

Chapter

6

Category Two –
Post Adolescents

6.1 Preamble

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of category ‘Post Adolescents’; a group of six trainees aged eighteen years of age through to their twenties. To protect their identity and ensure their anonymity, they are coded from P1 to P6. Similar to the group of adolescents, gender is evenly distributed across this group – three females and three males - with some irregularity when gender is distributed between the ages of the trainees. However, there are a reduced number of trainees compared to adolescents who volunteer to take part in the research. It is possible this reflects the reduced number of older trainees in comparison to the number of younger ones who sail. Post adolescents are made up of one eighteen year old – P4 male, one nineteen year old – P1 male, one twenty year old – P6 female, one twenty-two year old – P3 female, and two twenty-four year olds – P2 female and P5 male. All post adolescent trainees sailed as individuals and not as part of a school or organisation. P1 indicated knowing a Leeuwin volunteer, and this is actually the reason why he sailed. On his voyage, he considers himself on his own though as he reveals he sailed with others from a school he did not know. P2 sailed with work colleagues but did not know them. P3 sailed with two other girls who were sponsored by girl guides but she did not meet them until catching the flight together to Exmouth where they boarded the Leeuwin II ship. P5 also sailed with a sponsorship but did not know anyone else. According to these trainees, their voyages ranged from seven to nine days. Finally, none of them indicated how they felt prior to their voyage except P2 who expressed initial nervousness but excitement about the opportunity to be in the outdoors.

6.2 Personal Development

6.2.1 Sense of Self: Confidence

There are similarities and differences between adolescents and post adolescents when these trainees describe how they felt about themselves after their voyage. Similar to adolescents, the literature and what Leeuwin workers believe, is their reference to feeling confident about themselves. As P1 explains, “Ah, I would have to say, not wanting to sound cliché or tacky, but I did definitely have a great more confidence ...” For P3, after thinking about it, she says, “... it is quite sort of yeah, confidence boosting and very enjoyable.” For P6 she says:

... as far as, a bit more confident sort of in work and that. A week isn't much time to start learning all the lines that are on there and different sails and how to set them and what the procedure is, but when you start towards the end going, that someone yells out a command and you know what to do ... yeah, yeah... well you go, well I didn't expect that I would learn that this quickly.

In everyday life, this feeling of confidence continues for P1 who says:

... just cause of, like what you have just done you just feel really good about yourself and, I like I just couldn't stop smiling and I got off and it was you know, great, you know went back to work with a lot more confidence.

When P6 thinks about her life back home, she also believes her voyage has given her more confidence to do things. She explains it like this:

I think it has, in the fact that you know, you have so much stuff to do in such short time that if I had a reasonable amount of, things I had to do I

think I would have better time management and stuff for, you know a bit more confidence in knowing that I can get it done so that will help me stress out a little bit less from it.

It is interesting P6 raises stress in her life. Together with the female adolescents' reference to it, her comment contributes to the idea that females' lives are sprinkled with more ambiguity and contradiction (Van Newkirk 2006) than males in contemporary life. While this is something that continues to contribute to this way of thinking, what she conveys very well, from her experience on the Leeuwin II, is an image of having more control over her life, having more confidence to organise it for example, and as such, contributing to her sense of free agency enabling success in it as well.

6.2.2 Sense of Self: Accomplishment

Another response that is similar to the adolescent participants is having a sense of accomplishment when initially returning after their voyage. Like P2 who says, "Probably that I could accomplish more things that I didn't think I could have." But different to the adolescent participants' responses she also considers this in terms of, while she was accomplishing, she was setting examples and helping others to do the same. She explains it like this, "And yeah I mean, and it helped being a role model, too that, if I did certain things then it gave a bit of encouragement to the younger people in my group that they could actually do it as well." What she says can also be interpreted as being a role model associated with leadership.

6.2.3 Leadership

This is the same for P4 who actually identifies feeling more like a leader. Apart from A5 who associates leadership with having more confidence, it is something

that while the literature refers to it as a developmental outcome (see for example, Garst, Scheider & Baker 2001; Hobbs & Spencer 2002; Park 2004; Paisley et al 2008), the adolescent participants did not directly refer to it as something they felt about themselves once they finished their voyage. As he says:

I think the major thing I felt from it was I'm not usually like a leading kind of person. Like during the voyage I was kind of, like what they call a trainee watch leader ... so in a sense it like made me teach the people that were like new and that kind of thing.

So for P4, being eighteen years old, he was given a role of authority, responsibility and leadership on his voyage. Back at home, he also discusses this sense of leadership. As he says:

Yeah, I guess it gave me a like an experience of leading people the same age I guess ... Yeah cause ... I am not used to doing it but from the experience like without knowing the other age sort of thing I was, you know, like just kind of stepped up sort of thing so yeah.

But when asked if this meant he felt more like a leader back at home, after thinking about it, he explains it is more an awareness that he is capable of leadership. As he explains:

... I wouldn't put it that way ... I just realise that normally I like to observe rather than lead that is like my personality sort of thing. But like, by going through it, it kind of gave me a taste of being a leader and like in a sense, how teaching people can really be you know quite interesting.

Still, while not being able to think of an experience to share how this has changed or made a difference to his life, he agrees that it has, "I guess so, yeah in a sense."

6.2.4 Awakening Identity

Although there are only a small number of post adolescent participants, one notable difference about their development from the responses of adolescent participants is, it is often understood in relation to the younger trainees. Thus unlike the adolescent participants who describe their development in terms of being treated equally on board, particularly in reference to Leeuwin II workers, post adolescents, both female and male, recognise their older age and experience in relation to an awakening of their identity. This awareness and subsequent strengthening of self is described by P3 when she says, "... it certainly made me more aware of how I get, of how I guess, interact with other people."

P5, who sailed at the age of twenty-four, also contributes to this discourse. According to him, when asked him if he felt different about himself after his voyage he initially indicates he didn't. As he says, "If I was younger definitely." But this is because being older means for him, having life experience like, "Since I've graduated from high school I've done quite a bit of travel and teaching roles at Murdoch University." In this way, age relates to his experience and identity development. It supports A7s idea of experience being bound with what it means to be an adult as indicated in the previous chapter. But with further consideration, P5 agrees that his experience on board did change him in some way. He says, "... it had less an effect but it still changed me yes, yes." This is as he says, still in relation to how he identifies himself with the young trainees, "... well considering I was about ten years older than everyone else on board, I felt a lot older."

In essence, this illustrates that rather than initiation to adulthood as the adolescent participants experience, their identity as older individuals is being awakened and strengthened. Thus, this suggests that they already identify as older individuals, something that has occurred in their everyday lives before

their voyage but they are not necessarily aware of, and as such, they relate an awareness of this in their response to how they felt about themselves post voyage. This awareness of self is a sentiment conveyed by other post adolescents also and is continued when they specifically discuss their voyage and its impact on their sense of adulthood.

6.2.5 Sense of Self: Adulthood

It is not surprising most post adolescent participants differ to adolescent participants when discussing their feeling more like an adult after their voyage. Not differentiated by gender, they overwhelmingly indicate they already considered themselves an adult before they sailed. For example, when asked if he felt more like an adult when he finished his voyage P5's response was, "... well not really because I feel I was an adult when I went on the voyage." P1 responds similarly saying, "... I am not sure. I wouldn't say that for me. I think maybe for the young kids ... 17 years that would definitely feel that, that 16 you know, these guys still in high school but yeah, for me it didn't really have, I don't know, a bearing on that."

There are some other thoughts expressed around this theme also. For P2, while she considered herself an adult before her voyage, her voyage became more a realisation rather than a change in herself as she related with the younger trainees. As she explains:

Yeah, I did. But I never really had thought about it from that point of view. Like I still felt young ... It wasn't until I saw myself through the young kids' eyes that I went oh hang on, no I am not young to them ... Oh I always thought that, where I work I am young for my work environment so I thought I was quite young ... and then I went on the Leeuwin and I felt like the old person ... so, it was pretty interesting. I guess, yeah there were

people asking me and that's how it is to be in the workforce and I haven't really been around fifteen year olds since I was fifteen. Yeah, it was a bit interesting. It did make me feel older against, more like an adult I guess. That you realise that you've grown into being older.

P3 also takes up the idea of adulthood being considered in relation to the younger trainees. She agrees with the others that her experience on board did not change her identity as an adult. Rather, she was able to observe the interactions between the younger and older trainees. As she says:

I'm not sure that it affected how I felt as an adult so much ... The thing that was really actually quite interesting was, the way that the Year tens interacted with the adults. They saw the three of us who were sponsored by Guides we were, 17, 19 and 22 that they saw us all three of us as adults ... which was, quite funny for us. And that, the way that everyone interacted was just really quite interesting because I think it is the first, one of the first experiences that they'd had where there were adults in their team but who were you know as, uneducated about them as how the ship works and that sort of thing. So that everyone just worked on the same level ... For young people, I think it would have really brought home to them that you know, adults, I mean they are not necessarily that different. They just feel that they were able to work on an equal footing with adults ... I think, the adults, the older adults, which there were a few older adults, I think quite enjoyed being able to yeah interact sort of on an equal level with some of the kids. Have fun with them ...

So while identifying the Leeuwin II environment as one of a levelling experience, she still identifies it in recognition of an adult relating to the younger trainees.

P6 also does not think her voyage contributed to her becoming an adult. She says, "... that's a hard call, given that sort of I've already been working full time and living out of home and all that sort of stuff that I sort of felt like I have made that transition beforehand." Thus while she links her transition to adulthood with her life experience, she also, like P5, thinks that she did grow as an adult after her voyage in what she did and how she related to the others. As she says, "... it does help to sort of knowing about, you know self-sufficiency and stuff like that. I suppose it also helped a little bit in helping others so making you feel a little bit more mature in that you can help someone else if they needed it".

6.2.6 Post Adolescents or Resisting Adulthood

There is one exception to the post adolescent participants feeling like an adult before and after their voyage. This is expressed by the youngest one, P4, aged eighteen years old, who says he doesn't believe or want to feel more, like an adult. So when asked if he felt more like an adult after his voyage he responds, "... not exactly no. I think, I like being a kid (Laughter). " But he continues to say that, "I guess it has given me like, like for example if I had to be serious or if I suddenly was put in the situation where I had to be like an adult and actually lead a group of people, I think I would be more capable of doing that."

Put simply, this can be understood as similar to the views of the adolescent participants, as he recognises a change in himself. But despite this, he openly resists taking on an identity as an adult. Interestingly, this resistance is something he also indicates when asked about his feeling like a leader after his voyage. His response definitely differs to A7's indecisiveness about her sense of adulthood also, P4 is very clear in his way of thinking. Therefore,

understanding his perspective might possibly reflect his freedom to choose his own identity.

There are many ways this can be understood though. Given his age, P4's resistance to identifying as an adult might be considered in relation to his lack of life experience. This is similar to what P5 and P6 describe as contributing to their identity as an adult. Some might explain this occurring as a result of avoidance; behaviour that can be associated with young people distancing themselves from a reality that they experience as objective. It is also not unreasonable to understand his attitude and behaviour in terms of risk. Permeating contemporary life, the idea of risk can render individuals incapable of action (Beck 1994). When I recall the words of the Program Coordinator as she read out the reading on risk to us all as we sailed on board the *Leeuwin II* tall ship, it is easy to understand how it can be associated to young people's identity development. Still there is another way of understanding P4's response, and that is, that he has a sense of control, therefore indicating confidence over his life choices. From this perspective it does contribute to the idea of a new and distinct life-stage between adolescence and adulthood; a stage where he is exploring different aspects of life possibilities as Arnett (2000) describes as emerging adults do in love, work and worldviews.

However, rather than referring to this life stage as emerging adulthood, as Arnett (1998, 2000) does, P4's response and the discourse of the adolescent participants can be considered as challenging the assumption that there is an automatic progression to adulthood for everyone. For as A14 points out, "an adult can be, thirty forty years old but you are not an adult if you're still acting like a kid." Instead, what P4 does indicate is a shift from adolescent to post adolescent where he considers a new role more associated with adulthood if put in particular situations. As such, his response reflects the idea that today identity

is more often than not the outcome of his own efforts left to him to worry about (Bauman 2005). Further, in this individualised society that espouses self-responsibility (Beck & Beck-Germesheim 2002), what he says certainly highlights how adulthood needs to be understood rather than just simply accepting it (Willmott & Nelson 2005).

6.3 An Adult: What is it?

6.3.1 Responsibility

The post adolescent participants think in very similar ways with the adolescent participants and others cited in the literature (Hutson and Jenkins 1989; Arnett 2000; Westberg 2004) about what they consider an adult is. They both for example commonly turn to the idea of responsibility being a key part. In fact, every post adolescent participant in his or her response takes this up in some way. However, there are some variations to this idea also. Similar to the adolescent participants, they agree that an adult is associated with independence and one's actions. As P2 says, "... I think once a kid kind of moves out of home or takes on responsibility of a job or, really I think it is about becoming responsible for your own actions that when you become an adult." P1 agrees saying, "I would define it as being independent ... responsible for your own actions."

6.3.2 Consequence

The difference is that the post adolescent participants, interestingly two female ones; include the idea of consequence of one's action along with responsibility. P6 explains it this way:

... I think it's when you have reached a level of self-sufficiency. So whether, how you prove that, is obviously an individual's circumstance but, whether

it is being able to financially support yourself or, just being able to take responsibility for your own actions and knowing the consequences. So, sort of having that foresight as well. Just having that sort of maturity level to know what is going to happen with the action you choose and then choosing the most appropriate one through that.

P3 also agrees with consequence and responsibility being part of what an adult is. She says making your own choices and your actions as an adult are, “being responsible for the consequences”.

Thus, including consequence with what the post adolescent participants say about responsibility and what they think adulthood is differs from the adolescent participant responses. Apart from A 14 who indicated being aware of consequences as part of his personal growth after his voyage, that is, he felt more control over his actions and aware that what he does is accompanied by consequences. Other adolescent participants did not refer to it in what they think an adult is. What is interesting from the post adolescent participants including this in how adulthood is understood is that now A 14, a fifteen-year old male, considering consequences can be understood in terms of him gaining maturity. Moreover, as he identifies it associated to his action, it also suggests adults can be understood as having certain control over the decisions they make in their lives and as such, raises the value of their sense of confidence underlying their action and therefore their agency.

However, even though the post adolescent participants include consequence in their discussion of it, raising responsibility in relation to what they think an adult is, in essence the post adolescent and adolescent participants agree with each other. Indeed, what they all raise fits well in the contemporary individualistic society where it is increasingly recognised as them acquiring a subjective sense of adulthood. That is, it comes from an individualistic quality

of character, such as accepting responsibility of oneself and making independent decisions (Shanahan 2000). But still the idea of responsibility can also be considered in relation to others. It is something A13 described well when she said, “Not doing anything stupid that can harm someone else.” Not only does this convey the idea of responsibility in how to understand what an adult is, it widens the lens to view others in how adulthood can be understood. As the adolescent and post adolescent participants indicate, it is a combination of the individual within society that contributes to what they believe an adult is.

6.3.3 A Social Definition

Part of this definition relates to a legal perspective. Like P5 who says, “... well legally they’re above eighteen ... but how do you define it? There are subtle differences between adolescents and adults. It is more the way they look toward their outlook in the more maturity.” For him an outlook means, “Looking out for others ... besides yourself. Trying, doing what needs to be done whether or not it is fun or not.” When asked if he thinks this is a part of being responsible he replied, “yep, that would be the word”, but he continues and adds an adult is, “... if possible considerate and kind. And I guess more mature”.

This places his definition of what an adult is in the realms of the social not only in relation to its rules and regulations but in how he believes adults should act in their daily interactions with others. As such, his perspective on these interactions is an interesting viewpoint, particularly when contextualising it in the way Bourdieu (1993) describes an individualised society such as Australia. According to him, in it individuals relate to each other in terms of competition and self-interest. This means the internal processes within social fields bind identities to emerge through combination and intersection with other identities

(Bourdieu 1990). Or in terms of habitus, it is understood as a reproduction through the conditions of these fields that confront it, and the practices it generates (Meisenhelder 2006). Thus it makes sense that an adult would be understood in terms of an individualistic quality of character in the way that Bourdieu describes. But because P5's response is after his voyage on the Leeuwin II tall ship, while being aware this has not been explored with him so cannot really be assumed, it is not unreasonable to consider his relationships with others on board to have influenced the way he interprets what it means to be an adult.

This entails his experiences on board being likened to the idea of *communitas*, those social fields that are removed from everyday life. Being between their usual social roles and norms of thought and behaviour (Turner 1967, p. 93; 1969, p. 95; 1992, p. 132), these fields clearly differentiate the norms from those of the social structure that shape their everyday lives. As such, what happens is, as Turner (1969, pp. 97) describes, they promote a sense of “the generic human bond” - “a strong sentiment of human kindness.” Thus it is possible to understand his idea of what an adult is, with the reproduction of his habitus, through the conditions, namely the supportive relationships of the Leeuwin II tall ship as *communitas* as being considerate and kind. But perhaps more importantly, his idea of what an adult is, also demonstrates how his habitus is set free from the norms of everyday life; a life based on competition and self-interest. Indeed, from this understanding, the way P5 thinks about what it means to be an adult it is not unreasonable to consider if he is liberated from the conformities of everyday life (Turner 1974).

Understanding what an adult is from a social perspective is also understood in other ways by the post adolescent participants. Similar to the adolescent participants this is bound with ideas of the individual in interaction with the

social structure and that actual age is not a key factor for adulthood. P3 articulates this as she says:

At first there are different levels of how an adult is viewed. For a start, you know a very basic level it's somebody over 18 ... And within those people, you've got those people who act like adults and people who don't act like adults. People with a bit of, maturity and sort of common sense, that sort of thing which is almost, well mainly it's contributed to adults ... That it is not easily defined by age ...or in a legal sense ... I guess it is about having, a much kind of independence, responsibility...

She continues and thinks it is in relation to others: how people treat you and how you consider yourself with different people. She says:

But also, it's in, in relation to other people that you know, so. Unless, and something I find as a Guide leader, having so much interaction with kids makes you see yourself almost as they do as more of an adult than when I am with my friends or whatever, we're on the same age group ... You can't, or really believe we are actually adults ... So I think it depends a lot on who you interact with ... also how other people see you.

Subsequently, when understanding P3 measures her sense of adulthood by others it points to the importance of, as Bourdieu (1993) points out, how social fields can play an important part in identity development. This is true in relation to young people's identity as adults, but can also be equally understood to include developing their confidence in themselves, too. In fact, the influence of social fields in their everyday life on their identity as adults is supported by most of the post adolescent participants who already consider themselves adults prior to their voyage.

However, understanding that for some of them their voyage acted as an awakening or a realisation to their identity as an adult rather than initiation to it has certain implications. Indeed, when understanding post adolescent participants like P3 recognises her sense of adulthood against the younger trainees on board, this suggests her everyday life has not really invoked the intense transitional experience of being revitalised or what Turner (1992) describes as, “inwardly transformed and outwardly changed” (Turner 1992, pp. 48 – 49). Thus, it can be understood habitus responds differently to experience like responsibility for example in everyday life different from it in fields such as the Leeuwin II tall ship as *communitas*. But whatever the relationship, experience is indeed an important part of young people’s development and the post adolescent participants, similar to the adolescent participants, identify it with what they think it means to be an adult.

6.3.4 Experience

Experience is indeed associated with how adulthood is understood by P4 and A7. Given their ages are sixteen and eighteen years of age respectively, is this reflective of them being post adolescents? Is the idea of experience important to them because they are themselves considering their life experience that has not yet seen them as adults? For P4, an adult is wrapped up with experience he identifies as responsibility. As he explains, “I guess being like, for me, it’s probably being responsible, that’s the first thing.” He continues to include the idea of experience and says:

... like observing the environment that you are in and like acting accordingly, I guess. Like and one of the main things is probably like having like because you being an adult you probably have more experience for you to be able to predict what would happen. From that, you would like

act accordingly and help others to prevent for example accidents and such just because you know or you kind of have experience of what might happen.

Thus when understanding that post adolescent participants, except for P4, consider themselves already an adult before sailing on the Leeuwin II tall ship, it indeed reiterates the importance of social fields on their identity development, particularly in the way that experience in their everyday lives can be understood as having provided them personal development as an adult. But this is even while, like P6 points out, they are not always aware of it. For Bourdieu, this can be understood as a subconscious nature of habitus – as he says, “a modus operandi of which he or she is not the producer and has no conscious mastery” (Bourdieu 1977, p. 79). From this perspective, when development occurs in their every day lives without them having an awareness of it, it is indeed plausible to consider it part of the reason why habitus does not respond in quite the same way when experiencing a rite of passage or being removed to a social field like communitas where personal transformation as initiation occurs.

It will be very interesting to learn what post adolescent participants say about why and how they think their Leeuwin II experience works for them. Given their personal development is more often relating to their sense of self like that of confidence, will they link their development to their habitus being removed from their everyday lives in order for it to be set free? Will they suggest the contrast and their experience, being a new one, as contributing to their development? Will they implicate communitas in why and how they think their Leeuwin II experience works even though they already indicate an awareness of their adulthood before they sailed? Will communitas be implicated to their sense of confidence? Indeed, will they relate experience and responsibility to

their identity development that their discourse suggests so far in their personal development?

6.4 How and Why the Leeuwin II Adventure Works

6.4.1 Contrast and Responsibility

Surprisingly the first thing that is apparent about why and how post adolescent participants believe their Leeuwin II experience works, unlike adolescent participants, is their lack of reference to responsibility relating to it. Given many of them identify as adults before their voyage, it is possible this contributes to the value of contrast for personal development. That is, as adults, and according to their definition in relation to responsibility, it is possible they experience responsibility in their everyday lives so it does not stand out to them as a new experience that makes a difference. But for those who are not aware of their adult identities before they sail, it does support their recognition of responsibility. When P6 considers how and why her adventure works for her in the way it increased her sense of maturity, she sees it specifically in regards to her relationship with the younger trainees. Essentially P6 sees herself in a position of responsibility, interacting and helping them. As she says, “Yeah. Just being able to offer help. You know when you are younger you can’t necessarily do what when you are older what you can do.”

Similarly, through interpretation, in many ways, post adolescent participants are placed in a position of responsibility that can be understood to impact on their personal development in different ways.

6.4.2 Leadership and Responsibility

For example, when understanding leadership, as Paisley et al (2008) explain, is associated with a variety of interpretations like taking on responsibility, initiative, and decision-making roles, it is not unreasonable that post adolescent participants, like responsibility, do not recognise leadership as to how and why they think their Leeuwin II adventure works for them because they have already experienced it in their everyday lives. However, given P4 is the only post adolescent who does not consider himself an adult before his voyage, being placed in a leadership role certainly can be understood as a new experience for him that contrasts with his everyday life and therefore stands out for him. As he says:

I think it is the fact that they put me as a what they call a training watch leader. So I was basically in charge or second in charge of the group ... So normally I wouldn't step up to such a, such a position I guess. I would more likely be the person to sit back and kind of watch and help when I need to ...

For him this was not a choice as he explains:

I was surprised I guess cause like I was just thrown on there without much notice cause, I wasn't, originally I wasn't supposed to be on that voyage. To them I just kind of appeared in Albany on that day when they were just about to leave. And I just asking them about an extra spot and they said yeah, just jump on and so it was all of a surprise I guess ... They didn't actually know that I had never done a voyage before. Um, which is what you are supposed to do before you become a trainee watch leader ... because the first mate thought I had experience before which I don't. And so I kind of just served into this position without you know knowing ... things like that yeah.

Subsequently, although he does not directly refer to it, what he describes can be associated with being placed in a position of responsibility that has made the difference for him. In one way, it demonstrates trust by the Leeuwin II workers in him to do this and highlights the importance of the relationships within social fields and the influence of them on young people's personal development. But what he is saying also has certain value in understanding the nature of habitus. Again, similar to adolescent participant experiences it suggests habitus is capable of reproduction, supporting, as Flurie (2003) exemplifies, the idea of it as a method of leadership development among young people.

Still, coupled with the literature, Leeuwin workers and adolescent participants, what Flurie says has certain significance toward contrast as to why and how their Leeuwin II experience works. In other words, it continues to strengthen the way contrast can be understood to contribute to awareness of personal change, something post adolescent participants demonstrate does not always occur along with their development to adulthood in their everyday lives. Thus, being taken out of their comfort zone, as Leeuwin II workers often put it, away from their everyday life to a place on board the Leeuwin II tall ship appears to create a contrast that contributes to these trainees' personal development.

6.4.3 Processing and Reflecting

Interestingly, while the discussion highlights how post adolescent participants' voyage on the Leeuwin II tall ship indicates a realisation and awareness of their self as adults, particularly as they regard themselves in relation to the younger trainees, this realisation is also recognised by them when they specifically discuss their voyage and its impact on their sense of self. Or more specifically, to why and how they think their Leeuwin II experience works in relation to their sense of achievement and confidence. Two post adolescent participants, P2 and

P1, explain this in terms of their relationship with the younger trainees as well as the challenges that come with the Leeuwin II environment. Given they are female and male respectively, their focus continues the trend according to gender provided by adolescent participants. That is, females identify with relationships and males with activity when explaining why and how they think their Leeuwin II experience works.

For P2, it is her sense of achievement that is realised after reflecting on it in relation to the younger trainees. As she says:

I got a sense of achievement cause you just go through like kind of, you do Uni or High school and then Uni and then you get into the workforce and, I guess you don't really reflect on where you, the point you have got until someone sees it? ... So when the kids were asking me oh how did you go to Uni and what did you do and why did you do this and how did you get the job? I guess that was the thing where you go oh yeah I guess I have done all that and they still have all that to come ... so it is interesting that, you know, and it was really nice, some of them were actually considering, oh well maybe, it gave them vision ... some of them thought, maybe I don't have to work in whatever for the rest of my life, maybe I could go to Perth ... You know and that is a fairly big step to them.

What she describes links her sense of accomplishment with an awareness of her influencing the younger trainees that might be described as one of being a mentor. In essence, she sees herself as enabling these young people freedom to choose, to initiate their sense of agency. It certainly can be understood as a position of responsibility that in turn contributes to reinforcing her identity as an adult.

For P1 his reflection is more of an individual nature. Like A6, this is understood in terms of how she believes she achieved an increased level of confidence – as she puts it, “Because you think I can do this, or I have done something that is like this”.

As well as confidence though, P1 also describes it with responsibility, challenge and awareness of his capabilities. Similar to the experience of P4, he explains:

I think it is, the way I spoke before about how they throw you in the deep end? You just, you are not, I wasn't expected to be worked as hard as I was and I realise, made me realise what you are capable of ... what you can do and it's a, you know coming back from that you look back at it and you think well if I can do this, you know I can do anything.

It is a challenge he considers as advantageous for all and says, “... you challenge yourself and yes, I recommend that.”

While not much is known about processing or reflecting (McKenzie 2000), what post adolescent participants say highlights the importance of it, particularly when understanding their perceptions contribute most to personal development (Conrad & Hedin 1982). In essence, processing and reflecting upon their experience allows them to step back and, in a sense have the impression, mainly illusory, that they are master of their world (Hopkins 1993). Underpinning this is having the confidence to choose, having control over their life and as such, habitus being set free. It clearly points to the importance of them to think and feel in this way (Lehmann 2004) to enable their success in contemporary milieu.

P1 exemplifies the relevance of this when he describes how he felt after he had just received a letter he wrote to himself while on board. This was six

months after he returned back home and as he told me, it is something Leeuwin II does with all trainees. Receiving this letter has special significance for him, as he explains:

That was really, that kind of you know renewed that feeling of confidence because of the things I had written to myself ... reminded me of the voyage and that was a really good thing that they do ... Yep. It is really boosted my confidence you know. So you know, it just stipulated, just walked off you know, that feeling that feeling I can do anything. Yeah so, that is a really nice touch.

Like many of the adolescent participants, he agrees that this is tied up with him feeling happy, too.

Moreover, according to the discourse of post adolescent participants, processing and reflecting can also be associated with the way they have become aware of their adulthood. Again, this means that what was once subconscious, their unrealised sense of adulthood that has manifested in them in their everyday lives for example, has now become a part of these trainees' consciousness because of their voyage. As such, the idea of processing and reflecting not only becomes a reason how and why the Leeuwin II adventure works for younger trainees aged in their teens, it can indeed be considered an important part of personal development for older trainees who are aged through to their twenties also.

6.4.4 Teamwork and Challenge

Similar to adolescent participants, the idea of teamwork and challenge continue to be part of understanding why and how post adolescent participants think their Leeuwin II voyage works. Given there is only one post adolescent

indicating these reasons, there is no gender differentiation. For P2, her Leeuwin II experience works because as she says it is, “Possibly the team work because that helped me coming back into the office.” But she continues and adds a similar view to P 1 who recognises challenge as part of his development as she says, “... but from a personal point of view more the climbing the mast and different things like that. Self challenges were really good.”

6.4.5 A New Experience

Still another similarity between adolescent and post adolescent participants is their citing of the experience as being new. What they say strengthens the idea of contrast and habitus being removed from everyday life contributing to how and why the Leeuwin II tall ship adventure works. This includes them citing new relationships as well as a new environment. Two post adolescent participants, P6 female and P5 male, provide these explanations. First P6 says:

I think it was being so far out of my comfort zone. I wouldn't normally be a sort of person who'd jump on a ship ... so ... yeah just being so out of it and really have no clue what was going on ... All new people obviously is always an influence, too.

So for P6 it is the new environment and the new people that are the reason why and how her Leeuwin II experience works. P5 agrees but rather than including new people, he only focuses on the environment. As he says:

I think it was because it is such a different environment. That while you readjust to that, and while I was readjusting to the environment that they ... all the teachings they threw in got, went through as well ... I think it is adjusting to a new environment with ... and ah, all those activities that are to try and teach you leadership skills.

When asked if he understood this in terms of a sense of achievement he replied, “A sense of achievement yes ... but I think mainly the new and unique environment of the ship.”

While P6 includes the Leeuwin II environment as part of her explanation, her reference to relationships again indicates the relevance of these for females. Likewise, P5’s comments only relating to the new environment contributes to the idea that males tend to focus on this rather than relationships with others. Even though this group of post-adolescent participants is a small one, it is possible a gender difference between relationships and activity exists. This will be explored further in the next chapter when analysing the group of past trainees. Nevertheless, what P5 describes here certainly is in contrast to his everyday life; it is indeed a new experience and nothing he has previously experienced. As he says, “... no. I haven’t been on a ship before”.

Interestingly, during his interview, P5 thinks about why the Leeuwin II adventure works for young people because it is a new experience. Relating to his own life experience and how he developed from it, he explained how he travelled overseas on his own to different countries several times, and that is what he believes helped him build his confidence. As he says, “The Leeuwin teaches you a lot of those things in a short space of time ... in the things I have done since graduating High school, I’ve done quite a lot of things that try to develop those skills as well.”

This suggests that what young people experience on the Leeuwin II tall ship intensifies their experiences and therefore hastens or indeed initiates the transition. This concurs with LW1 who also recognises this intensity as a catalyst for change. Like she says, “If the ingredients are present in a person to grow then it’s going to be speeded up being in the intense environment that is created on the ship”.

Not only does this capture the idea that one's individual identity can be 'contingently activated' in a context (Brubaker and Cooper (2000), it also supports that rather than age, it is experience like responsibility that makes the difference for young people's transition. Hence, for those who have not experienced responsibility that is associated to adulthood in everyday life, explains why those who are aged thirty or forty years old as A14 says, are not necessarily adults. But what P5 describes goes further; it promotes the importance of not only a new experience like responsibility contributing to young people's identity development, something that occurs but can be elongated in everyday life, it includes the experience beyond everyday life effectively speeding it up. For this reason, similar to Adolescents, *communitas* is implicated in their development in regard to some trainee's initiation to adulthood and in initiating and/or building their confidence, too.

6.4.6 Communitas

For several reasons, P3 describes what can be identified as the *Leeuwin II* tall ship as *communitas* when she discusses how and why she thinks her *Leeuwin II* experience works. First, her description of her voyage well demonstrates the intensity associated to it (Turner 1969). As she says:

Well, I think part of it is having everyone living together in such close conditions ... which sort of adjusts the, effects the way that you interact with the, that also, the fact that there's a powerful sense of actually, working together and getting results which is having the ship sailing and that sort of thing.

Working together and sailing this vessel also means it is a real experience. This is indeed an important characteristic of the *Leeuwin II* tall ship as *communitas*. It certainly makes sense that it means much more when they are

not simply participating in a simulation or role-play. In other words, on the Leeuwin II tall ship trainees experience responsibility because it is a “spontaneously generated relationship between levelled and equal ... human beings, felt ... beyond playacting” (Turner 1992, pp. 135 - 136).

P3 also includes the environment and feeling connected with it in her explanation of why and how her experience on board works. As she describes:

But I also just, I mean and we had absolutely stunning weather on our voyage but, just being outside you know, you are in the middle of the ocean. Nights were clear so there were just stars from one horizon to another and they were all reflected in the water because it was so calm. Certainly, the incredible, outdoors physical aspect of it was fantastic.

I also felt this connectedness to nature, something I describe several times on my voyage as being connected to the universe. When he talks about the Singaporean trainees and how they reacted to the environment sitting on the beach at Esperance, LW12 describes it well also. Thus, what P3 says is well supported. In fact, it promotes an understanding that the wilderness provides an experience of physical as well as a symbolic journey through a region (of both the mind and earth) (Turner 1969). It is a situation that again promotes habitus being removed from their everyday lives to a place of communitas to experience contrast and more contributing to young people’s personal growth; growth that is readily recognised by them rather than a subconscious development they commonly portray as happening in their everyday lives.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

While the post adolescent participants are a small group, they add significantly to this discourse. First, for some of them, while their personal develop-

ment on board the *Leeuwin II* tall ship does not indicate initiation to adulthood in the same way it happens for adolescent participants, they do indicate a realisation or awakening of it; an identity they are not always aware of in their everyday lives. This is significant because it demonstrates that habitus responds differently to experiences when one changes context to experiences in the same physical setting (Shotter & Gergen 1989; Gergen 1991).

Second, similar to adolescent participants, they indicate an increase in their sense of confidence. This is also a significant development because it indicates, despite them being older than adolescents, all young people who sail on board the *Leeuwin II* tall ship can still increase their sense of confidence. Given this personal growth underpins their success in everyday life, it equates to an increase in their power of thought contributing to it (Bauman 2001). In essence, what this means is that they are better prepared; having agentic capabilities so they can intentionally make things happen by their actions (Bandura 2001). In other words, their experience on board, similar to that of adolescent participants gaining a sense of confidence, their increase in it can continue to strengthen their habitus and subsequently their agency.

There are other similarities in what post adolescent and adolescent participants say. First, apart from post adolescent participants including the idea of consequence in their definition of what an adult is, they are very similar in how they define it. This includes responsibility, independence, identity and social context. Given adolescent participants do not cite consequence in their definition it is possible that it reflects post adolescent participants' awareness of it because as adults they identify with it as part of their lives. Another similarity is that both adolescents and post adolescent participants indicate gender in the same way. That is, females direct their responses toward relationships and males toward activity. When they discuss this in terms of why and how their

adventure works, this is also implied as something new. As such, it again highlights the idea of contrast and communitas.

Finally, what post adolescent participants say about their identity development concurs with adolescent participant responses in that it extends over time (Hattie et al 1997). Indicating this from one week to six months after their voyage, they strengthen studies that show benefits of young people's participation in outdoor adventure over periods of months (Harris 2000; Garst et al 2001). In the next chapter, past trainees who sailed many years ago, will contribute to the evidence that trainees' personal development from participating in the Leeuwin II tall ship outdoor adventure extends over periods of years.