PALGRAVE STUDIES
IN GENDER AND EDUCATION

THE PALGRAVE INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF WOMEN AND OUTDOOR LEARNING

Edited by
Tonia Gray and Denise Mitten

Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education

Series Editor

Yvette Taylor
School of Education
University of Strathclyde
Glasgow, UK

"As a male in a profession perfused with male hegemony, this book has opened my eyes to the many profound—yet often unnoticed—thoughts, feelings and contributions of female colleagues. It is a waymark along the path towards further maturation that all involved in our profession will continue to journey."

—John Quay, *Associate Professor in Education,*
University of Melbourne, Australia

"Gray and Mitten's edited book provides important perspectives about women in the outdoors. It emphasizes the ongoing need to hear women's voices and normalize their contributions. Although inroads have been made and the playing field often is perceived as level, the ongoing need is to celebrate and challenge gender equality and equity in the outdoors."

—Karla A. Henderson, *Professor Emeritus of*
Leisure Behavior, Gender & Diversity, and Organized Camping,
North Carolina State University, USA

"Unconscious bias in a male constructed field like the outdoors needs constant attention as both men and women are affected by it. I have been part of teams and committees that worked hard to achieve 'balance' only for it to slip away once it was achieved. The bias, present in both men and also, surprisingly to me, women, does not go away. It needs our constant effort. This book is a major contribution to just that."

—Chris Loynes, *Reader in Outdoor Studies, University of Cumbria, UK*

"This book has challenged my good intentions around and helped to expose my misconceptions of gender issues in the outdoors. It has moved me closer toward a much-needed understanding of the issues and challenges women face. It's an absolute must read for those who wish to better understand the gender bias that favours men in outdoor education."

—Tom Potter, *Associate Professor in the*
School of Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism,
Lakehead University, Canada

This Series aims to provide a comprehensive space for an increasingly diverse and complex area of interdisciplinary social science research: gender and education. Because the field of women and gender studies is developing rapidly and becoming 'internationalised' – as are traditional social science disciplines such as sociology, educational studies, social geography, and so on – there is a greater need for this dynamic, global Series that plots emerging definitions and debates and monitors critical complexities of gender and education. This Series has an explicitly feminist approach and orientation and attends to key theoretical and methodological debates, ensuring a continued conversation and relevance within the well-established, inter-disciplinary field of gender and education.

The Series combines renewed and revitalised feminist research methods and theories with emergent and salient public policy issues. These include pre-compulsory and post-compulsory education; 'early years' and 'lifelong' education; educational (dis)engagements of pupils, students and staff; trajectories and intersectional inequalities including race, class, sexuality, age and disability; policy and practice across educational landscapes; diversity and difference, including institutional (schools, colleges, universities), locational and embodied (in 'teacher'–'learner' positions); varied global activism in and beyond the classroom and the 'public university'; educational technologies and transitions and the (ir)relevance of (in)formal educational settings; and emergent educational mainstreams and margins. In using a critical approach to gender and education, the Series recognises the importance of probing beyond the boundaries of specific territorial-legislative domains in order to develop a more international, intersectional focus. In addressing varied conceptual and methodological questions, the Series combines an intersectional focus on competing – and sometimes colliding – strands of educational provisioning and equality and 'diversity', and provides insightful reflections on the continuing critical shift of gender and feminism within (and beyond) the academy.

More information about this series at
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"This important book is a first class and comprehensive volume for students and scholars to explore the narratives of power, oppression and equality associated with women outdoors. This book will help university students and the outdoor profession to re-story its future so that a heightened sense of gender awareness and the cultural shift needed can be woven into the fabric of the outdoor p rofession. At last it has been written! Thank you."

—Mark Leather, *Senior Lecturer in Outdoor Adventure Education, Plymouth Marjon University, UK*

Tonia Gray • Denise Mitten
Editors

The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning

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macmillan

Editors
Tonia Gray
Western Sydney University
Penrith, NSW, Australia

Denise Mitten
Prescott College
Prescott, AZ, USA

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We dedicate this book to the women past, present, and future:
the pioneering women who paved the path before us;
the women in the field doing groundbreaking work in theory and practice; and the women who will continue to transform the outdoor learning landscape in the future.

Foreword:
Nourishing Terrains—Nurturing Terrains: Networks of Connections

I cried from my heart on that mountain
I talked and it spoke to me
Awe inspiring, breath-taking.
I feel so small and insignificant.
I feel like we are the keepers,
Alone and at peace,

A rainbow at the end of the waterfall,
Droplets of water suspended in space
Laughter, love and togetherness,
How do I fit into the scheme of things
There are no “niches.”

The sound of raindrops on my head
The sight of the rainbow across the waterfall
Howling winds against the body
A hysterical human caterpillar,
Seven dwarfs,
Snow balls on the hill top,
Touching each other.

Sunset, sheep and tractor radio,
Shimmering light on valley trees,
The beauty and majesty of nature,
The power of water,
Emotions too deep to describe,
Majestic scenery,
The thunderous sound of the water.

Ice crystals trampled in the mud.
The vastness, openness and freedom,
No cars, no noise, no watches that "beep,"
Alone and insignificant—pressures disappear,
No men—absolute bliss,
The beauty of a small pink stone.

A spiritual experience,
Togetherness,
In tune with nature,
Hysterical laughter,
Being in touch with myself,
Emotions let loose with the wind.

Inner-self emerging,
Is this a religious experience?
Belief In yourself, Inner peace,
Overcoming physical barriers,
Ravens diving of the cliff,
Memories of good friends—trust—and love
Beings immortalised in the landscape.
(*I Cried from my Heart*)
Women Youth Workers, Brecon
Beacons Group (1990, March)

This volume brings together unique knowledge and wisdom from women who have spent their lives as outdoor educators and leaders, in the Antipodes and/or North America, as well as Denmark, India, Japan, Norway, and the United Kingdom. It is a valuable addition to the field, and to education and leadership more broadly. This compilation examines the theory and practice of outdoor learning from a multitude of perspectives and experiences made available through the voices of more than 80 women, many of whom cover in excess of 30 years of life and career in the outdoors.

The last quarter century has seen a massive change in how different communities perceive and relate to the natural environment, and these changes have been shaped by local and global social, political, and environmental factors. Moreover, place and space have huge influences upon experiences of the outdoors and upon the ways in which humans interact with their natural environments. Regardless of geographical location, human relations with the more-than-human have changed dramatically since modern industrial development, as has women's position in the family, community, and society more generally, within technologically advanced communities. These changes have not happened simultaneously but at different times and places in industrial cycles. Women in technologically advanced societies have fought and gained arguably some equality, and at the same time, the planet has come under considerable threat largely as a consequence of excessive and uncaring industrial development. Humans are nourished by nature as some of these chapters highlight, whilst other chapters identify the need also to nurture, care for, and cherish nature. Indigenous knowledge from around the world has understood well the significant connections between human and more-than-human health and well-being. This is evidenced in Canada's, Australia's, and New Zealand's indigenous peoples' values summarized in Strang and Busse (2009, p. 8): "Human well-being and environmental well-being are connected, and disturbance of the environment...is understood to have social, ecological and spiritual impact."

Women's and others' experiences of being in the outdoors as the title suggests can be nourishing but only if the *terrain* or nature itself is nurtured and not abused. The web of connections identified in indigenous values may have been broken or at the very least weakened through industrialization and colonization, but outdoor learning and leading is crucial in recovering these relations and women, as illuminated throughout this volume, have contributed significantly to regaining and strengthening these threads and relationships. Social and environmental justice is key to the survival of the planet and to women's and men's enduring and enriched lives.

Eco-feminist perspectives in the twentieth century, in identifying these important relationships and webs of connections, challenged dualistic thinking. Such dichotomized ways of seeing and acting in the world emerged in the Enlightenment period and created distinctions, which tended to privilege culture over nature, male over female and so forth, creating polarizations and unequal power relations where none may have existed before.

Donna Haraway's (1985) classic paper challenged traditional dichotomized thinking, which created such distinctions that often resulted in oppressive and abusive actions. Her text calls for the deconstruction of composed binary opposites towards an understanding of all life, human and nonhuman, as equally valued. Her *manifesto* was amongst the many initiating eco-feminist writings emerging from natural and social science writers of the time.

Women's contribution to outdoor learning as leaders and thinkers is considerable, as this volume identifies and celebrates. In many ways, these contributions embody much eco-feminist thought and praxis. Despite the apparent invisibility of eco-feminist theorizing since the 1990s, women's considerable contribution to outdoor learning and leadership has continued and even increased.

Eco-feminist writing attempts to understand the webs of connections which embed human and more-than-human relations, and to promote social equality and environmental sustainability, examining how social, environmental, and spiritual interrelate. Eco-feminist contribution to academic thought, which has largely but not exclusively been through women's writing, has most recently frequently been ignored. For me, eco-feminism identifies the importance of human and more-than-human interconnections and relations, and that the notion of social and environmental justice go hand in hand (Humberstone, 1998). Outdoor learning and leadership are central in enabling and empowering this union, as the chapters in this book highlight. However, social justice and environmental sustainability "are not always compatible objectives," as Dobson (2003, p. 83) remarks. There is an inherent tension between social justice perspectives, which are human centred, and deep green perspectives, which centre the more-than-human world. Eco-feminism speaks to these tensions philosophically and through praxis. Since the 1960s until the 1990s, eco-feminism influenced much thinking and action in relation to these significant *interconnections* between social and environmental oppressions and degradation. Eco-feminism has now regained its voices and is recognized as constituting significant bodies of knowledge that provide for analyses of "the connections among racism, sexism, classism, colonialism, speciesism, and the environment" (Gaard, 2011, p. 26).

This compilation uniquely draws together women's wisdoms. It celebrates and analyses women's contributions to outdoor learning and leadership. As such, the editors have cultivated a book which makes a valuable, unique, and major contribution to social and environmental awareness and justice.

Professor Sociology of Sport and Outdoor Education Barbara Humberstone
Buckinghamshire New University
High Wycombe, UK

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Acknowledgements

The first *International Handbook of Women in Outdoor Learning (IHWOL)* is a shared initiative. As editors, we are humbled by the support the chapter authors have shown. Our original title, *Nourishing Terrains*, describes the nurturing and collaborative process we experienced in this book assembling and how women support each other and the outdoor learning profession by engaging in compassionate and relational leadership. In telling their stories, they express common realities, as well as their individual ways of navigating their personal and professional lives.

When the idea for this book was conceived in 2014, little did we know what would grow from our initial conversation in a small cottage on the Hawkesbury Campus, Western Sydney University, Australia. This book, like many adventures, had a life of its own. The exploration of ideas expanded into 60+ chapters with more than 80 women contributing. It was a significant effort. To push rapidly to a conclusion was seductive; however, we realized that one step at a time—the same dedication that gets one across a portage or to the top of a mountain—was what would get this *IHWOL* to publication.

What you hold in your hands or read on the screen must be credited to our remarkable co-contributors. Sculpted by determination and chiselled with patience, this tome was manifested by courageous and talented individuals. They gave their valuable time against the competing demands of active lives, be it career, family, or adventure. As genuine and loyal colleagues, these women exhibited noteworthy resolve during the three-year writing process. The rhythms of life—the ebbs and flows—are all evidenced within these pages. Babies were born, influential outdoor women died, some authors married whilst others endured painful separations. Thank you for staying committed to the project, sharing our journey, and ensuring women's voices are heard.

Constantly in our minds is gratitude to the many other women unable to participate in this volume because of their constraints or ours, including unknown or unsung women whose contributions to outdoor learning environments have helped us all. We wish to thank these women, some of whom we may never know.

At Palgrave Macmillan, the staff and editors possess the vision to advance the outdoor learning field in immeasurable ways, including involving and embracing the many voices in this book. Thank you; we are grateful of your support.

We owe Pam Firth of *The Detail Devil* endless appreciation. As our copy editor, Pam's valuable insights, attention to detail, and professionalism shone through during the project. We are forever indebted.

We recognise the skill with which Bridget Jackson and Tiffany Wynn introduced the sections by creating narratives that creatively weave the threads of chapters and launch the reader into the essence of *IHWOL*.

Thank you to the many women and men who have been role models by ensuring that women are afforded an equal playing field in their practice. Together, all together, we are instruments of change.

On a personal note, Tonia is thankful to Greg Downey whose intellect helped craft initial ideas in the book proposal whilst being a sounding board. Her mother Jeanette Gray and grandmothers Jean Duff and Eunice Gray have shaped her matriarchal lineage and have informed Tonia's environmental advocacy and nature-based practices. All three were capable farm hands and avid gardeners, with an uncanny ability to transform barren patches of land into an abundance of life, colour, and beauty. Mrs Walsh, her Kindergarten to Year 2 teacher, allowed nature—the rainforests—to be Tonia's teacher during her formative years, and she now realises the potency of her lessons, which were a truly significant gift. Last, Rhona Miller, Carol Birrell, and, more recently, Lynne Thomas have nurtured—in their distinctive ways—Tonia's deeper connection and affiliation with Mother Earth. Collectively, these women have been extraordinary mentors.

Denise is indebted to the women in her family, her mother and her child, Lorna and Lauren, and her sisters, Yvonne and Holly Mitten, for their encouragement and different ways of helping her be a better woman. She has immense admiration for the Girl Scout camp counsellors from her youth who modelled that it is natural for women to live and travel outside. Her high school gym teacher, Carrie Russell, literally drove her to a college to apply and interview—starting her on an academic path that has kept her saturated in learning for many years since. During the Woodswomen years of 1977 through 1997, thousands of women—staff, guides, and participants—were

great teachers and comrades. Learning to be a parent educator from inspirational mentor, Jean Illsley Clarke, helped expand Denise's understanding about groups and leadership. Denise moved into motherhood and working in academia simultaneously, grateful to have Karen Warren and many others as colleagues as role models to write and play outdoors with.

Lastly, we wish to acknowledge the initial seed funding for this venture came from the generous support of the Centre for Educational Research (CER) at Western Sydney University in 2014. These crucial funds enabled Denise Mitten to be the visiting scholar at the *Precarious Times: New Imaginings for Sustainability* symposium. Invariably, our initial idea would still remain a "thought bubble" if it wasn't for the financial assistance by CER to make this dream become a reality.

With our unique histories, women's voices usher in diverse understandings of what it means to be humans entwined with the natural world. This essential book helps maintain a place in history for women who live, work, and play in the outdoors. Through publishing this volume, we hope that many more people may be touched by the spirit of adventure and the pleasure of travelling and working with women, and be inspired to contribute to compassion and inclusiveness in outdoor learning environments.

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Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Tonia Gray, PhD, Centre for Educational Research Western Sydney University, Australia, has been involved in wilderness studies and outdoor education for over 30 years. With a Master's in Community Health and PhD in Outdoor Education, her interdisciplinary research explores human-nature relationships and their impact on well-being and human development.

Denise Mitten, PhD, starting with the Girl Scouts (1960s) has combined the ethic of care with expert outdoor skills to help people learn sustainable community building skills. She blends expertise in ecology, counselling, and education. She designed an award-winning outdoor and leadership programme for women, Woodswomen, opening a door to the outdoors for many women.

Contributors

Sandy Allen-Craig, MEd St, is the National Coordinator for the Outdoor Leadership and Outdoor Education and is responsible for the curriculum development and programme delivery of Outdoor Leadership units across the multi campuses of the Australian Catholic University. She is passionate about sharing her love of the outdoors with her students, friends, and family.

Linda Allin, PhD, is a kayaker, mother, wife, and an associate professor at Northumbria University, UK. Her PhD explored "Women's career identities in outdoor education" and she was co-editor of the *Journal of Adventure Education and*

Outdoor Learning from 2007–2012. She is happiest outdoors on her bike or playing in white water.

Stefanie Argus, MA, received a Master of Arts in Adventure Education from Prescott College. Her love for the outdoors began at Girl Scout summer camp, and she has worked for the organization for over 12 years. She is dedicated to social justice and feminist leadership, and finds nourishment amidst mountains, woods, and lakes.

Mary Ellen Avery, MS, received her Master of Science in Recreation and Leisure studies from Texas State University. She has over ten years of experience working in education and the outdoor recreation industry. Her research interests include diversity in outdoor recreation, benefits of experiential and nature-based learning, sports education, gender, and social justice in education.

Karen Seierøe Barfod, PhD, Senior Lecturer at University College VIA, Department of Teacher Education, Denmark. Besides teaching, she coordinates the Research and Development Programme of Outdoor Education. She is a PhD fellow at University of Copenhagen, studying teacher's perceptions of *udeskole*. In 2015, she received the Danish Outdoor Teaching Award.

Susie Barr-Wilson, MS, Recreation, is passionate about girls' empowerment. Her graduate research on the influence of outdoor adventure on body image in girls is published in the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership* (2016). Former GirlVentures Programme Manager, she is a membership recruiter coordinator with the Girl Scouts.

Katherine Bates, PhD, MEd, DipEd, lectures in History and Geography Education with Western Sydney University and in Education K-10 with the University of Wollongong. Since 1984, her career has spanned across classroom teaching and literacy support K-10 and leadership roles with the New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education and Sydney Catholic Education.

Martha Bell, PhD, is an independent sociologist in Dunedin, New Zealand. She was at the picnic table at midnight in Estes Park, Colorado, in 1985. She met her co-authors through co-founding Women Outdoors NZ and researching feminist outdoor leadership. She is now researching all-women's adventure racing teams.

Carol Birrell, PhD, a researcher, artist, and writer, studies the meeting of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, post human in the Anthropocene and creativity in learning. Her work of more than 25 years' experience in classroom teaching, counselling, wilderness education, and personal development is informed through *ecopoieisis*, her long-term earth-based practice.

Genevieve Blades, MEd, a lecturer at the Department of Outdoor and Environmental Education, La Trobe University, Bendigo, Australia, her teaching, spanning over 30 years focuses on environmental values, outdoor learning, and cultural responses to Australian land. With a lifetime love of exploring places on foot, she is doing a PhD on walking.

Sara Boilen, PsyD, earned her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Denver where she researched augmenting hope and courage through all-female climbing programmes. Boilen has a private practice offering therapy, adventure, and psychological assessment. She leads teenage girls into the wilderness annually, growing confidence and engagement.

Joelle Breault-Hood, PhD candidate, is an outdoor educator with a passion for working with girls. Her research at Western Sydney University is on self-efficacy and body image. She continues to have her own adventures when she finds the time amidst the wonderFULLness of being a mum, a wife, an educator, and a researcher.

Heather Brown, MA, is a freelance leadership and personal development coach, and facilitator. Her background includes teaching at the project master's level, helping to develop the Institute for Outdoor Learning's professional accreditation scheme and facilitating outdoor management development workshops. She enjoys sailing and hillwalking, and is also a registered Shiatsu practitioner.

Abby Buckley, PhD candidate, a social ecologist, and team leader for Operation Flinders Foundation, treks with youth-at-risk in the outback of Australia. The sudden death of her son in a car crash transformed her world view. At Western Sydney University, her thesis examines the creative interplay of personal, social, and cultural changes in death, dying, and grief.

Fiona Cameron, MEd, BSW, BA, is a first-generation Australian woman of Scottish descent. With her degrees in Experiential Education, Fiona is passionate about social justice, education, adventure, the outdoors, cultural diversity, and travel. She lives and works in Cambodia at an NGO focusing on community sustainability.

Noël Cox Caniglia, PhD, is a long-standing graduate professor, Prescott College, Arizona. Recent scholarly interests embrace post-qualitative research methodologies/methods honouring new materialism/post-humanism. Her calling, working as a sustainable Arizona cattle rancher, has been her primary focus for over 35 years. Her research integrates place-based learning with ecologically sound agrarian practices.

Cathryn Carpenter, PhD, a part-time freelance academic seeking a creative sustainable lifestyle, enjoys adventures with family and friends. Using her education, arts, and public health degrees, she contributed to the Australian outdoor profession for 30+ years as a teacher, guide, researcher, and curriculum developer in secondary and tertiary institutions, and in strengthening international adventure therapy connections.

Cheryl Charles, PhD, is an innovator, author, and educator. She is the Co-founder, President, and CEO Emerita of the Children & Nature Network where she coordinates its international activities. She is also Research Scholar and founding Executive Director of the Nature Based Leadership Institute at Antioch University New England (AUNE).

Beth Christie, PhD, is Lecturer in Outdoor and Environmental Education at the University of Edinburgh. She is Programme Director for the MSc Learning for Sustainability and Associate Editor of the *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*. She loves to run, snowboard, and spend time outdoors.

Di Collins, MSc, has a broad experience, working with all ages as a primary school teacher, youth worker, and university lecturer. More recently, she has been an outdoor, youth, and community education consultant. She is now developing her love of the outdoors through photography, painting, and writing.

Marg Cosgriff, MSc, is Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of Waikato in New Zealand. She was involved in co-founding Women Outdoors NZ, and has taught outdoor education and leadership in school, tertiary, and outdoor programmes.

Sam Crosby, MEd, is an experienced and passionate nature educator, eco-artist, and trainer who works predominantly in amazing urban green spaces. She has spent countless hours covered in mud, grass, and insects, all in the name of engaging imaginations and developing in future generations an awakened connection to nature.

Chiara D'Amore, PhD, is an environmental scientist, educator, and activist. She founded and leads the Community Ecology Institute, which enhances community health by fostering connections between people and the natural world, and Columbia Families in Nature. She holds a PhD in Sustainability Education and MS in Environmental Science and Engineering.

Clare Dallat, MSc, PhD, is Head of Innovation at The Outdoor Education Group, Victoria, Australia, and a researcher within the Centre for Human Factors and Sociotechnical Systems at the University of The Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia. She has held field and executive positions in the UK, the USA, and Australia.

Sarah Dubreuil Karpa, MEd, BSW, RSW, is a social worker in Calgary, Canada. She has spent her career working with youth and women, focusing on education, domestic violence, addictions, and mental health. She maintains a social media presence encouraging outdoor engagement while focusing her academics on environmental and outdoor education.

Carroll Graham, EdD, worked in Australian tertiary education for two decades, following a career in engineering. She now consults in tertiary education leadership and management. She has held volunteer leadership roles for Girl Guides in Australia for over 20 years. She is an outdoors leader, providing outdoor activities for girls and trainings for leaders.

Kirsti Pedersen Gurholt, PhD/Master of Sport Sciences, is Professor at Norwegian School of Sport Sciences where she researches historical, cultural, and gender relations of *friluftsliv* and Physical Education. She teaches in the *Erasmus Mundus* Joint Master's programme *Transcultural European Outdoor Studies* and was chair of the *European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning*.

Marna Hauk, PhD, directs the Institute for Earth Regenerative Studies in Portland, Oregon, and teaches graduate courses at Prescott and Champlain in regenerative design, eco-feminism, leadership with imagination, and sustainability. A researcher with over 90 peer-reviewed presentations and publications, she co-edited *Community Climate Change Education: A Mosaic of Approaches*.

Kerryann Hayes is co-founder and independent publisher of Travel Play Live—Women's Adventure Lifestyle Magazine and movement. With a 30-year background in the fitness industry as a coach and "events experience" manager, she believes in the power of the outdoors and adventure to create positive change, individually, locally and globally, and works to raise the profile of women in the Australian adventure landscape.

Amy Heague is the chief editor and founder of Travel Play Live—Women's Adventure Lifestyle Magazine and movement. Heague is passionate about empowering women to discover and "bring to the table" their unique gifts and skills through the power of adventure. With over 20 years' experience in the arts and media arena, Heague is a creative, dynamic and outside-the-box thinker and public speaker with an uncanny knack for thinking ahead of the curve, cutting through the noise and telling stories.

Barbara Humberstone, PhD, is Professor of Sociology of Sport and Outdoor Education and editor of *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning* (JAEOL). Her research interests include well-being, the senses, and outdoor pedagogies; nature-based activity and ageing well; and social and environmental action/justice. She is a keen windsurfer, walker, swimmer, and yogini.

Bridget Jackson is a writer passionate about the environment and immersive wilderness adventures; raised on the edge of England's Lake District, she carries a deep-rooted connection to the land. With a 3-D Design degree and postgraduate qualifications from SOAS, University of London, she now calls Australia's Blue Mountains home.

Linda Jolly, PhD, is a teacher of biology (University of California, Santa Cruz) and gardening who has worked with pupils of all age groups in both classroom and outdoor education in over 30 years. She works at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences as Assistant Professor in Teacher Education.

Debra J. Jordan, ReD, is Professor in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at East Carolina University, North Carolina. Starting as a participant, serving as an expedition leader, and then studying leadership in the outdoors, she has been involved in outdoor recreation for over 30 years.

Jackie Kiewa, PhD, lectured in Outdoor Education after working with adolescents experiencing difficulties with mainstream education. Also president of the Rock Climbing Instructors Association of Queensland and chair of the Australian Outdoor Education Association, she juggled these responsibilities with dedication to an adventurous outdoor lifestyle and a family of three children.

Maureen Legge, PhD, MEd, DipEd, DipPE, is Senior Lecturer in Physical Education in Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her research interests are practitioner-led with core themes about culture and identity with the indigenous Māori culture, socially critical pedagogy, and experiential facilitation. Her research encompasses narrative inquiry and autoethnography.

Clarice Lisle, MA, is a social ecologist and teacher at Ballarat Grammar with a special interest in bridging the nature culture divide within our schools and surrounding communities through place-based education. She co-ordinates a unique experiential programme for Year 4 students at the Higgs Centre on the Mount Rowan School Farm.

Amanda Lloyd, PhD, whose career focuses on outdoor learning for 5–12-year-old children holds a Bachelor of Education (Primary), Graduate Certificate of Outdoor Education, Master's of Environment, and a PhD centred on place-based outdoor learning. She is an outdoor learning consultant and nature educator in Australia.

TA Loeffler, PhD, is an outdoor educator at Memorial University, Canada. Her research interests include women's career development, phenomenology of outdoor experiences, and expeditionary living through the lifespan. Her books include *More* *than A Mountain: One Woman's Everest*, *Theory and Practice of Experiential Education*, and *Get-Outside Guide to Winter Activities*.

Erin Lotz, MA, is a PhD candidate, mother, rock climber, river runner. As a faculty member in Prescott College's Adventure Education Department, she offers both field-based and theory courses to undergraduate and graduate students. She has become a resource on feminine leadership and learning styles, and teaching inclusively to all genders.

Alison Lugg, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer at RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. She has extensive experience as a lecturer, teacher, and curriculum developer in tertiary and secondary education. Her PhD thesis integrated a range of research interests in outdoor education, sustainability education, interdisciplinary curriculum, and initial teacher education.

Ruth Lusty, EdD, worked as a career primary schoolteacher. With 15 years as an assistant principal, she has wide teaching and leadership experience. She now works as an academic in teacher education at Western Sydney University, Australia. Personally, she has been a volunteer Girl Guide leader, holding various leadership roles, for over 40 years.

Pip Lynch, PhD, MEd, researched female experiences outdoors in her graduate studies. She was a founding member of Women Outdoors NZ and co-edited *Wilderness Women* (1989). Her academic work centres on recreational experience and learning outdoors. She is a trustee of Whenua Iti Outdoors and an independent researcher-educator in New Zealand.

Sarah Maney, master's candidate, studies adventure education at Prescott College and has a B.S. in Neuroscience from UMass Amherst. She is the Associate Director of a wilderness programme for girls and gender non-binary teens, does recruiting for an adventure camp, and helps host monthly "Social Justice in Outdoor Education" gatherings.

Sarah Martin, MA, adventure education at Prescott College, researched gender representation in outdoor texts and journals.

Priscilla McKenney, MA, has worked for Girl Scouts of Northern California. Starting with Outward Bound in the 1980s, she has worked with outdoor programmes as director, instructor, team leader, and trainer. She has provided leadership in the girls' outdoor adventure programme niche. She serves as adjunct faculty for the graduate programme at Prescott College.

Rhona Miller, BEd, at the age of 12 attended her first National Fitness Camp in 1947 where she realised it was "legal" for girls to excel in outdoor learning and adventure pursuits. She implemented nature-based teachings into her groundbreaking work and introduced creative writing, relaxation, meditation, and mindfulness programmes as part of school children's personal development.

Lærke Mygind, MS, PhD candidate, is a research assistant at Steno Health Promotion Research, Steno Diabetes Center, Denmark. Her research interests include learning in informal settings and mechanisms of spatial-behavioural dynamics with a particular emphasis on natural environments and mental well-being. Her MA in Sociology is from University of Copenhagen.

Jackie Neill, BA, BTeach, a GradDip in Early Childhood Education, has completed 16 years of a double degree in being a mum. This outdoor instructor turned school teacher is passionate about play, especially nature-based and loose parts play.

Val Nicholls, PhD, as an adventure therapy practitioner, educator, and workshop facilitator, is intrigued by the art and science of adventure therapy practice, challenged by the integration of theory with action and inspired to provoke broader and deeper understandings of all that nature-based adventure therapy is and might be.

Christine Lynn Norton, PhD in Social Work from Loyola University Chicago, an MA in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago, and an MS in Experiential Education from Minnesota State University-Mankato, is an associate professor at Texas State University, and a research scientist with the Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Center.

Janice Oakley, PhD, teaches social justice courses in the Faculty of Education and department of Women's Studies at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario. Her research and teaching interests include social justice pedagogies, feminist and ecofeminist theory, and humane and environmental education.

Liz Peredun received her BA in English and her Bachelor of Recreation and Leisure Studies (B.R.L.S) in Outdoor Recreation. She is passionate about intertwining narrative into outdoor experiences and will continue her research interests with a Master's degree. She works backpacking and river courses for NOLS and with various schools as an outdoor instructor.

Stephanie Potter, HBOR, BA, is a graduate of Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism, and Geography and the Environment, with a minor in Women Studies from Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario. With attention to critical feminist philosophy, her interests include the management of parks and protected areas and the engagement of minority populations in outdoor environments.

Mary Preece, BEd (Arts & Crafts), is an Australian visual arts educator. In 2008, she relocated to the south coast of NSW to be Education Manager at Bundanon Trust, combining her love of nature, the outdoors, and environment with the arts. She shares her artistic practice on Instagram @reedsandvines.

Anita Pryor, PhD, Grad Dip (family therapy), Hons (outdoor education) is Director of Adventure Works Australia. Instrumental in establishing a statewide bush adventure therapy service for young people experiencing mental ill-health, she delivers programmes, trains and supervises practitioners, and evaluates innovative nature-based interventions from her heart-home in Tasmania, Australia.

Tanya Rao, MS, is passionate about bringing life-changing outdoor experiences to people from diverse backgrounds. She works as a regional specialist for Mountain Travel Sobek, a pioneer in adventure travel around the world. Her graduate research focus centred on bringing outdoor adventure education to adolescent girls and women of colour.

Kathryn Riley, MAEd, PhD candidate, is a physical education, and outdoor and environmental studies teacher. She studies at Deakin University, Australia. To (re) story human-nature relationships, she is interested in new materialism, and the role of multisensory and embodied learning in sustainability education.

Shelly Risinger, MS, is a passionate outdoors woman, entrepreneur, and home-school mother of two adventurous boys. She holds an MS in Outdoor Recreation from the University of Utah. A NOLS wilderness educators' course graduate, she guided for Woodswomen, Inc. She can be found section hiking the Appalachian Trail with her sons.

Nina S. Roberts, PhD, Professor at the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism at San Francisco State University, also directs the Institute for Civic and Community Engagement. Her research has been vital to land managers and community partners providing resources needed to respond more effectively to changing demographics and social trends.

Ruthie Rohde, MA, is a former outdoor leader, a writer, teacher, and social worker. She is the founder of *Writers Reach* providing writing workshops for personal and social change.

Sidsel Sandberg, BA, is a farmer and upper schoolteacher with a BA in social anthropology from University of Oslo, Norway. Working as a teacher and farmer most of her life, she has taught students from grades 8 to 10 on her farm since 1997.

Vinathe Sharma-Brymer, PhD, in Gender and Education, MA in Biopsychology, applies her academic studies and work-life experience to her research on human health and well-being. She has particular interest in exploring human agency and behaviour change. She also works in Community Empowerment field and Forest Schools practice.

Christy Smith received a BS in Music Therapy from Indiana Purdue University Fort Wayne. Now retired, she plans to continue pursuing her long-time passions of bicycling, camping, backpacking, and international trekking. Her most recent adventure was a 33-day trek in the Dolpo and Mustang regions of Nepal.

Teresa Socha, PhD, is Chair of Undergraduate Studies in the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario. As a health and physical education teacher educator, her research and teaching interests include fat studies, feminist and sociocultural theory, and anti-oppressive education.

Jo Straker, PhD, MEd, for 40 years was an outdoor educator in Britain, Canada, Australia, Antarctica, and Aotearoa (New Zealand). Inspired by how outdoor experiences contribute to well-being and engaged learning, her research focuses on the potential of learning outdoors. Recently retired from teaching (Ara Institute of Canterbury), she remains an avid climber and cyclist.

Kaz Stuart, PhD, is principal lecturer at the University of Cumbria. She is passionate about critical pedagogy, empowerment, agency, and social justice. Methodologically, she is a person-centred, asset-based researcher using creative data collection tools. Her professional background includes primary, secondary, and higher education teaching, youth work, social care, outdoor education, and research.

Takano Takako, PhD, is Professor at Waseda University, Japan, and Founder and Chair of ECOPLUS, a charity that provides sustainability education to people across the world. She serves for committees of many organisations linked to environmental policies, and outdoor and environmental education.

Nicole Taylor, PhD, Sessional Lecturer in Health and Physical Education (HPE), and Outdoor Education (OE) at the University of Sydney and Western Sydney University, draws on post-structural and new-materialist theories to critically explore the place of "environmental health" within HPE. Her areas of interest include health education, as it intersects with environmental, cultural, outdoor, and embodied learning contexts.

Lynne Hoya Thomas, BEd, is an Aboriginal woman from the Biripi (white pointer shark) and Umbarra (black duck) Yuin Nation. As an Aboriginal Education Officer, she has advanced the school curriculum by following in her parents' footsteps. She guides tours to the sacred mountain, Gulaga (Mother Mountain), and shares her culture as a female Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Officer, Discovery Ranger, and Threatened Species Officer.

Anita R. Tucker, PhD, LICSW, is Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of New Hampshire where she is the Associate Director of the Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Center and co-coordinates UNH's dual Master's Programme in Social Work and Outdoor Education preparing students for careers in adventure therapy.

Kumara Ward, PhD, is Director of Academic Program: Early Childhood Education, Western Sydney University and a nature pedagogue. An educator for 30 years, her research focuses on *eco*nnection, the symbiosis between the arts and sustainability, and the ways they promote interaction, multifaceted ways of knowing our complex world, and post-humanist well-being.

Karen Warren, PhD, teaches courses in experiential education, outdoor leadership, wilderness studies, and social justice at Hampshire College. She researches, writes, and speaks on social justice in outdoor experiential education. Her books include *Women's Voices in Experiential Education*, *The Theory of Experiential Education*, and *Theory and Practice of Experiential Education*.

Anja Whittington, EdD, at Radford University, teaches wilderness medicine, adventure activities, and general skills in recreation and tourism. During summers, she teaches a month-long wilderness expedition class in outdoor leadership. Her passion is promoting girls and women in the outdoors and non-traditional settings. Her research and service focus on providing opportunities for girls/women.

Jennifer Wigglesworth, PhD candidate, is working in the Socio-Cultural Studies of Sport, Health, and the Body degree programme at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Her research explores women's rock climbing using feminist perspectives on the body, and she locates her work in the outdoor education and sociology of sport fields of literature.

Tiffany Wynn, MA, LPCC, is a past Executive Director of the Santa Fe Mountain Center. Her recent work has focused on integrating trauma informed care, neurobiology, adventure practices, and intersectionality. She is working on her PhD in Counsellor Education and Supervision, focusing her dissertation in the intersection of ethnicity and gender with treatment outcomes.

Robyn Zink, PhD, has focused her research on how young people make sense of their outdoor experiences, with a particular interest in how gender intersects with this. She works for Enviroschools, which aims to foster a generation of people who instinctively think and act sustainably.

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Part I

Setting the Scene

Bridget Jackson

It is not a new phenomenon that when looking back in written history, whether at significant events or major steps in our understanding of the world, there remains, even today, a distinct lack of visible feminine influence. All too often, the absence of known female involvement or achievement is apparent. The world of outdoor education is not immune, and in many ways perhaps it's even more prevalent here; yet when we lift the lid, we find many truly dedicated, oft-unrecognized women with profound accomplishments, contributing vast amounts to this crucial learning space.

An insightful story, relayed by Dr Denise Mitten at a Western Sydney University symposium, only served to highlight this issue when she recounted the story of the founder of Outward Bound, revealing his almost unknown co-founder of his first school and the concept of expeditionary learning to be a woman!

Leaving the audience aghast and raising many questions, this tale provided the catalyst for a much deeper exploration of inclusivity, genderwashing, and women's roles in the outdoors. And this story was not unique. There are myriad instances of similar situations where women's achievements and their voices have been left unheard.

"Setting the Scene," the first part of the *International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning*, explores the historical accounts of the evolution of the outdoors as an educational platform in parallel with the foundational principles and conceptual framework so essential to understanding the book's rationale.

B. Jackson
Blackheath, NSW, Australia

Women's ways of being in the outdoors and contributions to this space as educators are examined through the lens of gendered spaces and leadership. From the embodiment of the outdoors as a unique vehicle for education, we hear of the challenges of being female in a male-dominated environment, the necessity and value of incorporating a more feminine and reflective influence into programmes, and shifting the perception of women's capabilities.

This part builds extensively on experience in the field that spans the last five decades and provides an expansive view of the history and trends within the field. These inspirational and pioneering women lay the foundation for challenging the status quo and helping to increase recognition of women as significant players in the outdoor learning environment.

1

Nourishing Terrains: Women's Contributions to Outdoor Learning Environments

Tonia Gray and Denise Mitten

Introduction: Be Bold for Change

Be bold. Be brave.
Be adventurous.
Be inquisitive. Ask questions. Be passionate.
Stand up. Speak up.
Be a trailblazer and a vanguard.
Be a truth teller who says the unsayable.
Be courageous. Be compassionate.
Be a leader. Be a lioness.
Be a naturally untamed woman
Facilitating change in outdoor learning environments.
—By authors

T. Gray (✉)
Centre for Educational Research, Western Sydney University,
Penrith, NSW, Australia

D. Mitten
Adventure Education & Sustainability Education, Prescott College,
Prescott, AZ, USA

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The genesis of the *Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning* (*PIHWOL*) resembles a rhizomatic process spanning over three years. In June 2014, on a clear and crisp winter's day, a group of Australian women gathered in a small cottage on the Hawkesbury Campus, Western Sydney University (WSU), Australia. The previous day, Denise Mitten had delivered an inspirational keynote address at the Centre for Educational Research symposium entitled *Precarious Times: New Imaginings for Sustainability* (see Malone, Truong, & Gray, 2017; Mitten, 2017).

As a highly esteemed feminist scholar and practitioner, Denise's presentation provided a catalyst for us to explore the covert nature of the genderwashing of women in outdoor learning environments (OLEs). Unfortunately, many powerful and significant women in history are not well known or celebrated, and this trend is evidenced in the outdoors. Denise recounted a fundamental truth about Kurt Hahn—one that seems obvious in retrospect but was revolutionary at the time. The group was left bewildered, astonished, and speechless. In this instance, the history (or herstory) books for outdoor education (OE) were rewritten. Kurt Hahn, noted by many as the founder of the Outward Bound movement, surprisingly had a female co-founder for his first school, Schule Schloss Salem (Salem Castle School), where the concept of using expeditions for learning began (Mitten, 2011a). According to Hahn's personal papers found by Nick Veevers and Pete Allison (2011), Marina Ewald co-founded the Schule Schloss Salem in 1920. Yet, her contributions have been erased by our profession's "gender blinkers." More importantly, her notoriety in the field of outdoor learning has been met with ambivalence and disaffection. This begs the questions: Were the blind spots societally imposed, or were they culturally constructed? Have we been experiencing unconscious bias and become immune to the chronic effect? The magnitude of this ambiguous situation was further enhanced in a recent conference presentation by Gray, Mitten, Loeffler, Allen-Craig, and Carpenter (2016):

> In 1904, at the age of 18, Hahn suffered from sunstroke that left him with a recurring disability for the remainder of his life. He was frail in the heat and underwent major operations to relieve fluid in his head…. Hahn never completed a major expedition and had to regulate for the remainder of his life, how much time he spent outside and under what conditions.

We were left pondering: If Hahn were a woman, *theorizing* about the outdoor movement and never truly *experiencing* an extended expedition, would "s/he" be firmly entrenched in the history books? And more significantly, why has the outdoor industry never heard of nor promoted Marina Ewald? Why were the acumen, power, and authority bestowed on (white) men and not women? How can we accelerate the gender parity debate? Has women's complicit inertia allowed this to happen, without raising our red flag? Clearly, Denise's keynote stimulated more questions than answers. The hegemonic nature surrounding male domination or supremacy in outdoor learning was becoming increasingly apparent. Indeed, contemporary society is punctuated with genderwashing and unconscious bias that is pernicious, pervasive, and debilitating (Smith, 2016; Tickle, 2017; Ziller, 2016).

Throughout this book, we combine an intersectional focus on the various—and sometimes colliding—elements of gender bias and inequalities in outdoor learning. We conclude by presenting reflections on the continuing need for a critical shift towards gender equality and feminism within (and beyond) the white male academy. Unashamedly, the through line for the handbook takes an explicitly feminist approach and orientation. From an international perspective, we combine renewed and revitalized feminist teachings and research methods with emerging theoretical concepts. This handbook is representative of a landmark project through which we harvested papers from women globally, who live, work, and participate in OLEs.

Another Parallel Story

Interestingly, whilst gathering the mounting evidence of gender invisibility, another backstory co-existed. Seeds of unrest had been sown seven months earlier following a gender-biased presentation at the Sixth International Outdoor Education and Recreation Conference (IOERC) in 2013. The gender-erasing incident galvanized a group of women who kept our gender inequity conversation alive from November until June 2014 (see Gray, 2016; Gray, Allen-Craig, & Carpenter, 2016). Equipped with our vision of an outdoor women's "think tank" occurring at the Hawkesbury cottage, our brave colleagues—Sandy Allen-Craig, Carol Birrell, Gen Blades, Amanda Lloyd, Alison Lugg, Terri-Anne Philpott, Kathryn Riley, and Heidi Smith—joined Denise and Tonia to ruminate and deliberate over their unease in the profession.

We chatted informally about unconscious bias, covert discrimination, and our overt powerlessness to elicit meaningful and enduring change. Our oft-voiceless stance in OLEs has been manifested in myriad ways, for example, women's hesitancy to enter into online debates such as OUTRES (see www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=outres), where only a handful of brave female souls ventured into this male-dominated terrain. Instead, our shared stories unveiled our preference to be silent lurkers within the "academic cyberspace," watching discretely from the "online sidelines." Many confirmed their unwillingness to navigate this online space for fear of derision or retribution. Equally, we were disturbed by our low publication rates (Martin, 2013; Martin et al., 2018), the lack of keynote invitations (Gray, Allen-Craig, & Carpenter, 2017), and our continued reluctance to self-promote (Gray, 2016, 2018).

Double Jeopardy

An omnipresent concern for women is the conundrum of feminist backlash. At times, when women speak up or stand our truth, we're labelled as "feminazis," especially when we do not acquiesce (Rowe-Finkbeiner, 2004). Many women who project an authoritative, assertive, or masculine energy pay deeply for their stance by being branded as ball busters, dykes, or even worse (DuRoff, 2017; Vint, 2007). Calling women who engage in OLEs lesbian or dyke has been a way to discourage women from being outdoors (McClintock, 1996). Called lesbian baiting, it is a way to divide women and scare women into working hard to retain a feminine posture, if they are outdoors at all. A remedy to lesbian bating is for women to stand in solidarity with all other women no matter what their affectional, sexual, or gender preferences or presentations are.

Alternatively, when we allow gender inequities to "go unabated," our actions are misconstrued as being hypocritical or dismissive of the woman's voice. Seemingly, a double-edged sword and a no-win situation prevail within the profession. Indeed, the solution is vexed, convoluted, and ambiguous. However, the words of Ringrose (2007) struck a chord, stating, "The new contradictory work of 'doing' successful femininity … requires balancing traditional feminine and masculine qualities" (p. 471). This raises questions: How do we successfully navigate the gender divide? Who gets to decide how this is done? Will women be critiqued on their balancing of qualities whilst men continue to be critiqued on their use of masculine qualities?

An Epiphany: Nourishing Conversations

Interwoven throughout our musings was the dire need for a new book addressing these hidden and complex hegemonic issues. Twenty years after Karen Warren's (1996) book *Women's Voices in Experiential Education,* it emerged to the women in conversation at the WSU cottage that outdoor women were going backwards in terms of metrics at keynotes, publications, and academic standing. Even though significant inroads were reported in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s towards gender equality or at least talking about women in OLEs (see Bell, 1996, 1997; Henderson, 1996; Loeffler, 1997; Mitten, 1985, 1992, 1996; Warren, 1996, 1998), there seems to have been limited or inconsequential impact.

As the vision for the book began to emerge, our aim and scope became far reaching. In essence, we wanted to share a collection of papers on theoretical approaches that highlight the voices of women and celebrate women's accomplishments from around the world.

Outdoor women have persistence, passion, and determination. We are wise, we are resilient, and when backed into a corner, our vulnerability can be one of our strengths. We have irrepressible, heart-on-our-sleeve toughness and determination. This book represents both an amalgam and a manifestation of these qualities.

Our Next Challenge: Convincing Women Writers for the Handbook

With this in mind, we lobbied a substantive list of potential outdoor women representing authors from across the globe. In our usual (feminine) style, this process was a slow burn, taking 15 months before the editors "perfected" their pitch to Palgrave Macmillan. The fear of it being rejected as a frivolous proposal is something that we in academia have (too often) grown accustomed to. At the outset, we envisaged a small, 80,000 words or 300-page monograph similar in size and stature to Warren's (1996) groundbreaking publication. Palgrave foresaw the greater need for this piece and wrote back with a request for an international handbook consisting of close to 300,000 words.

The immediate provocation for this handbook was the process of soliciting contributors. Getting enough women and a diverse group of women to agree to write chapters, and do so within the time parameters, proved to be challenging. Responses were varied; some women were jubilant and eager, whilst others saw it as a hurdle—in fact, a major hurdle. Some women who had achieved extraordinary accolades in their careers—true leaders in every sense of the word—wavered at our request. A common theme was their modesty and self-critical viewpoints. Repeatedly, we had to

> cajole and coerce women who had extensive accomplishments and demonstrated eloquence speaking to a variety of audiences, to consider contributing. They insisted that they had nothing to say or tried to pass the spotlight to someone else…. a pervasive pattern that contributes to our collective low visibility. (Gray, 2016, p. 26)

There are a number of women's voices not here. In the US, that includes Rita Yerkes, Wilma Miranda, Karla Henderson, and Deb Bialeschki—authors who began publishing in the 1980s and made important early contributions. Just like Marina Ewald, there are women we don't yet know and whom we may never know about, who have made contributions to OLEs. As a field, OE is predominantly white, and the authors in this volume largely represent that demographic. More voices of women of colour would strengthen this work and the field that uses OLEs.

Our Optimistic Mission

The intention of this book is to serve as a starting point for critical analysis and discourse about the status of women in OLEs. Many choose to participate actively in outdoor careers, believing the profession to be a level-playing field and that it offers alternatives to traditional sporting activities. Women gravitate to the industry on the strength of their enthusiasm for facilitating experiential learning in natural environments and being unperturbed about dirt, sweat, and the physicality of our challenges. Women begin optimistic for their careers, assuming the field is inclusive, rewarding excellence regardless of age, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, (dis)ability, or ethnicity. In the past two decades, since Warren's (1996) landmark book, however, it can be argued that we have experienced heightened levels of bias or career regression.

There is no shortage of attracting good women to the profession at the junior level, but their pipeline impact becomes diluted or invisible as their careers progress (or regress, in this case). In part, it may be that "women's prodigious drive and enlarged presence at the junior level have not sufficiently translated into highly visible senior positions" (Gray, 2016, p. 26). Alternatively, the bottleneck could be attributed women's exposure to implicit prejudice, such as the lack of notoriety, and kudos when we apply the Bechdel test to the OE field (see Gray, Chap. 3). One practical method of applying the Bechdel test to the OE profession is to review the reference lists in academic papers to see whether the gender ratio is skewed to the white, privileged, and middle-class male academy.

This gives rise to the questions: How did the phenomenon of gender erasing go unnoticed in our profession? Were we (as women) blinded by the pioneering vanguard leaders such as Germaine Greer (1971), bell hooks (2000), and Gloria Steinem (2014), for example, thereby whimsically hoping that society would self-correct the gender asymmetry? Was our illusion simply an altruistic notion? Were we living in a fantasy world, and did our complicit inertia allow the problem to exacerbate? Whatever the reason for the impasse, our experiences as women in OLEs suggest many have felt unnoticed, marginalized, and undervalued (Mitten, Gray, Allen-Craig, Loeffler, & Carpenter, 2018).

In response to our perceived gender invisibility, *PIHWOL* celebrates the richness of knowledge, wisdom, and practices of women practitioners. Women scholars and practitioners from numerous fields, such as experiential OE, adventure education, adventure/Bush Adventure Therapy (BAT)/wilderness therapy, and gender studies, explore the implications of their research and practice using poignant examples within their own disciplines.

Our insights emerge from similar life experiences as women and outdoor leaders from the 1960s and into the twenty-first century. The alignment of our experiences helps to shape the female narratives within each chapter and provides the through line for this book. OE as a discipline focuses disproportionately on male theorists and exalts or valorizes the insights of men. Frequently, when we are placed in a room full of alpha males, for whatever reason, we don a magical cloak of invisibility. Within this ubiquitous intersection, women find inequities abound amongst the acknowledgements apportioned to our contributions to the field. Albeit, if these injustices are allowed to persist, the field will continue to validate and perpetuate our non-existence and diminished value.

Some successful women have benefited from mentors of both sexes. However, the entrenched problem of gender disparity, especially in terms of the asymmetry in recognition and leadership, compels women to name this issue that has plagued the field: We have not had a thorough feminist self-examination. Perhaps our own blind spots have exacerbated the problem. For instance, the successes we achieved in the field during the 1990s may have lulled us into a false sense of complacency, becoming smug and not actively pushing for the additional changes necessary to truly achieve parity.

Nonetheless, social inequalities still thrive in OLEs, and our task is to elucidate the contributions of women as well as the work that needs to be done to make these spaces inclusive. What has become blatantly clear is the need to closely examine this gridlock with an open mind to make a difference. Perhaps as a field there needs to be more reflective listening and watching? If so, what do we see? The new paradigm requires a shift in consciousness by both men and women alike.

Within (and Beyond) the White Male Academy

A cross-examination of the gender disparity, both in the field and in the academy, unveils some discouraging metrics. Recently, Mitten (2011b) commenced this conversation when she probed the experiential education landscape for gender bias through a review of the *Sourcebook of Experiential Education*. In this sourcebook, 36 people (8 women and 28 men) were named and described as “key thinkers” who helped shape the philosophy and practice of experiential education. However, the women:men ratio rings alarm bells in terms of gender asymmetry.

Gray et al. (2016) followed in Denise Mitten’s earlier footsteps and cross-examined the unconscious gender bias in terms of female representation as keynotes at state and national OE conferences in Australia. To their dismay, only 4% of keynotes were OE women at national conferences. More alarmingly, when women do feature as keynotes, unlike male keynotes, they are much more likely to be sourced from beyond the outdoor learning profession, such as generic fields of psychology or sociology. In the same vein, Gray et al. (2016) cast a feminist microscope on the subtle elements of gender discrimination and call for

> a shift in what we see and who we see, or how we interpret people and actions. Just as when we enter natural environments and remain quiet, we see things we did not see before; we likewise can see an intellectual field differently when we pay attention to figures outside the narrow canon.

To this end, Mitten (2011b) concluded, “Perhaps it is time to discard the parental metaphor and understand how broad-based our experiential education philosophy is and how diverse and widespread the methods are for translating that philosophy to praxis” (p. 81). Mitten suggested an ecological metaphor where a number of folks from many different niches contribute to the development of a field, rather than a genealogy, one that focuses on the “father” of a field. Notwithstanding these oversights, re-storying women’s future prominence from the margins to mainstream offers a critical shift of gender and feminisms within (and beyond) the white male academy. This space may help ignite our capacity to include more works of women and other underrepresented groups in our scholarly discussions.

The *PIHWOL* pushes to break through the barriers that are created by men and women’s reluctance to speak up and explicitly challenge the biases that prevent fuller participation. We seek to create discussions not centred on male theorists but that, rather, foreground women’s distinctive contributions and put them into conversation with each other. The predominant reason we have chosen to embark on this journey is to create deeper awareness and understand the environment in which we, as women, conduct research and practise our profession. For too long, we have been sidelined, disregarded, banished, or hidden (Warren, 2016; Wright & Gray, 2013). Albeit, the time is now ripe and we are beginning to create our own channels for sharing our insights and ideas.

Unquestionably, we need to challenge the status quo of women in the OE field, and we provide a pathway for transformational change in terms of gender equality. Through systematic change in the profession, we can ensure a brighter future for the women who will follow in our footsteps and a better environment for all our students, including young men. *PIHWOL* balances the needs of different audiences, from upper-level undergraduates and well-educated non-specialist readers to academics using interdisciplinary approaches in their research. These accessible foundational chapters establish the groundwork for readers to grasp the more in-depth examples presented later.

In all six parts, the authors bring together a narrative with rigorous intellectual and personal arguments, presenting well-written, persuasive examples. In particular, the case studies offer compelling stories that integrate attention to gender inequities and social norms in practical contexts.

Part I: *Setting the Scene* provides historical accounts and lays out some of the foundational principles and conceptual framework, which are essential to understanding the rationale for the book. Women's way of being in the outdoors and historical contributions are examined through the lens of gendered spaces and leadership. This part builds extensively on broad reading and experience in the field and provides an expansive view of the state of play within the discipline.

Part II: *Contested Spaces: Examining Gender Disparity* unravels how gender equity is not just a women's issue; it is a societal issue that requires attention from both men and women. Outdoor women have a prodigious capacity for undertaking exemplary work and have been resilient, steadfast, and resourceful in the face of adversity and setbacks. Countless women have continued to progress forwards with an undefeatable spirit despite all that is thrown at them, and this part is devoted to some of our warrior women who have helped shape these contested spaces.

Part III: The chapters on *Motherhood and Outdoor Learning Environments: Chaos and Complexity* raise critical questions about what aspects of our personal life are sacrificed and which of them are enhanced when women leave behind traditional roles and expectations to pursue careers in the outdoors. Many of these women—whether single, partnered, or married—encounter difficulties when traversing the tumultuous terrain of raising a family coupled with extended periods in the field (Allen-Craig & Hartley, 2012). The chapters in this part explore the ways in which the past catches up with them as they reflect upon the losses and gains of longevity in the field.

Motherhood has an impact not only on the outdoor mothers but also on their children. The compelling array of narratives in this part offer a detailed exploration of the intersectionality of career and family. Competing demands for women mean that some have felt they have had to make the difficult decision to choose between an outdoor career and family life. Several women may identify with the resentment some children feel when they have an "absent mum" or when they have to tag along to the fieldwork site, whilst other women may identify with children who used their time with mum outdoors to go there. Unlike many other careers, time away from the family for extended periods is an integral component of outdoor expeditions. Edwards and Gray (1998) articulated how it is harder to enter back into the family fold when you feel elements of burnout and depletion following a lengthy camp.

Part IV: *Identity and Transformation Through Outdoor Learning,* which explores *our* heartfelt reaction towards the growth and the transformation of the women, resonates on many levels. With generational differences and similarities, women write from a place of connection and relationship with the environment and themselves and others. In turn, this has ramifications for body image, self-concept, and identity as well as transformative life experiences.

Part V: The chapters in the *Case Studies* part consist of examples that demonstrate women's approaches to OLEs, some of which are unique and some are examples of excellent common practices. Drawing on past experiences as well as current practices, this part sheds substantial new light upon our modus operandi. The proof of any new perspective is that it tackles "wicked problems": questions that are not easily answered with older ways of thinking. These case studies present compelling, evidence-based arguments for why new, distinctly gender-informed approaches can contribute to more effective and more inclusive OLEs.

Part VI: *Towards an Inclusive Future* provides chapters that highlight the contributions of the past and detail the necessary steps to achieve inclusive environments. Leaders in this field provide accounts of developments in theory and research for innovations that make our inclusive vision a reality. These chapters are crucial for understanding how we seek to translate theories and principles into practice and work with the real-life challenges practitioners face when seeking to create inclusive environments for learning and growing outdoors.

Standing as a United Voice as Vanguards of Change

As educators, we are mindful that *behaviour* is underpinned by *motivation* (Gray, Allen-Craig, & Carpenter, 2017). This next phase in our gender trajectory represents a dual responsibility, men and women alike, to be enthused and inspired as vanguards of change. A cultural shift is part of the atonement process. Unquestionably, this starts at the leadership level in academic circles and with practitioners. Leadership sets organizational tones and direction, including who is hired and whose voices are heard. At the same time, women and men joining organizations need to engage in equality and change. Together we can enact positive change for the betterment of the OE profession.

We are searching for a profession that honours participants regardless of race, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, culture, age, socioeconomic status, religion and, as importantly, gender. Speaking up, unashamedly naming and addressing the inequities of asymmetrical gender dynamics, is part of our ongoing conversation as a solution for 2017 and beyond. In the words of Christine Norton (cited by Chambers, 2015), "Voice is both a privilege and a responsibility … silence is simply not an option."

Whilst united in bringing voices forwards, this should not be mistaken for having one voice or one story. Women do not think alike, as evidenced when we requested pictures and dialogue about the visual image for the cover of *PIHWOL*. As we had hoped, women looked critically at the proposed pictures. The debates and arguments, pros and cons, helped increase understanding across continents and helped all to know that dialogue is a continuous and necessary process. Our final picture can be critiqued in many ways, and we applaud the continuing conversation.

Serendipitously, as our book was in process the theme for the 2017 International Women's Day March was "Be bold for change" (#BeBoldForChange). There has never been a more fitting or appropriate tagline to amplify the outdoor woman's voice. Changing the conversation from its asymmetrical gender bias, whether conscious or unconscious, needs to be woven into the fabric of the outdoor profession.

Concluding Comments

This is not just a handbook for those with a thirst for an adventurous or rugged life. The book presents myriad experiences, observations, reflections, and acumen of women's involvement with outdoor learning, providing insight and inspiration for all by encouraging greater inclusivity for women in this space. *PIHWOL* provides a comprehensive space for a progressively diverse and complex area of interdisciplinary research: gender and OLEs. We need to constantly remind women of their extraordinary latent power, to not be too self-critical, and to challenge themselves to move beyond the sociocultural barriers. More importantly, this handbook actively promotes women's rightful place as co-leaders of critical acclaim alongside men in the outdoor learning profession. The editors recognize the importance of probing beyond the boundaries of male-centric approaches to outdoor learning to develop a more intersectional focus.

We should be inspired by the final words of Hillary Clinton's (2016) campaign: "Fighting for what is right is always worth it…. Let us not grow weary." The inspirational and gracious women who have contributed to the *PIHWOL* possess a burning desire to be agents of change in the outdoor learning profession and, more aptly, have demonstrated actions towards these ends. Hope, risk taking, and dreaming are integral to our advancement and evolution (Bishop, 2008). Re-storying our future helps us to remain hopeful and brave. Dreaming of nourishing gender-inclusive terrains ensures an ongoing conversation in the well-established, interdisciplinary field of gender and OE.

> I wondered about the explorers who'd sailed their ships to the end of the world.
> How terrified they must have been when they risked falling over the edge;
> how amazed to discover, instead, places they had seen only in their dreams.
> —Jodi Picoult, *Handle With Care* (2009)

We invite men and women from around the world to open up their personal channels of communication and encourage others to #BeBoldForChange and help accelerate or interrogate gender (dis)parity within your own sphere of influence. Here's to dreaming about us standing together as strong, compassionate women and men, on the cusp of critical, cultural, and structural change. In closing, once a heightened sense of gender awareness is reached, we caution the field to not become disillusioned, complacent, or smug.

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2

Let's Meet at the Picnic Table at Midnight

Denise Mitten

The history of outdoor learning begins when humans first roamed the earth. Women were involved from the beginning, helping children learn about their environment, and have continued this role of helping others learn. In this chapter, I examine this history, the language that has been used to keep women from being in the outdoors in current times, and ways that some women's organizations may offer programming that is different from mainstream outdoor learning environment (OLE) programmes. I attempt to explain how in 300,000 years humans evolved from the norm of living totally immersed in the natural environment to a group of eight women sitting around a picnic table at midnight in 1983.

I have worked in women's programming since the 1960s, and I've been amazed at how many people, mostly men, have asked, "If you work with women does that mean you don't like men?" Finally, I gave a presentation titled, "If I like your shirt, it doesn't mean that I don't like your pants [trousers]." As an outdoor leader, when I choose to work with men, nobody asks me if I don't like women. Western white culture takes it for granted that men will be outdoors, though in the last couple of thousand years it has been hesitant to visualize women being in outdoor environments. Once, as a group of 12 women and I were leaving for a three-week canoe trip in Ontario, a man at the permit station asked me with great concern, "Where are the men to tell you where to go?" In my innocence, I sincerely came back with, "We have

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D. Mitten (✉)
Adventure Education & Sustainability Education, Prescott College,
Prescott, AZ, USA

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maps." Oddly enough, that seemed to fill the void—he nodded his acceptance, and we left for our journey.

Many people have preconceived notions about women's groups in the outdoors. On day four of a seven-day backpacking trip, a participant began talking with me about how she waited several years to come on this women's trip. Her concern, the reason she waited, was that she was trying to sort out an appropriate response when the women on the trip started to talk in a derogatory manner about men, which she was sure would happen. She explained that this trip caught her completely off guard because so far on the trip, no one had mentioned men. In my experience, most women participate in OLEs to hone activity and group skills, and they enjoy being in the present moment, rather than using the trip as an opportunity to talk about men.

Stereotypes of Outdoor Women

From a study that included 36 outdoor leaders (split close to 50-50 men and women), with more than about 20 years' experience each, Mitten, Warren, Lotz, and D'Amore (2012) found that in adventure education programming there are strong undercurrent assumptions about the roles of women and men on outdoor trips. Those leaders surveyed agreed that there is a valuing of physical and technical skills over interpersonal skills, whilst at the same time, women are expected to use interpersonal skills more than men, and men are expected to engage more in physical and technical skills than women. Therefore, in co-ed and mainstream outdoor programming, women are usually expected to perform less-valued roles, which combines with common pejorative language that values activity and technical skills more than interpersonal skills, facilitation and instructional styles that fail to account for the gender of instructors or participants, and gendered images in media, to create an orientation in the profession that favours men over women in hiring, promotion, and assigning leadership roles. (Gray, 2016; Gray, Mitten, Loeffler, Allen-Craig, & Carpenter, 2017).

In thinking about outdoor leaders, Warren (2009) has noticed a typical visualization that people have. Outdoor leaders are commonly thought of as white, male, fairly tall, rugged and buff, sporting a beard and a hat, often wearing a flannel shirt, and expert in outdoor activities. This common view of an outdoor leader disregards women and many men, rendering them invisible. However, there is one stereotype label used for women outdoor leaders, and that is lesbian.

During the last session of a semester-long upper-division outdoor leadership class, a woman asked, "Why do people assume that I am a lesbian because

I’m in outdoor recreation?” I asked the class members if other women find they are also assumed to be lesbians, and then I asked the class members if men were assumed to be gay because they are in outdoor recreation. A fruitful discussion occurred that often needs to happen in OLEs. First, why is lesbianism associated with strong women and heterosexual orientation associated with strong men? And then, why does Western, white, heterosexual culture believe it is an insult to call a woman lesbian?

McClintock (1996) has described the reason for these as lesbian baiting. This is a technique used in a hegemonic attempt to confine women to roles that a Western, white, heterosexual culture believes women should be in. Roles other than the “appropriate” ones are associated with lesbianism (which is further demonized in this system) under the hope that women will not enter them for fear of being called a lesbian. One role women are discouraged from is living and travelling in the outdoors—in large part because they would appear strong and self-confident.

According to McClintock (1996), lesbians are hurt when baiting occurs because negative attitudes and behaviours towards lesbians are reinforced. Heterosexual women are hurt because baiting reinforces stereotypes of what behaviour is acceptable for heterosexual women. Suzanne Pharr (1988) said that to effectively combat lesbian baiting, women need to both eliminate their fear of being labelled lesbian and to work to end homophobia and sexism in general. Therefore, a goal is for lesbians and non-lesbians to be visible and valued in OLEs.

Whilst there has been progress in current Western cultures accepting people who do not conform to gender norms, the threat of being labelled a lesbian is still used to keep women in place. Such pressure on women reinforces the limits on all women’s behaviour. Women in OLEs are caught in a Catch 22 of being expected to be nurturing and not being too assertive or strong, whilst working in a field that requires interpersonal and relationship skills as well as physical and technical skills.

In 1983, at the Association of Experiential Education (AEE) Conference at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, an invitation was extended to women to talk about this very subject of being called lesbians or being lesbians in OLEs field. The invitation came as a sign taped up in the women’s bathroom—to meet at the picnic table by the lake at midnight—put up by Jean Vrbka who ran Womanquest (another woman who is not found in history books or on the Internet). According to the *Women’s Professional Group: A Collective Account of Our Roots and Growth* compiled by Nina Roberts (1997), some women were scared to show up. At that time, few women were out, though women working with all-women organizations were often thought to be lesbians whether they identified as such or not. Women who taught in academic institutions wondered and worried about consequences if students they worked with showed up, too. It turned out that this discussion, now known as "year of the famous picnic table in the dark woods," catalysed getting lesbian and *all* women's topics into mainstream conversation at AEE. For these women, it was a bold step in reclaiming space for women in OLEs. Coming together that night helped build a support system, which curbs the effects of lesbian baiting. Support systems help eliminate the fear of being labelled lesbian, and in this case, added to the strength of the Women's Professional Group, whose members initiated significant change in how women were viewed and treated within AEE.

Through directing a women's outdoor tripping organization, I, and others who worked with me, understood early on that we needed to address the phenomenon of lesbian baiting on every trip. We knew from our client base that participants were split—about 50-50 being non-lesbian and lesbian women (this aspect of a person's life can be very fluid, so no assumptions would be made from day to day how people identified). We chose a normalizing approach. To us that meant during the first day of the trip, in some way, guides would be sure that the word lesbian was said in everyday conversation. If the word lesbian was said through organic conversation amongst participants, that was fine. Participants take cues from guides in how to respond to other participants and the environment as the group's social norms (structural and affectual) are created. Therefore, the guides' reactions when hearing or saying the word lesbian was paramount in helping to shape a trip to norm that it was normal for women who may describe themselves as lesbian or non-lesbian to be in OLEs. Whilst I have simplified the description of this approach, it worked well in validating that both lesbian and non-lesbian women would be involved in outdoor activities. It also sparked important discussions about identity, society's perceptions of women travelling in the outdoors, and inclusion. Times have changed since the 1970s when we first implemented this programme aspect, but it continues to be pertinent to take the charge out of the word lesbian and welcome all women. Language and awareness continue to evolve, and normalizing language such as gender queer, queer, transgender, and more can help increase consciousness and inclusion. (See Argus (2018) and Hauk (2018) in this book for further discussion about lesbians in OLEs.)

Homophobia works through silence and invisibility. By talking with other women and men about how lesbian baiting and other forms of homophobia, transphobia, and the like work to restrict the lives of all women, men, and agender people, doors open for people to be themselves and contribute in many ways to OLEs and beyond.

Women in Outdoor Learning Environments: There Is Not a Single Story

Some people think of outdoor learning as something that began in the last century or so. However, I look at women's involvement in OLEs as something that originated as humans co-evolved with the entire environment on the earth and in the cosmos and that contemporary women's programming stems from these earliest times. Like all animal species, humans have been learning about living in the outdoors since they first evolved. The co-evolution aspect has important implications for today's programming. To begin with, the evolution of the human species was made possible by the evolution of plants and their release of oxygen. An oxygen-rich atmosphere formed the ozone layer, thus blocking ultraviolet solar radiation, and enabled oxygen-dependent forms of life to evolve. Humans remain in that dependent relationship today, meaning that humans are not as self-deterministic as some may suppose. I believe this co-evolution and mutual relationship with the natural environment has affected women's programming.

As an ecologist, I understand and appreciate that the natural environment is more based on mutualism then competition (Margulis & Fester, 1991). Early humans lived their lives intertwined and in rhythm with natural patterns such as solar and lunar cycles, salmon spawning cycles, whale and bird migrations, insect activity, and berry ripening. More recently, people talk about this inter- and intra-relatedness as entanglement (Brown, 1997). More than being immersed, humans are connected and related to the environment, and these relationships impact our social, psychological, spiritual, and biological selves. (For a deeper discussion of the relationship of this evolutionary past to current biological, psychological/emotional, and spiritual connections with humans and the environment, see Ewert, Mitten, and Overholt (2014).) Some women's programming has been based on this concept of co-evolution and mutualism, and recently mainstream outdoor learning has argued for a return to programming that respects nature and is based on place (Clarke & Mcphie, 2014; Mitten, 2017).

Mainstream Western culture has treated women and nature similarly, subjugating both to a lesser status than men. Susan Griffin in *Women and Nature* (1980) chronicled how this power in relationship towards women and nature by mainstream male Western European culture has been destructive and belittling to both women and the land. Oftentimes, nature is feminized, referred to with the pronoun "she"; sayings such as "rape the land" and "reap nature's bounty" can be linked to female oppression. Francoise d'Eaubonne

(1974), a French activist, recognized that by externalizing and treating the environment in ways that were violent, uncaring, and destructive,humans actually hurt themselves. She understood how impacts on the biosphere, questions of energy choices, genetic engineering, and women's reproductive rights were concrete manifestations of the intersections of feminism and ecology, and coined the term "ecofeminism" to describe her activism. She and others urged people to see the links and to change the patterns of violence, which means changing our relationships with other humans and everything in the universe.

Ecofeminism fosters a sense of belonging to, rather than being in control of, the community of life. At least some women's outdoor programming[1] by women has retained a way of being and an attitude towards the outdoors, guided by ecofeminism, which included positive relationships based on care and an understanding of mutualism. In a sense, this way of being may be a continuation of what Carol Lee Flinders (2002–2003) described as a "value-of-belonging." She said that the relationships the hunter-gatherers had with the natural world, one another, and their concept of spirit included trust, inclusion, and mutual reciprocity.

Women are diverse, and it is hard to write about women and OLEs without appearing to essentialize women. At the same time, there are aspects of all-women trips that are documented in research and, through experience in women's programming for more than 45 years, I have observed many of these practices in real time. Hornibrook et al.'s (1997) research summarized three primary components of import for women participating in all-women outdoor adventure programmes: all-women participants, being in and with nature, and an inclusive environment. From my experiences, women seek spiritual nourishment and relationships or growth, or this is what they gravitate towards in the course of the trip. Perhaps because of socialization, many women tend to be more interested in nurturing relationships rather than dominance or conquering.

Laura Fredrickson (1996) explored spiritual benefits of people's interactions with nature, and in her research with all-women groups found that it was the mix of specific social and biophysical factors that contributed to spiritually beneficial aspects of the participants' trip experiences and to the inspirational qualities of each place setting. The environmental characteristics of the setting, including wildlife, being in a wilderness area, and seeing geological formations were significant in contributing to the more meaningful aspects of trips for participants. Cosgriff, Little, and Wilson (2009) found that New Zealand women they interviewed expressed nature as a part of themselves and included a spiritual aspect.

Yerkes and Miranda (1982) found that women participating on women's trips felt that they had better opportunities than on co-ed trips to learn and practice skills, and that they went on women's outdoor trips to feel empowered, to relax, to have fun, to gain a sense of renewal, to network, and to find spiritual healing in nature. Women choose outdoor adventure trips because there are no distractions of telephones, cars, children, and other responsibilities. Mitten (1992) found that for many women, not being able to control nature was comforting; one woman indicated that the outdoors was a powerful place for her stating, "I can't control, so I don't. And because I don't I have to take care of it or control it, I have time to focus on myself." Another woman said, "Nature is so healing, I can't help but feel good and powerful out here" (p. 57).

Not All Women's Trips Are the Same

There appear to be differences between women's trips initiated by women's organizations and those initiated by co-ed organizations. Many organizations that became co-ed did not critically examine their philosophies and pedagogies; they just opened enrolment to women and offered the same programmes. Helen Lenskyj (1995, 1998) from the Department of Physical and Health Education at the University of Toronto, writing about the US, Canada, and Australia, described this problem for outdoor programming as well as sports. Without considering the attributes that women bring to adventure trips in designing the trip and the philosophy, damage to women can be done. Karla Henderson (1996) talked about the "add women and stir" phenomena as people recognized that women were participating in outdoor activities, but that women were merely added to the current practices.

A problem with the add women and stir approach can be illustrated in a common practice of using outdoor trips to test strength and courage and to culminate in victory over adversary, and adversary is often represented by the environment. Western cultures have promoted the idea of individualism, self-reliance, and autonomy, especially for men. OLEs leaders often use these notions as a guide for programme outcomes. The practice is so deeply ingrained that outdoor educators often still view physical strength, independence, dominance, and tough-mindedness as desirable attributes for leaders and participants. In this practice, leadership is embodied in the glorified leader who can command attention in either a militaristic or "pied piper" manner. A constraint that has kept some women from engaging in OLEs is a subtle or not-so-subtle message that this practice presents, namely, that women "should" act like men in outdoor activities and in leadership (Little & Wilson, 2005).

A Take on Women's History in Outdoor Learning

Early humans appear to have lived a sense of connectedness and oneness with nature. It seems that a reverence for the environment and birth and life may have shaped early worldviews and behaviour as noted by Carol Lee Flinders' (2002–2003) values-of-belonging concept. Her understanding of their society's core values: intimate connection with the land, empathetic relationship with animals, self-restraint, balance, expressiveness, generosity, egalitarianism, playfulness, and nonviolent conflict resolution seems to be reflected in the diversity of artefacts found in settlement remains and the occasional animal midden dating back to about 50,000 years ago.

Interpretation of these artefacts indicate that behavioural modernity, or the ability to use complex symbolic thought and express cultural creativity, was happening, including an upsurge of visual art and music. The earliest flutes found were made during this stage. Seasonal rites, initiation rituals, and other ceremonies related to the participation in the sacred ceremonies of life are reflected in cave art, most of which is likely done by women (Noble, 1993; Pauly, 2017). These artefacts serve a referential function, and given archaeologists' interpretations of the plethora of female artefacts, it seems logical to conclude that they displayed awe and respect for femaleness, birth, and natural systems (Ewert et al., 2014). Though remember, if I like your shirt, it does not mean that I do not like your trousers.

The importance of mentioning this history is that Westernized humans have had roughly 30,000 generations as hunter-gatherers, perhaps 500 as agrarians, 9 during the industrial era, and 1 or 2 in the emerging post-industrial era (Massey, 2002). We may live in a post-industrial era, but we may continue to thrive better in active outside environments and close connections with other beings. Neil, Gray, Ellis-Smith, Bocarro, Sierra, & Desai l (2004) and Mitten (2010) have theorized that outdoor learning environments and recreation may stimulate or wake up an intra-indigenous consciousness in people.[2] An intra-indigenous consciousness is humans' remembrance of and how to be, and longing to be immersed in natural environments. This consciousness likely has not been extinguished in the past ten or so generations that Western people have become more urban.

Pre-agrarian communities may have resembled the pedagogy found on many women's trips sponsored by women's programmes, including valuing nurturing relationships and positive interactions with the environment based on mutuality, and valuing women and their contributions with no need to change to be male-like in order to be outdoors. Evolutionarily, women have been involved in child rearing and have oxytocin surges in close relationships, which likely reinforce relationship building. In reviewing a number of early women adventurers’ writing, it seems that relationships are a common theme in the reason for adventuring and during the adventure (Mitten & Woodruff, 2010). As importantly, women are highly capable in technical and activity skills useful in outdoor learning.

Early Women Adventurers

Women travellers in the 1800s and early 1900s, from both North America and Western Europe, have commonalities. Some of them (e.g., Mina Bensen Hubbard and Georgie Clark White) went on transformative outdoor trips in times of grief. Others broke the stereotype of “not wanting grandma’s dishes to be broken” and headed west (e.g., Mary Ellicott Arnold and Mabel Reed in 1980, as discussed in their book *In the Land of the Grasshopper Song*). In 1953, during the first recorded Western all-women mountaineering trip in Nepal, Monica Jackson, Betty Stark, and Evelyn Camrass, against the norms of the time, worked hard not to interface with the press and gain notoriety for their endeavour (Jackson & Stark, 1956). They travelled in an area that was not yet mapped because the more popular mountaineering areas were off limits to them as women. Contrary to standard European procedures, they did not name any mountains or areas after themselves or white men. They named places after the Sherpa people with them, including a 6706-metre (22,000 feet) peak they climbed, naming it Gyalgen Peak after their head Sherpa. Though they reported that they “splurged” and named one glacier the “Ladies’ Glacier” (Jackson & Stark, 1956). These women concerned themselves with relationships amongst themselves, with their Sherpas, and with the land. They appreciated the land and did not engage in the conquering language and behaviour typical of the male explorers of the time. These seemingly small differences in not wanting notoriety for their accomplishments and actually understating them, entering in local rituals about place, and in not trying to conquer the land come about from women “being” in the outdoors without having notions of taming or controlling the environment.

Mina Hubbard and George Wallace began parallel expeditions in 1905 on the George River in Labrador. In comparing their two books about their separate trips, several differences in values stand out. Wallace talked about the people they met along the way in stereotypic and derogatory ways. Hubbard built relationships with the people she met and spoke respectfully about them. Wallace seemed angry at nature and deemed it something to conquer and get through in order to go home. As the trip progressed, Mina seemed to become even more immersed in nature, frequently commenting positively about it. Many early women explorers and adventurers found nature to be healing, were prone to find a sense of place, and felt spiritually connected to the land. Their intent was not to conquer nature; they wanted to be with nature. They came to know that they felt good because they were in nature. In fact, many women said that being in nature was like coming home. Mina Benson Hubbard found herself surprised at the end of her George River trip in Labrador that she would miss this land and her travelling companions (Hubbard, c1908).

Early Programming Differences for Girls and Boys, Women and Men

Miranda and Yerkes (1996) noted that gender themes in the camping movement emerged in the late 1800s. Girls' camps focused on relationships, cooperation, and community values, whilst boys' camps focused on competition, challenge, conquering the wilderness, and restoring manhood to males. Girls' and women's programmes were framed as providing a time for networking, relaxation, skills acquisition, and civic engagement. Woman camp leaders wanted their programmes to emphasize the aesthetic and spiritual kinship of girls to nature and to one another. The pedagogy planned for women to have tools to thrive in the changes caused by urbanization and the recently won right to vote; therefore, women leaders made the girls' camps into "excellent social incubators for what would become a new type of woman and the politically active citizen" (Miranda, 1987, p. 14). For example, the first Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) camp in the Philadelphia chapter of the YWCA (circa 1874), called the "vacation project," was designed to provide a relaxing environment for young women who worked at tedious factory jobs with little free time (Mitten & Woodruff, 2010).

For males, OLEs in the US grew out of a model of rugged individualism and in reaction to urbanization. In 1861, Frederick and Abigail Gunn ran a home school for boys in Washington, Connecticut. Frederick, worried that the boys had become weak and needed to get in better physical shape, decided as part of the curriculum to take the boys on a two-week trip in which they marched 40 miles (64 km) to the beach at Milford, Connecticut. As an individualist and outdoorsman, Gunn's focus was to make boys into men through physical outdoor activities. Other boys' camps followed. Dr Joseph Trimble Rothrock founded the North Mountain School of Physical Culture in 1876, devoted to "weakly boys" whose parents paid up to $200 for a four-month stay. Many of the early models for outdoor leadership were created out of this male-based value system and perspective. Male-based paradigms, including "Survival against nature builds stronger men" or "War (against nature) builds stronger men," have shaped mainstream OLEs and programming in many Westernized countries.

This theme of recapturing physical and mental strength was reinforced when Outward Bound was introduced. Outward Bound started as a way to train young British men during World War II to survive the physical and mental hardships encountered on the seas. Currently, Outward Bound offers expeditions designed to utilize unfamiliar settings to "impel students into mentally, emotionally and physically demanding experiences" (Outward Bound, 2009). The use of hardship to encourage people to bond or coerce people to help each other continues to be used today. According to Thomas James (2008), in Outward Bound, the adventurer must still "break down and learn to serve his companions" (p. 114). This notion may not make sense for many women who have been culturally primed to be in relationship and to serve.

In a specialized segment of adventure education, wilderness therapy, some groups have taken this stress and survival paradigm to an extreme in what are labelled wilderness boot camps, which include both state-owned and private camps in the US. These camps subject participants to severe adversity, often intentionally or unwittingly painting nature as the enemy out of a belief that surviving and conquering adversity creates stronger personal resolve when under future pressures.

"Female values, not traditionally linked with [mainstream] leadership were associated with a priority on form and harmony; concern for people, unity, spirituality, a desire to help and care for others, and a concern for beauty and creative expression" (Henderson, 1996, pp. 109–110). These values were part of the leadership influencing women's adventure education programmes and other women's organizations (Mitten & Woodruff, 2010). These values have been described by a number of authors, including Lenskyj (1995, 1998) and Gilligan (1982), writing about differences between female and male ethics.

Women's programming in the US, often marginalized by mainstream OLEs has a different history and a different pedagogy than predominately male programmes. It appears that many women chose to lead all-women trips or join all-women trips because they wanted to be on trips that reflected their values of (a) coming home to nature, (b) being in a trip environment that feels emotionally, spiritually, and physically nurturing, (c) travelling the wilderness for its own sake, not using it as a means to an end, to create situations to take risk or prove competency, and (d) generally seeing women's strengths as assets to trips—hence, a number of women's outdoor tripping organizations formed and women-centered programming developed from these initiators in the 1970s (Mitten, 1985).

By the 1980s, there were over 50 tour companies in over a dozen US states that, according to *The New World of Travel* by Arthur Frommer (1988), were "openly feminist in their orientation, and limit their clients and leadership to women only" (p. 56). He reported that these outdoor trips were for women who genuinely enjoyed the attractions of nature and that the companies were initiated by women who believed that women could better enjoy a holiday change of pace that was stress-free and relaxing when they travelled with other women.

In 2010, I had the good fortune to write the foreword for Beth Mairs celebrating her 20th anniversary Wild Women Expeditions (WWE) of Ontario, Canada, with the book *Recipes for Wild Women II: Tales from the Trail and Kitchen Goddesses "Dish"* (Mairs & Demers, 2010). The history included in the canoe trippers' cookbook and guide, which has amazing trail recipes, by the way, may resonate with other women who started all women's tripping organizations. For Mairs it was a dream as an 18-year-old of owning a summer camp that morphed into running a spiritual retreat centre, and then morphed into a women's healing community somewhere on land. In time, "the threads of summer camp, spirit, healing, and women all found a place in the foundations upon which Wild Women Expeditions came to flourish and take shape" (p. 7). Mairs' all-women tripping business in Ontario, Canada, branched out into retreats, kayaking, and more, and served thousands of women. Some of her first retreats led by elder Margaret Toulouse of Sagamok First Nations, respectfully, included Native Spirituality. This excerpt summarized the intention and practices of many women-only companies:

> The fact that WWE was a woman-led company for women-only made us unique, and we espoused a distinctive view of shared leadership and other feminist principles. We were lesbian-positive, and we acknowledged and celebrated a diversity of women and progressive leftist politics. We openly celebrated women: women's strength, sexuality and spirituality. I felt there was a mutually beneficial, healing exchange between the Earth and the women on our trips because of the respectful way we journeyed through wild places. (p. 14)

Counter the Silence with More Picnic Tables and More Voices

Women, men, and people identifying other than binary may want similar things from being in OLEs. However, because of societal values about how men and women should behave and about their capabilities, women's outdoor programming by women generally has different qualities, values, and objectives then programming designed by men.

Marginalizing and devaluing some ways of being in the outdoors whilst favouring other ways of being limits who can participate freely in outdoor ventures. Gender has been used in this chapter to illustrate different ways of being in the outdoors. Because of the way gender is used to control the roles that humans can play, women, men, and people identifying other than binary have not been free to explore how they want to be in OLEs.

The pedagogy of recapturing their rugged individualism, prevalent in the development of programming for boys and men, precludes some men from feeling comfortable in the outdoors. When I directed Woodswomen, it was common for men to ask to come on trips, saying that they felt akin to the philosophy. They, too, wanted to explore at a pace that encouraged self-care and care for the environment; they felt spiritually connected to the land. Through that, I realized that the values prevalent in women's programming by women should and could be enjoyed by a larger population. More of the specifics about these programme components and values can be found in Chaps. 7 and 20.

I appreciate the naivety I had about mainstream outdoor programming because I first learnt about being in the outdoors in a girls' and women's setting of Girl Scouts. I had the privilege of seeing strong women without any understanding that they might be labelled lesbian in an intended hurtful manner. In fact, I very much wanted to grow up and be like these strong women, and wondered if I could.

Sitting around the picnic table at midnight in 1983 was a beginning to shaping a modern-day conversation about women in the outdoors. Women who were lesbians took the bold step of confronting homophobia by beginning the conversation. Lesbian and non-lesbian women continued the conversation and actions, such as forming the Women's Professional Group at AEE, running for board of director positions, and publishing about their preferred way of being in the outdoors. They brought innovations in leadership styles and choice, and engaged men and people identifying other than the binary in conversations and actions.

Homophobia, sexism, and lesbian baiting still exist. However, these work through silence and invisibility, silencing women and rendering lesbians and people identifying as other than binary or transgender invisible in OLEs. Similar picnic tables have and will continue to happen around the globe continuing to counter this silence. In a sense, this book helps counter the silence, giving voice to more perspectives and ways of being in the outdoors.

Notes

1. Woodswomen, Inc., an adventure travel company for women in business from 1977 to 1997, was based on ecofeminist and ethic of care values. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodswomen,_Inc.
2. Whilst Neill et al. believes it is genetically stored, Mitten believes that this consciousness is more holistic and has somatic, spiritual, and emotional aspects and perhaps moves towards epigenetics.

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3

Thirty Years on, and Has the Gendered Landscape Changed in Outdoor Learning?

Tonia Gray

Hooked…

In 1983, I was a fledgling Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) teacher, having trained at one of the most progressive and forward-thinking institutions in the country. Having graduated from a tertiary institution with a formidable reputation of producing next-generation PDHPE teachers, I naively assumed that my new-found training would be the vehicle for life-changing lessons for my students. This misnomer was dispelled—and, more importantly, serendipity played a hand in the first chapter of my teaching career.

My first teaching stint was at a co-educational school, Chevalier College, which had recently instituted a groundbreaking course called Wilderness Studies as a two-year, fully accredited school certificate subject. At the time, wilderness was an unknown and untested "element" in the Australian school system. From the outset, Wilderness Studies was an experiment: the staff were the pioneers and the students the guinea pigs (Ryan & Gray, 1993). In 1983, I was co-opted by the male faculty members to go on outdoor education (OE) camps, primarily due to the belief that PDHPE teachers didn't mind being sweaty and being outdoors or maybe because of my rugged masculine hands that were the result of my childhood being a horse rider and country girl.

T. Gray (✉)
Centre for Educational Research, Western Sydney University,
Penrith, NSW, Australia

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Whatever the reason, or simply by default, I found myself immersed in a teaching profession with no formal training per se (Gray, 2001). I must have done something right, because the males who had pioneered, developed, and implemented these courses entrusted me to be the first woman to teach Wilderness Studies in Australia.

As vanguard wilderness teachers in the mid-1980s, we were like salmon swimming upstream, especially through the eyes of conventional teachers who dismissed the subject as a waste of time simply "playing" outdoors (Fig. 3.1).

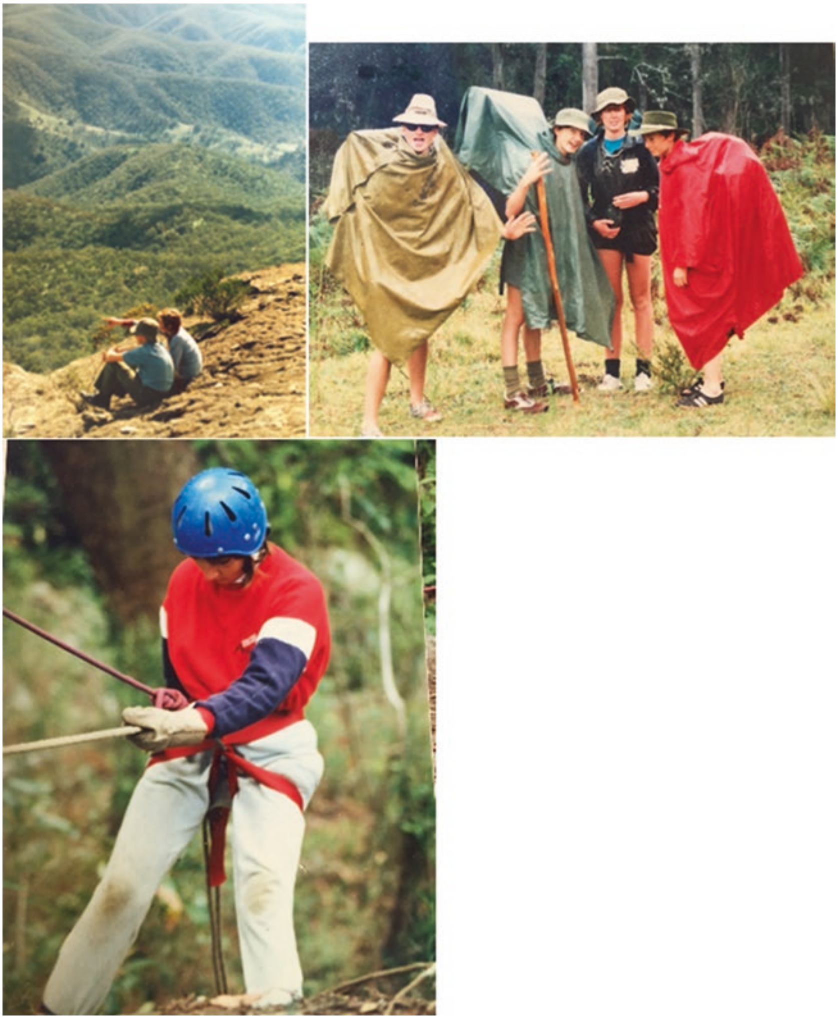
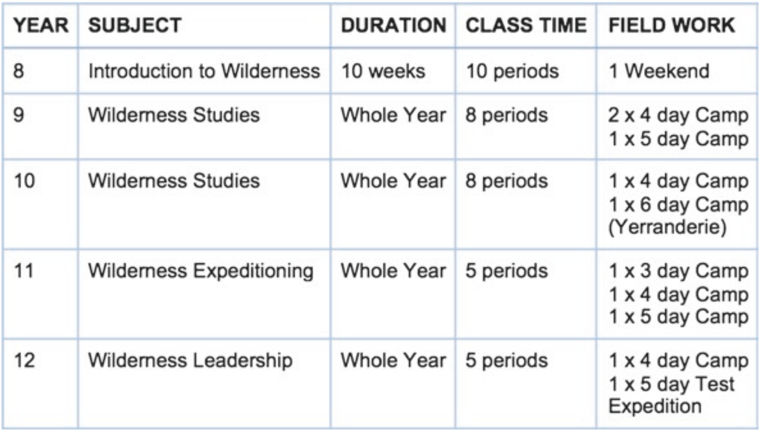


Fig. 3.1 My Wilderness Studies students from 1985–1986

I was hooked. The outdoor learning environment (OLE) offered a fertile educational platform for eliciting transformative experiences for my 25 adolescent students. As a fully accredited elective course, students spent as much time in the wild as they did in other conventional subjects, such as Mathematics or English. For two consecutive school years (Years 9 and 10; see Fig. 3.2), a significant amount of time was spent outdoors with these 14- to 15-year-old students (*n* = 17 boys, *n* = 8 girls), in what could only be described as an innovative curriculum. Practical and theoretical components were interwoven explicitly into the learning outcomes, and their personal development and behaviour change in wilderness settings eclipsed any of my traditional classroom teaching methods (Gray & Perusco, 1993). This aspect is carried to further magnitude by Ryan and Gray (1993): "These early educational experiences convinced staff involved that OE was a unique vehicle for education and growth of students, and it brought staff and students together in closer relationships than experienced in traditional classrooms" (p. 7).

Part of my PDHPE teaching philosophy intuitively said I needed to introduce silent journaling into Wilderness Studies. Students carried their personalized logbooks in their backpacks for reflective activities on every expedition and also in classroom musings. Trying to weave something of an introspective nature into expeditions in the 1980s was considered somewhat "eccentric" or "outlandish" in Australia. I orchestrated a class ritual to be undertaken around the campfire or during lunchtime rest periods—15 minutes of silent writing or some nature-based creative arts activity (Fig. 3.3).



YEAR	SUBJECT	DURATION	CLASS TIME	FIELD WORK
8	Introduction to Wilderness	10 weeks	10 periods	1 Weekend
9	Wilderness Studies	Whole Year	8 periods	2 x 4 day Camp 1 x 5 day Camp
10	Wilderness Studies	Whole Year	8 periods	1 x 4 day Camp 1 x 6 day Camp (Yerranderie)
11	Wilderness Expeditioning	Whole Year	5 periods	1 x 3 day Camp 1 x 4 day Camp 1 x 5 day Camp
12	Wilderness Leadership	Whole Year	5 periods	1 x 4 day Camp 1 x 5 day Test Expedition

Fig. 3.2 The sequential Wilderness Studies subjects from Years 8–12 (1985)

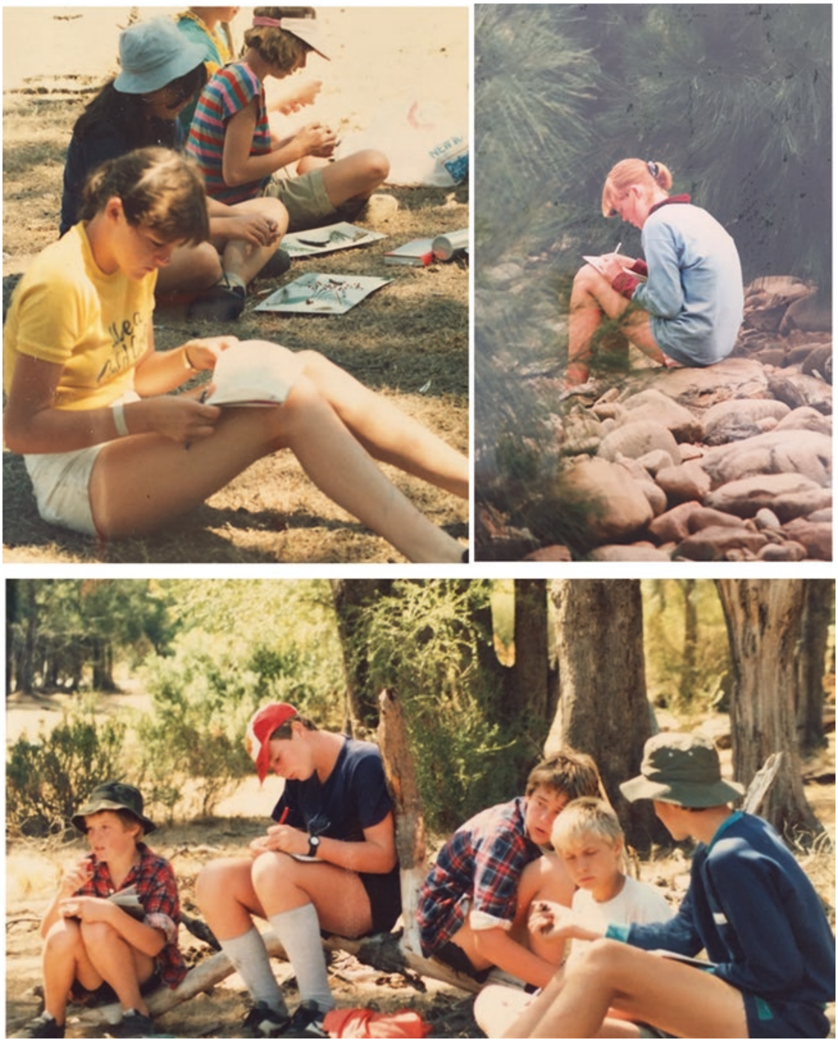


Fig. 3.3 Students 1984–1985 undertaking silent journaling time

Understandably, there was initial resistance, especially from the male students. More importantly, there was covert opposition from my male Wilderness Studies teacher colleagues who used to doubt my "journaling time" or "nature connection" time as some touchy-feely-wanky exercise. However, I was determined to bring some feminine aspects into the mix of activities, primarily to counterbalance the macho and militaristic approach previously adopted.

A poem written by a 14-year-old student in her logbook in 1984 encapsulates the gravity of the outdoor experiences and, in turn, the learning outcomes elicited:

My souvenir is two cups full of creek water,
I couldn't take it with me so I tipped it over my head,
rebaptised myself because I'm going to be different from now on.

A recurring theme became blatantly apparent when reading the student logbooks post expedition. Pushing the "pause button" and slowing down the rhythm of the outdoor learning activity were akin to a "superfood" to these students (see also Blades, 2018). Slow pedagogies and sitting quietly in nature whilst handwriting in their journals appeared to have obscure advantages. Similarly, both Ingold (2013) and Pallasmaa (2009) espouse the benefits of writing by hand, as it brings them closer to and into greater sympathy with the observed. Arguably, embodied learning—which is instigated or amplified through the act of handwriting and, in particular, reflective journaling—is something that I fear is now lost in the age of computerization.

Albeit, these events occurred in the 1980s, and at the time I was puzzled by the interplay of journaling and outdoor learning. Knowing I was not formally trained in OE and by default found myself here also added fuel to the fire. With intense frequency, I would ask myself, "What's happening here?" "Why hasn't my teacher training prepared me for this?" Nonetheless, I was convinced that this unique form of experiential education had galvanized a deeper relationship with the students and, more importantly, surpassed anything I could do within the four walls of the classroom.

Curiously, to this day, these students' logbooks remain a cherished part of their life's possessions and are stored in sacred places for posterity. In a recent study, many of my students—who are now in their mid-40s—still know exactly where to locate their prized artefacts (Gray, 2016a, 2017). I find this outcome astounding, given many have moved houses multiple times, travelled the world frequently, or have been married, have had children, have been divorced, and so on. Re-reading their journal entries allows them to anchor and reawaken their treasured memories (Fig. 3.4).

At the end of 1986, the trajectory of my career took a tangential turn. My involvement with the outdoors spanned across the Pacific Ocean to the United States, where I commenced a Master of Community Health. Serendipitously, my internship was with the Denver-based wellness clinic, QuaLife, which had

Antony Butcher w/s.
Groups
Radicals
Peter Cost
Steven Pinzi
Kylie Brew
Anthony Hildebrand
Phillip McKay
Yugo Bon Sprouts
Cam
Luke
Martin
Fliss
me
Dung Beetles
Mue
Andrew (Braddle)
Stew
Dave
Ilona
Yr10 W/s 85/6 season
Cathy
Kim
Scott
Mark
Kirk
Cos Brigade
Cass
Antony
Damian
Andrew (war)
Cat
Year 10 1986 W/S
Kathryn Cush
W/S 1985
Log Book 1986

Fig. 3.4 Student logbooks from 1985 to 1986 still remain a prized possession 30 years after undertaking the course

incorporated Outward Bound (Colorado) as one aspect of their intervention modalities. The therapeutic benefits of nature became increasingly evident during this period. Upon returning to Australia in the late 1980s, my ambition was to bring wilderness studies into the tertiary setting. Subtly weaving the outdoors into my PDHPE teacher training courses became my underlying ambition. Eventually, in 1992, my inaugural OE class commenced at the University of Wollongong. Parallel to this achievement, I was undertaking a PhD in OE (Gray, 1997) in an attempt to quantify or validate the impact of this teaching medium. The rest is history. There was no turning back, and I was a devotee of OLEs.

My PhD examined the differential of gender outcomes between boys and girls following a year-long residential OE programme. At the completion of the study, girls surpassed boys in both qualitative and quantitative measures. Interestingly, from a gender perspective, the school was one-third girls and two-thirds boys. When I quizzed the principal as to why this gender imbalance existed, his reply was noteworthy: "Tonia, if it were 50:50 gender ratio, the girls would far outshine the boys and that would leave the boys feeling inferior" (S. Leslie, personal communication, 1993). Extant literature, for instance, Breault-Hood, Gray, Truong, and Ullman (2016, 2017), Budbill (2008), Carter and Colyer (1999), Edwards-Leeper (2004), Leupp (2007), Loeffler (1997), Mitten (1985, 1992, 1996), Warren (1996a, 1996b, 2016), and Whittington, Mack, Budbill, and McKenney (2011), clearly documents that girls and women can flourish when placed in OLEs.

Unconscious Bias Within Our Gendered Outdoor Learning Terrain

Against this backdrop of women thriving in outdoor learning contexts, the pathway for inclusiveness has not always been readily accessible. As foreign as this may seem to younger women who have grown up in a different generation, entering the outdoor profession in the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s was considered unconventional. In essence, it was a boys club built on a masculinized Outward Bound model (Birrell, 2018; Gray, 2016a; Saunders & Sharp, 2002; Warren, 1996a; Wittmer, 2001). Roughly 50 years ago, in 1965, a group of 24 trailblazing young women were the first female attendees at the Minnesota Outward Bound School (now called Voyageur Outward Bound School). According to the director of the film *Women Outward Bound*, Maxine W. Davis,

> we had one month of amazingly difficult experiences in a stunningly gorgeous place … where we learned to appreciate the beauty of nature and to move at its pace … a woman can do almost anything, get through almost anything, persevere through almost anything—using the intelligence of her mind and strength of her body. (Cited by Timmons, 2016)

Likewise, the story provided in Chap. 2 by Denise Mitten (2018) offers validation for the notion that gender inequality abounds. The "meeting at midnight," in practice and symbolically, provided a safe space to talk about women's involvement in the outdoor profession and the marginalization they had encountered. Since the late 1960s, participation in outdoor adventure activities for women has grown markedly. The gendered landscape was predominantly skewed towards a male audience, where only a handful of gallant women courageously ventured (Galpin, 1987). Yet, whilst the overall number of women has risen steadily, growth in our scholarly acumen and professional influence has been hindered (Christie, 2018; Gray, Mitten, Loeffler, Allen-Craig, & Carpenter, 2016). Currently, women lag behind in expert or professional status and are disproportionately underrepresented in leadership positions in spite of the influx of gifted women (Gray, Allen-Craig, & Carpenter, 2017; Loeffler, 1995, 1996). The issue has become more acute over the past decade, as a number of authors have noted (Bell, Cosgriff, Lynch, & Zink, 2018; Blades, 2018; Christie, 2018; Martin, 2013; Wright & Gray, 2013). A recent scan of the gender makeup of the Board for the Outdoor Council of Australia reveals 100% male domination (see www.outdoorcouncil.asn.au/about/board/). How can this be the case in 2017?

I still vividly recall the disorienting feeling of participating in my first "official" OE conference:

> Gender disparity was overwhelmingly apparent. The work environment was highly gendered and homogeneous in a range of ways: white, middle class, and able bodied … In the early '90s, I could almost cut the testosterone in the air with a knife. I was one of two lonely women; we made up a tiny minority of the workforce due to extreme gender imbalance. (Gray, 2016b, p. 25)

Women successfully guide programmes (Jordan, 1992) and build award-winning careers, whilst also remaining largely indiscernible when it comes to invitations for keynote addresses or citation rates in journals (Gray, 2016b; Martin, 2013). The unconscious bias that women face dismisses our expertise and lessens our penetration in the profession. Our exclusion is subtle and pervasive in mysterious ways, and women need to keep their "gender radar" highly attuned to these inconsistencies.

In terms of the monopoly by male keynote conference speakers, this imbalance does not accurately reflect the audience. There is an

> absence of women as significant players or "protagonists" in the OE field. As a discipline, OE focuses disproportionately—if not exclusively—on male theorists whilst also exalting and valorising the insights of men. Not a single woman is mentioned in Wikipedia in the OE field, as it traces the contours of male professional lives. This begs the question: How and why have women been erased from the public eye? (Gray, 2016b, p. 27).

Women have become mainstream in instructor training programmes, and their numbers are expanding in both academia and on the ground (Avery, Norton, & Tucker, 2018; Gray et al., 2017). Yet, a double jeopardy exists. The more we are seen agitating or "fighting men" about genderwashing, the biggest disservice we do for our standing in the profession, the more we are caught in a quandary. When we exhibit a powerful masculine energy (which has absolutely nothing to do with our sexuality), too often we pay dearly for it by being called assertive dykes and angry ball-busters (Gray, 2016b). The term "feminazi" is something we tolerate regularly as a direct result of our pushback (Gray et al., 2017; Rowe-Finkbeiner 2004).

Feminism in Outdoor Terrains: A Brief Potted History

Women-only adventure companies began in the 1970s, most likely as an offshoot of the feminist movement (Gray & Birrell, 2015; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1987; Mitten, 1985; Warren & Rheingold, 1996). These revolutionary movements provided a venue for promoting a sense of belonging with other like-minded women. Through working with the natural environment and fostering a nonthreatening, noncompetitive space for women, these opportunities were influential in the expansion of assertiveness skills, increasing self-esteem and self-concept (Allin & West, 2013; Avery, 2015; Bell, 1996, 2008; Dickson, Gray, & Mann, 2008; Jordan, 1991, 1992; Warren, 1996a, 1996b). One long-established women-only adventure company in America was Woodswomen, whose mission was to promote supportive and challenging learning experiences for women to foster individual growth, responsibility, and relationship skills (Mitten, 1992). They also included a strong environmental charter that provided women an option to participate in trips where low environmental impact had been seriously considered by the organizers. Denise Mitten, one of the early founders of Woodswomen, described their values as "emotional safety as well as physical safety; personal choice and individual goals; healthy relationships with people and the environment; women and women's ways of knowing" (Mitten, 1985, p. 21).

Initiating a Long Overdue Conversation with the Outdoor Profession

In 2013, at the Sixth International Outdoor Education Research Conference in New Zealand, three well-respected male academics and researchers conducted a workshop entitled "Exploring Critical and Transformative

Methodologies in Outdoor Education Research." What played out in their 40-minute workshop was both disconcerting and an epiphany.

Using a "fishbowl" activity which is well known to outdoor education facilitators, the presenters placed three chairs at the top of a horseshoe shape and seated themselves in them. The workshop presenters were seated in these chairs and commenced the workshop dialogue. If and when a member of the audience felt the desire to interject, they had to come to a chair and tap one of the seated persons on the shoulder. That person vacated the chair and went to sit in the chair left available by the person that tapped them. This process allowed new voices from the audience to enter the conversation by assuming a position in one of the three seats.

As time elapsed, the conversation was lively, entertaining, and educative. But the asymmetrical relationship that followed was even more perplexing. Not a single woman got up to tag a male out of their seat. Effectively, we did not hear a feminist voice. In addition, no one woman (theorist or practitioner) was mentioned as a significant player in the field of "critical and transformative methodologies in outdoor education research" (as per the topic of the workshop). Effectively, the workshop was *run by men, for men, exalting the accomplishments of men*. The feminine input or footprint in the field had been erased. In that very instance (November 2013), *my* light-bulb moment occurred. *Outdoor education has a gender-blinkered view of women's contributions to outdoor learning.*

The epiphany was the stark realization of women's invisible existence as key players in OE and, more disconcertingly, there was no acknowledgement of this oversight by the women in the group (many of whom were present in the room with a long and celebrated history of achievements in OE). I was astounded. Having spent the last 30+ years of my career advocating a place for women in the field and forging a connection between research and practice, I was left questioning my own inept, mute, and passive response. Why hadn't I got up and spoken? The invisibility has, in part, been allowed to exist because of the way the field has developed and continues to operate.

The omnipresent question replaying in my head whilst the presentation unfolded was: *How will I be perceived if I speak up*? As I ruminate on my reticence, I have listed some of the possible reasons for my self-imposed silence:

- *Frozen:* Was I paralysed by shock and as a result became mute?
- *Guilt:* By not speaking up, would I be lending a hand to this ongoing male-dominated discourse?
- *Ridicule:* If I were encouraged to speak up, would I be labelled a "precious petal" or "butch lesbian" or "feminazi"?
- *Silent lurker:* Is it better to just sit back and let this wash over me, observe, rather than inject my voice?

- *Misrepresented:* If I did challenge the status quo, what would the men think? Most probably, "What's your problem? Suck it up, princess."
- *Mixed messages:* Concerned about my public image, how would I be perceived (by men and women) if I did speak up? A nutty, left-wing radical or a whacko disgruntled feminist? Or would I be seen as a brave hero?
- *Misconceptions:* Are men unaware of their blind spot and not cognizant that they have overlooked or bypassed women in their genderwashed dialogue?
- *Admonished:* Is she just an agitator and a man hater, trying to put men in their place?
- *Awkward:* Is it not polite to point out to men that they have spent 40 minutes ignoring women?
- *Feminist fatigue:* Been there, done that, and paid the price, so I don't want to do it again. What am I prepared to die on the hill for? I've learnt to pick my fights carefully.
- *Bite my tongue:* Getting recognition may not be the most important fight right now.

Whatever the reason, I was speechless with sheer disbelief. As a reflective person, I generally refrain from spontaneously speaking, preferring instead extra time to formulate a measured response. In this instance, my "silence" could be construed as "consent" to the events that unfolded in the workshop. But nothing could be further from the truth. Hindsight gives us great wisdom, and if I had my druthers, I would have said:

> *Thank you for an enriching workshop, but I am going to say something that I don't want to be misinterpreted as a criticism, but more of an "observation." We have had a 40-minute dialogue that has only encouraged men to speak up—and more importantly has had only males acknowledged as the leading practitioners and theorists. Doesn't that strike us as incongruous? Look around the room—at least 50% of the audience are women, and yet none have chosen to have a voice.* Why do women don an invisible cloak in a room of alpha males?

When Did "Feminist" Become Such a Dirty Word?

Unpacking some of the stereotypes attributed to the word "feminist," and particularly women involved in the outdoor learning profession, has revealed some fascinating results. When I ask my Gen Y students to do a cartoon drawing of what a "feminist" looks like, they stereotypically provide hairy, angry, bra-burning women who are given labels such as outspoken and opinionated (Fig. 3.5).

Positives	Negatives
Confident	Bra burning
Equality focused	Crazy
Independent	Angry
Powerful	Opinionated and outspoken
Strong	Protesting
Career-oriented	Spikey hair with unshaven armpits and/or legs

Fig. 3.5 Author observations of the frequently mentioned qualities attributed to feminism though the eyes of Gen Y

Interestingly, my 27-year-old daughter announced, "I wouldn't call myself a feminist," despite having a double degree in Engineering and Law. It seems that many young Gen Y women do not align their motivations and practices to the pioneering feminist movement. The poignant question is "Where has our equity message failed and feminism become a dirty word?" Perhaps part of the apathy towards feminism can be traced to the fact that Gen X absorbed the message that women could have it all—and grow up with great careers and caring, equitable husbands. However, many are now realizing that it is hard to do it all, even though there is an inbuilt protection such as legislation as their safeguard. Whatever the answer to this ubiquitous question, I firmly believe Gen Y would retort, *"I support a lot of the principles that feminism is built on, such as respect and equal pay, but I definitely don't self-identify with the word feminist."*

Time to Apply the Bechdel Test in OEE

We might deploy a Bechdel Test for the OE profession, first conceived in 1985 by feminist cartoonist Alison Bechdel when she published the comic strip, *The Rule*. Ostensibly, Bechdel (2010) observed that men in movies were always portrayed as the protagonists and women served only minor characters. She proposed the Bechdel Test as a way to evaluate which movies respected women as active protagonists: To pass the test, a movie had to have at least two women who talk to one another about something other than a man. Essentially, the test screens whether women have complex and substantive roles and are portrayed as independent characters or whether they are treated as supplemental or subordinate to the dominant narrative driven by male protagonists (Hickey, 2014; Waletzko, 2015a, 2015b).

A Call to Action: Time to Push the Reset Button

In a sense, I am calling for the profession to push the reset button and conduct a Bechdel Test on itself. This will be a litmus test to measure the active presence of the female voice and ask if women have an effective or autonomous character, such as a protagonist, or whether they are treated as a supplement to the main narrative and thereby serve only as a minor character.

The Bechdel Test offers a model for a similar test in the OE profession, especially for instances like in our professional interactions. Questions such as:

- Do men only talk to another about male accomplishments and achievements?
- Do women in our field engage with each other about their own ideas?
- Do we, too, as women asymmetrically privilege male theorists and their contributions to the field?

In short, our profession would currently fail the Bechdel Test, as women have been unsuccessful in their quest to actively interrogate contemporary cultural and structural norms. It is time to step up and be valiant whilst challenging the status quo within the profession. We need to break through the barriers created not only by men, but also by women's unwillingness to speak up and explicitly challenge the biases that prevent fuller participation (Garcia, Weber, & Garimella, 2014; Vukotic, 2016). As a unified body, we require a discussion that is not centred on male theorists but rather foregrounds women's distinctive contributions and puts them equally into mainstream conversation (see also Gray, 2016b).

Men and Women Must Orchestrate Change Together

For the most part, we live in a patriarchal culture where hegemonic power has been apportioned to males (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Pinker, 2009; Pipher, 1994; Sharp, 2001). Yet men and women need to collectively and defiantly stand on the cusp of the modern era with resolute solidarity. In the words of Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau:

> We shouldn't be afraid of the word "feminist." Men and women should use it to describe themselves anytime they want. (Trudeau, 2016)

Indeed, societal delusions and conceptual misunderstandings about the word feminism are ubiquitous and pervasive. In 2016, I provided an analysis of women's perceptions of their invisibility, which revealed nine key themes as to why feminist reform has been stymied:

1. A lack of self-confidence; women do not like to self-promote.
2. Women typically employ a symbiotic or eco-feminist style of leadership.
3. Motherhood and the resultant struggles for longevity in the field.
4. A mismatch between heroism and gender roles plagues the profession.
5. Perfection is our worst enemy.
6. Some women suffer from impostor syndrome.
7. Women do not ask, stay silent, and allow others to determine the terms of discussion.
8. "Feminist fatigue" and the rationalization that "women can't have it all."
9. Feminism has failed to achieve traction.

This begs the question: *Has feminism failed to achieve significant traction* (Cox, 2016)? Perhaps women naively made an assumption in the 1980s and 1990s that feminist reform was just a pipeline issue and that gender inequality would adjust over the oncoming decades? The source of the difficulties that women confront in OE is somewhat convoluted, as we do not often find explicit obstruction or overt prejudice. Instead, I observed:

> The obstacles are invisible and the covert biases that prevent women's progress appear to be gender neutral. In addition, many women suffer from feminist fatigue—an important through-line of current feminist discussion.
>
> My ongoing conversations with seasoned female outdoor educators often focus on how it feels to be a *minority* female in the outdoor sector. (Gray, 2016b, p. 26)

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have unveiled the subtle and nuanced messages that prevail in OLEs with regard to the covert status of women. By building on the discussion provided by Denise Mitten in Chap. 2, where she outlined a series of revelatory incidents that occurred in the midnight rendezvous at the picnic table, we find that our story as outdoor women has not escaped the same narrative. Unfortunately, in the past 30 years, inequalities, subtle prejudice, and gender invisibilities still linger, and a closer scan of the field reveals a stark contrast to the egalitarian values to which it espouses. Women need the position statement for their indiscernible presence to self-correct the implicit bias being inflicted through gender laundering and unconscious bias. Through systematic change and cultural shifts within the profession, a brighter future will be assured for those who follow in our footsteps. A better environment for everyone is the underlying goal, whilst also celebrating the richness of knowledge, wisdom, and practices of women as a unified and diverse body.

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4

Outdoor Education: Threaded Pathways to Belonging

Sandy Allen-Craig and Cathryn Carpenter

Introduction

As passionate outdoor educators, our professional experiences and personal lives have been intrinsically rewarding as well as encompassing numerous challenges within a more public arena. Reflections on our 30-plus years of employment as outdoor educators in Victoria highlighted that we were documenting the emergence and consolidation of the profession, both locally and nationally, as we identified key decades in our lives.

This collaborative writing process has emphasized our shared sense of the ridiculous and frequent bemusement at the separate but similar threads our lives have taken, often echoing significant song lyrics from each decade. Along with our perspectives on the professional development of outdoor education in Victoria, we interweave our personal stories and anecdotes to examine key points along our shared journeys.

S. Allen-Craig (✉)
School of Exercise Science, Australian Catholic University,
Melbourne, VIC, Australia

C. Carpenter
Barwon Heads, VIC, Australia

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The 1960s

Fig. 4.1 The mirror dinghy: The most popular home-built yacht of the 1960s

The early 1960s are renowned as the age of permissive society, free love, and alternative ways of living in the world. It was also the decade in which we were both born—sliding headfirst into the world amongst the last of the baby boomer generation. Whilst our parents might have lingering memories of life during the Depression and the Second World War, the future was looking brighter. The lyrics “life is but a dream, it’s what you make of it” (DiMucci, Weiss, & Cita, 1961) seemed to reverberate through our early years.

This was a time for questioning what was important in life as well as challenging traditional approaches, in particular to education and schooling. Timbertop was the first example in Victoria of an educational curriculum that was purposefully engaging students in learning that could occur “in” and “through” the outdoors. Whilst the school had developed this campus in the 1940s, it was not widely publicized until the programme gained notoriety with the attendance of royalty in 1966.

In other states of Australia, more outdoor-focused programmes were beginning to emerge. Remnants from our colonial past resulted in programmes originating from the United Kingdom slowly evolving and developing an

Australian focus as they adapted to the landscapes and outdoor environments with which they were now working. Outward Bound programmes found a base near Canberra and ran programmes across the alpine regions, whilst Scouts and Guides continued to develop and refine their programmes in urban and rural regions. Around Australia fledgling camps and educational programmes took tentative steps to proclaim or offer something more meaningful, engaging, and directly transferable to students and the wider community than the contemporary curriculum of the times.

Whilst programmes were evolving and developing to get more people active outdoors, the 1960s were also significant for the loss of a secondary school student's life in Cradle Mountain National Park, Tasmania. The public review of this tragedy identified a number of leadership mistakes and errors of judgement, resulting in the development of the Community Bushwalking Leadership certificate (Lingard, 2004). Initially facilitated by the National Fitness Council of Victoria (NFCV), these community qualifications were the first widely available, formalized training that outdoor enthusiasts could access.

As children in this decade, we both experienced few responsibilities or cares. We were fortunate to embrace the freedom of the permissive age. Comfortably living in rural communities somehow, we both discovered that our constant immersion in surrounding natural environments was generating a deep and abiding love for the outdoor life. With family members, friends, or alone, we sought adventures large or small in the landscapes in which we lived.

Sandy's childhood is filled with memories of endless hours exploring her family's bushy block, creating adventures and imaginary journeys with her siblings and best buddy. With dirt roads and no fences, the scope of possibility seemed endless even if in reality she perhaps was never that far away. Adding to this was the timelessness of family adventures: building a hut to live in and ski from in winter, bush camping and the beach for long summers, and frightening yet exhilarating hours and hours on the water whilst both parent and child learnt to sail the dingy made together in the family lounge room.

Cathryn also built a sailing dingy with her father in a borrowed shed by the railway line. Her family moved every three years, living in Victorian rural towns. Anticipating change and exploring new spaces was central to her understanding of the world. Family holidays entailed counting up the savings and travelling as far north, east, or west as half the money and time would take them before turning homeward bound. Always seeking new environments to camp alongside: a river, lake, or an ocean. Riding a bike through the sandy tracks beside the Murray River *north of Mildura, or swimming in a boggy dam amongst the wheat fields in the Wimmera are lingering childhood memories.*

As adults, we often question what role childhood memories and experiences have in the choices made in our lives. For us, the strong sense of connection to the outdoors, where active curiosity about surrounding environments along with a sense of freedom, dominated. Intimate contact with the natural world, especially during childhood, is considered essential in forming meaningful bonds with, and promoting positive values towards the natural environment (Chawla, 1998; Hinds & Sparks, 2008). Time in natural places has always been and continues to be essential for both of us.

Reflecting back on these early years, it was our experiences and interactions with nature that we both vividly recall and cherish. We question whether these early childhood experiences are the threads that have gently drawn us down our chosen pathways: the development of our lifelong quests for adventures, our role in taking responsibility to protect unique environments, and the constant autotelic desire to spend time in the natural world. The awareness that the natural world can fulfil a range of human needs and desires in a healthy, regenerating process that ultimately protects the natural environments is important to both of us. As Wright and Gray (2013) suggested, "our values and beliefs significantly affect job satisfaction, commitment and work motivation" (p. 20). The impact of this early immersion and awareness of nature guided our choices constantly.

A similar search to identify and clarify the purpose of outdoor education (OE) unfolded across Australia in the 1960s. At this time, Queensland, New South Wales, and Tasmania had all identified positive links between young people being in natural environments and being active in the outdoors. Curriculum and community health programmes were beginning to investigate the benefits of learning in the outdoors and how beneficial these experiences were for both school students and the community. Field studies units and camping programmes were identified as important methods to enhance the traditional science and agricultural subjects. Parallel to this, opportunities to extend existing physical education (PE) and sports curricula for the benefit of health and fitness were being explored. Defining exactly what OE entailed and how it could/should be experienced continued to evolve; however, Brookes' (2002) suggestion that "outdoor education is located within, and intervenes in, patterns of existing relationships between communities and regions" encapsulated the diverse and complex ways in which OE was developing (p. 409).

The 1970s

Fig. 4.2 Sandy learning to ski at age six

As teenagers in this decade, the lyrics of the Blood Sweat & Tears song, "Makes you think all the world's a sunny day" (Simon, 1973) became indicative of the lifestyles we enjoyed. Whilst the death of Sandy's father changed many aspects of her childhood, the fundamental thread of being active in the outdoors continued. Hedonistic in hindsight, the opportunities we both had to pursue outdoor activities for pleasure without having to worry too much about the mechanics of organizing these activities was extraordinary. Perhaps our commitment to provide opportunities for others stems from these early rewards based on the generosity of others. The brief moments spent hurtling down the slopes was easily worth the hours spent cleaning or working to fund them.

Schools in Victoria in the 1970s did not offer OE as an explicit part of the curriculum; however, many schools ran orientation camps or school excursions to remote parts of Australia. This was quite widespread and by 1978, almost 80% of secondary schools had a camping programme (Penhall, 1978). The private schools allocated extra funding to strengthen their alternative Year 9 programmes, whilst the public school system was largely dependent on the energy and passions of the staff and local community. The range of sport and recreation options depended mostly upon the region.

Fortunately for us both, the public state secondary schools we attended offered a range of innovative and exciting extracurricular opportunities. Bus trips to various locations like the coast, the Atherton tablelands, or outback Australia, expanded our understanding of how people lived in diverse landscapes. It was, however, an opportunity to learn different activities or journey mechanisms like skiing, sailing, paddling, and bushwalking that were the critical experiences. The 1970s was the decade when we, as teenagers, embraced every opportunity to expand and consolidate our outdoor skills.

As the outdoor opportunities offered by various organizations increased, the schools and youth centres began to expect a higher level of qualification than either a PE teaching qualification or a couple of years of individual experience and interest. Scouts and Guides had structured training for camp leaders, alongside the NFCV Bush Mountain Leadership[1] and Ski Tour Leaders[2] courses that were gradually becoming the accepted qualifications for leaders in the outdoors.

When completing high school and approaching university, we were drawn to seek qualifications within a profession that would enable us to spend time outdoors. At this time in Australia, OE had not established itself as a profession. Even the terminology of OE had not been firmly settled upon as the identifying term for learning and growing in the outdoors. There were almost no undergraduate pathways at a tertiary level in Australia with the exception of electives offered as part of PE teacher training or recreational programmes. The only avenue available for any study in the field of OE at this time was a Graduate Diploma in OE offered by the Brisbane College of Advanced Education in Queensland.

Sandy's educational choices were driven by positive experiences of participation in activities and experiencing success (not necessarily in the traditional team sports), by mid-teens a competent skier, sailor, and surf lifesaver, and persuaded by powerful memories from a school trip—of bush camping in the outback for three weeks. Drawn to study in an area that allowed her to be outside and physically active, led to firstly studying environmental studies with a park ranger job in mind, and then changing to PE.

Documenting and recording experiences in the outdoors had enabled Cathryn to develop film and photographic skills that she wanted to pursue alongside being outdoors and her love of literature. The teaching degree that required studies in *four discipline areas was the logical choice. Whilst OE was not yet a degree in its own right, there were a number of subjects and opportunities to learn skills through the university campsite at Noojee: art in the outdoors, a ski touring expedition from Licola to Mt Howitt, as well as numerous trips paddling the Goulburn River.*

The 1980s

The 1980s in some ways were the peak years of activity in the expansion of the OE sector, as well as providing the foundational breadth of experience and skills for our ongoing professional careers. This decade saw rapid growth and development in the outdoors sector, particularly in Victoria with the founding of the Victorian Outdoor Education Association (VOEA), Australian Camps Association, the provision of OE subjects in many universities, and fully dedicated courses in a few.

OE was accredited as a Year 12 subject area in 1982 in Victoria, generating a number of study options for students in Years 10 and 11, and OE was offered in some form of school curriculum in almost all Australian states. The Third National Outdoor Education Conference was held in Queensland in 1981, and by the mid-1980s, OE teaching positions were emerging. By the late 1980s, all states had established a professional association to support and develop the professional field and industry associated with OE.

We completed our undergraduate studies in the early 1980s and focused on embracing experiences that would enable us to carve out careers in the

Fig. 4.3 Cathryn, east of Kargil, Kashmir, India

outdoors. As Hodkinson and Sparkes' (1997) sociological model of careership indicated, our decisions arose "thorough ongoing life experiences and interactions with others … partly emotional and made in relation to perceived horizons for action" (p. 34). The lure of travelling and working overseas tempted Cathryn to take a year off during her studies, with Sandy taking a year off after she graduated. The essence of our work was in guiding, teaching, or instructing in alpine, aquatic, or general camping environments in places like New Zealand, Canada, the United States, and India. Returning home, further opportunities for Sandy arose in a range of endeavours including the NFCV camps and community health campaigns such as "Life be in it" and "Ski fit," whilst Cathryn decided to pursue specific postgraduate OE qualifications in Queensland to further enhance her skills and understandings in more tropical environs.

As we strengthened and broadened our qualifications and working experiences in the outdoors, we also volunteered our energy, expertise, and time to further professionalize the outdoor field. Developing and implementing an OE curriculum in schools were the focus, alongside broader curriculum initiatives to articulate outdoor safety practices like canoeing and skiing. The VOEA and the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) were two vital organizations that ran conferences and training for outdoor educators.[3] Facilitating the developing community and professional organizations increased our awareness that practitioner membership and volunteers were needed to ensure the outdoor profession could continue to blossom.

There is an integrated synergy in careers in the outdoors; the skiing, sailing, paddling, or walking activities provide both a medium for pleasure and enjoyment in their own right as well as being a mechanism to access the heart of the country. To share these experiences with family and friends was as important as to teach or instruct within a commercial or educational organization. Explicit "feminist agendas" or challenging the role of women in the outdoors was not a factor for either; both of us were intrinsically motivated by our passion for spending time in the outdoors. Just being outdoors let our true colours shine—our competence and skills ultimately determined our leadership roles regardless of any gender barriers. However, we both sensed the validity in Allin and Humberstone's (2006) suggestion that "women's career experiences and paths in the outdoors industry may be affected by a gendered disposition" (p. 150) without this necessarily being explicit.

Traditionally, many outdoor programmes including adventure education, OE, wilderness education, and outdoor recreation pursuits have been portrayed as "masculine" involving strength, risk, and unknown outcomes

(Gray, Mitten, Loeffler, Allen-Craig, & Carpenter, 2017; Mitten, Gray, Allen-Craig, Loeffler, & Carpenter, 2018; Humberstone, 2002; Wright & Gray, 2013). The OE profession in Victoria at this time was dominated by male practitioners; however, females were making inroads at many levels. Wright and Gray (2013) argued that women in outdoor fields face stigmas, that we must unflinchingly face any challenge with fearless determination. Women often experience the double bind of prejudice. On the one hand, they are treated as inadequate or perhaps odd for wanting to be in the field, but are also subjected to unrelenting scrutiny and judgement and held accountable to a higher standard (p. 12).

Sandy describes being aware that her gender was a significant factor in employment, and although qualifications and skills were important, scrutiny of some aspects of her skills appeared to be based on preconceived gender bias. Could she drive a 4WD? Could she tow and back a trailer? Did she have the strength and fitness to undertake a particular position? Thankfully, the answer to these questions was yes, but were her male counterparts subjected to this level of questioning?

Cathryn was fortunate to have male friends that treated her as just one of the crew and enabled her to avoid the gender focus as they had the same expectations of everyone who was there. She was conscious of some folk (men and women), not being enthused at women infiltrating traditionally male spaces, but this did not seem to limit her opportunities. However, there is no doubt that a number of gender stereotypes dominated in the outdoor world and being able to challenge and justify the inclusion of all people into the outdoors is critical to both women.

Consciousness around gender was a significant factor for another reason. Being in our early 20s, we were also interested in exploring meaningful relationships. The inherent nature of this work requires staff to work closely with other staff for extended periods of time. One often became close and dependent on the other person during the programme, developing friendships and deeper understandings much more rapidly than what one might experience in the normal pattern of human interaction.

When working on commercial programmes with adults seeking an adventure and change in their lives, it is not unknown for the leaders, regardless of gender, to become the focus of clients' romantic aspirations. Taking people to remote locations where they are not in control of their living conditions, or being in the position of learner, can lead to unnatural dependence on staff that can easily be misinterpreted. The multiple roles of an outdoor instructor also speed up the processes of human connection. You know personal medical information, often have to examine and treat wounds, talk people through challenging times, and motivate, support, instruct, and organize all components of an extended journey. To manage the human relationships component of the role requires a high degree of self-reflection, self-knowledge, personal analysis, and skill. However, the adult personal relationships aspect of the outdoor professional's life are rarely discussed and "the heterosexist and homophobic nature of outdoor education has largely been ignored" (Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008, p. 32).

Serious relationships or marriage with the prospect of children were harbingers of reduced participation in outdoor trips for the female. The year 1989 was a significant year for both of us, as we married partners who were not professionally involved in OE. We both chose to start our new adventures outdoors with the exchange of vows witnessed by the wind, the sun, or the stars. We both became skilled at balancing the challenging dynamics of maintaining an ongoing personal relationship whilst being employed full time in the outdoors. The social norms were shifting as women began to prioritize their responsibilities and continued to pursue their adventure goals (Warren, 1996). As Little's (2002) research suggested, women find value and meaning from adventurous pursuits. She stated, "rather than passively accepting or even acknowledging constraints … women are active, creative participants constructing personally satisfying environments and life stories" (Little, 2002, p. 172). Choosing the right life partners has been integral to our ability to negotiate the social and psychological boundaries that frame women's participation in the outdoors. The lyrics, "I see your true colours shining through" seemed to encapsulate the 1980s for us, the words as well as the images of Cindi Lauper seeking a fun but also honest and meaningful reality.

Marriage for Sandy meant that over time the way she interacted with the outdoors changed and took on different patterns of timing, flow, and participation. Sandy's partner was excited by opportunities that were to arise from forming a partnership with someone intent on sharing a love of adventure and the outdoors. For the early years, one was the teacher, the other the learner. A partner with new outdoor skills and limited experience meant personal adventures were less remote, closer to home, slower steps, seeing the outdoors anew yet also deepening her commitment to initiating others into this wonderful world.

Cathryn's partner was also addicted to spending time adventuring in the outdoors, and together they increased the level of difficulty, remoteness, length of time and effort required in their explorations journeying through different landscapes. Whilst Cathryn was frequently absent from home on work-related trips, her partner's profession also required interstate and international trips, and so travel, constant change, and being in different environments became a fundamental shared understanding of their lives.

The 1990s

Fig. 4.4 Sandy teaching the next generation

"Life has a funny way of sneaking up on you, Life has a funny way of helping you out" (Morissette & Ballard, 1995). The song "Ironic" drew our attention to the reality that just as we had accumulated skills and expertise to extend time in the outdoors, our work and personal commitments began to limit the time available for outdoor adventures.

However, the 1990s saw the consolidation of not only our skills as outdoor educators but also of the outdoor profession itself. The decade was a time when people who worked in the outdoors changed how they viewed their work. Increasingly, the term "profession" rather than "industry" was being used to describe the role for people and programmes that used the outdoors as a platform for education or behaviour change. The term "outdoor education" was now being used in almost all states in Australia. Conferences in OE were well established, with annual state conferences and a range of targeted professional development workshops as well as a biannual National Conference for Outdoor Education.

By this time, we had forged some solid outdoor experience and felt we had something to contribute to the profession. Cathryn joined the council of the VOEA, eventually taking on the role of President, whilst Sandy undertook the State Recreation Coordinator position for ACHPER as well as being a committee member of the VOEA. We both volunteered with the Bush Walking Mountaincraft Training Advisory Board as board members, advisers, or examiners, continuing the tradition of mentoring and supporting future leaders. This was an era of mentorship where contributing and belonging to this community was special, and collectively we felt we were doing something important.

It was in the 1990s that we consolidated our professional roles in the world of academia. Further study was required and we successfully completed our master's degree in this decade. For Cathryn, this further study was really to continue her personal curiosity about the nexus of various theoretical concepts with praxis in secondary schools. Desire to improve the outdoor experiences provided in schools led her to a position lecturing in OE at Victoria University, whilst Sandy undertook a position lecturing Physical Education and Outdoor Recreation at Victoria College, later to become Deakin University.

The 1990s was also a time of growth for training in OE in the Victorian tertiary sector. Initially, La Trobe University offered the only full-time degree in OE in Australia, whilst other universities offered major electives in OE in a number of related degrees. The Tertiary Outdoor Educator's Advisory Network was established to provide support and advice on all matters related to outdoor programming and training. Collaboration between the universities was possible predominantly because there were specific outcomes for each course, and the VOEA had a role to advise future outdoor leaders on their career options depending on which path they wished to take. Cathryn and Sandy, together with other tertiary educators, contributed to the guidelines for teacher training qualifications in OE in Victoria, the development of professional activity statements, and the Victorian response to the National Outdoor Recreation Leadership Scheme, which was being floated at the time as a national accreditation scheme for outdoor leaders. With so many initiatives being developed, it was inevitable that debates around the best way to promote, regulate, and support the outdoor profession dominated. After much discussion, the Outdoor Recreation Council was formed, its role being to represent all aspects of the outdoor profession and industry on a national scale.

Closer to home, the state of Victoria was not the only entity developing new initiatives and growing the outdoor profession. Sandy also found herself in the role of giving birth and growing and nurturing three young children, which directly impacted her leadership role in the outdoors with trips being of shorter duration and less remote.

Cathryn at the same time was pushing the boundaries of extended time in the outdoors and venturing to even more remote corners of the world. She was also developing her understanding of the specific use of the outdoors for various populations including "youth at risk." Small research projects were shaping her curiosity and knowledge of the adventure therapy world.

The 2000s

Fig. 4.5 Cathryn on a coastal bushwalk, Victoria

The turn of the century heralded many opportunities, for us and for the multifaceted area of the outdoor profession. Adjunct areas that up until now had shared the umbrella of associations such as VOEA, sought to be recognized separately. Groups that used the outdoors as a medium for educational or behaviour change, such as adventure therapy and corporate outdoor training, were keen to re-establish themselves as separate entities. Professional debates raised questions about who could or should benefit from being in the outdoors, and what the consequences for the health of the natural environment might be. The role(s) of OE as an all-inclusive experience for personal development, health and well-being, community development, or being seen as a tool for specific skills development like teamwork were being considered.

This decade enabled Sandy to explore the use of the more traditional outdoor adventure, incorporated into training for business leaders. The demand for a combination of outdoor skills, leadership skills, and teaching skills meant opportunities for involvement in the delivery of corporate training programmes. Corporate outdoor training that had boomed in the 1980s and had then been hard hit by economic and insurance issues of the 1990s was now the domain of a steady few who had been in the business for the long haul. The increasing need for the corporate sector to quantify and validate its claims of possible programme outcomes saw a diligent attempt across the entire outdoor sector to concentrate more extensively on gathering strong evidence of programme outcomes and to move away from the more anecdotal evidence of the past.

Cathryn sought to gather evidence to consolidate understandings of experiential education and the value of OE for holistic health benefits. The Bush Adventure Therapy Network was re-established, building on a number of previous incarnations. Key research and literature initiatives helped bring the health and well-being benefits of being in the outdoors to the forefront. However, whilst some of us were finding clarity and new purpose in our specific interests, the voice of the outdoor profession slowly diminished due to diversity of associations within the Outdoor Council of Australia. Ultimately, this led to the development of Outdoor Education Australia (OEA), a national body specifically focused on the outdoor profession and supported by state OE professional associations. The responsibility for the national OE conferences moved to this body, working in conjunction with the host state on a biannual basis.

The *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education*, a national peer-reviewed journal established in the 1990s, has been diligently establishing a research-based body of evidence to support and clarify the impact and outcomes of OE. For those who have worked in academia, this increasing emphasis on research offered opportunities to explore the strengths, weaknesses, and possibilities of programmes, practitioners and human–nature relationships. Both of us were keen to determine if we could achieve the outcomes from an outdoor programme that we often claimed we could achieve, either educationally or therapeutically. This exploration and research allowed the opportunity for us, along with the students we mentored, to share our work at conferences or via national and international journals and texts.

Job satisfaction and intrinsic rewards were always the inspiration in our careers. We were committed to balancing our lives, working in areas we were passionate about, and with people who were collaborative, curious, and generally positive in their approach to their place in the world. Whilst work often included international travel, we both chose to take extended leave from our work and careers to travel around Australia during this decade. This self-initiated "turning point" (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997) was more a chance to consolidate our fundamental beliefs and values than a change in career direction or intent.

"Look at the stars, look how they shine for you, and all the things you do" (Martin, 2000) were lyrics that seemed to highlight how lucky we were. For Sandy, it was a chance to introduce her young family to the joys of extended camping trips whereas for Cathryn, it was a chance to explore the more remote northern regions of Australia.

I realised what a blessing it is to have the opportunity to let go of the binding ties of everyday life and share and explore Australia with my family. My children *became attuned to the rhythms of the bush, their curiosity and imagination became immersed in what the bush had to offer. They created fishing nets out of vegetation, searched for tracks, swam in waterholes and on remote shores, and drew with ochre on the rocks on which they lay to dry themselves. They didn't want our journey to end and now as young adults they relive our travels and talk of their plans to return.*

I loved the colours and the reflections, the sense of timelessness, the freedom to be. Travelling slowly; sitting, walking and watching. The climate encourages one to adjust our actions and intentions to that of the place we are in. I immerse myself in this environment. As we walk, all my theoretical understandings about traditional song lines come alive. My appreciation for cultural histories and personal narratives deepens as I engage with the challenges of moving within and living alongside the land. Sitting in silent companionship around the glowing embers under a starlit night are vibrant memories.

Exploring and immersing ourselves in the outdoors is a key motivational force with annual leave and family holidays, always active immersions or adventures in the outdoors. Both of us consistently seek new pursuits that challenge our skills and keep us in touch with what it feels like to be a beginner. For Cathryn, mountain biking replaces inline skating as the new challenge, whilst surfing becomes the new passion for Sandy. Both of us are constantly trying to obtain or maintain the required skills faster than the gradual cellular demise that ageing brings!

The 2010s…

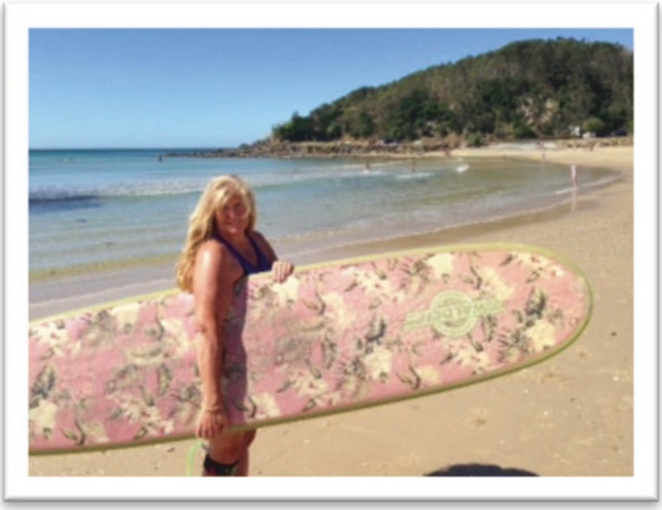

Fig. 4.6 Sandy heading out in search of a wave

The current decade feels like one of perpetual change. The world, the climate, the outdoor profession as well as our individual working careers seem to be in a constant state of transition. However, as the lyrics; "I'd rather be striving than settled, I'd rather be moving than static" (Soederberg & Soederberg, 2014) indicate, it is possible to embrace the positive aspects of change.

These changes strain and tug on the core values and foundations on which the outdoor profession is built. Changes to government policy and funding structures have contributed to the collapse of the strongest state-based OE organization in Australia. The VOEA has been absorbed into the broader representational body Outdoors Victoria, which is seeking a new membership base and gradually rebuilding the capacity to implement OE specific initiatives. Other professional bodies like the Australian Camping Association (ACA) and ACHPER have stepped up to try to help pick up the pieces and address the needs of outdoor professionals. When one door closes, another door opens. Whilst there is always sadness with the demise of pivotal institutions, there is also excitement if new opportunities look promising. The *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education* has morphed into the new *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education,* heralding another change and emphasis in the profession.

A crowded curriculum in schools sees pressure placed on a range of alternative subjects, Outdoor Environmental[4] Education being one of them. Most private sector schools find the growing prospect of litigation and the ever-increasing demand for due diligence overwhelming and look beyond the school borders to outdoor industry providers to take responsibility for their whole programme. This significantly changes the nature of the relationship between staff and students and the continuity of programmes—however, innovative solutions are being sought.

Like the changing of the tide, support and passion for our profession means that it will surge and rise above the current challenges. Already a strong and dedicated group of outdoor educators on a national level has worked diligently to ensure that OE professionals have a voice in the new national curriculum. Hard lobbying in Victoria has ensured a strong injection of funding from a new government to ensure access to camping and outdoor programmes by all schoolchildren.

Attendance at state and national conferences is once again rising, bolstered by the need to work collaboratively with other organizations that share the understanding of education in the outdoors. Industry providers have once again lobbied government bodies to open up funding for ongoing training in outdoor leadership since the funding was drastically cut in higher educational institutes. Whilst some undergraduate courses have shrunk, others have grown and there is increased support for postgraduate programmes in OE. Independent training options in bush adventure therapy have also been initiated and the dedication of passionate people continues. An increasing number of practitioners are developing evaluation processes and research projects that will ensure a clear understanding of issues within the OE profession.

The course that Sandy initiated and developed over many years has now been implemented in three campuses within universities across Australia, and every semester, Sandy continues to share her experience and expertise whilst walking, paddling, and skiing alongside her students as they explore and experience their own journeys in the outdoors. She maintains the holistic integrity of theory into practice and practice into theory. The course that Cathryn developed over 15 years has been relocated into another faculty of the university and her current work centres on experiential educational processes within youth work and bush adventure therapy. The bushwalks, paddling, or skiing expeditions to remote regions that have been essential throughout her life continue with family and friends rather than with students.

When reflecting on our lives in the outdoors we discovered we have so much in common; we have each privileged spending time in nature and have followed our hearts' desires. Like the "river of life" analogy often used for participants in educational or therapeutic processes, it seems as though we have journeyed down the same river, both observers and players within the fluctuating history of OE. It is interesting to reflect how frequently our lives have followed parallel tributaries, been swept along with the torrent, or taken divergent routes, and yet every path we follow consolidates our sense of belonging. Somehow, time seems irrelevant; the past is a wealth of memories and experiences and the future tempting and mysterious as the current entices us forward.

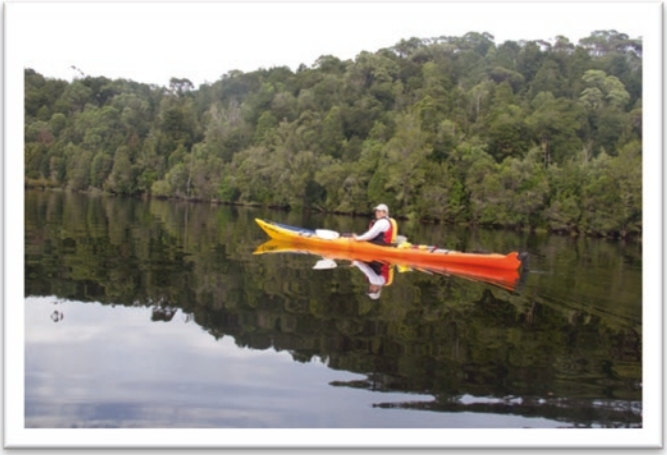

Fig. 4.7 Cathryn on the Pieman River, Tasmania

Notes

1. The BMLC was a comprehensive program which trained participants to lead Bushwalking trips. Sandy completed BMLC in 1990.
2. The STLC was a comprehensive program which trained participants to lead Ski Touring. Cathryn completed STLC in 1986 (first female graduate).
3. Sandy has been a member of both Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) and the Victorian Outdoor Education Association (VOEA) council and boards for 25 years and is still an active member of both. Cathryn was a member of the VOEA council for five years, chaired the International Adventure Therapy Committee for six years, and is still an active member of the Australian Association for Bush Adventure Therapy, Inc.
4. Outdoor Education was amalgamated with Environmental Education in 2001.

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5

Elder Women Speak of Outdoor Learning and Experience

Genevieve Blades

Setting the Scene: Gathering for Conversation

> When we women offer our experience as our truth, as human truth, all the maps change. There are new mountains.
> (Le Guin, 1989, p. 160)

Twenty-seven years on, this quote by author Ursula Le Guin resonates to this day and has inspired and helped me frame this chapter in which three women speak of their experiences in outdoor education (OE) in Australia. Furthermore, Le Guin (1989, p. 159) offers a strong proclamation and commitment: "To keep women's words, women's works, alive and powerful—that's what I see as our job as writers and readers for the next fifteen years, and the next fifty."

There are three collaborators in this chapter: Gen Blades (chapter author), Terry Gaechter, and Annie Louhgnan, who all began their working lives in OE in the late 1980s, around the time Le Guin's book was published. I invited Terry and Annie to share a conversation about our experiences in the outdoors and, more specifically, OE. Through our passages in the outdoors, our lives have intersected in various ways over the years. Terry met Annie soon after arriving in Australia from Switzerland, and Annie introduced her to

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G. Blades (✉)
Department of Outdoor & Environmental Education, La Trobe University, Bendigo, VIC, Australia

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people and places in the outdoors. Terry and I lectured at the same university. Terry and Annie are pursuing other work paths now and I still lecture at a university. We all live in the same town, Castlemaine, in central Victoria, and maintain contact in our everyday lives.

These intersections weave their way through this conversation. We gathered one evening, shared food, and by chance we had a harvest of elderberries to prune! As each of us identified ourselves as elders, the word "elder" leapt out and we agreed that this would be a theme in this chapter. Terry observed how "the pruning of the elderberries is rhythmic, just pulling them off the stalk. This is how the older women did it. They quilted and shared their stories. It's easier to talk when you're doing something." Annie added that it was a nourishing thing to do. So, we set about to share our "nourishing terrains" (Fig. 5.1).

This pruning spontaneously arose as part of the methodology[1]—a conversation that is embodied by way of the hands. We engaged our thoughts and memory with the dextrous task of pruning. Embodiment can be described in many ways but in this context, cognition depends not just on the brain but also on the body, an understanding brought to the fore by many scholars, notably Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch (1991). In relation to the tactile sense and the dexterity of the hand, in his book *The Thinking Hand*, architect Juhani Pallasmaa (2009) highlights how the eye–hand–mind fusion is essential for dexterity and how, ultimately, the body and the senses play a crucial role in memory and creative work. This suggests that we are capable of understanding by making and thinking through our hands.

Fig. 5.1 The elderberry intersections and connections

Introduction

Returning to the opening quote by Le Guin (1989, p. 160), she states that "when we women offer our experience as our truth, as human truth, all the maps change." This is what we offer in this chapter—our experience—and hence, this is a phenomenological undertaking as we speak from our experiences as we lived and live them. Our intention is not only to offer our reflections but also to open up possibilities. This was the intent of authors Brent Hocking, Johnna Haskell, and Warren Linds (2001, p. xvi) in acknowledging embodiment in a way that they claim that "our bodies implicate us in the world in particular ways." This implication, they explain, requires attentiveness, is relational through the engagement and experiencing of our bodies and, furthermore, "we have a responsibility to embody awareness of our intentions, values, and beliefs emerging through our worlds of interaction" (Hocking et al., 2001, p. xx).

Each of us who speaks in this chapter comes with our own biases, assumptions, and values. Our worlds interact in conversation. A brief outline of our biographies provides a snapshot of each of us behind the storytellers, revealing in some sense our values. Terry, originally from Switzerland, has worked for 27 years as an experiential and outdoor educator. She now works in a mindfulness-based experiential psychotherapy (Hakomi) practice. Annie is from Victoria and she worked for many years, facilitating, motivating, and running adventurous and rewarding programmes, with various organizations and schools as an outdoor educator and instructor in Australia and the United Kingdom. A yearning to learn more took Annie into alternative therapies, food as medicine, and yoga. I am from Queensland and have been living and working in Victoria since 2004. I have worked with schools in the outdoors in Queensland and moved to Victoria to start a lecturing position in a university course in outdoor and environmental education. My interests and passions during my time lecturing relate to relational pedagogy and philosophical understandings of place and education (Blades & Bester, 2013).

Our experiences shared in the conversation span a period of 30 years, in different places and similar places, some on our own, some shared. For the purposes of this chapter, the phenomenological concept of experience as we live it, or lived experience, is adopted and, as Max Van Manen (2014, p. 38) describes, "phenomenology orients to the meanings that arise in experiences." For instance, the experience of our conversation as embodied by way of our hands engaged in pruning describes some of the structure (material) and qualities (temporal, corporeal) of our conversation that brings forth more than just words.

This interaction invites multiple layers of meaning and shifting perspectives over time. My aim is to reveal our experience akin to the terrain of our lives. Similar to how Jeff Malpas (1999, p. 36) applies a topographical structure to his analysis of place and experience and describes this as "an open and interconnected region within which other persons, things, spaces and abstract locations, and even one's self, can appear, be recognised, identified and interacted with." It is important to note also that our conversation is situated in the context of professional practice as outdoor educators and this inquiry seeks to enact that in a way that reveals "thoughtful and tactful action" (Van Manen, 2014, p. 15).

For women, the difficulty in finding the space for voice and for visibility is evident in OE (Preston, 2001). These spaces are the gaps between an intermediate space, a space that is hard to define. Ruthellen Josselson (1996, p. 4) refers to this space as the "in-between space" and states that the "way the space is filled or reverberates … becomes all-important." The woman's experience is what becomes visible. I have chosen to emphasize this space by using the symbol—as a stimulus to allow the felt senses, the multiple meanings to emerge and open up and thereby emphasize a creative topography. To illustrate this point, Paul Carter (2004, p. 3) makes the distinction between "gap" and "abyss," describing the qualities of the "gap" as not empty but, rather, resembling "the instant between two strides, having amplitude … [and] softly dialectical in motion."

There are particular demands in relation to the writing of lived experience in the phenomenological tradition. It is a reflective process, yet at the same time attempts to "recover and express the ways in which we live our lives" (Van Manen, 2014, p. 20). Laurel Richardson (1994, p. 521) puts the notion of research as writing another way: "Through it we can experience the self-reflexive and transformational process of self-creation … we struggle to find a textual place for ourselves and our doubts and uncertainties." This emphasizes the significance of trust, vulnerability, and courage as women speak, which has been a focus of my previous research (Blades, 2005).

In organizing this chapter, the intention is for you, the reader, to bear witness to the themes as they unfold, the different layers, the different meanings. Hocking et al. (2001, p. xxxiii) state that writing and reading in this way is an adventure "as we penetrate what is growing" in new ways or different ways. The "possibilities are unknown to all of us until the moments when they happen." As previously mentioned, the narrative of this chapter is largely our conversation that provides an assembly of experiences, responses, and insights. It is complemented by, to adopt a term and method used by Hocking et al. (2001, p. xxxiii), "analytic stances … providing a reading that brings different possibilities …."

The flow and movement of our conversation is reflected in the naming of the sections and aims to reveal the texture of our experiences through a topographical structure that, to draw from Le Guin's (1989, p. 160) quote again, speaks one's truth whereby "all the maps change." The first section is Beginnings: Finding Ground. Here, we share our early years in OE and how we started. In the second section, Mind the Gap—Tensions and Revelations—shifts to our experiences that are affirming and reveals our learnings and insights that have come from the uncomfortable and unknown spaces. The third section, Becoming: Elder-Being, captures the insights that transcend to possibilities for each of us as well as women collectively. The final section, Beyond the Horizon—Essence Stories, includes a written reflective piece by each of us and then arrives at the final destination or opens to new possibilities.

Beginnings—Finding Ground

Analytic Stance

Themes of physicality, belonging, not belonging, conforming, and the importance of relationships were common in describing our beginning experiences. Our experiences raise important cultural antecedents. Barbara Humberstone (2000) critically examines the outdoor "industry" as culture and argues how it can be a site for masculine hegemony, particularly due to the very physical nature of it. In our beginnings, OE in Australia was a newly emerging field and evolving in terms of its presence as a profession and its educational relevance. The context varied for all of us but did clearly situate the "struggles over meanings, practices and gender subjectivities" (Humberstone, 2000, p. 27).

Pruning the elderberries, we commence our conversation: TG (Terry), AL (Annie), GB (Gen)

AL *reflects generally*: In your twenties, there is a "gung ho" attitude. It was about putting on a pack and stepping out into the wilderness. Yet at the same time appreciating things: that emergence of experience, the smile on someone's face, the sunrise, getting lost. You are more introspective as you get older as being in nature is in the nature of yourself. There is a connection.

There is collective agreement:

TG: I came into outdoor education quite late. I was 28 years old when I discovered this was amazing and it was very much about the physical for me. I came to Australia to work as a rafting guide. Coming from Europe where there is no wilderness, yes, there are high mountains, but oh my god!! I soon realized I'd need more than my one-year permit to see this incredible country. It was very much about experiencing it, really feeling it. For me it was extraordinary to sleep under the stars and see the stars, whereas in northern Wales it was always raining or cloudy. I was on a steep learning curve at the time, as I always had to be slightly more competent than the people I was with because I was in a teaching role.

AL: I remember when I first started OE, there were 18 of us doing the OE course. There were six women and 12 men. It was interesting because I'd never been into the outdoors in that particular capacity, particularly with heavy packs! Lots of the men had lots of experience, they'd been skiing since they were two, or came from environments where they had that finance or that upbringing that, interestingly, most of the women didn't. Most of us [women] lacked confidence and that's what I noticed the most. I remember starting our first walk in fine weather but it ended up snowing and then having to trudge through snow with our packs on. I remember thinking, "Oh my god! I'm so not able to do this!" and feeling incompetent. I decided to just push myself on and this wasn't my nature. I felt like I had to be someone I wasn't. I wanted it to be enjoyable but I felt I had to be more spirited in that capability thing. I remember when putting up my tent, my back was sore, my feet were sore. I didn't have good enough shoes because I didn't have enough money. In my tent I had a cry, thinking I wasn't meant to be an outdoor ed-er [educator].

GB: I first came into the outdoors and OE a physically capable woman and like you, Terry, I thrived on the physical nature of adventures outdoors. One of my first outdoor encounters was when I went on a 20-day Outward Bound course for young women. I was 18 years of age and that was transformative for me! Doing all these adventurous things: on white-water rivers, rock faces and caves, and being in what felt like incredibly remote places, we ventured on foot carrying backpacks. But I also remember helping others when things got tough. It didn't occur to me at the time how this may have been a function of a women's only group. I just felt at ease in the outdoors, like I'd come home. I also observed our leader and respected and admired her, thinking that this would be a great job to do. After that course, I was invited to work at Outward Bound as a casual staff member during my summer breaks whilst studying at university.

> That was around the early 1980s and OE was just emerging as a profession in Australia at that time. As a student at the university, I was fortunate to encounter OE as a teaching and learning method, thanks to three lecturers (all male). It wasn't part of the course curriculum but these staff weaved it in because they believed in it. That was another formative time for me as I was studying to be a physical education teacher and felt it wasn't what I really wanted to do. I identified more with OE. It felt more holistic. It had meaning beyond learning a set of skills, and there was something profound about being in a natural place and feeling the impact of that on oneself and observing that, with others. Then, soon after I graduated as a physical education teacher, I applied for a job at an OE centre, owned and run by the Department of Education in Queensland. I have had a long-term connection with that place. It was where I learnt to teach in the outdoors and to be with a group of staff who were all very like-minded. This was a mixed-gender group and we all got on well and supported one another, sort of like a family as we all lived on-site at the centre at that time.

Mind the Gap—Tensions and Revelations

Analytic Stance

This section highlights the conditions that enabled each of us to find our own expression in professional practice through tensions, discomfort, and the "aha" moments. Working intuitively emerges as a common theme and is reflective of pedagogies that work from the heart, that encourage us, as educators, to know oneself and to "live creatively in the pedagogic world" (Leggo, 2005, p. 175). Relationship emerged as another shared theme and can be described as a relational–responsive pedagogy where the "self-in-relation" with the "other" is paramount.[2] We all found openings for these priorities, yet they were not always easily put into practice. As Humberstone (2000, p. 29) observed that "even though many of the values and philosophies underpinning OE seem to owe much to so called 'feminine' attributes such as care for others and the environment … [the question is] … whether or not these values and philosophies are realised in practice."[3]

The significance of the ecological was also central to us all in areas that spanned the personal, the social, and the environmental, where we valued our place in the Earth's ecology with all dimensions of our being. This includes the areas of social ecology and deep ecology, both recognizing that human existence and well-being are dependent on being in a relationship with human and nonhuman species.

Unfolding our experiences in order to reveal what's in the gap:

TG: When I came to Australia, there were hardly any women I knew, so when I met women (who are good friends to this day), I thought, I really like them and they're fun! Also, somehow intuitively I knew that there was something about women's experience that was very different to men's. It was so male dominated in the late-1980s when I first came to Australia. I just wanted more of that [connections with women]. I needed that, because I couldn't really *admit* to some of the men I was with, that I was *really* scared or out of my depth. I just felt safer [with women]. There was another kind of experience when I was in the outdoors with women that was often missed when I was just with men, which was more of that emotional feeling, of what surfaces when you're in amazing environments.

AL: [Reflecting on her OE course.] It was interesting because all of the lecturers were men, so there was that attitude of, "Come on girls, you'll have to toughen up a bit." I remember feeling how I loved the outdoors but I didn't love the outdoors *this way*. So again, by not having the strength in my voice to say that, I didn't feel I had the strength to go against the grain of it.

AL: [Annie spoke of the women on her course sharing their discomfort.] I was sharing a tent [with a friend] and I asked, "Are you crying?" She was having a cry too, and then we had a meeting of the women the next day and we all had the same thought. We said we didn't think we could do this and then we said, "Yes we can!" and then it really felt like this separation of the guys and women, through that first bit. We were the second group through the OE course, and at that stage it was pioneered by a couple of army guys, so it did feel like that, but we just sort of clung to each other and it made a difference, that sort of support, a bit of laughter, and checking in: "How are you going? Are you ok?" I think some of the guys felt like that too. They were sensitive, but because they were guys they had to follow the guy thing.

TG: I have to say, I became very disillusioned with it all. I think that was probably because of social ecology.[4] It helped open a crack and realizing there *is* this whole other unspoken world, it was just so blanketed by this very mono-lens. I'm sure it has changed since I was there [lecturing at university] but certainly at that time it just kind of increased this chasm between my sort of understanding … [pause] … just how big I felt that gap was between what I felt inside me. In a way that felt more authentic, as opposed to what was expected of me working in that system, and also, what everyone else expected too. [A colleague] used to talk about this, about how [the course] defined adventure which was the same as it always had been and the students expected that. There was really nowhere to move with other conceptualizations of how to be in nature that are softer and more felt and less defined, less intrusive and less “wow.”

GB: I also reached a point of disillusionment but I was also burnt out. I had been in a position in a large state high school where I designed and taught OE. This was exciting but also challenging and demanding. I was also active in advocating for the OE profession at state and national levels, which was also exciting and challenging. I resigned from the Department of Education feeling I needed time to recalibrate, and at the same time, I also withdrew from leadership roles in OE professional associations. Probably it was more about feeling stale but also, I was wondering if there was a different way? Around this time I’d been to a national OE conference and heard about social ecology where I was inspired by the presentations and the presenters. Ideas about transformation and change, and sense of place, resonated with me. But what really stood out was how social ecology was situated in the personal and, at the same time, held relevance to wider ecologies we are part of.

When I got a job in a university and started lecturing for the first time, it was a period of big change in my life at a personal level and I was emotionally untangled. Having enrolled in social ecology, like you Terry, it really opened me in so many ways. It was amazing! Not just intellectually, but in embodied ways. We were encouraged to explore ideas through our own experience. I was in a vulnerable space at that time and it was something I wrote about in my research, which was amazing to have that permission! There was also something there as a community of practice, when we would gather on campus for a residential at the beginning of each semester. The space was creative and full of diverse ideas and expressions of practice where you felt connected.

The three of us observed and discussed the notion of ecology:

AL: Ecology is on the edge. It is in a shifting state. **TG**: I’m getting goose bumps talking about this! **AL**: In some ways Gen, did you feel you had come home? **GB**: Yes, it was a healing journey for me and a space to learn and renew. **TG**: In social ecology you are at the very centre of everything you are looking at: at a learning level, at a social level, at a personal level—you bring yourself into that picture; you’re part of it.

GB: An example of bringing a part of that picture to my teaching was the inclusion of a deep ecology workshop[5] in a subject I taught with first-year students that was about environmental worldviews. My intention was for the students to gain awareness of their personal values via their emotions and experience, to put aside abstract notions and facilitate a space for them that validated their felt responses. It felt risky! Every year before the workshop, feeling the unknown, not knowing how this next group of students would respond, but amidst that, deeply trusting the process. Some loved it and jumped right in, but I had to be careful about that uncomfortable and unsettled space that can emerge. It was not in the central core of practice in the course.

AL: It always brings a wave of uncomfortableness and that's worth pointing out to students.

TG: You know Gen, when you were talking about when you first came to Victoria from Queensland, it was pretty uncomfortable; you were in a vulnerable place. It reminded me of my areas of discomfort. I probably did more of the *masculine* thing, learning more around the skills. So in some ways this notion of being stiller, of being quieter and needing more space between the action parts actually evokes in me a lot of discomfort in that stillness. So if I'm experiencing that, then I don't know how to interpret that for the students or anybody else, but also, they're probably also experiencing that because we don't have a tradition of stillness in our learning environments. It evokes discomfort and in our culture, we always anaesthetize ourselves when things become uncomfortable. We numb out. I certainly dabbled in having more space and less activity but I could also feel it was just sometimes easier doing the long hike from *a* to *b,* or to get busy with whatever we were getting busy with.

Becoming: Elder-Being

Analytic Stance

Being mindful of "gaps" filled with emotion, passion, and realizations can be transformative. When each of us spoke of our experiences as being more aligned to who we are, there was a sense of appreciation. This was also related to a wider sense of identification and mutual engagement with the broader social and cultural contexts of becoming elder-being. Margaret Somerville (2007, p. 232) defines the concept "become" as "to come into being; to come or grow to be" (Macquarie Dictionary). She observes that this shifts the self to the other, to the "becoming-other," and reflects on the "twin processes of coming into being and becoming-other to the self" (2007, p. 232). We spoke of that shift from doing to being, acknowledging the discomfort in that, but also the learning. Engaging in conversation whilst pruning elderberries also enabled us to hear each other's experiences and to reflect and engage in making meaning. As Le Guin (1989) says, "the being of women" is heard and seen.

*Unfolding insights, revealing possibilities***:**

AL: It wasn't until probably going to Mittagundi[6] where the Director at that time was such a thoughtful man on the environment and respectful of kids learning about being in the bush: acknowledging the mountain people and the history, the traditional elders of the bush, the elderberries! Then I thought, ah! I knew there was another reason.

TG: And another way, as well.

AL: I'd play with kids to get them up the mountains, so it didn't become the grind to get there but to have fun, notice stuff, so it changed my feel of the bush. I love the stories that were held within the bush too, because there's lots of storytelling.

TG: It's like you found a way to engage that was more aligned to who you are as a person. It's almost like a self-directed or intuitive rite of passage for young people but not set up in that way. There is this mysterious aspect of the role of nature as a backdrop: the rich soup in which all of these relationships with self and others are being worked out. It's important. It's almost like at that level it wasn't being brought explicitly into any of the learning, yet it was profound, it was powerful, it was long lasting, and these are complex questions for a young person.

AL: They are, but if you had good mentors on board constantly then a lot of change in outdoor ed. moves in a direction where it's about nourishing our own terrain, our own system, so we can move together in this way of sharing these beautiful places, of sharing some of the exhilaration and act with an ability to come back to reflect, rather than just move through.

GB: These sorts of things are not written into the structure of the course at my University but they are occurring on some level.

TG: But if all of those values are written into the structure, like time for reflection, modelling of reflection, then it comes from all levels.

Bringing forth:

AL: As I was learning outdoor skills over time, at the end I was really learning how to bring pieces of myself together: being comfortable with feeling clumsy and vulnerable, and asking for help. Now I don't really care but I care about deeply felt connections with nature.

TG: A transformative experience for me was to help facilitate in a way to help others notice these gaps. I did a lot of work with women in different capacities, knowing what those stepping-stones were, so that women could create their own experiences in the outdoors without feeling they had to be tough to do that.

When I studied social ecology, it opened up new ways of seeing the multiplicity of everything and it really threw me on my head! It was discombobulating and transformative and changed the way I saw OE, changed the way I taught. However, it was harder and harder to bridge these other ways of seeing the world with the OE world that I had been so immersed in. I felt torn and that was one of the reasons why I left. I just couldn't find my way there anymore.

Then, Hakomi (a psychotherapy practice) was my third transformative experience and that was more spiritual, touching a deeper personal or wisdom level. But what's been missing from that has been connection with nature, which I think is often missing in psychology, in counselling, and things like that, a particular way of being in the outdoors that nourishes the whole person. I'm starting to see more of that potential now. I've spent 27 years working as an outdoor educator so I don't want to ditch that experience.

AL: You can't. It is a part of you.

TG: … but a part of me has wanted to, and actually, it's getting the essence of those amazing experiences and how I bring them forward with me now, into this next phase of my life.

GB: As I am still lecturing and taking students out in the field in OE, I am finding that research and writing is my creative expression of transitions I have had. Those moments to stop and reflect, to question and face some of the discomfort.

AL: Our journey of being in nature is the journey of our selves. Nature is our teacher. You recognize all of that stuff when you notice and that's actually being an "elder-berry!" (Fig. 5.2). You look through different eyes. That's being an elder. I take it into my work now as a healer. I see people as landscapes and I look at a season and how that's affected someone. The

Fig. 5.2 The fruit of our pruning

> environment has given me a closer look into intuition, into soft but strong, seeing the ability that lies deep within, seeing something shaky and that's all it is.

It's interesting because in my teaching now I like to play; it's not about having a serious talk. My class sits down on the floor and we have a little tea ceremony. I think those early years really formulated a lot for me. I actually feel grateful for my experience in the outdoors.

"Beyond the Horizon"—Essence Stories

Analytic Stance

It is the opening of the space in-between that enables meaning to be made and, as Somerville (2007, p. 230) observes, "emergence occurs in the space between data, representing grounded (but unknowable) material reality." By drawing on our past and bringing it to the present, things become visible. David Abram (1997, p. 212) lays this out another way, in eloquent phenomenological terms, as “beyond the horizon”[7]:

> We have already noticed the magic by which the horizon encloses and yet it holds open the visible landscape: precisely by concealing, or better, *withholding*, that which lies beyond it. Thus, the horizon’s lips of earth and sky may touch one another, but they are never sealed; and we know that if we journey toward that horizon, it will gradually disclose to us that which it now withholds. (Abram, 1997, p. 212)

By putting our words on a page, our terrain reveals our footprints as we journey towards the horizon and beyond.

Written Reflections

Reflections on the essential qualities of being outdoors and working as outdoor educators that have carried through to their present lives.

Terry’s Story

Freedom: Something about having the physical and practical skills to venture into unfamiliar territory.

Vital: I am more alive and myself when I am in the outdoors. I meet myself over and over again in a prism of moods and forms. The parts that yearn for a deep joining with all that is, especially on dark moon starlit nights. The parts that are terrified of being lost in the vastness of it all as well as yearning to be lost in that vastness. The parts that experience such joy from the magnitude and diversity of physical beauty. The parts that lean into the physical, emotional and mental challenges of remote environments. The parts that wonder at the *urwelt*, what and who the earth was before we all came here. The parts that yearn for the deepest of solitude these places offer. The parts that grieve for the loss and destruction of the Wild that witnesses the shrinking of her sacred places.

I don’t think I would have experienced as much as I did in the outdoors, had there not been something called OE. This was my pathway into this exciting and mysterious world. For many years, I wanted the young people I took into the bush to experience the transformations I had experienced.

Experiential learning has always been my most potent learning style, and I believe it is for everyone. To combine this with the most awesome and awe-inspiring environment, that is, Nature, Wilderness, is to create an educational "Superfood." It's as though we know we need it, that we fail to thrive without it, but we don't have a clue how it works on us or with us.

I no longer work in the field nor take groups into the bush. A few years ago, I fell into some deep conceptual or spiritual ravine, between what had been a lifelong passion of "doing" outdoor education and a sense or yearning for a different relationship with nature that was not part of the traditional discourse. I wandered off-track into the terrain of experiential psychotherapy, only to find that the relationship with nature was missing from this too, and that regardless of what I "do" or practise out there in the world, the essence of my time in the outdoors is still essential!

As I consider the question, 'what is the essence of outdoor education for me', I still only know it as a deep yearning for something that is missing … a deep connection with Nature, with all that is, with the numinous and a yearning for a slower more deliberate encounter, with more pauses to feel what I feel. The loss, the yearning, the connection. Even when I'm tinkering in my garden, to grieve the loss of physicality and adventure.

Annie's Story

The outdoors has certainly shaped and nourished all aspects of my life, from the physical pursuits, shared experiences and bonding friendships. It has provided a wealth of self-discovery and exploration woven and embodied into life memories, the sheer beauty of nature herself.

On reflection this is very apparent in my current work as Shiatsu Practitioner, Kinesiologist and Teacher. I see people as landscapes. I notice, listen and observe my clients' health and stories, making connections and parallels between the seasons and elements: wind, fire, earth, water, and air.

I have learnt and observed the relationship of health and well-being to be finely tuned for balance and these can easily be affected by our environment. Like nature we are always budding with potential, challenges and obstacles. Openings, possibilities and insights arise giving way to nourish and support us on the next stage of life.

I feel my current focus now is certainly more about openness, curiosity and less doing and more being in the outdoors as well as in life. I want to notice, observe and tread with more respect, gratitude and awe on this land that is borrowed. Create more time to appreciate the stillness within the wildness.

The outdoors will always be a passion, an adventure, an educator for me. It's my compass in life, a reminder to rest, to feel and to smile, whatever I am doing or choose to do in life. Changeable as it may be, it's where I feel at home.

Gen's Story

I feel so privileged to have been able to step into the outdoors when I was 18 and from that day my experience in the world marvellously opened up! The joy of adventure was a key ingredient but more significantly was the relating and relationships both with the human and more-than-human world. There is an unknowingness when immersed in nature that is the essence for me, moments and experiences that are hard to put into words. I may know and learn about being an educator in the outdoors but over time I have come to accept what I don't know, is the most important.

On a personal level, over time this opened up to acknowledging the sacred dimensions of my being and connection in the outdoors. On a professional level, it shifted from doing activities to a way of being, a way that attunes and is responsive to entering a relational realm. As I continue to walk the ground, I feel that my experiences go beyond the personal to a wider sense of responsibility that abides in a deep sense of reciprocity, of giving and receiving.

Arriving at the Destination—Possibilities

At the end of this chapter, I hope you, the reader, have interacted with our voices and felt those "spaces in-between" that go beyond a descriptive account to one that brings forth possibilities. Therefore, this ending is not *the* end but the opening to what is possible and to what matters.

As we cast our conversational terrain across these pages, there is a thread woven around a wider moral imperative, around what matters. This, I suggest, is not singularly the domain of women but of men too, of all humans, and it is the place and role of OE. I have included environmental philosophy and phenomenology as the theoretical thread and, as Robbie Nichol (2012, p. 454) articulates, the value of both these disciplines shares a common value, that is, "to redefine what it is to be human" where the "the relational self in both cases points to a view of the human not simply as 'how things are' but 'how might things be' in the world" (p. 454). Also, as mentioned in the Introduction, to consider how "thoughtful and tactful action" is put into practice (Van Manen, 2014, p. 15).

It is important to be aware of this terrain as not being gender neutral, of not silencing or creating conditions of invisibility, but being constitutive of difference and multiplicity of meaning. So to end, as Le Guin (1989) did, with a poem by Linda Hogan (1984, p. 172) of the Chickasaw people, "The Women Speaking":

Daughters, the women are speaking.
They arrive
over the wise distances
on perfect feet.
Daughters, I love you.

Hogan (1984) is reminding her people, the "daughters," of the wisdom their women elders hold and the love that abides universally. It is a call for all women of all cultures to acknowledge their inner power, to be a part of creating spaces that are what we imagine could be in the world. As Le Guin (1989, p. 160) asks directly: "If we don't speak our truth, who will? Who'll speak for my children and yours?" No matter what you do, whether teaching, making a speech, gardening, or sitting in silence, attune to "what matters" and see what happens!

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Notes

1. I recorded and transcribed our conversation and it is represented word for word in this chapter. Minor grammatical edits were made and words that appear in italics are included by me. In the transcribing of our conversation, the sequence was changed as I grouped sections according to the themes that emerged. This is explained in more detail in the introduction that follows.
2. I explored this in more depth with a colleague as a "pedagogy of attunement" that drew upon the dialogic philosophy of Martin Buber (Blades & Bester, 2013, p. 4).
3. However, McKenzie and Blenkinsop (2006) offer a very insightful account of an ethic of care and educational practice that is ungendered, offering suggestions for practice.

4. Social ecology, as described by Terry, was a Master of Arts (Social Ecology) programme offered at the University of Western Sydney. There is a 30-year history of this course and its origins were founded upon the need to enable and facilitate farmers to change their practices in an Australian environment that was water deficient with soils that do not match European farming practices. It evolved over time to include a range of environmental issues, perspectives, and approaches, drawing upon a range of philosophical and educational disciplines. This deployment of social ecology is explained by the founding professor, Stuart Hill (see Hill, 1999, "Social Ecology as Future Story" in *A Social Ecology Journal*. 1, 197–298). This is a departure from one of the noted writers of social ecology, Murray Bookchin, whose "emphasis is placed upon the twin pathologies of 'hierarchy' and 'domination' and the need to create conditions conducive to the development of socially and personally competent selfhood" (Hay, 2002, p. 288).
5. This deep ecology workshop drew on the practices designed by Joanna Macy and Molly Brown (1998). Their premise is called the "great turning" whereby conditions are created to enable a shift from an "industrial growth society" to a "life-sustaining society" (p. 53). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to go into deep ecology in depth, except to say that it is both a philosophy and a movement (i.e., ascribing a way of life) that emerged in the 1970s, holding values directly attuned with the more-than-human world (See Harding, 1997).
6. Mittagundi is an OE centre and pioneer-style farm in Victoria, Australia, "established with the belief that young people, mountains, purposeful work and challenges are natural partners." See www.mittagundi.org.au
7. Abram's (1997) discussion of horizon draws from the philosophy of Martin Heidegger around the notion of time and space, of the past, present, and future. He combines it with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's terminology of "the visible and invisible" where "we could say we are searching for certain *invisible* aspects of the visible environment" (Abram, 1997, p. 212).

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6

Women's Voices in the Outdoors

Jo Straker

Introduction

We are continually adapting to and reconceptualizing the environments in which we live, recreate, and work, as they are fundamental to our sense of identity. These environments become imbued with meaning as we increase our connection to them, but whilst personal experiences are important in our meaning making, we are also influenced by cultural and political accounts. To be aware of who is describing, storying, classifying, and naming the land is critical, as the stories which originate from groups with divergent histories have been, and are still being, disenfranchised (Plumwood, 2004).

In conversations with colleagues, I have noticed that many outdoor educators, myself included, have not always fully explicated *which outdoors* and *whose outdoors* is being referred to (Straker, 2014). Quay and Seaman (2013) suggest that outdoor educators should take time to reflect carefully on the ways they knowledgeably participate in *the outdoors*, as that relationship directly influences their practices and what students learn about living responsibly in the world. Yet grammatically, "the," that is frequently placed prior to "outdoors," assumes that there is an accepted version of what "the outdoors"[1] means. This propensity to treat the outdoors as something where all participants have similar experiences and can learn useful lessons about themselves

J. Straker (✉)
Canterbury, New Zealand

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continues, despite many arguments suggesting that human relations with places are contestable and ambiguous (Cronon, 1996; Hay, 2002).

My ideas of the outdoors and outdoor education were challenged when I arrived in Aotearoa New Zealand and Graeme Dingle, the director of the Outdoor Pursuits Centre, told me to set aside my British values and immerse myself in the New Zealand way. A couple of weeks later, I arrived back from a tramp with my group, bleeding and battered after battling through kilometres of *toetoe* (cutty grass). I looked at my legs and those of the group thinking we would have fared better if attacked by a couple of tigers. Graeme just laughed and told me to enjoy the experience and embrace the swathes of toetoe—not fight them. This lesson of learning to be comfortable with where I am has helped me on many bush trips, and life in general.

Women's Outdoor Experiences

Whilst academic debates about the outdoors are sparse, there is a wide range of prose, poetry, and historical accounts that encapsulate and generate popular meanings. Many early European stories about outdoor exploration were recorded in NZ Alpine Club journals. The general theme of these reports was of the mountains "testing the mettle of the climber" (Sutton-Turner, 1921, p. 85), arduous ascents, and bagging another peak. There was an element of stoic endeavours and revelling in the hardship of surviving storms. In contrast, the traverse of Mt Cook by Mrs J. Thompson (Thompson, 1921) was written in much softer terms. The avalanches were lace-like, the crevasses filled with beautiful blue ice, and on the summit they refreshed themselves "with some watery tea and tinned pineapple" (1921, p. 17). Whilst completing the traverse was important, much of her account is about her guide and the friend who regaled them with hot tea when they finally returned. She valued the social interactions and small luxuries rather than revelling in stoic endeavour.

Whilst mountaineering, alpine clubs, and the values of exploration were dominated by male voices, tramping clubs in the 1920s and 1930s were less elitist. They were structured so that both men and women could enjoy walking in the local hills and bush. At first, chaperones were appointed as there were concerns that mixed tramping was socially risqué. This was soon dropped, as many of the female trampers were happy to challenge some of the social mores of the time. As Ross (2008, p. 92) states:

> The bush was a place where woman and men tramped together and confronted assumptions about femininity and masculinity and shifting definitions of gender

> relations. Tramping through the landscape provided modern women with the chance to flex their muscles and show off their bare legs—at least when no one was looking. (Ross, 2008, p. 92)

As more women joined the clubs, some male members raised concerns that the trips would become less demanding and the reputation of the clubs would be threatened. To rectify this, it was suggested that the number of women members be curbed to fewer than 45%, but this never eventuated and women continued to participate in tramping club excursions. Despite the increasing involvement of women, male stoicism and crusty self-reliance remained dominant in general perceptions of the outdoors. These attitudes were enhanced through literature and collective stories. For example, in a collection of poems about a gold miner *Arawata Bill* (Glover, 1953), and books on hunting such as *A Good Keen Man* (Crump, 1960), rugged independent men who were happier away from cities and female company were idolized as being *true New Zealanders*.

Currently, fewer females participate outdoors, especially in the hunting, fishing, and mountaineering domains where male stereotypes dominate (Gidlow, Cushman, & Espiner, 2009). The perceived masculinity of these activities has meant that women struggle to fully engage. However, many women enjoy being outdoors and participate in a range of activities such as bushwalking and sea kayaking. Marketing of these activities emphasizes the whole experience rather than stoic ruggedness. In addition, many outdoor companies now design and market specific gear for women so that it is possible to enjoy the outdoors whilst wearing practical and comfortable clothing. Various outdoor magazines and travel articles also emphasize family-related activities which are more about having enjoyable, rather than survival, experiences.

Working as an outdoor educator over the last 45 years, I have seen the percentage of women instructors increase; however, they are still a minority. A quick search of the New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association website (NZOIA, 2016) reveals that fewer than 30% of the current registered instructors are female. Allin and Humberstone (2006) suggest it is harder for women to stay in the outdoor education sector long term because of family responsibilities and the expectations of time spent away from home.

Outdoor Education

Currently, outdoor education in Aotearoa New Zealand is perceived to be activity- and adventure-focused (Boyes, 2012; Hill, 2011; Jones, 2004/2005). This link with adventure has not always been the case. Lynch (2006) describes how nature studies encouraged teachers to go outdoors and provide city children with opportunities to experience nature, understand the natural order of life, and improve health. As the field has expanded, myriad terms (e.g., adventure education, education outside the classroom, outdoor pursuits, outdoor environmental education, boot camps) have been introduced. These differing strands have led to mixed messages being incorporated, particularly around the value and purpose of outdoor environments and the role of adventure (Cosgriff, 2008; Irwin, 2008; Jones, 2004/2005).

Whilst the term outdoor education is contested, this chapter adopts the Ministry of Education's (2004) encompassing definition, which states that outdoor education is education in, for, and about the outdoors. Quay and Seaman (2013) believe that a balance of *in, for*, and *about* is important to help connect three key foci of outdoor education—people, activity, and place.

Research

Using narrative-styled interpretive research, 11 outdoor educators shared stories about their personal and professional outdoor experiences over a series of three 1-hour interviews. Part of the analysis involved writing a series of vignettes using direct quotes from the participants. Writing the vignettes involved paring down their stories in a way similar to carving a figure from a block of wood, meticulously working with the grain to let the figure take form. As the stories emerged, so did multiple layers of nuanced meanings. This chapter focuses on the vignettes of the three women participants.

Why Am I Here Doing This? Sara

> *The snow was up to our thighs as we trudged up and I kept thinking, "Why am I here doing this?" but standing on top was so cool, it was somehow better because of all the effort. Looking at the land stretching out below was just awesomely amazing. I enjoy the physical challenge, but love all the camaraderie, and helping others along the way. It doesn't last long though—after five minutes with the wind howling, it was "Woo hoo, let's get back down again." I've done my fair share of trudging in the wet, having epics and bivvying out in crap conditions, so now I avoid really bad weather, although ummm—well I do still like the win—it's exciting. Sometimes when I'm tired, I just want to go home and have that cup of tea, but then when I get home all I think about is the next trip. I just enjoy being outdoors with others. A friend asked me the other day, "How do you feel when you're driving back into*

> *Christchurch because I really hate it?" I said, "Well I don't actually mind because it's home—so I don't mind coming back, especially as I know that I'm going to leave again to do something else."*
>
> *While I still like to challenge myself, I don't like to be very scared anymore. Now I'd rather do something easier, and if I don't get up to the top then I don't mind—I'll just sit and enjoy the view, and sometimes when I'm just sitting on top of a mountain looking out, I get a peaceful tranquil feeling, which maybe like a spiritual experience—I'm not sure—I'm not really religious. It's like a Zen state; I just feel part of the environment, a kind of moulding into the environment. At night too after a full day climbing, just lying and looking at the stars and clouds—in that stillness time, it's like it's all there for you.*

Sara's passion for the outdoors started in her late 20s. This interest grew because she enjoyed "the challenge of getting somewhere" and "building rapport with people." She felt being with others made it more special. On outdoor trips,

> *everyone is on a more equal footing and people seem to let their guard down a bit more. There is not the same society boundaries put on them. I know that sounds a bit weird, but it's more like just—let's go and have some fun.*

For her, being outdoors supported relationship building and broke down the social mores that existed at work and in other urban settings.

She was always planning a trip. The whole experience was important, from pouring over maps and organizing food, to showing the photos to others. She did not separate the outdoors from other parts of her life; even the journey from home to the outdoors and back home were mutually implicated, one made more special because of the other. This continuity highlights how she was adept at adopting a range of identities from outdoor leader to attentive listener, adventurer to environmentalist, mountaineer to cook and tea maker. In this way, she both conformed to, and challenged, gendered beliefs without tensions and conflicts, demonstrating a strong sense of being comfortable and self-assured in many roles.

Sara could not believe that she was paid for something she loved doing. During the week, she instructed at a centre, but during weekends she organized trips for friends or the local alpine club. From the sparkle in her eyes, it was obvious that she was passionate about helping others experience the outdoors in positive ways. She was always looking for ways "to get more people out and about," but felt that quick-thrill activities lacked the commitment to encourage ongoing participation. Moving through the bush, scrambling over logs away from tracks was for her a more memorable, full, bodily experience that would help students understand the complexities of the natural environment. Her goal was that students would learn to love and care for the outdoors and go out on their own trips, because "it's so special and given me so much pleasure."

My Mountain Is Kahurangi: Sharon

> *My mountain is Kahurangi, the mountain never moves, it never changes. Many older Māori will still not make eye contact with the top of a mountain; they won't look at the top of Ruapehu or Tongariro because it is tapu—it's sacred. When you are doing your mihi your actual name is the very last thing that you say because you are irrelevant. It's not actually about you. It's about where you are in the world, and the land and the place and who you've come from that makes you who you are. I'm proud of who I am and where I have come from.*
>
> *I have little things in my head where Dad would say to me, "Don't turn your back on the beach," and "Always give the first fish back." Spirituality was never explicitly spoken about and it wasn't until I learned about these things through the kura courses that I thought that's why we do that, but I never thought to ask why we did them at the time. It was just the way it was. For me the spiritual stuff is quite important, but I guess not everyone feels that way, so I don't push it when I'm with others. I still climbed all the mountains in central North Island; I even called my Mum from the top of Ngauruhoe. I understand where the old people are coming from, not wanting to stand on top, but we always did a karakia (prayer) before we went up and for me it was more about respecting the mountain. You need to appreciate the environment for what it is. Ultimately, the mountains control things, like they are the ones with the ultimate power. You're allowed to be there, but you definitely need to respect them.*

Sharon explained that for Māori, the land is part of who they are. Being part of the land infused all her meanings and reflections. She described how she became ill working indoors: "It didn't have any windows in that place, and it was dark and it was dingy and it was cold. It was just awful and I got sick all the time." Just being outside helped her overall health and well-being. Durie (2001) suggests that for Māori, alienation from land carries with it a severe psychological toll and proposes *Te Whare Tapa Wha*, a holistic model of well-being which balances *hinengaro* (mental well-being), *wairua* (spiritual well-being), *whānau* (family well-being), and *tinana* (physical well-being).

At an early age, Sharon realized she was a strong, competent outdoors person. She credits her outdoor education teacher with helping her build enough confidence "to be the first in my family to leave home and study." As the interview progressed, however, it was obvious that she had learnt lots from her father, before engaging in any formal outdoor education. By spending time with him and the extended family, she absorbed and embodied ways of connecting to the land, which she admitted to only just understanding now.

Sharon spoke of the holistic nature of learning outdoors, which she described as being more about relationships than gathering a body of knowledge. These relationships were both with the land and with other people. She noted how on many occasions social interactions changed, gang regalia were removed, and students seemed more tolerant of each other. Nonetheless, whilst outdoor education was positive, she felt that it was still a marginal subject

> *for staff who see themselves as more academic. I see value in every subject, but you can't just be about maths, English, or science; you need think about the students and giving them the skills to live well on the earth.*

Her own school experiences had been mixed as she had felt disenfranchised when teachers had not acknowledged the different social and spiritual responsibilities of being from a Māori family. Her response had been to become a teacher and make sure other Māori students did not feel the same way. One way she helped Māori students feel respected was to incorporate local Māori stories and traditions into her teaching. This helped them build a stronger sense of connection to their roots.

Being outdoors always lifted Sharon's spirits, but especially when it was green or close to the beach. She also took every opportunity to get her class out of the classroom as she felt many students "switch off inside, but outdoors they are more relaxed and get the point that learning is part of life." Whether it was kayaking, gardening, or sitting under a tree teaching, it was evident that Sharon was emotionally and spiritually attached to the land. Helping others know more about where they are from and developing their confidence were key reasons for wanting to teach outdoors.

Being Unruly: Nicci

> *I was an active difficult kid never wanting to sit still, and I had allergies to sugar and that sort of thing, but I was lucky enough to live in rural areas so tended to spend hours running around—you know, just being unruly. Mum and Dad were happy for us to just disappear all day and so we'd go eeling down at the local creek—go down to the beach, horse riding—all over the place. I just loved the freedom of being outside.*

> *Then I got into kayaking and was just completely hooked and realised I wanted to spend the rest of my life doing that sort of stuff. I'm probably quite a talented boater, but my confidence gives me the most problems. Sometimes when I'm negotiating difficult sections of water I'm not sure whether the river is welcoming me or upset that I'm there.*
>
> *Tramping in the high more remote ridge tops makes me feel as though I am part of it—a living part of the whole world. Being able to look out, for as far as you can see, gives me perspective, and I do like being reminded of my humanness and that I'm a small part of something bigger, greater. Life is more than just what you get sucked into on a day-to-day basis. It is so much more.*
>
> *I need to take students outside because that's where I get my passion and enthusiasm from—that's what keeps my batteries running. Just being outside and looking at the stars, seeing satellites, and tramping in the rain helps students to make links with planet and the origins of where they live. Sometimes in cities people are angry at each other, for no given reason. They seem as though they are fighting with the environment, and that's not a sound way to live. We have to learn to live in healthier ways, be nicer to each other, and have positive interactions with the environment.*

Nicci enjoys the physical and emotional experiences of outdoor environments. Her nonverbal communication—arm waving, laughter, sobs, tears—added richness and intensity to her stories. Somewhat embarrassed by her tears, she explained, "I don't know why I'm so tearful, well it is a very emotional place, well maybe it's not an emotional place—but I certainly experience a lot of emotion in those environments." Her stories were never abstract but full of sensory and emotional responses.

Growing up amongst the dunes provided space away from adult control, and her remembrances create images of a carefree life. She refers to her childhood as "being unruly," which has connotations of resisting societal conventions. Roaming the dirt lanes, playing on the beach, and visiting neighbours were disrupted when she went to boarding school. Living in the city was a difficult, unsettled period in her life, but realizing that she was potentially heading into trouble, her brother encouraged her to enrol into a polytechnic course training outdoor instructors. Being outdoors, away from crowds, was therapeutic and inspired her to help others find a similar sense of joy and fulfilment.

Whether it was stories of walking her dogs, running in the hills, gardening, or exploring the ecology of an area, her bubbling enthusiasm filled the room. Her talk about kayaking, however, took on a different tone as she confessed to having doubts and lacking confidence in her competence. She aspired to perform at a high level, but the mental and physical challenges she set herself took her on an emotional rollercoaster. These performance goals were not about competing with the environment but responding to, and respecting, the river.

Whilst there is a strong element of personal agency in her descriptions of kayaking, she also attributes some of her success, or lack of success, to the river itself. "When I haven't been successful, I feel as if I haven't had permission to be on that stretch of water and that permission comes from the river or the terrain." Not liking the word spiritual, she describes it as feeling connected, linked, or part of the environment. She believes activities like kayaking and climbing can help people consider their humanity and connection to the wider world by helping them focus on the present.

The outdoors for Nicci was positive and liberating, whereas cities were angry and emotionally draining. Taking students outdoors was vital, not just because the students were away from distractions but because "outdoors we are closer to our origins." She felt that understanding our origins and connection to the planet could teach students about living responsibly in the world. In this way, she attributes a sense of moral worth to natural environments. As morally significant, the outdoors becomes a positive place for personal growth and development, and she suggests that helping students develop a love for the outdoors can make "a better society."

Building Meaning

The outdoors is not just a designated physical area, but spaces which are created by individuals. Often these outdoor work and recreational spaces have been designed by men for men, not usually as a deliberate way to exclude women, but with little thought about how women respond differently. The constructed nature of outdoor experiences means outdoor women are products of social, cultural, economic, and gendered political processes. Nicci, Sara, and Sharon are no exception. They love being outdoors, but dominant discourses mean they understate their expertise despite being highly competent. Male standards of competency result in women doubting their ability to fully participate and influence their perceptions of competence. They never openly stated that they felt disadvantaged by being a woman, but rather than promote their strengths, they deferred to the idealized norms of performance, which they perceived to be strength, fearlessness, and independent resourcefulness. As Sara noted, she no longer wanted to be "scared, cold and wet," Sharon commented that she wasn't as fit as she should be now she was a mother, and Nicci struggled with her confidence when kayaking. Whilst the outdoors offers potential to challenge some of the social mores of femininity and masculinity, this requires ongoing unpacking of dominant discourses of power.

Five years ago, a major earthquake shook Christchurch; buildings toppled, killing over a hundred people. Research following the earthquake (McManus, 2015) identified that women responded differently to men; yet, most of the disaster recovery was orchestrated by men. Whilst vulnerability was seen as a deficit by the disaster coordinators, for the women interviewed in McManus's research, vulnerability provided motivation to take charge and be pro-active. Their need was not to look after themselves, but to find ways of helping others, which in turn reinforced their own strengths. The three women in this research also used their vulnerability and insecurity as a motivation to help others overcome challenges. Rather than dismiss the discourses of rugged independence, endurance, and fear as inappropriate for women, they incorporated them into their practice whilst developing a sharing and supportive style of instruction which helped students feel safe and connected to the outdoors. This ability to recast attributes which are often perceived as negative contributes immense value to our understanding of humanity.

The assumed focus on adventure in outdoor education generated some interesting debate. When the three women talked about their own programmes, risk and adventurous activities were not important, although they held a general perception that risk and adventure remained central to other programmes. They were disparaging of quick-thrill activities, which they thought were primarily included for entertainment and often involved a delivery style which inhibited students taking on any responsibility. They did, however, value activities which involved full bodily engagement. Some of these activities could be considered adventurous, but their purpose was not to scare, confront, or intimidate. In their personal stories, they spoke of developing deep feelings of attachment and love for specific rivers, beaches, and mountains when they were totally immersed in rigorous physical activity. This supports Barbour's (2004) work on embodied knowing, which suggests that a focus on movement and activity may help expand awareness of how to relate with the world and how the world impacts us. Barbour describes how embodied knowing gained through moving our bodies and reflecting on how we move "can contribute significantly to our knowledge of ourselves, of each other and of the world around us" (Barbour, 2004, p. 235). As the women identified, paying greater attention to movement can reposition the body as a source of knowing about the world, but one which could be overwhelmed when activities are primarily associated with feelings of fear and apprehension.

Overall, the women gave the impression that being outdoors for both work and recreation was something that contributed to their sense of living a happy and fulfilled life. They told stories which focused on joy and happiness, a sense of freedom, positive well-being, and feelings of belonging. A few stories reflected on moments of grief or frustration, but the majority were about positive and rejuvenating responses. From their childhood stories of playful freedom to their more recent ones of returning from trips feeling refreshed and invigorated, there was an overwhelming sense that the outdoors was a great place to be. There were multiple examples of how the outdoors had contributed to their health and well-being. Nicci believed that moving out of the city and closer to natural environments rescued her from a life of trouble towards which she was drifting. Likewise, Sharon attributed her love of the outdoors with giving her the confidence to leave home, take on further study, and become a teacher. She was also adamant that being outdoors was good for her physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. These stories suggest the outdoors is not just a random scenic location or place for adventure, but can provide women with a cornerstone for living a flourishing life.

The outdoors was in part constructed through the intimate and emotional relationships the women experienced. Trips with family and friends, a quiet moment watching the light flicker through the beech trees, or an encounter with a blue duck generated intense feelings of connection. These moments gave them immense pleasure, but for education they wanted to provide more than a nice emotional experience. As Nicci said, her greatest satisfaction was when "the students get it, when they experience a 'eureka' moment and realise they are an intimate part of the wider world." Helping others develop a deeper understanding of the wider world provided an overriding purpose for their work. For them, a sense of connection increases understanding about our dependence on nonhuman life and the ecological cycles of the planet.

The purpose of the research and indeed this chapter was to provoke more debate about the many meanings and values of the outdoors. Each voice is important, but it is especially necessary to promote ideas from different groups, not just the usual political advocates. By sharing stories, women can contribute to a broadening understanding of the multiple dimensions of the outdoors, and at the same time challenge stereotypical constraints of femininity and masculinity. Through their stories, emotional responses, vulnerability, embodied knowing, and relationships become attributes to be celebrated. This alternative discourse is well aligned with encouraging students to feel at home in the outdoors and live respectfully on a planet that we all share and depend on.

Notes

1. The use of italics for *the outdoors* has been used to highlight the difficulty of talking about a dominant construction when there are many localized meanings of outdoors. Having addressed the issue, this convention will not continue.

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7

Women and Leadership: Commitments to Nurturing, More-than-Human Worlds, and Fun

Denise Mitten

It is common for co-ed organizations to offer women's trips ostensibly to get women ready to be on co-ed trips. Sometimes that is directly stated, and the word remedial is used, and other times it is an assumption that the real trips are male or co-ed trips. Many people think women's trips are easier, which is also untrue. In 1978, Arlene Blum (1980) led a successful climb on the Himalayan mountain Annapurna I in Nepal. In the USA, it was a widely publicized women's trip. Many people were surprised to learn (and many people still do not know) that only eight people had summited before them and this was the first successful summit of Annapurna I by any group from the USA. There is no way to make climbing Annapurna I easy.

Women's trips are not remedial, and a cultural shift is needed so that more people know the value of women's trips in their own right. "Many women prefer to adventure with other women, and the trip styles that emerge are different from those of co-ed or mixed gender groups and from all-men's groups" (Mitten, 1985, p. 20). Many women prefer women's trips because they get to be involved in every part of the trip (Hornibrook et al., 1997; Mitten, 1992; Yerkes & Miranda, 1982). "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" (Hazard, 1979) was a great title and music for a slideshow by Kathy Phibbs, founder of Women Climbers Northwest and Woodswomen Northwest's director, as she artfully showed essences of women's trips. According to Yerkes and Miranda (1982),

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D. Mitten (✉)
Adventure Education & Sustainability Education, Prescott College,
Prescott, AZ, USA

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and my observations, a top goal for many women on trips is fun. At Woodswomen, after safety and environmental appropriateness, fun was top of the list for goals. Supported by brain research, this chapter explores how practitioners can ultimately increase learning opportunities by examining misguided practices and bringing healthier connections and relationships and more fun into outdoor learning environments' (OLE) programming.

Experiencing the Contrast

I got my start in being outdoors, exploring the land around my home in Delaware and Girl Scout Camp starting at age seven. By age 15, I was in the Counsellor-in-Training (CIT) programme, and by 1969, I was a counsellor, leading sailing and other excursions. I loved camp and wanted to grow up to be a camp counsellor. Coming from Girl Scouts it seems normal to me for women to be in the outdoors. Research shows women at all women's colleges do better in the workforce (so do Girl Scouts, for that matter) because of the confidence that is grown by having full participation and leadership opportunities. I was quite comfortable in the outdoors; it felt like home, and I did not feel that I had to compete with men.

During my first year (1972) at college, I was part of a group of physical education majors that went on trip to North Carolina Outward Bound School (NCOBS). Amongst other things, I learned what a gift my time at Girl Scout camp had been. At NCOBS I enjoyed the physicality—the rock climbing was spectacular (even though we used Vibram-soled hiking boots because rubber-soled rock climbing shoes were not yet invented) and the ropes course was wild and was where the Green Berets trained. We stopped each other at the bottom of the zip line with a stretched-out sleeping bag, least the person hit the tree.

Four situations during that trip made deep impressions on me. The Outward Bound (OB) philosophy then was to stress group members physically almost to the point of collapse. Our group members had hiked slower than planned, and just before dark two large football team men were fighting about where we were and where to go. Having had plenty of map and compass training, I walked up between then and said, "You're both kinda right. Here is where we are and where we need to go." I was stunned. I might as well have been a fly—and was almost swatted. They continued arguing. At some point, we all just camped there. I had my first experience with fighting in the woods and being treated as if I was invisible. I later realized that their fighting was about dominance, not the safety and respect for the group members. It was a way to sort out the group dynamics that some call storming—though, in my opinion, not a functional name or way to build a group. Many outdoor leaders appear wedded to a certain group stage theory even though that theory was mostly observed in and derived from leaderless groups and the military. Other theories and practices may help participants develop skills needed to build sustainable communities (McAvoy, Mitten, Steckart, & Stringer, 1992; Mitten, 1999, 2009; Mitten & Clement, 2007); most outdoor trips are up to four weeks and the dynamics on many are likely not sustainable in a long-term community.

At that time, OB instructors faked accidents to see what group members' reactions were. As we hiked around a corner, we saw an instructor lying in a contorted position on the mountainside, moaning loudly. Two large men rushed over, grabbed the instructor and started pulling him up the mountain. I ran over and shouted, "Stop, he may have a back injury." For a minute they stopped. Then the instructor's wife, who was on the trip but had not been briefed that this was a fake accident came over and yelled at me to let the men handle it. I protested thinking that he could easily have a back injury, but to no avail. Then the supposedly injured instructor jumped up and said it was an exercise. I was stunned, again, and there was no debrief. I worried for a long time that the students on the trip never learned that when the injured person is not in danger that clearing them from a possible back injury before moving them is protocol. I felt invisible. I had not seen deceit as a teaching tool and have chosen not to use it. However, I believe that using role play and scenarios are a powerful teaching tools.

A third situation gave me more fodder for thought. We were hiking and I was behind two instructors. They were talking about who had emotionally broken and who had not. I was the only one they said had not emotionally broken with their purposeful use of stress. What did that even mean, I wondered? I was quite fit, felt comfortable in natural environments, and already knew most all the skills. One thing I did not enjoy was the run and dip into the cold water in the mornings—but I would not mention that (smile emoji). That experience helped me be firm on a basic principle that people do not need to be broken and rebuilt or change to fit into adventure programmes or taught things to be good enough; women and men are welcome as they are and bring a wealth of applicable life experience.

Part of the OB course was a 150-foot free rappel with a full pack, which means going over a cliff attached with a rope and using four carabiners attached to a swami belt constructed from webbing (there were no harnesses or figure 8s at that time). Several of us were down and sitting by the stream when we heard shouts. A slight woman with the weight of her pack had turned upside down and was stuck. As it turned out, once again the men took charge. After this incident, we debriefed. Women asked why the men took charge. They said, "Because we respond faster and get there first." That response gave me pause. There was some accuracy to their assessment. As a woman, I was not socialized, especially when men were around, to respond super quickly. I reflected and decided to work to hasten my response time.

The next summer a Girl Scout camp counsellor comrade and I decided to work at a dude ranch in Colorado for the summer. It turns out it was an OB programme, and they needed women instructors. That summer I joyfully led rafting and kayaking trips down the Green, Yampa, and Colorado rivers (my training being in a pond). I led my first mountaineering trip with ice axes and walking roped over icefields in the Mt Zirkel Wilderness. At that time there was little formal training for instructors in OLEs. I learned on the job, and for my personality and character, that worked well.

From my earliest days as a CIT, I loved learning about group dynamics and leadership. I enjoyed knowing about age-related developmental theory. I remember a discussion in 1972 with the other instructors and the course director about what a leader should be. I primarily drew from my experience as a counsellor at Girl Scout camp. In my head, I thought a leader should be compassionate (though at that age I used the word nice). The males around me were saying above all a leader should treat everyone the same, which would be fair. Later that summer this difference showed when during a course, one student had to shoot a tied-up lamb after which the students butchered, roasted, and ate the lamb. One vegetarian woman student asked not to participate because she did not believe in killing animals for meat. I said she did not have to participate. When staff debriefed the course, I was told that I should have treated everyone fairly and equally and made her participate. That did not make sense to me; I could not figure out why they saw making everybody participate as fair. Now I realize it may have been our difference in leadership trainings and socialization.

From Camp Counsellor to a career in the outdoors

Whilst working on my master's degree, in 1976 I started an outdoor programme for inner city youth. The programme was based in nearby nature. We went to places they could learn about and return to via public transportation. The participants taught me a great deal about working with socially and economically disenfranchised people. Many would come to the trip having witnessed a shooting or some other challenge the night before; most had not eaten yet. Ten years later I started an outdoor programme for socially and economically disenfranchised women and children in the Twin Cities of Minnesota and then a couple of years later worked with the Minnesota Department of Corrections to design and run an outdoor programme for women felons (Mitten, 1998). I continued to work with nearby nature and help participants incorporate outdoor time into their everyday lives. Early on I believed that the effects of nature, as well as nature itself, were undervalued by adventure educators and the OLE community and that valuable healthful experiences occur in the nearby nature (Mitten, 1985, 2004, 2009).

When I started working with Woodswomen, Inc., I could not have predicted I would spend 20 years leading women's trips working with brilliant, competent women who cared deeply about helping other women to be in the outdoors and being outdoors with other women whilst continually reflecting and being reflexive about their practice. It was not so much a conscious decision as it was a following of where I was unconsciously leading myself, and I got to be a camp counsellor, of sorts, for women—my dream job. Doing a reflective session after a trip, one of the guides said that guiding with Woodswomen was a whole-life process. She said that the more she learned about group dynamics and people, the more she changed in every part of her life including her personal life. Sometimes I long for those days where we led trip after trip thinking deeply about aspects of leadership, including who we were leading. For example, we chose to call ourselves guides rather than leaders (though we practised leadership and facilitation) in an attempt to accurately portray our role as we journeyed in the outdoors with participants.

From a research project in the early 1980s that included visiting a number of women's outdoor organizations, I learned first-hand about some similarities of the values and various leadership practices frequently employed by women on women's trips (Mitten & Woodruff, 2010) and how these were in contrast to mainstream OLEs of that time. Many of these leadership practices have influenced programming in mainstream OLEs, some now adopted as common practices, such as intrinsically valuing nature, making choice prominent in programming, and valuing emotionally and spiritually safe environments for participants as well as physically safe environments. In general, women's influence on the field of outdoor and adventure programming in the USA has brought greater congruency between ethical conduct towards participants and leaders of all genders and towards the environment, as well as recognition of the importance of healthy connections and spiritual relationships with the more-than-human worlds and other humans. As I talk about some of these values, group dynamic considerations, and programme components, I do not imply to essentualize women's programming or women. I draw from over 20 years of observational data at Woodswomen, supported by other programmes run by women for women, as a case study. Enjoying and engaging in research were parallel to my leading trips and used some of the same open inquiry and observational skills.

Systems theory and thinking help OLE practitioners realize how complex (which differs from complicated) leadership is (Mitten, 2012). Because of differences in socialization and hormonal and chemical differences, the same practice might result in different outcomes for different people. Whilst Western culture sees gender as binary and leaders often talk about differences between women and men, care needs to be taken not to essentualize and say that all women are one thing and all men are another. In Chap. 62, Mitten & Gray talk about file drawer research showing that often there is more variation amongst men or women as between men and women. There are more than two genders as well as people who identify as agender.

Leadership Is a Relationship

Woodswomen and other women's organizations operated with the belief that leadership is a relationship (Mitten & Clement, 2007). In the long run, in my opinion, leadership in OLEs is about the relationships one forms, rather than task completion or accomplishments. It was as important *how* one got up the mountain as that one got up the mountain—the process has to have integrity for the accomplishment to be satisfying. Operating with this belief helps women return home reinforced in their knowing that their focus on relationships helps community sustainability.

This positive regard in relationships carries into more-than-human worlds. The concept of healthy bonding guided interactions, little and big, and helped women bond together for positive reasons (shared experiences, shared interests, and the like) (Mitten, 1985, 2007), and not bond as humans who do not like the rain but find appreciation in slogging a potage trail in the mud, or not bond together hating mosquitoes, rather understanding the role they play in the ecosystem. We do not have to like getting bitten and we do not have to "hate" on them. Our relationship with the natural environment or more-than-human worlds honours our spiritual connection and guides facilitated participants' understanding that we live in entanglement with more-than-human worlds.

This magic of the mountains vignette illustrates positive human relationships: As Kathy Phibbs and I led a women's trip on Denali (6190 metres, 20,300 feet), we met Junko Tabei (who in 1975 was the first woman to summit Everest [Franz, 2016]) as she and her female companion were climbing to

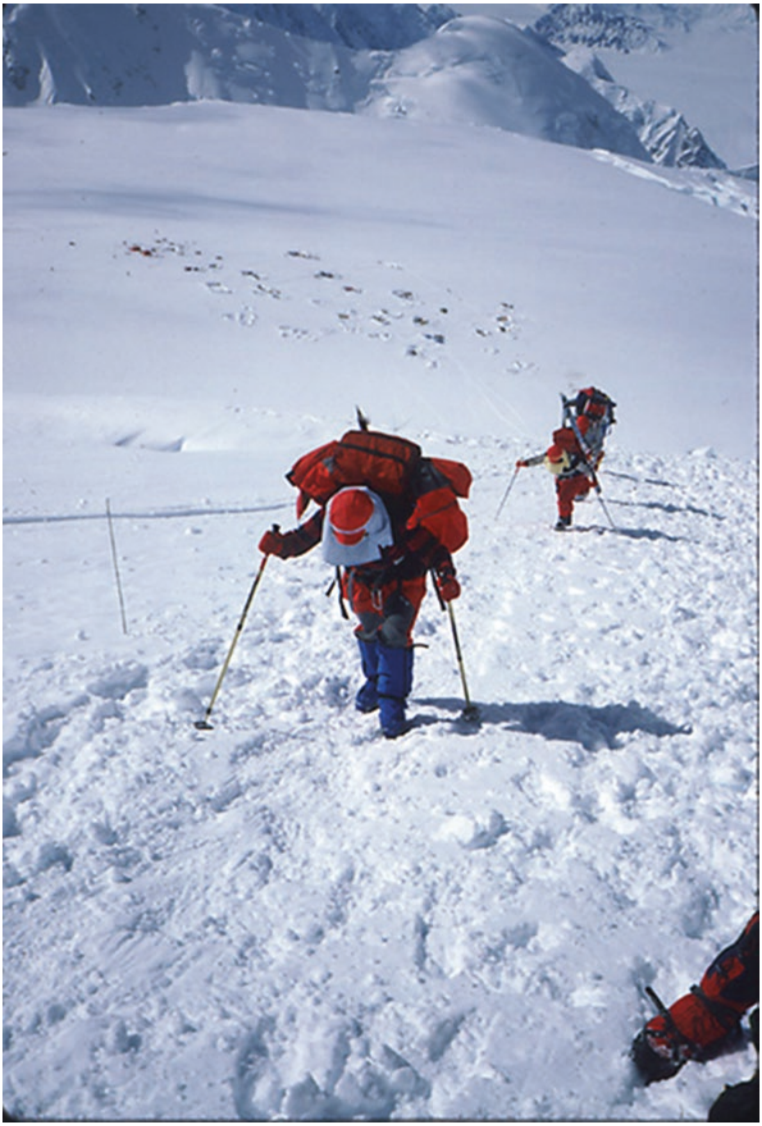

Fig. 7.1 1988, Junko Tabei, the first woman known to have summited Mt Everest (1975) and her woman climbing partner walking up Denali in order to ski down

the top in order to ski down as seen in Fig. 7.1. When our group members made our first summit bid, we were turned back by snow and wind. The next day I successfully guided a group of four women to the summit. In this situation, we decided smaller groups would have a better chance of success. Kathy kindly offered to wait the extra day to go with the second group of four women. On the way down from their successful summit, Joan, a woman climbing Denali as her 50th birthday present to herself, said that she could go no further without a cup of tea. Kathy worried that Joan was becoming overly tired. In a few minutes, they rounded a bend, at an elevation of almost 5790 metres (19,000 feet) and saw a tent. As they walked by, a woman, Junko, put her head out and asked, "Would you like a cup of tea?" Kathy said that she had a moment of disbelief, whilst Joan graciously accepted as if it was an everyday occurrence. After their tea party on the mountain, the women were fortified and continued to go down to our meeting place at 5243 metres (17,200 feet). The lovely care and hospitality exemplified relationship building and provided tangible evidence of a style of being on an expedition that was about relationship building and kindness that mediated the hardship. The tea party became an icon of the expedition as much as did the accomplishment of summiting. The group was on the West Buttress shown in Fig. 7.2.

Women in Western cultures are socialized to be relational, and Noddings (1984) suggested using an ethic based on care and belonging to guide our relationships. In three areas, current science reinforces that humans need healthy relationships for regulation and that encouraging self-regulation through independence and autonomy as the primary way to function isolates people and leads to more violence. Working in a complex system, brain-triggered co-regulation, women's tendency to tend and befriend, and oxytocin and hormonal pathways combine to help people build sustainable relationships that can lead to sustainable communities. One place this can manifest is on women's trips designed to highlight/take advantage of this complex and adaptive system.

Bonnie Badenoch (2017) explained that humans are built or hardwired for co-regulation, but we have to experience it or intentionally be taught to learn to co-regulate well (e.g., use an ethic of care in relationships). Co-regulation can occur with another person, the memory of another person, with nature, and more. Our brains are equipped with mirror neurons and the preference to co-regulate with others. The co-regulation is done with the integration of the functions of the right and left brain hemispheres. Badenoch warned that, in Western cultures especially, men are encouraged to be separate, unemotional, and self-regulating, reinforcing the almost exclusive use of their left hemispheres, which tends to help people feel isolated, competitive, and mistrustful/paranoid. A negative feedback loop can result in that where the more the left hemisphere directs feelings, the more mistrustful one can become and then the more one isolates, the more less caring of other people and nature one can become.

Many women may have a propensity to engage in nurturing activities, characteristic of tending, and to build social networks, characteristic of befriending (Mitten, 1994; Taylor, 2006). In studying work-related stress, Repetti (1989)

Fig. 7.2 Woodswomen participants walk down the West Buttress of Denali after 11 expedition members successfully summited during a 1988 climb guided by Kathy Phibbs and Denise Mitten

discovered that mothers engage in more nurturing and caretaking behaviour (tending) after stressful days at work as compared with nonstressful days, whilst fathers who encounter a stressful day at work are more likely to withdraw from their families upon returning home. Taylor et al. (2002) reported on studies showing that women who emigrate and are able to form female networks are less likely to become victims of abuse than women who are unable to form these ties. These networks serve to protect women in many situations, including from abusive males. These results combine to help support the theory that under stress, many women may tend and befriend (a term coined by Shelly Taylor (2006)), in addition to or instead of fight, flight, or freeze. Historically, instead of running away from danger, women needed to devise a way to protect children and cooperate for the mutual benefit of the clan.

Third, women (and men to a lesser degree) have the hormone oxytocin, a neurotransmitter and neuromodulator, which helps in co-regulation and may provide an impetus for affiliation. Oxytocin facilitates bonding by helping people be receptive to and feel good in close relationships. This hormone, released in greater quantities when people feel close, reinforces trust and closeness by creating a positive feedback loop. Some research shows that oxytocin may help a group of people not trust and accept newcomers. However, if people understand this aspect, they can use their frontal lobe capacity and the learned ethic of care to help determine who to trust.

Because of socialization, personality, and biological differences amongst people, there is not likely a single cause or maybe even a single pattern about how these three areas, co-regulation, an inclination towards tend and befriend, and oxytocin, work together. Systems theory says that many interactions are happening at once, including brain wiring, socialization, and hormonal activity (and likely more not yet known), which may cause women's behaviour towards tend and befriend. These interactions likely cause positive feedback loops from people feeling good in positive social networks, oxytocin surges, and enough right hemisphere guidance and then wanting more of the positive. Badenoch (2017) reported on a research project where people were brought into a room and told they were going to climb a challenging mountain. There was a significant difference in stress when the respondents were told they would climb alone or with a friend(s). The calming effect of knowing one is not alone when engaging in a challenge is a signal of co-regulation and is likely due to the complex interactions of the social, emotional, spiritual, and biological systems.

Many women create, maintain, and use social groups for support including managing stressful conditions. It seems that many programming aspects of women's trips designed by women support positive relationships amongst women and with the more-than-human worlds and thus encourage co-regulation as well as tend and befriend (Mitten, 1985). I believe that most people appreciate relational leadership that acknowledges and respects who they are and that offers them opportunities to contribute to the success of the trip or programme as well as their learning more skills and having adventures.

Do Women Navigate Better than Men?

I gave a talk, "Do Women Navigate Better Than Men?" based on a study at the University of Rochester, Rochester, NY, in which the navigational preferences of female and male rats and students were compared. After discussing the difference between preferences for either landmark navigation or vector navigation, I would discuss other seemingly gender differences. I think some gender differences are complicated; some might be hardwired or influenced by hormones, though most may be caused or reinforced through socialization. Whatever the cause, because there appear to be differences in women and men on outdoor trips, leadership that is sensitive to these differences is more effective.

Competency and Accomplishment

There is a distinction between accomplishment and competency. I heard about a research project that asked a group of women if they could build a fire. They all said no. Later in the survey, they were asked how many times they had built a fire. Each woman put down between one and four times. This example illuminates that even when they actually have done the activity they still saw themselves as not able to do so. When directing a programme for women offenders, we taught women to recognize the skills they were learning by framing many things as skills and reinforcing this through discussion. This included skills of drinking three quarters of a cup of water every 45 minutes whilst hiking, hiking on uneven trails, finding suitable camping spots, and the like. Understanding and valuing this learning as skills helps reinforce self-efficacy and feelings of competence.

If women accomplish something, like some summiting a mountain, but do not feel competent, they do not necessarily gain self-efficacy. For men, accomplishment often increases self-efficacy (e.g., we beat/conquered the mountain). In general, women tend to underestimate their competency and men tend to overestimate competency. As acknowledged by Loeffler (1997), it is helpful to facilitate women having a sense of their competencies; they arrive with many competencies and skills that positively influence the success of OLEs.

Task time and clock time come to play where competency comes in. For example, when learning skills necessary to safely complete an activity, it is important to use task time. That means when learning to tie a knot, allow enough time so that even the most novice people have time to develop their skills. When feeling the pressure of time, it can be hard for many people, especially some women, to learn; some people give up trying.

Locus of Control

Locus of control, often discussed in OLEs, is an individual's belief system regarding the causes of their experiences and the factors to which that person attributes success or failure. Often it is thought that if participants have an internal locus of control, that is a good thing because it means that they attribute success to their own efforts and abilities and choose their action because of internal motivation rather than be influenced by external motivation. Internal locus of control is thought to help a person develop self-efficacy. However, locus of control is not so simple, and in OLEs, there can be a gender difference.

At workshops when I ask, "Men, when you get to the top of the mountain what do you often say and who you think got you up there?" almost universally they say, "I made it. I got myself up there." When I ask the same question to women they often say, "We got up there together or I couldn't have done it without the support of this person or that person." There are positive things in both of these extremes. It is positive that the women are able to affirm the value of the support they receive in attaining a summit and it is equally important that men can take credit for getting themselves there. I worry about the extremes, and, as an outdoor leader, work to integrate a healthy understanding of the personal efforts and simultaneous support.

When asked, "Whose fault is it if the expedition fails or the summit is not gained?" women usually readily take the blame for the failure: "If I had been stronger we would've made it. If it were not for me, the group could've made it." Again, the converse is true for men. Men often respond with, "The weather was bad, we had a problem with gear, or some of the other people were too slow." In a co-ed group, this is often a set up to continue the pattern of gender socialization. In general, men take the credit and women take the blame. In the 1980s, I climbed the Matterhorn with a local guide. There had been a slight rain the day before. The morning started with a bit of ice cover. Most of the climbers decided not to climb that day. We decided to go and had a successful day. My travel companion stayed at the hut and was amazed at the constant banter from the men about why they chose not to climb (I was the only woman climber that day at the hut). It was about not having the proper gear, the poor weather conditions, and not having competent climbing partners. Whilst I think these are important considerations before one climbs and all has to be in order, what was not heard from the men remaining at the hut is, "I do not feel I have the skills to climb today."

In general, I find that women have an *external* locus of control for success and an *internal* locus of control for failure, whilst men have an *internal* locus of control for success and an *external* locus of control for failure. Hillary

Clinton provided an example of internal locus of control for failure, or at least taking more than previous candidates for failure. She was the first US presidential candidate in her concession speech who has said "I'm sorry" and said that she takes personal responsibility for the loss (Traister, 2017). Traister's analysis concluded that Clinton is apologizing and taking on more blame in the same manner as when expeditions fail that many women believe it is their fault. Other people and the press let Hillary, in this case, and women in general take the blame.

For women to develop an internal locus of control for success, they must be able to attribute success to their own efforts and skills. Instructors ought not to assume that participants who achieve an accomplishment or success will attribute it to their own efforts.

Outdated Practices

My Girl Scout background allowed me to come to leadership from a different perspective than most men in OLEs. In about 1990, I realized that the leadership pieces I thought were useful for women likely were useful for men. I saw some mainstream programming as working against helping people understand their capacity for compassion for humans and more-than-human worlds. Agency/self-efficacy guided by empathy is necessary for sustainable communities. Many practitioners have not closely examined the paradigms in mainstream OLEs, though sometimes when presented with other options, they embrace them because they fit for them.

Familiar Zones, *NOT* Comfort Zones

When leaders ask or tell people to get out of or even expand their comfort zone, they are making an assumption, even if unconsciously, that the person is comfortable. Granted, comfort zone is a euphemism, and these come from a belief system. It is presumptuous of leaders to assume they know if someone is comfortable or not. If I hear a veteran living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a youth living on the street, a person in prison, or a high school youth asked to get out of her or his comfort zone, it feels disrespectful, and it probably comes from a privileged place on the leader's part. Many of us live in comfort and the colloquialism of getting out of our comfort zone may work for us. However, even if not comfortable, people's situations and behaviours feel familiar to them and often they stay in familiar situations or fall back on familiar behaviours, even if these situations or behaviours contribute to them feeling miserable. When faced with a challenge, a familiar behaviour for a person overusing drugs may be to self-medicate. Leaders ought to understand that we are asking that person to engage in unfamiliar behaviour of doing something other than self-medicating, but I would not call self-medicating a comfort zone. Bolen's (2018) chapter explores the psychological and relational implications of participation in an intentionally unfamiliar, relationship-based excursion. Participants literally step out of their familiar realms and have opportunities to be in an unfamiliar situation and try on new and unfamiliar behaviours. In this case they are leaving their familiar, not their comfort.

Adventurous or Timid

Some instructors have been taught there is a continuum of people from very timid to very adventurous with a goal of OLEs to help people become more adventurous. Being adventurous is often associated with taking risks; however, risk taking is domain specific, not a trait. For example, if Indiana Jones were on an outdoor trip where the first activity was to walk by several rattlesnakes, he would likely be labelled timid even though in other areas he would be adventurous. Corporate careers have been derailed when a manager has exhibited the normal fear of heights at a ropes course event. The purpose of fear is to keep us alive, and humans should feel some level of fear at the height of a high ropes course; it is a survival instinct. Risk is multidimensional in that we have different tolerances for it in different domains of our lives (Mitten & Whittingham, 2009). For example, some people are more comfortable taking emotional risks than physical risks, and others are more comfortable taking physical risks than spiritual risks. Additionally, research on participants in certain extreme sports have concluded that these people are not necessarily high risk-takers, rather they see themselves as skilled and their participation adds to their positive psychology (Brymer & Schweitzer, 2017). Therefore, people cannot accurately be labelled as timid or adventurous—it depends on the activity, environment, and other factors as to their level of adventurous feelings.

Challenge by Choice

Choice is not outdated; however, Tyson and Asmus (2008) argued that the challenge by choice paradigm may not offer authentic choice that is central to an experience of personal empowerment. They pointed out three concerns for participants being able to make authentic choices using the challenge by choice model: (1) the underlying values of the facilitator and/or programme often create a culture that rewards only certain choices, (2) OLE practitioners often see their role as moving individuals towards a desired outcome, which compromises choice, and (3) many, if not most, participants lack the support and education about how to make healthy choices, and practitioners are not usually trained in the choice-making process.

In 1985, Mitten wrote about supporting choice and shared decision-making through key programme components, including providing participants with options, having flexible schedules, allowing people their own timing, encouraging rather than pushing participants, giving them information to make informed choices, and intentionally supporting women in defining and making choices for themselves. Haras, Bunting, and Witt (2006) described a model, inviting optimum participation (IOP), for ropes course programmes that includes a wide range of clearly defined ways to be involved in the activities. Comparing the model with a challenge by choice approach, their research found that the IOP approach elicited lower levels of anxiety and a higher degree of perceived choice and similar degrees of meaningful involvement. The Women's Wilderness Institute facilitators use the conscious choice model and help participants access their deepest layer of self-awareness that they are capable of, and then support the choices the participants make.

Gender roles can impact the choice-making process. Women have a tendency to comply with outside expectations and to set their own needs aside to take care of others or maintain relationships. In co-ed groups some women may make choices to engage in less challenging ways, because being a strong female, or being better than others at an activity, can cause social difficulties. For boys and men, doing the scary or hard thing is valued and raises social status; this is not true for women. Therefore, OLE leaders need more education about choice and teaching choice in order to increase healthy personal empowerment as a result of OLE experiences.

The Use of Stress and Risk

Stress and risk, inherent elements in life, have been overvalued and overused in OLE programming (Davis-Berman & Berman, 2002; Mitten, 1986, 1996). Wolfe and Samdahl (2005) pushed researchers to question the assumption that risk-taking results in learning benefits, as their "examination of the literature revealed that these beliefs have been accepted as foundational tenets, and have not been challenged and tested as to their veracity" (p. 31). Using risk as a learning tool can invoke a stress response in participants and stress has been shown to negatively impact learning. Jensen (2005) found that students under stress are less able to understand connections, and learning narrows to memorization of isolated facts and therefore advocates promoting learning environments that do not rely on threat or stress. This can enable students to be able to engage in problem-solving, critical thinking, and integrating a wider range of material. Van Bockern and Wenger (1999) summarized that when stressed, the brain tends not to use its highest order cognitive function (e.g., careful and critical thinking). They say that forms of stress or threat sometimes called tough love disconnect participants from important relationships. Other researchers have found that whilst a certain degree of stress improves learning in male laboratory animals, it inhibits learning in the females due to inhibited growth of neural connections in the hippocampus (Shors, Chua, & Falduto, 2001).

Reactions to stress, threats, and activities such as white water kayaking, rock climbing, and zip lines vary widely amongst individuals and can be different in women and men. The autonomic nervous system has two major divisions: the sympathetic nervous system (adrenaline—faster heart rate—and the fight and flight response) and the parasympathetic nervous system (acetylcholine—slower heart rate—and a mental slowing down or freezing response). The parasympathetic nervous system helps in digestion amongst other functions.

Sax (2006) reported that adrenaline- and norepinephrine-driven reactions, with sharpened senses and a sense of excitement, are more common in men than women. Women's autonomic nervous system is influenced more by the parasympathetic nervous system and the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, often resulting in women reporting unpleasant or even nauseated feelings when they are scared during an outdoor activity and feelings of mental slowing or "freezing": "I just couldn't think—or even move!" "I felt paralyzed" (p. 192).

My whole life I have loved being with more-than-human worlds, but I had never experienced what is referred to as an *adrenaline rush* with the common comments afterwards related to thrilling arousal that Sax (2006) reported as "I've never felt so alive 'Let's do that again!'" (p. 192). In outdoor environments, I tend to slow down and stay calm even in high-stress times such as emergencies; I do not experience the nauseated and unable to think sensations (though I experience mental slowing and "freezing" in high-stress academic situations). My first experiences with the natural world were gentle and nonthreatening, and I realize what a gift that was. Women, prone to release acetylcholine in stressful situation, causing them to experience an unpleasant, nauseated feeling and a difficulty with verbal expression, are sometimes discouraged from continuing in outdoor endeavours when they start out stressful. No wonder fun is top of women's desires for outdoors trips. It seems a loss and a shortcoming of practitioners in OLEs to hype adrenaline rushes. Mitten (2014) in *Human Development and Nature Interaction* discusses introducing novices to outdoor environments in nonthreatening and incremental ways so as not to overwhelm people who have not previously had outdoor experience with nature.

Reflection and Reflexivity for Practitioners to Examine Practices

When I directed an adventure programme for adjudicated youth formulated on Christian values, I worked with the staff to change a few key programme components. A staff member who had been leading trips for 30 years was quite wedded to the natural consequences model—if a participant let their socks get wet, then they suffered the consequences of wet feet. After we had a staff training about compassion, this instructor talked about a time when he unexpectedly offered a clean dry pair of socks to a participant. He recounted this almost with shame at not following protocol but also in deep reflection. He said that teenaged boy changed. He said looking back, he thinks that his being kind and compassionate towards the youth may have had something to do with the success of this teen. On climbing days, a climbing wall rule for the youth was that they got *one* chance and had to give it their all. The staff used phrases such as "Are you sure you want to quit," "Push yourself," "Give more." Many of the youth would not try very hard because it felt futile from the start. In the case of the climbing wall, I changed the practice to mimic desirable behaviours in the youth. I taped a horizontal line about ten feet off the ground and made the route doable. On the first try, the youth could go to the line and no further before coming down. On subsequent tries, they could go as far as they wanted. In general, these youth have trouble setting goals, setting realistic goals, and achieving goals. This activity offered them an opportunity to experience a realistic goal and achieve it. This group of people also had trouble with impulse control. Having a firm line that they do not cross and that they back down from helped them experience stopping an action. They got to try an activity and then think about if they wanted to continue the activity. Finally, the group of participants had a shared experience, useful in community building. This activity can help students begin to learn and practise judgement, including what risks to take, with whom to take them, and when.

Coming from the Girl Scouts, I entered OLEs from a paradigm different than mainstream. I saw women leaders as normal in the outdoors. Growing up with strong women role models and actually doing everything related to outdoor trips helped me be comfortable in my ability to work in the outdoors. When I entered mainstream OLEs, I noticed that human's relationship with more-than-human worlds was undervalued in OLEs, as was nearby nature. I noticed that leadership goals were more about individualism and accomplishment. Too often, outdoor leaders followed misguided and dated theories and practices.

I still choose compassion as my guiding trait for leadership in OLEs. Whilst leaders or guides cannot guarantee safety in the outdoors 100% of the time, by using an ethic of care to set a tone of inclusivity, acceptance, and reflection, safety is increased. These ethical values are fundamental because they provide participants a culture of openness and awareness to both the individual and the collective whole within the context of OLEs. Inherent in travelling outdoors, there is always the risk of unplanned hardship, difficulty, and even pain. When in challenging situations, leaders or guides have the ability to remain optimistic and realistic, coping with patience and resourcefulness. For many women, outdoor leadership connotes a deep and abiding commitment to a physically, emotionally, and spiritually nurturing environment; many men likely resonate with these values too.

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8

Tourist and Sport Reform Dress, *Friluftsliv*, and Women's Right to Vote in Norway, 1880–1913

Kirsti Pedersen Gurholt

Entry: The Gina Trail

Her Majesty Queen Sonja of Norway opened the Gina Trail in the Lofoten Archipelago close to the Arctic Circle, on 15 June 2013. The opening was part of the Norwegian National Jubilee of Women's Right to Vote (1913–2013). My chapter seeks to elucidate the connection between the inauguration of a local hiking trail in contemporary northern Norway and the movement for women's right to vote 100 years earlier.

Norway became one of the first countries in the world to introduce universal suffrage when its parliament ratified legislation covering all women over the age of 25. This law was the culmination of a long march beginning with the Norwegian Constitution of 1814. Inspired by the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, when it was introduced, this constitution was the most democratic in Europe. Although it banned aristocracy, Norway remained a class society, which limited the democratic rights of many men and all women. Bourgeois women gained limited voting rights towards the end of the nineteenth century. Agitation for universal suffrage continued to grow, reaching a peak when Norway's political union with Sweden dissolved in 1905.

Publications of hiking associations, as well as calendars, books, and magazines celebrating the centennial of women's right to vote, have frequently contained illustrations and texts in which women of the 1880s and 1890s are

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K.P. Gurholt (✉)
Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo, Norway

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depicted as equipped for mountaineering and skiing wearing side skirts, a petite backpack, and carrying an umbrella, that is, clothed in inappropriately feminine attire of that era. However, as in this passage from the official history of the women's right to vote jubilee, these outdoor enthusiasts are celebrated as symbols of women's emancipation (Fig. 8.1):

> Women's participation in *friluftsliv* was valued as a part of women's social and moral emancipation. From the 1880s, we can see an increasing interest in hiking on foot and mountain climbing among the bourgeoisie, including women. Female mountaineers challenged traditional images of women. (Danielsen, Larsen, & Owesen, 2013, p. 133)

The participation of women in the early years of *friluftsliv* (lit., free-air-life)—in hiking, mountaineering, and skiing for pleasure and adventure—is underresearched, as is the role of women's exploits on hiking and ski trails in what Hargreaves (1994) has called "nineteenth-century feminism" (p. 42).

The Gina Trail, named after Gina Krog, recognizes this history. Krog, who became known as the *captain* of women's suffrage (Agerholt, 1937), was born in 1847 in the parsonage at Flakstad in the Lofoten Archipelago. Her father, the senior pastor of Flakstad, died before Gina was born. The family subsequently moved south eventually settling in Kristiania, now Oslo. Consequently, it is reasonable to doubt that Gina ever walked the Gina Trail. Rather, the name is intended to honour a prominent, locally born suffragist by associating her with the sublime beauty of the Lofoten islands, fjords, and mountains whilst strengthening local feelings of community and belonging. The impetus

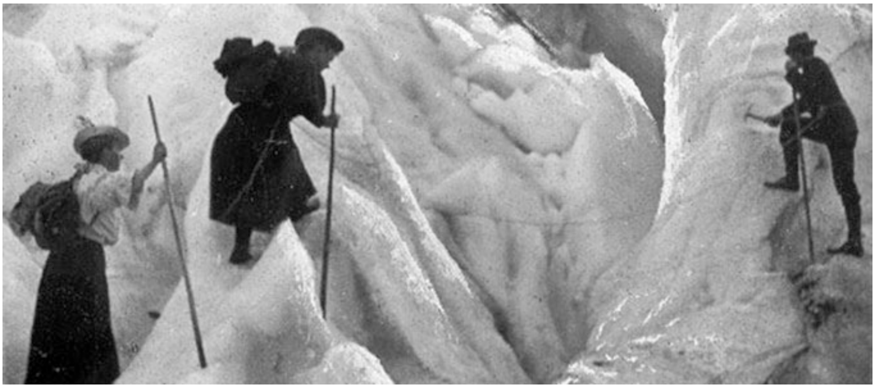


Fig. 8.1 Norway's first female professor Kristine Bonnevie on a glacier hike with colleagues in 1896 (Photo credit: Alfred Bryhn. Collection of historical photos, University of Oslo, Norway)

for the naming was an invitation from the National Committee for the Women's Right to Vote Jubilee for Norwegians all over the country to organize local celebrations. In this case, naming a hiking trail after a prominent suffragist was particularly appropriate. Several sources portray Gina Krog as one of the pioneers of the emerging *friluftsliv* and mountaineering movement of the late nineteenth century. Krog's dual role inspired Her Majesty Queen Sonja's engagement in the ceremony.[1]

Throughout 2013, local groups all over the country held events highlighting the struggle to win women the vote, celebrating suffragist pioneers and describing the political and sociocultural conditions in which they fought for women's rights.[2] As part of this effort, in collaboration with colleagues at the Norwegian School of Sports Sciences, I organized a library exhibition[3] addressing the links between the emerging *friluftsliv*/mountaineering movement and women's suffrage. Showcasing pioneering feminist mountaineers and suffragists, the exhibit described the conditions in which their participation in hiking and politics took place and the goals for which they strived.

Wanderlust and Physical Activism

Norway's early feminists and suffragists read widely and closely followed contemporary European and Anglo-American debates on women's educational, societal, and political rights (Danielsen et al., 2013). Thus, constructing a Norwegian narrative linking ideas of women's social and political liberation and suffrage with women's freedom to hike, ski, and embark on adventures in open spaces may shed light on feminist political narratives describing other Western societies. Several nineteenth-century writers, including Krog (1894, p. 82) and Mary Wollstonecraft writing a century earlier (1796), described Norwegian women as enjoying more freedom than women in most other European countries (Danielsen et al., 2013). Comparative analysis may thus reveal both parallels and differences—for example, regarding what Schultz called "physical activism": "the articulation of physical activity and political activism—striking simultaneous blows to the myths of women's physical and political inferiority" (2010, p. 1133).

In the first decades of the twentieth century, US suffragists embarked on long walks and hikes and occupied city streets and rural roads to reach "the eyes, ears and collective consciousness" of the public. In this type of "spectacularised" protest, asserted Schultz (2010, p. 1133), the suffragists positioned "their bodies in the public sphere rather than confining their mission to the parlours and meeting-halls of their more conservative sisters." Such protests, he pointed out, “allowed the women not only to voice their message but also to stake a symbolic claim on the polity, interweaving the democratic technologies of the right to assembly and speak freely with the incongruity of their denial of full citizenship.” The US mountain climber Annie Smith Peck engaged in a different kind of spectacular demonstration in 1911 by unfurling a “votes for women” banner when she reached the summit of Peru’s Mt Coropuna at age 61.

According to Schultz (2010, p. 1134), the term “suffragettes” is typically associated with British militant women who fought for the ballot; their more conservative US sisters are known as “suffragists.” Women walking collectively for emancipation had the powerful political effect of challenging their lack of freedom to walk in a public space unaccompanied by men and the general sociocultural and juridical restrictions put on their lives, according to Solnit (2001). Indeed, the Romantic walking movement was saturated with gendered ideas from its inception: freedom to wander for pleasure and adventure was assumed as an exclusively male prerogative (Gurholt, 2008).

The hypothesis is that Norwegian women’s quest for the right to embark on outdoor adventures and the right to vote were linked guides to this study. Both were nonmilitant, nonviolent, and intimately and publicly connected to movements for reforms in women’s education and fashions that would enhance their health, freedom to move, and overall societal emancipation. The Norwegian liberal feminists of this era, who fought for equal rights on terms with men, competed with feminists of the socialist and social-democrat movements, who celebrated women’s pride as women whilst seeking equal rights for all through a complete social, economic, and political transformation (Danielsen et al., 2013). They noted that as in other spheres, the advances of women in outdoor activities and sports were class based, and working-class women benefited less (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 85).

A Dual-Track Methodology

I used a *dual-track* methodology to research connections between *friluftsliv*, woman’s societal rights, and the women’s suffrage movements in the nineteenth century whilst mindful of their sociopolitical context. First, I scrutinized biographies of the women whom the National Committee for the Jubilee had designated as the *Great Four*—“among the many who played a significant role in achieving the vote for women.”[4] Second, where documentation exists, I examined the careers of women of this era who engaged in both outdoor activity and public advocacy whilst involved in organized struggles for women's suffrage against prevailing prejudices and conventions regarding femininity and women's societal roles.[5]

I located relevant empirical material in the digitalized archives of Norway's National Library by linking personal names with concepts such as *friluftsliv*, mountaineering, and suffrage. Materials included speeches, press articles, and women's magazines, such as *Urd* (1887–1947), a Christian-oriented publication covering family life, education, arts, and culture, and *Nylænde* (1887–1927), the Journal of the Norwegian Woman's Rights Association. I also perused magazines published by sports/*friluftsliv* associations such as The Association for the Promotion of Skiing (*Skiforeningen*) and the Norwegian Touring Association (*Den Norske Turistforeningen*). In addition, I examined biographical material (Benterud, 1947; Folkvord, 2016; Jonassen, 2013; Reistad, 2011, 2012; Vibe, 2012) and literature on movements for women's right to vote and their sociopolitical context (Aasen, 1995; Agerholt, 1937; Danielsen et al., 2013; Moksnes, 1984).

Based on these sources, my research narrative is structured around events in the remarkable biographies of nine women who publicly advocated for women's right to vote and wander freely. Some of them embarked on remarkable outdoor adventures, whilst others emphasized supplementary aspects of women's interactions with nature. The analysis, inspired by a narrative methodology, is based on the premise that narratives denote a structure of condensed expressions of time, events, and conversations in which connections in individual lives and history accentuate their prominence (Riessman, 2008). Conversely, narratives have a tendency to overemphasize direct connections between events, including examples of physical activity and their possible political effects. In addition, they often give the impression that individual lives, as well as history, were more linear, coherent, and consistent than they were in reality.

Despite these limitations, the narrative approach provides a useful tool for researching women as subjects of their own lives and exploring historical paths that lead to knowing and understanding.

Exploring the Gina Trail

When Krog became the head of the woman's movement in 1885, according to Agerholt and Skjønsberg:

> she was a fully mature woman equipped with considerable knowledge and widely read. Healthy and strong, physically and mentally, with broad interests

> and an open mind, she was ready to embark on [the struggle]. Her beautiful and authoritative appearance helped her in the battle. When she walked down the main street [in Kristiania], she was so fresh, so upright and noble in her posture that people stared after her. She was an outdoors person who went swimming and skating; she was among the first ladies to hike in the Jotunheimen mountains, and even a mountain climber. (Agerholt & Skjønsberg, 1937/1973, pp. 88–89)

In her groundbreaking and internationally recognized *History of the Norwegian Women's Movement* published in 1937, historian Anna Caspari Agerholt credited Krog as being the most influential person in the women's movement in the 1880s and 1890s. Agerholt described her as a pioneer mountaineer. However, a digital and manual search for first-hand sources, texts, and/or photos describing Krog's accomplishments as a mountaineer, swimmer, or skater failed to turn up any corroboration. This lacuna prompted the question of whether suffragist involvement in *friluftsliv* and mountaineering has been overestimated.

I can say no with considerable confidence. Evidence is available that Krog publicly supported women's participation in sports and *friluftsliv*. For example, in her essay "Norwegian Women's Juridical and Social Position," Krog (1894) observed, "Finally, *friluftsliv* and sport, and in particular winter sport, is about to become more popular among young people than everything else, and is highly appreciated among women" (p. 82). Furthermore, in her role as leader of the Norwegian Association for Woman's Issues (*Norsk Kvinnesaksforening*) founded in 1884, and editor of the association's journal *New Terrain* (*Nylænde*) first published in 1886–1887, she took on the controversial challenge of reforming bourgeois women's harmful and unhealthy fashions. The proposed reforms sought to reduce breathlessness, faintness, dizziness, and chlorites and thus promote mobility by replacing corsets and crinolines with a wider waist, pants, and shorter skirts (Bugge, 1984, p. 6).

By the mid-1850s, reforming bourgeois women's restrictive fashions had become an international issue, taking its inspiration from the American War of Independence and the French Revolution, as well as Mrs Amelia Bloomer's polemics in the United States. Bloomer argued that if they wished to achieve equal societal freedom and equal rights with men, women could not continue to wear lace and crinolines that hampered their movements. Rather, she considered it logical for women to wear men's clothing (Bugge, 1984, pp. 5–6). Swedish suffragists, British suffragettes, and the American suffragist movement (advocates for women's suffrage in Britain), all immediately adopted Bloomer's concept of "rational dress"—wide pants under shorter skirts

(Larsson, 2012). These feminists were fully persuaded by her argument that achieving women's emancipation in the family, education, and the polity was directly linked with enhancing their freedom to breathe and to move their bodies freely, naturally, and expansively.

This position remained controversial. Although a Norwegian magazine displayed Bloomer's rational dress in the 1850s–1860s without attracting much attention, around the same time, ankle-long dresses with corsets became the fashion amongst working-class women (Danielsen et al., 2013; Skre 2012). The popularity of rational dress did not increase substantially until doctors called attention to the unhealthy consequences of women's restrictive dress and publicly called for new styles that would give them "space for breathing," freedom to move, and better health. Many of the same doctors argued that hampering physiological processes led to psychological weakness (Bugge, 1984, p. 6).

Subsequently, a new discourse triumphed, first in the United States in the 1860s and then in Europe and Scandinavia in the 1880s. As an editor, Krog promoted what was called "tourist reform dress" in an illustrated article in one of the first volumes of *Nylænde (New Terrain)* (1887, p. 91).[6] For example, one article featured a dress fit for "gymnastics, rowing, skiing, and skating." The following year, *Nylænde* published a call for the reform of girls' school uniforms written by another founder of the woman's rights movement, who was the first Norwegian teacher to offer co-education for girls and boys (Fig. 8.2).

Leading Steps on New Adventure Trails

Recognizing the importance of physical culture to the thinking and public discourse of the 1880s–1890s, Agerholt (1937) dedicated an entire chapter to women and sport. As she explained (Fig. 8.3):

> An interesting feature of women's lives in the [18]80–90s, is their participation in sport and outdoor life. In this field, taking a leading role required courage. Nevertheless, some [progressive] traditions existed. In the [18]20s … it caused dismay in Kristiania if a professor's daughter went skating on the fjord … In the [18]80s women could go skating without anyone taking offense, and they could follow their boyfriends on a sled ride to Frognerseteren [the top of the hill overlooking the city]. However, skiing, which was also new for urban boys, was considered unfeminine. In 1881, the Kristiania-based newspaper *Dagbladet* reported that a women-only ski training-programme had opened in Kristiania. Four fellows from Telemark taught a group of 15–20 women on a field near the city. 'Skiing will probably become a favourite sport of women equal to skating

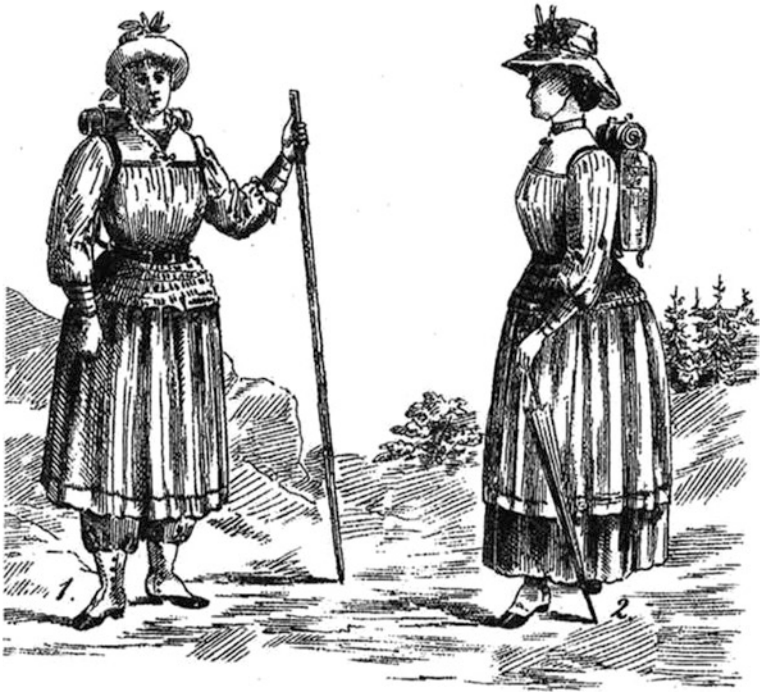


Fig. 8.2 Norwegian tourist and sport reform dress (*New Terrain [Nylænde]*, 1887, p. 91. National Library of Norway)

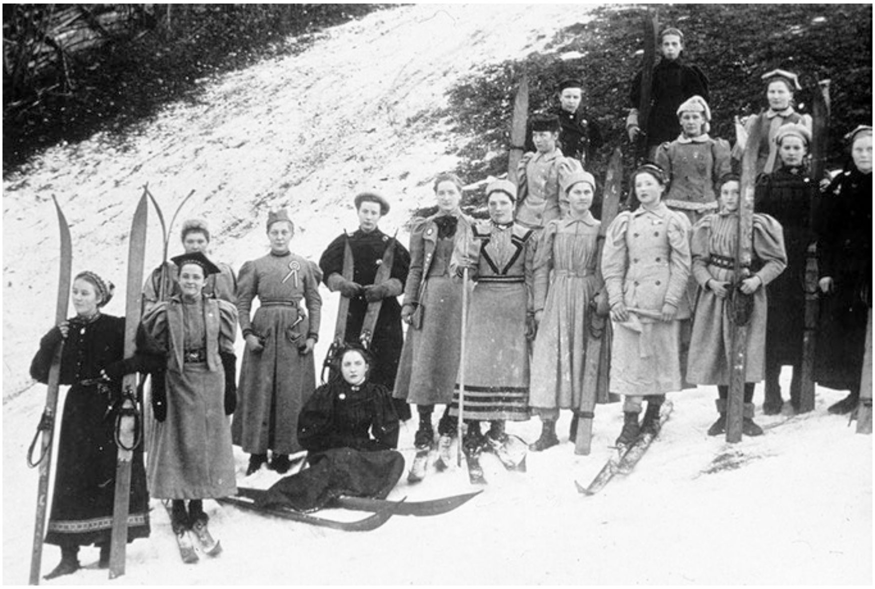


Fig. 8.3 Ski competition for women (*Skirenn for damer*) 1896, on a hill outside Kristiania (Photo credit: unknown. Skiing Museum, Oslo, Norway)

> in the near future,' added the newspaper. However, in the middle of the [18]80s Eva Sars and Cecilie Thoresen created a stir when they went skiing to the Huseby Race. Yes, as late as in 1893, Sars felt it necessary to write a newspaper opinion piece arguing that for women, skiing was not synonymous with immorality! (Agerholt, 1937, pp. 130)[7]

In her article "Skiløpning" (ski running), published on the front page in Norway's most widely read political newspaper *Verdens Gang* (3 March 1893), Eva (Sars) Nansen (1858–1907) advocated for the right of women to participate in "the free and unrestricted life in nature," in winter sports and skiing (Nansen, 1893). She wrote that her unpleasant feelings provoked by ideas connecting skiing women with immorality urged her to raise her voice publicly. Sars Nansen, who had trained in Berlin to be a romantic singer and had her own professional career, was already a skilled skier in 1889 when she married her husband, the polar explorer, Nobel Peace Prize winner, scientist, and humanist Fridtjof Nansen. A legendary photo from 1889 shows Nansen wearing a self-made woollen ski outfit inspired by the *kofte*, worn by Indigenous Sami (Fig. 8.4).

By the end of the nineteenth century, emancipated upper-class Norwegian women had access to private education and could lead professional lives, as well as discuss women's issues, sporting activities, and the movement for women's right to vote. This cohort included the first female academics in botany, zoology, and geology; they ventured out to map and research natural resources in the most remote regions of the country, including Svalbard. Dressed in (homemade) outfits inspired by the new tourist and sport reform fashions, sometimes wearing trousers, they fought their way into academic positions; in 1912, one of them, Kristine Bonnevie, was appointed as a professor in biology.

One of the most influential women intellectuals was Anna Rogstad (1854–1938), a noted reformer of girls' public school programmes and amongst the founders of the associations for both the promotion of women's issues in general and women's right to vote. Rogstad became head of the female teachers' association and the first female member of the Norwegian Parliament (1911). She was also a dedicated mountaineer throughout her adult life. In 1885, she became one of 57 women (of a total membership of 1746) admitted to the Norwegian Touring Association. In 1892, she became one of the first women to climb Norway's highest peak (Reistad, 2012, p. 60). In 1922, she was awarded the King's Gold Medal of Merit for her pioneering reforms of girls' primary and continuing education.

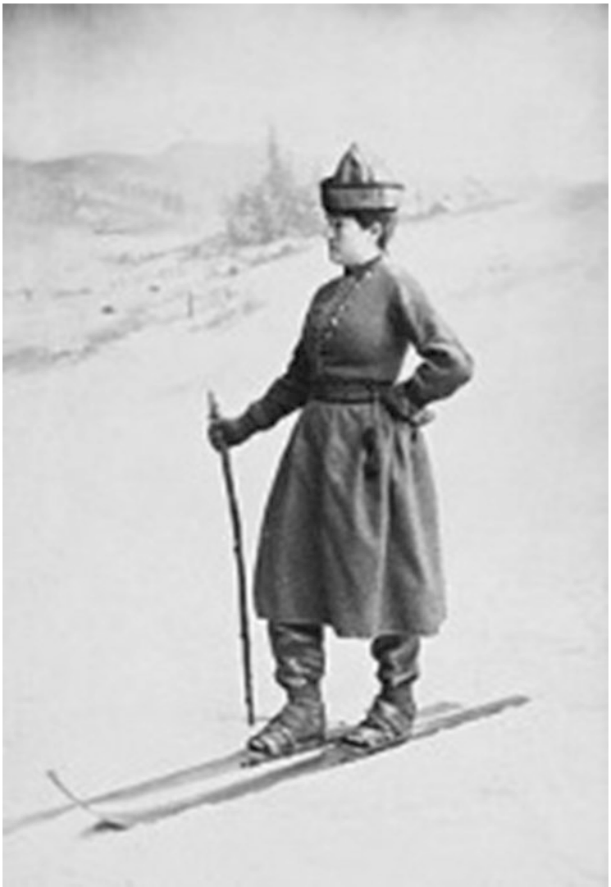
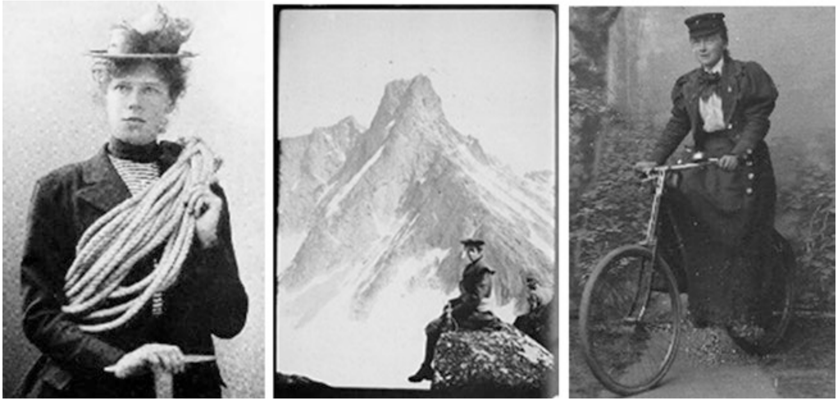


Fig. 8.4 Eva (Sars) Nansen dressed in a Sami-inspired reform outfit (1889) (Photo credit: Ludvic Szacinski. Taken in a studio, National Library of Norway)

The public appearances of another nineteenth-century feminist leader Betzy Kjeldsberg (1866–1950) provoked nasty gossip: “The Lady of the Lawyer is fleeing on hikes, skis, and bikes, and worst of all, she’s wearing pants when she rides her bicycle!” (Reistad, 2011, p. 25). Kjeldsberg rode her bike both locally and nationally to promote women’s issues and women’s right to vote and she is credited with the first ascent of a remote challenging peak on the west coast of Norway. She also played a role in reforming the working conditions of female factory workers and was the first woman to run a large factory in Norway.

The influence of Therese Bertheau (1861–1936), Norway’s most prominent female climber, was extraordinary. Well known as the first woman to reach the summit of Store Skagastølstind or Storen (The Great One), Norway’s most challenging and third-highest mountain, in 1894, Bertheau climbed extensively for 25 years. "The mountains had cast a spell over me," she declared. "Trails in valleys could not satisfy my lust for adventure (*eventyrlyst*). The peaks lured me!" Thanks to her education as a teacher of English and French languages, Bertheau communicated easily with foreigners, including other climbers. "[M]ost of all my thanks are due to the leading Norse lady mountaineer, Fröken Therese Bertheau, who has given me much help and advice," wrote the English climber W. Cecil Slingsby in his book *Norway: The Northern Playground* (1904, preface). In 1902, Bertheau became the first female member of the executive committee of the Norwegian Touring Association, and in 1909, she was invited to become a member of the Norwegian Alpine Club (*Norsk Tindeklub*), even though the organization did not accept any female members until 1975. Notwithstanding her exceptional achievements as a mountain climber, Bertheau attracted more public attention for wearing trousers under her skirt. She ignored the critics and publicly promoted women's right to develop their capabilities to pursue a profession and promote social progress (Bertheau, 1914) (Figs. 8.5, 8.6, 8.7).

In many ways, the efforts of women like Bertheau, Kjeldsberg, and Sars were similar to the *physical activism* of their US suffragist contemporaries. Adherents of both movements wore loose clothing and trousers when biking, hiking, mountaineering, or skiing, and publicly advocated for women's right to vote and to an education. Physically and verbally, these women challenged traditional concepts of femininity and the dominant (bourgeois) belief that the only proper social role for all women was to marry and become a mother and home-



Figs. 8.5, 8.6, 8.7 From left: Therese Bertheau (Photo credit: unknown, *Urd*, 8 March 1902); Bertheau in front of Storen 1894 (Photo credit: Ullén, The Norwegian Tourist Association, annual yearbook 1892); and Betzy Kjeldsberg riding her bike (Photo credit: private, Th. Larsens studio 1897)

maker. In both countries, these women succeeded in destabilizing patriarchal social structures and creating new opportunities for girls and other women.

During the 1890s, one could frequently observe women skiing in the forests around Oslo and other cities during winter and hiking up mountains in summer. By the first decades of the twentieth century, many such women wore sport outfits in public, including trousers. Even then, however, only a handful of women followed in Bertheau's path and climbed the highest and most remote Norwegian peaks.

Despite their growing numbers, the bold women who engaged in winter sports, mountaineering, cycling, and swimming continued to encounter public anger and opprobrium. Journalists, male climbers, leaders of *friluftsliv* associations, and politicians condemned their *manly* appearance, as well as their efforts to achieve social and political rights, arguing that women's emancipation had already gone too far. Women's efforts to assert greater freedom in fashion, sport, and other outdoor activities became a popular topic in the caricature press; the *trousers issue* (*Buxespørgsmaalet*) was frequently invoked to symbolize the behaviour of women who were becoming *unfeminine* and threatening patriarchal society (Fig. 8.8).

"I Had to Get Out, Out in Nature…"

Nineteenth-century Norwegian feminists drew inspiration from the writings of pioneer Norwegian feminists as well as the European Enlightenment. Camilla Collett (1813–1895), the oldest of Norway's *Great Four*, was quite

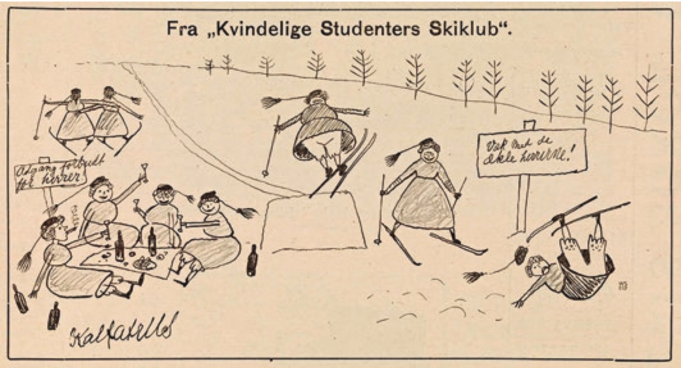

Fra „Kvindelige Studenters Skiklub".
Adgang forbudt for herrer
Væk med de ekle herrerne!

Fig. 8.8 Women's emancipation through outdoor sports and adventure was a beloved theme for the caricature press; in this example, the cartoonist pokes fun at a "Female Students' Ski Club," in the witty magazine *The Viking* (*Vikingen*) (Saturday 8 March 1912, p. 2)

prominent. In her youth, her family lived on the outskirts of small Norwegian towns. According to Camilla, her own childhood was *wild*, filled with outdoor play and freedom to climb trees in summer and skate in winter—in other words, *friluftsliv*. She received her primary school education at home and more advanced learning as a student in Germany and on journeys through Europe. Fluent in German, French, and English, she studied the works of contemporary European thinkers, including George Sand, Mary Wollstonecraft, and John Stuart Mill (Aasen, 1995). Although the early death of her husband left her a young widow with four sons, she became a prolific writer. In her novels, essays, travelogues, as well as articles in newspapers and journals, Collett advocated marrying for love and building a nation in which women and men were equal citizens. She was the first Norwegian woman to publicly declare that women's inner liberation was a prerequisite for their social emancipation (Collett, 1854–1855).

Although Collett's role as a pioneering feminist is well known in Norway, her path-breaking literary works inspired by the ideas of the emerging nature romanticism receive less attention. In them, she lauded the spiritual benefits that humans could derive from encounters with pristine nature, *friluftsliv*, and free outdoor play. As early as the 1860s, she critiqued industrialization and its consequences, including the destruction of nature (Berntsen, 2011). In her autobiographical narratives, *In the long Nights* (Collett, [1862] 1997, p. 358), she expressed a deep felt bodily urge: "I had to get Out, Out in Nature, into the great pristine and distinguished Nature not yet destroyed and misbehaved by Human Hands."

Contradictory Trails in Nineteenth-Century Feminism

Like most known leading US suffragists of their era, the recognized pioneering Norwegian feminists of the late nineteenth century were born around the 1850s into wealthy, socially prominent families (Schultz, 2010). They grew up in smaller towns located in southern Norway and first met in Kristiania, where they were students in the first higher education course offered for girls. Inspired by their reading, including the emancipatory novels of Camilla Collett, they organized a secret club for feminist discourse. Soon after, they went public, forming the Norwegian Association for the Promotion of Woman's Issues (*Norsk kvinnesaksforening*) in 1884. Over time, this network of women achieved a remarkable series of breakthroughs. They were the first to be university students, take leadership roles in social reform movements, hold political positions at state and municipal levels, and become professionals in journalism, education, and academia—even appointments as professors. Additionally, they were amongst the first women to reach the tops of mountain peaks, to wear trousers whilst skiing and riding a bicycle, and to speak out for women's social and political rights in public. Several never married. Overall, they promoted a liberal feminist ideology of social and political equality with men.

Contradictory perspectives existed in the way the so-called woman question (woman issue) was approached and understood. Fernanda Nissen (1862–1920), the youngest of the *Great Four*, argued for a feminism far more comprehensive than achieving the right to vote for individual (bourgeois) women. Nissen, the youngest daughter of a consul and shipowner, devoted herself to a celebration of *women's pride as women*, including as mothers and as women in love relationships with men based on equality. From this perspective, she called for broad societal change, in particular, reforms to meet the needs of working-class women's maternity homes; free public access to libraries; and shorter working hours, higher wages, and healthy working conditions for female textile workers, factory girls, and house servants.

Nissen worked as a literary critic and journalist for several publications including *Kvinden* (The woman), a magazine for women in the labour movement, and despite her upper-class background, she became one of the pioneer woman politicians in the growing socialist and labour movement. Although there is no indication that she asserted her right to ride a bicycle, ski, or climb alpine peaks, as a political leader in Kristiania she chaired the city's first urban park management board and was an outspoken advocate for public access to and preservation of city parks and urban green spaces. Her arguments for placing parks and green areas on the capital city's political agenda cited three benefits: promoting health, providing social meeting places, and enhancing the aesthetic quality of life. In her essay "The City and Its Parks," she emphasized the spiritual value of the urban green space, particularly for the young:

> A human who is completely distanced from Nature in the course of his/her daily struggle to exist is necessarily unhappy, because his/her mind will be stunted. Nevertheless, something will always remain that can sprout, like leaves in springtime. A city that allows children and young people to grow up surrounded exclusively by brick walls and bare streets is committing a great sin. (Nissen, 1918, p. 108)

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw tremendous transformations of many women's lives and great progress in the emancipation of women's bodies. The freedom to breathe and move that they experienced whilst enjoying the pleasures and adventures of hiking, mountaineering, skiing, biking, and swimming inspired them to develop a critique of culture and the social construction of new womanhood. As the analysis in this chapter reveals, this transformation was accompanied by a variety of views on women's social and political rights. Similarly, their varied contributions to mountaineering, hiking, and aesthetic appreciation of nature reveal the multiple realities of women's lives in this period, as well as myriad ways in which these women have contributed to and benefited from outdoor sports and adventures.

Much later but still nearly 80 years ago, Agerholt summarized the thinking of the first decades of the twentieth century in words still relevant in our time:

> You might have sensed what Camilla Collett suggested: that young men and women participating in outdoor activities together would create healthy and comradely relations between the sexes, and promote equality to a greater extent than perhaps anything else. (Agerholt, 1937, p. 131)

Democratic Rights and Open-Trail Access

Her Majesty Queen Sonja, a dedicated skier and mountaineer, exemplifies some of the major changes in women's lives over the last 100 years, including a dramatic degree of emancipation in their living conditions and freedom to move. When the monarchy was re-established in the newly independent Norwegian nation in 1905, a referendum—that excluded women as voters—installed a grandchild of British Queen Victoria, Princess Maud, along with her husband Prince Carl of Denmark, as Queen Maud and King Haakon VII of Norway. The young couple quickly confirmed their Norwegian identity by publicly going on a family ski excursion with their young son Crown Prince Olav. The "hourglass shape" of Queen Maud's body in that tableau gives us a telling contrast to the healthy, freely moving body of the current Queen Sonja, who married into the royal family in the late 1960s. Her Majesty Queen Sonja's inauguration of the Gina Trail is only one example of her efforts to promote women's *friluftsliv* and physically active living. Most recently, she invited all women to enjoy her favourite hikes, including *Dronningstien*—the Queen's Path—which she inaugurated in 2016 (Glorvigen, 2016).[8]

The public personae of the two queens symbolize the complexity of ideas, events, personal involvement, and societal changes in a national narrative in which the emergence of *friluftsliv* has been intimately linked with the rise of feminism and democracy over the last 150 years. It is already more than half a century since the Public Access Act of 1957 codified the public's democratic right to roam and follow whatever trail one might wish whilst being considerate (Gurholt, 2016). Thus, the concept of *open trails* becomes a metaphor for both the emancipatory changes in most women's lives since the 1850s and a national policy and the prospect to make *friluftsliv*—hiking and adventure—accessible to all citizens.

Notes

1. http://www.kongehuset.no
2. The information was taken from the official web page running throughout the Jubilee (http://stemmerettsjubileet.no/de-fire-store), however, which was later closed down.
3. Generated by university librarian executive emerita Anne-Mette Vibe, university librarian executive Hege Underthun, and Professor Kirsti Pedersen Gurholt, with graphic design by Tove Riise and financial support from the Norwegian School of Sports Sciences, displayed from 24 October 2013 to 24 January 2014. In particular, I am grateful to Anne-Mette Vibe, who took the initiative and provided me with original sources of female pioneering mountaineers.
4. Same as note ii: including Camilla Collett (1813–1895), Gina Krog (1847–1916), Fernanda Nissen (1862–1920), and Fredrikke Marie Quam (1843–1938). No sources connect Quam to *friluftsliv* or sport. However, in her later career, she led the National Association for the Promotion of Women's Health, which is now funding research on women, physical activity, and health.
5. The second category includes Anna Rogstad (1854–1938), Betzy Kjelsberg (1866–1950), Thekla Resvoll (1871–1948), Therese Bertheau (1861–1936), Eva Sars Nansen (1858–1907), and Antoinette Kamstrup (1859–1948).
6. Promoted by the initials H.S. (1887). *Momenter til eftertanke betræffende reformturistdragten for damer og andet kvindedrakt vedkommende* [Moments to afterthought about the reform tourist dress for women and other female dresses], *New Terrain* [*Nylænde*], *6*, 89–92.
7. Agerholt refers to the historian Halvdan Koht, *Vision and myths* (1934) and to *Dagbladet*, 15 January 1894. Cecilie Thoresen was the first woman to attend university in Norway. In 1892, the Huseby Race was moved to Holmenkollen, still Norway's most famous ski arena.
8. Promoted in the weekly women's magazine *Hjemmet* [The Home], published the week before Easter, 2016, when this chapter was completed!

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9

Building Relationships on and with Mother Mountain: Women Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into Outdoor Learning

Lynne Thomas, Nicole Taylor, and Tonia Gray

Introduction

In this chapter, we explore some of the affinities that developed amongst three women outdoor educators, one Indigenous (Lynne Thomas) and two Anglo-Celtic (Nicole Taylor and Tonia Gray), whilst on Mount Gulaga in remote southeast Australia. The relationship that formed between us and the Mother Mountain Gulaga is key to this chapter, in which we seek to demonstrate how Indigenous Australian knowledge can be respectfully taken up within outdoor learning contexts, such as those provided through outdoor education. Outdoor education programmes, in their various forms across Australia, are still largely approached through Western knowledge systems and academic structures (Kingsley, Townsend, Henderson-Wilson, & Bolam, 2013; Truong et al., 2018). Whilst there is some evidence of small shifts to include

L. Thomas
Narooma Public School, Narooma, NSW, Australia

N. Taylor
The University of Sydney, Sydney, NSW, Australia

T. Gray (✉)
Centre for Educational Research, Western Sydney University,
Penrith, NSW, Australia

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Indigenous Knowledge in outdoor or environmental education programmes (Birrell, 1999, 2001, 2007; Gray, 2005; Spillman, 2017; Whitehouse, 2011), these are not often documented or made explicit for others in the field to take up and learn from.

The work in this chapter identifies how a space exists between Traditional Knowledge, non-Aboriginal people, and the Mother Mountain Gulaga, where similarities, connections, and stories can be shared as a way to build respectful relationships with people, Country, and the self (McKnight, 2015). This space, which is referred to as the "in-between-ness" of cultures, provides the foundation for outdoor education teaching and learning that occurs for the authors of this chapter. What follows can be considered an example of how the authors navigate this space together, sharing their experiences and stories of connecting with Country. This chapter can be useful as a guide for others in the outdoor learning and outdoor education fields, where not many explicit resources currently exist for non-Aboriginal people to think about, or implement, respectful teaching and learning that connects with Indigenous Knowledge.

Specifically, this chapter is broken into four key sections. First, we introduce the authors of this chapter and situate their personal stories in the context of this work. Second, we present a general discussion of Indigenous knowledge and pay specific respect to the traditional Yuin knowledge that has informed much of this chapter. Following this, we re-story the experiences that the authors of this chapter have shared together, connecting with each other and to Country at Mount Gulaga, under the specific guidance of Lynne Thomas. We explore the pedagogical and cultural benefits of a collaborative, cross-cultural learning and teaching regime that is built on such respectful relationships (McKnight, 2015). Lynne Thomas provides a unique cultural experience, sharing her Yuin voice for us to recognize and promote traditional Indigenous Knowledge in our outdoor learning environments. The pedagogy of this collaboration is then linked to our rethinking of the disciplines of knowledge entrusted to outdoor educators. We investigate what this might mean for our practice and consider the possibilities inherent in new ways of knowing, being, and understanding. Finally, we conclude the chapter by exploring how our shared story can be taken up by others in outdoor learning contexts, such as outdoor education, and provide a conceptual framework to guide readers of this chapter to connect to the space that can be located between Indigenous knowledge, non-Aboriginal people, and Country.

Three Shared Stories: An Indigenous Teacher and Two Non-Indigenous Women Born on Yuin Land

The first author of this chapter, Lynne Thomas, is an Umbarra Biripi woman and elder of the Yuin Nation on the south coast of New South Wales (NSW). She is the daughter of Guboo Ted Thomas who fought tirelessly to protect Aboriginal sacred sites on Mumbulla Mountain and all over NSW. An environmental advocate, Guboo campaigned extensively to cease the logging that was destroying Aboriginal significant sites, wanting them to remain intact so that visitors to National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) could learn about the Indigenous connection to nature.[1]

In the early 1980s, Lynne's mother, Anne Thomas, was one of the cofounders of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, which was committed to encouraging Aboriginal perspectives into mainstream education and closing the gap. Both her parents were dedicated to engaging Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in deepening their understanding of the oldest culture in the world (Fig. 9.1).

Lynne's career has spanned a variety of fields such as NPWS ranger, worked at the Umbarra cultural centre at Wallaga Lake as a tour guide, Aboriginal cultural heritage officer, and threatened species officer. She has developed cultural awareness and practices for the local marine park, which have been a part of Aboriginal survival long before colonization. Currently in her role as the Aboriginal education officer, she promotes Indigenous perspectives into the school's curriculum by working with Aboriginal people and their wider communities.

Carrying on the rich legacy of her elders, Lynne guides visitors into the sacred sites on Mother Mountain Gulaga, echoing the stories of the wisdom keepers of the past and teaching students, youth groups, and overseas guests how to appreciate the land. As a powerful educational figurehead, Lynne leads the way in connecting people from around the world to Aboriginal ancient culture and knowledge of Country, with an underlying mission to share and pass on her Aboriginal connection to her family's cultural stories and respect for the environment.

The access track to Gulaga meanders through weathered megaliths, towering granite rocks from the mid-Cretaceous era that formed 94 million years ago[2] (Harrison & McConchie, 2009; McKnight, 2015). The significance of teaching about environmental sustainability, whilst simultaneously delivering the need for deep listening to Mother Earth's wisdom, is crucial. Having learnt from her parents and their parents, Lynne describes her purpose:

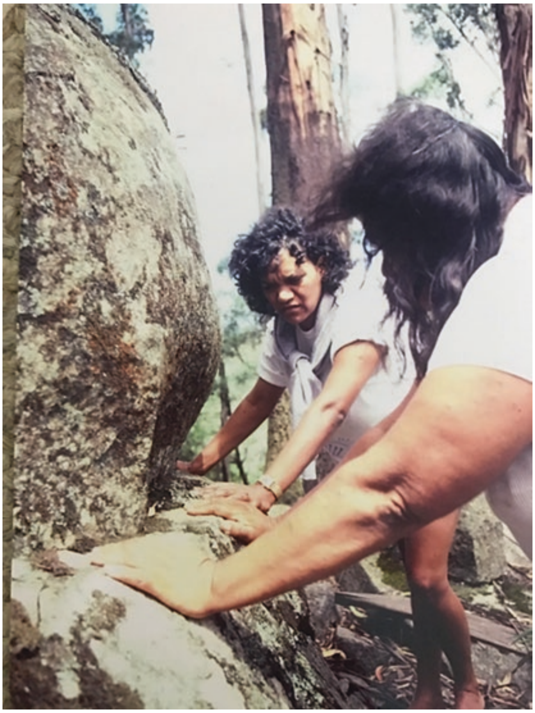

Fig. 9.1 Lynne Thomas' mother Anne Thomas teaching on the Communication Rock, Gulaga (Photo credit: Lynne Thomas)

> The visual perspective of seeing, feeling, touching, hearing and tasting the bush foods amongst these spiritual places take on the life forms of the ancient songlines. The lady rock comes to life, bearing a belly and carrying the future. The learning of education in these areas is important to our future, for country. I am only a tool in this world of creation so let's teach and share with people. Like the trees and rocks we will go back. In the same vein, Lynne remarked:

As a 'Black Duck, Yuin' woman, Lynne has an important role in keeping these knowledge[s] with her. This learning process is linked to the "maintenance of Country," and the legacy and spirits that visit inform us that Country isn't just below our feet:

> It is all around us, within Mother Earth, within that tree and within those stars. The four natural elements that created this world into existence are there; air, fire, earth and water. We are of kin to these elements, all these living things are our relatives, and my Country is my creator. I am of it, and it is of me. And to stand there, is to be known by this power. (L. Thomas, personal communication, 2017)

The other two authors of this chapter, Tonia Gray and Nicole Taylor, are non-Indigenous women conceived and born on Yuin land. Both women are Australian researchers and educators in a predominantly Western tertiary academic system. Tonia has a long-standing career as a lecturer and researcher, whilst also spending her childhood holidays roaming freely on a horseback near the sacred site. Nicole is an early career lecturer and researcher in Health and Physical Education. Her areas of interest extend into studies of health education, as it intersects with environmental, cultural, outdoor and embodied learning contexts.

Raised in Anglo-Celtic families, Tonia and Nicole developed throughout their early years a foundational connection to the landscape of the south coast of NSW. The unique geographical area enabled these two women to feel a strong affinity to the salt water and sandstone Country of the Yuin Nation. Both are indebted to Lynne for her gentle and immersive experiences on Country, which have been unconditionally offered as a result of her generosity of spirit, and on the strength of this, their awareness and practices have matured significantly over the past 15 years. These teachings have been delivered through place-based experiences, sharing the stories, pictures, and Indigenous knowledge from Lynne's heart. Tonia and Nicole, as non-Indigenous women, have been enriched by their ongoing experiential learning with Lynne, drawing on this new-found skill set to include Indigenous ways of knowing when educating their tertiary education students.

Although each have different worldviews, Lynne, Tonia, and Nicole have developed a respectful relationship with one another and with Country, which provides the through line for uniting Indigenous knowledge to outdoor learning contexts.

In many ways, the authors' journeys parallel the recent work by Singh and Major (2017), who reflect on the complexities and experiences of an Indigenous researcher working with a non-Indigenous supervisor to highlight how the coming together of both Indigenous and Western epistemologies "do not have to be used to the exclusion of each other; they can be used effectively to complement and support each other" (p. 5). Singh and Major (2017) argue that Indigenous research in educational contexts is "no longer research *on* or *about* Indigenous people, rather it is becoming research *for* and *with* Indigenous people" (p. 5). We seek to highlight in this chapter how our work is also built on the notion of shared relationships with each other and Country, which are culturally safe, respectful, and show recognition to Indigenous worldviews (Singh & Major, 2017). We next present a general discussion of Indigenous knowledge, and subsequently, we pay specific respect to the traditional Yuin knowledge that has informed much of this chapter.

Aboriginal Ways of Knowing

Notably, the term "Indigenous" within this chapter is the collective term used to refer to both mainland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who are a blend of hundreds of multicultural communities and identities (Colless, 2009). As such, there are many broad similarities found across the different groups that construct culture, community, and identity (Yunupingu, 1994), and Australia's Indigenous peoples have a continuously evolving culture. Today's Indigenous identity and knowledge is an intermingling of ancient traditional and modern cultures, representative of both old and new (Atkinson, 2002).

Culture can be viewed as a system of beliefs regarding social life, which relies on conventions, implicit assumptions, communication, and shared identity amongst a social group (Colless, 2009; Holland, 2006). Likewise, cultural traditions are particular to the tribe from which they originate and are usually a direct result of Dreaming (Harrison & McConchie, 2009). Dreaming is the term commonly used by Indigenous people (Stanner, 1979, 1991), and Dreamtime stories vary from tribe to tribe. The stories and totems of each distinct tribal nation are the means by which Dreamtime acquires different cultural understandings of community identity (Reed, 1969).

Aboriginal ways of knowing are based upon ancient knowledge systems that demand an intimacy with the landscape and their songs' lines (Atkinson, 2002; Harrison & McConchie, 2009; Sveiby & Skuthorpe, 2006; Truong et al., 2018). Dreaming stories reconstruct Aboriginal creation stories and articulate how culture is inextricably connected to the physical and spiritual landscape (Birrell, 2007). A common and poignant Aboriginal maxim is *"We do not own the land, the land owns us."* Put simply, knowledge of the land belongs to Indigenous people, who in turn belong to their landscape. As Lynne has said:

> Of course, if you're living in the bush or environment, you're just so used to it because you know it, you were born in the land, you know. You eat, feel and breathe in that land, and when you die we're going back to that land. So it's only natural that ancient—like Aboriginal people, people that live off the land, really understand that and can bring it out in a different way of expressing themselves, either through music, or through patterns, or through symbols that are part of them. Because I think that's what the land wants to teach us and to tell us, is that we're all part of the land and it's a wonderful thing. I think the land is so much older than what we are, really. You're right, we're only here for just a few little moments in time—just a drop in the ocean I guess, in some ways. The land will always be here. (L. Thomas, personal communication, 2016)

Indigenous knowledge is generated through the pillars of relationships, roles, responsibilities, and respect (Atkinson, 2002; Birrell, 1999, 2001, 2007; Gray, 2005). In Aboriginal teachings, according to Lynne, "knowledge belongs to our people, and people belong to a landscape". Their teachings are place based, embodied, and immersive and exist only within a complex web of interrelationships (Birrell, 1999, 2001). Lynne's father, Guboo Ted Thomas, imparted an important message:

> The Earth is our Mother.
> When I die I'm going down there.
> When you die you're going there too.
> We are all going there, there is no escape.
> But what are you doing for Mother Earth? (Guboo Ted Thomas, cited in personal communication with Lynne Thomas, April 2016)

In essence, Lynne has spent the past 35 years conveying her mother and father's wisdom to Western, non-Aboriginal people. In the tradition of her people, Lynne teaches through "stories" to communicate the salient meanings. In an effort to retain this important technique, some of what follows in this chapter is linked with the stories Lynne tells when she is on Gulaga with students:

> I tell my stories at different locations, between these locations, we would follow song-lines to other locations. Stories occurred between these sacred sites. My cultural education took place informally, and was (and is) a geography of knowledge[s]. (L. Thomas, personal communication, 2017)

In this sense, Lynne says, Indigenous, place-based education is a reciprocal exchange "between me, the site, the site and me" (2017). Telling these stories at various sacred sites and locations (Fig. 9.2, Birthing Rocks), such as Gulaga, requires an interplay with the place and their scared ancestors, where "each rock is a story and when you hear the story, you have a responsibility to the story. Carrying this concept to further magnitude, Lynne remarked "you must retell the story and pass on its essence/meaning".

Based on this premise, there is a conjoint relationship between the knower and the known. Indigenous knowledge systems are inconceivable without this mutuality (Wildcat, 2009). Indigenous knowledge is generated in this way through a circular process that occurs by renewing these relationships, and according to Friesen, Jardine, and Gladstone (2010):

> Time spent on the land with elders and spiritual guides creates the milieu of possibility. Hearing the traditional language and engaging in ceremony becomes the student's preparation for receiving communication and knowledge. This

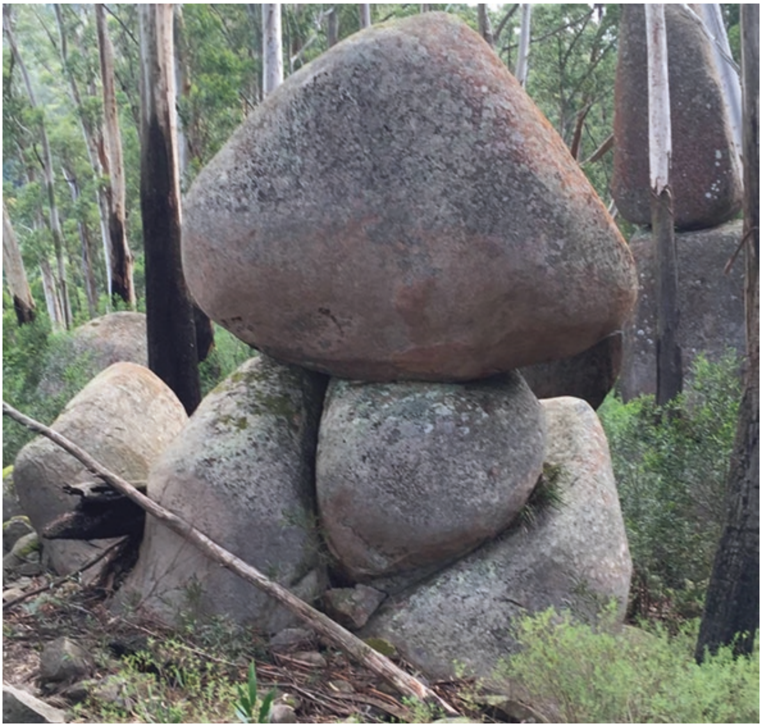

Fig. 9.2 The Birthing Rocks, Gulaga (Mother) Mountain (Photo credit: Tonia Gray)

> coming-to-know is neither linear nor fragmented. It is embodied. It exists only within a web of relations. (p. 190)

Lynne open-handedly takes us onto her Country the way her parents did, walking through her people's sacred sites. Coming together to share these stories is so important, as it creates friendship and an awareness of respect. Our modus operandi as white women working in outdoor learning environments has changed irreversibly as a result of Indigenous knowledge being infused into our teaching practice.

Entering into Yuin Country: Welcome to Gulaga

Mount Gulaga, or Mother Mountain, welcomes us to her special place of learning through the spirit, time, and peace and with the warm embrace of a mother. When we return to this area here on the south coast of NSW, the first place we see and that greets our arrival home is the graceful shape of the Mother Mountain Gulaga. There is a saying when you get to this special spot that rises up through the land: *"We are home and there she is waiting for us."* This message has been strongly passed on from Lynne's ancestors, and she always knows that "the mountain will call you home; you only have to see her and know."

There are areas on Gulaga, in the ancient landscape, which represent the unity and social interactiveness between females and males, a place that we share together. These are places of learning and are for all people to come together. Gulaga's teaching areas not only provide that deep spiritual feeling but also enhance the responsibilities of protection of the families and their space of connection.

Walking through the majestic, time-altered granite rocks on Gulaga, many are visually and spiritually feminine. Through the rock formations, their knowledge and understanding of birthing is taught from a woman's perspective. The men are left to interpret the male perspectives, yet, they are born together through the teaching of creation. This creation includes babies, children, adults, and knowledge holders "the grandparents" and, most of all, the environment.

However, the Western world has never seen through the eyes of the Aboriginal person and has never really understood the land as Aboriginal custodians have. Early settlers such as Captain Cook saw in the rising of the land what looked like a camel and so he named the land formations Mount Dromedary. What Captain Cook and the early settlers didn't realize was that this mountain already had a name, which was and still is Gulaga. Lynne describes an old story of this occurrence, passed on to her by her father as a poem:

An old wise man sits looking out to sea,
holding his spear and waddi to his side,
he watches the white ghost ships sailing by, he says
this is the end of civilisation,
and slowly stands up and walks away. (Guboo Ted Thomas, 1988)

Indigenous philosophy according to Lynne has an underlying principle of "sameness." Lynne often remarks "no matter whether our skin is yellow, black, red or white, the same red blood runs through us." This philosophy is amplified in the following Indigenous teachings by Lynne:

> My dad always said that we're all one. We all have arms, eyes and legs, you know, we're just all one. The same blood that runs through you runs through me, we are all one brother, when I die I'm going back to Mother Earth. And when you die, you're coming too, we are all going down there back to Mother Earth. So we need to respect the Earth because it's our Mother….
>
> It doesn't matter where we are or where we come from, but the beauty is that we need to all come together and share and to look after and make sure that our land, that Mother Earth gives us all these resources, is that we're preserving it

> and learning about sustainability because we want it here for our children and our children's children, for the future. I learnt that it doesn't matter, wherever you are in this world, we are connected in some way or another or by the land itself and we're learning. It's just an amazing thing. It's part of the land in which we live, it's us. I believe that if we all come together like that, and we learn and we understand each other then we have a better world to be able to look after the environment and sustain it for at least, you know, for our children's children.

In the next section, we re-story the experiences that we have shared together, connecting with each other, to Country, under the specific guidance of Lynne Thomas.

The Ochre Ceremony

Before entering the sacred teaching areas of Mount Gulaga, Lynne asks each individual in her group to approach her one at a time, and she quietly goes through the ceremony that prepares each person to show respect to the sacred area they are about to visit. She mixes the ochre, using her fingertips to paint the cool Earth onto each of the students' faces. Lynne then paints four dots, encouraging those present to respectfully listen and see what they are being told, not just by her but also by the Mother Mountain, Gulaga.

Lynne places dots on either side of the temple. The left dot of ochre is the *Marbarra*, meaning "to look." This dot symbolizes the concept of teaching people *to look* where they are going, to *look* at Mother Earth and where they are walking. In this way, they will see the environment clearly, not fall over and be safe. Students are encouraged to *look forward* and *look back* so they don't get lost. If anyone becomes lost, they are encouraged to *look and see* the markers on the trees so they can find their way back.

The right dot of ochre on the other side of the temple is the *Mookagaran* (the Biripi word for Lynne's mum's totem, the White Pointer shark). For the Dhurga South Coast, this represents the *eyes*, and students are encouraged by Lynne to *look* and *see* what they are going to learn. When the elders use it in that way, they also want the children to look at them when they are talking, as a sign of respect, so they know they are listening.

The third dot of ochre is placed in the middle of the forehead, between the eyebrows. Lynne describes that this symbolizes *the third eye* and is connected to one's *heart*. It represents our ability to *open our mind* and see things from a different perspective. Whilst placing the ochre in this spot, she teaches her students to look at things from a different perspective by getting "in tune" with Mother Earth.

Finally finishing with an ochre dot on the chin, Lynne teaches her students to *speak their truth* respectfully, only after careful consideration of their words.

In this way, she emphasizes the importance of realizing that sometimes, it is best for one *to remain silent*. Silence is considered particularly important whilst learning, and students should only talk when spoken to.

When these four ochre dots are combined, and Lynne has finished her "painting up" ceremony, she explains that the Ochre Ceremony can be viewed as another way of seeing what Mother Earth is trying to teach us. The ceremony is completed by tying a red string around the head, which symbolizes the blood that runs through us all, connecting us to one another (Figs. 9.3 and 9.4).

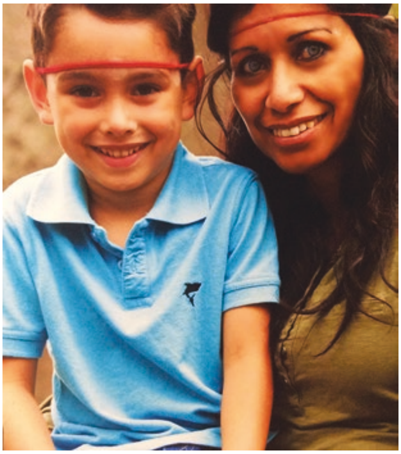

Fig. 9.3 Lynne Thomas and her grandson during the Ochre Ceremony (Photo credit: Lynne Thomas)

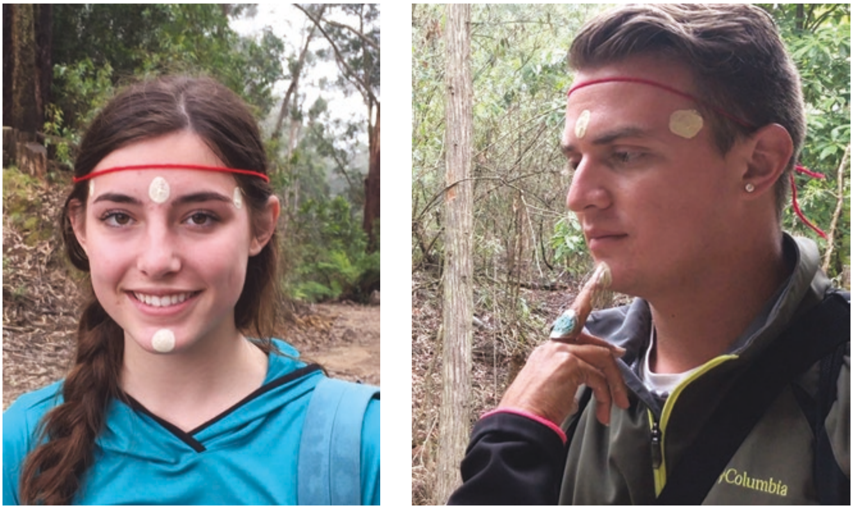

Fig. 9.4 The Ochre Ceremony (Photo credit: Tonia Gray)

The Clapping Sticks: "It's Like Knocking at the Front Door"

As Lynne moves the group from the Ochre Ceremony to the sacred teaching sites, she selects one of the students to announce our group's presence. The group of visitors then needs to "knock at the door" to announce their arrival. At a specific location beside a tree, the chosen student is handed a set of clapping sticks. The sticks are struck together—one short, sharp strike—as each person enters the sacred site. This act is symbolic, announcing each person's arrival at the entrance. Lynne explicates how this act is "like knocking at the front door" when you visit another person's home. The clap is the sound communicated to the spirits, and we are telling them how many people are coming in, thus respecting the spirits of the land and getting protection from those same spirits. The clapping sticks (Fig. 9.5) serve three specific purposes. The first is that they remind us that when entering an Indigenous sacred site such as Gulaga, one needs to show respect and let the ancestors know they're coming in. It's just like going to another person's home. The sticks are also a reminder that everything we need is surrounding us. The trees, the Earth, the land, they provide us with all we need. Finally, the sticks are also the link to Lynne's specific teaching, that having "one [stick] is out of balance, and we need two sticks to make a noise"; therefore, in duality there is balance. Here Lynne gives the examples of alpha and omega—the eternal beginning and the end, or the continuing circle, and yin and yang.

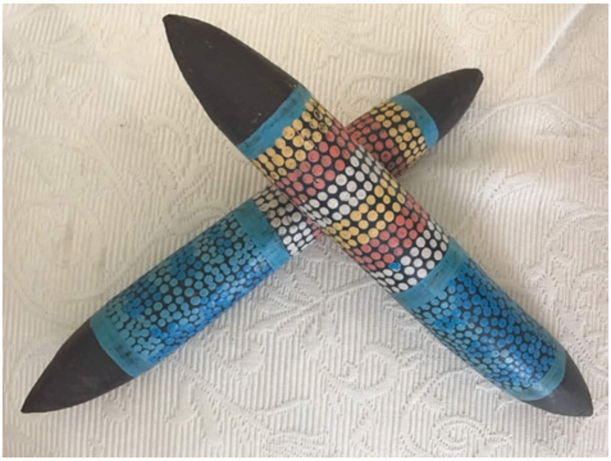

Fig. 9.5 The clapping sticks (Photo credit: Tonia Gray)

The Past, Present, and Future

Walking further, the group turn and on *looking back* realize that they have just passed three large rocks, one piled neatly on top of another. They look unbalanced, unnatural almost—one can't help but wonder how these unique rocks came to perch so precariously on the mountainside. The one highest to the sky is pointed, like an arrow, towering above the heads of the group. Lynne clarifies that these three rocks represent *the past* at the base, *the present* in the middle, and, finally, *the future* pointing skyward (Fig. 9.6). These rocks are considered sacred and are explained by Lynne as being similar to a cathedral to the white man, except that she describes how by not having a roof over one's head, it means that "prayers" are free to fly up to the sky, rather than being trapped in a building, not able to escape the roof.

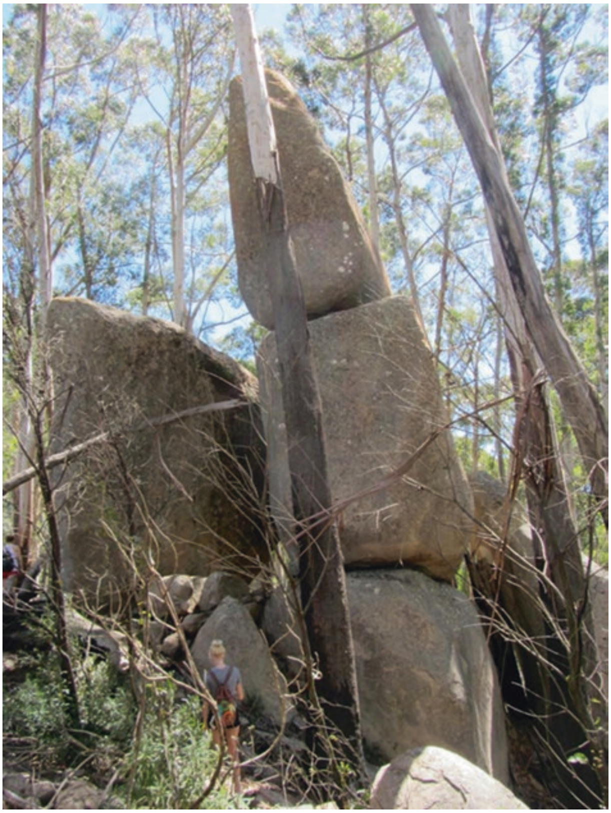

Fig. 9.6 Three rocks: Past, present, and future (Photo credit: Tonia Gray)

The Teaching Rocks

One of the most significant parts of Lynne's teaching is being lead onto *the teaching rocks*. This is a short, sharp climb that brings visitors onto a large, flat rock, perched high above the ground. Up on the teaching rocks, one feels nearer to the bright blue sky, lifted closer to the whispering leaves of the eucalypts that stand tall and straight, like guardians. There are 180-degree views from the rocky outcrop in the north up the coastline towards Narooma, and south, overlooking the Wallaga Lake and Bermagui. Lynne carefully outlines the significance to her people of Wallaga Lake:

> When we look at Wallaga Lake we see the island in the middle of the catchment. This is where I get visitors to use their third eye, and think about what the island may look like to them, reinforcing the idea of using the third eye and seeing the island in another perspective. Although it is an Island in its location, to us, it is significant, as this island was once a home to the tribal Elder named Merriman, known as "umbarra" or "wumbarra." His name represents a "black duck" which is the bird species that identifies its ecological and sustained areas of existence and protection to the local people living, breathing, being born and dying in its boundaries they call Country. Other people travelling through black duck area are allowed to eat a black duck, as long as they show respect to its life and the creator. This is social lore that allows passage ways for other Aboriginal people travelling through, and enables enough time for the species to recover and live in its natural and protected surroundings by the local people. It also signifies that the species survival depends on sustainable, ecological, natural processes Aboriginal people have practiced since the dreaming. (L. Thomas, personal communication, 2017)

Lynne describes how this flat, smooth rock has been used for thousands of years as a teaching and learning space. Children and young people in particular have been brought to this place to learn about their connection to Mother Earth and how they and their elders looked after Country. The children learn to look at things through different perspectives, and the rock formations and colour help children see that there is more to a rock, tree, bark, or the things they see on the Earth. This teaching rock also identifies the understanding of woman in their lives and the importance of looking after each other. Listening is the key when sitting on the teaching rock.

Becoming a Guardian of Gulaga: "Find a Rock That Calls to You"

As the students climb down from the teaching rocks, Lynne instructs everyone to keep their eyes and minds open and *find a rock that calls to you*. It can be large or small but everyone must pick up a rock that intuitively speaks to them. Lynne then tells us to add our rock to the small pile that we notice has accumulated under a tree. When we select a rock at the end of the day to place on the pile, Lynne clarifies to us that we are leaving a piece of ourselves behind. Our DNA is on that rock, a reminder that we are now a part of Gulaga, and Gulaga is in our hearts. Likewise, Lynne explains that no matter where we go in your life, one day—we might be at work or in another country or picking up kids from school—our mind will drift back to our time on Gulaga, and we will think about what we learnt there. Lynne closes her teachings by stating, *"Once you visit Gulaga, the Mountain calls you back."* She says that once they pick up that stone and put in onto the rock, they become a guardian of Gulaga. She says that the mountain (Gulaga) will always be a special memory in their heart, mind, and soul. They will be touched and will remember her, and at that time and in that space, Gulaga's magic will be with them.

Navigating the "Third Space" in Outdoor Learning

The pedagogy of our collaboration is inextricably linked to our rethinking of the disciplines of knowledge entrusted to us as outdoor educators. We investigate what this might mean for our practice and consider the possibilities inherent in new ways of knowing, being, and understanding. We now conclude the chapter by exploring how our shared story can be taken up by others in outdoor learning contexts, such as outdoor education, and provide a conceptual framework to guide readers of this chapter to connect to the "third space," which can be located between Indigenous knowledge, non-Aboriginal people, and Country.

What Do Two Non-Indigenous Women Glean from Indigenous Wisdom?

Against the backdrop of global warming and species extinction, Indigenous ways of teaching and culture transmission have also experienced a similar decline. The intersectionality of Indigenous Knowledge and outdoor learning as a Western construct is vitally important during these precarious times. Walking simultaneously in two worlds alongside an Indigenous teacher, navigating Indigenous/Western epistemologies and methodologies, can have its own set of inherent challenges.

For us as two white women, the "in-between-ness" of cultures and the Indigenous sustainability message resonates loud and clear. We are left contemplating questions such as:

- How do we, as contemporary educators, help build a truly sustainable society on this Earth?
- How did the Aboriginal peoples do it so well and for so long?
- What type of outdoor and ecological leadership practice does it require us to adopt?

To this end, Fig. 9.7 provides a preliminary conceptual framework we are developing to illustrate our pedagogical thinking. Although the chapter has an imposed word length, the cursory manner in which outdoor learning is applied to the theoretical constructs is acknowledged by the authors. Albeit, this diagram serves merely as a starting point and, as such, needs to be viewed in this light.

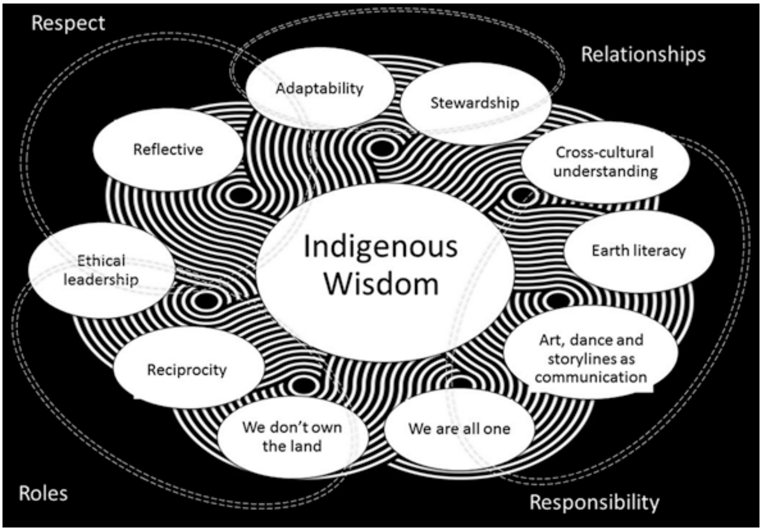
Respect
Relationships
Adaptability
Stewardship
Reflective
Cross-cultural understanding
Indigenous Wisdom
Ethical leadership
Earth literacy
Art, dance and storylines as communication
Reciprocity
We don't own the land
We are all one
Roles
Responsibility

Fig. 9.7 Preliminary conceptual model illustrating the meeting of Traditional and Western knowledge systems (adapted from Arvanitakis & Hornsby, 2016)

The four pillars of Indigenous wisdom include respect, relationships, roles, and responsibility and provide a scaffold for our pedagogical understandings. These are achievable through ten key elements: ethical leadership, reflective practice, adaptability, stewardship, cross-cultural understanding, Earth literacy, reciprocity, arts-based communication, and mantras such as "we are all one" and "we don't own the land, the land owns us."

And because the students in Lynne's groups are not stagnant beings but are implicated in questioning and creating meaning from their experiences, it is important that we consider their part in respectfully connecting with Lynne and her teachings. Below is a student's reflection on the experience.

> *Growing up, we strive for the 'why' and through that we gain knowledge. Our lives are circles and at the end we return to the Earth. Our spirits are why we are here. Lynne Thomas, an Aboriginal elder, taught us about Aboriginal culture. When she looked me in the eyes I felt like she could see my spirit. It's easy to understand how we are all connected to the Earth when you travel to places like this. Lynne taught us how to look at things using a different perspective, particularly regarding our third eye which is connected to our hearts. During our journey through her teaching, at one point she put traditional paint, ochre, on our faces after we tied a red band around our heads. The red band symbolizes the blood that runs through us all, connecting us to one another. The dots on our faces symbolize looking, listening, our third eye, and teaching.*
>
> *During that moment when she was sharing her knowledge with me, I felt very connected to the Earth and was touched that she would share such an intimate part of her culture with us. I love learning about other people's cultures because of the impact they have on the world. With each distinct culture, there are different things brought to the world and by gathering all these teachings and knowledge we actively shape the world we live in just as it actively shapes us. The knowledge shared with us was incredible but what really touched me was when she spoke about sharing the knowledge we have gathered with other people. This struck me as something I care about deeply but rarely ever think about.* (E. Morzewski, blog, 2017)[3]

Uniting the Four Pillars: Outdoor Learning and Earth Wisdom

A common through line in Indigenous teaching is the concept of *dadirri* or deep listening. This gentle, introspective, and meditative practice is integral to Indigenous knowledge. According to Atkinson (2002), *dadirri* is a term that Aboriginal elder Miriam Rose Ungunmerr Baumann refers to:

To know me is to breathe with me.
To breathe with me is to listen deeply.

To listen deeply is to connect.
It is the sound of deep calling to deep.
Dadirri is the deep inner spring inside us.
We call on it and it calls on us.

Meditative listening is essentially a personal spiritual practice that has largely informed our pedagogical practice as two white women working in the outdoors alongside Lynne. In the same train of thought, Aboriginal elder Tex Skuthorpe reveals:

> Our land is our knowledge, we walk on the knowledge, we dwell in the knowledge, we live in our thesaurus, we walk in our Bible every day of our lives. Everything is knowledge. We don't need a word for knowledge. (T. Skuthorpe, workshop and personal communication, February 17, 2017)

For centuries, we've largely disregarded the Earth literacy insights of those amongst us who are still directly connected to ancestral ways of knowledge (Birrell, 2005, 2007; Gray, 2005; Mitten, 2017). As our unabated consumer lifestyle collides with the realization that our Earth is not capable of supporting our current way of life, we are looking to those who once lived in a state of indefinite sustainability and abundance, as a way forward. Lynne helps us by saying:

> Healing country heals ourselves, and healing ourselves heals country. When something of our Aboriginal culture is preserved and cared for, the heritage of all Australians, Europeans as well as Aboriginals is richer. (Guboo Ted Thomas cited in L. Thomas, personal communication, March 2017)

Conclusion

In closing, this chapter has provided an example of the intersectionality of Indigenous knowledge and outdoor learning contexts as a Western construct. Exploring the possibilities that exist in the space between Indigenous knowledge, non-Aboriginal people, and Country points to how respectful relationships can create foundations for the ways such knowledge can transfer into outdoor learning practices. The long-standing, respectful relationship, which is nurtured amongst not only the authors of this chapter but also their embodied relationship with Mother Mountain Gulaga, makes possible the conditions in which non-Aboriginal people can craft pedagogy and teach in outdoor education contexts in a way that does not speak on behalf of Indigenous people. Rather, as non-Indigenous outdoor educators, we are able to re-story our experiences with Lynne and Gulaga as a way of framing Indigenous knowledge within our teaching and learning. This highlights the significance for non-Indigenous educators in outdoor learning fields to develop their own connections and respectful relationships with Country, with Indigenous communities, and with people in their locale. Here, we argue that it is only through these relationships and connected experiences on Country that we can truly explore the intersectionality of Indigenous knowledge in the field.

> Land is fundamental to the wellbeing of Aboriginal people. The land is not just soil or rocks or minerals, but a whole environment that sustains and is sustained by people and culture.[4]

Finally, a salient message from the Yolngu musician Yirrmal Marika relays the importance of sharing Indigenous knowledge with people in the Western world:

> In my mind, living in two worlds is like a keyboard; there are white keys and there are black keys. And to get a good sound you need to play both keys, you can't just play one. This is what I am doing, learning about both worlds and recognizing that we are all different but our blood is one and we need to work together to close the gap. (Deadly Vibe)[5]

Ultimately, the three women in this chapter have in common the aspiration of making beautiful "music" in our outdoor education practices by bringing together the black and white keys on the keyboard to deliver the importance of Mother Earth's wisdom in our environmental sustainability messages.

Notes

1. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guboo_Ted_Thomas
2. Cartoscope Pty Ltd. Source: http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/historical/mtdromedary-gold
3. See https://mylifemyperspectives.wordpress.com/2017/03/28/south-coast-cultural-excursion/
4. See http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/austn-indigenous-cultural-heritage
5. See http://www.deadlyvibe.com.au/2013/11/yirrkala-music-man/

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10

Following the Currents of Mighty Women Past and Present

Anita Pryor

Beaded Delta

Paddling down the upper reaches of a glacier-fed river tends to involve hasty choices about which thread of a river to follow. Depending on the river's volume, the paddler may find herself at a standstill amongst rocks and sediment, or at a dangerous constriction. By luck, planning, or guidance, the paddler may find a determined thread, enabling her to flow onwards towards the wider flood plains below (Fig. 10.1).

This chapter mentions something about luck and planning, but focuses more on the fortuitous timing of a paddler entering the river and the generous guidance of older paddlers. It is a personal tale of patriarchy, physicality, gender, sexuality, culture, power, and confrontation, and a professionally reflective tale of the emergence and consolidation of a novel field of outdoor practice in Australia called bush adventure therapy (BAT), within which people of all genders are encouraged to be mighty.

Subjective in nature, this tale is one version of one woman's story and invites telling from other points of view; yet one point should not be missed: this ride, enjoyed, would not have been possible without the beauty and bravery of earlier explorations by generations of mighty women, combined with cultural freedoms and economic adequacies that allowed this girl to even consider entering the river in the first place.

A. Pryor (✉)
Adventure Works Australia, Hobart, TAS, Australia

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T. Gray, D. Mitten (eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning*, Palgrave Studies in Gender and Education, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-53550-0_10

Fig. 10.1 The mighty Mitukituki River winds its way to the sea in New Zealand's South Island

Happy to Be a Tomboy

I was born into an Australian family of Cornish and European–Tasmanian descent, inheriting the patriarchy, democracy, and spirituality of Celtic Cornwall and the adventure and hardship of international immigration to a remote island off mainland Australia. Spanning two dimensions of history, my Cornish ancestors were oppressed by English colonizers in Cornwall (Kernow) and my immigrant ancestors were present to the shameful colonizing of Aboriginal custodians and their lands by European settlers.

My parents Bronwyn and Robin were hard working, spiritual, and service oriented, and provided a close-knit family for me, my twin sister Reima, and older brother Rohan. From age three, I chose jeans over dresses, loose hair instead of pigtails, and garden play over dolls. Whether or not these early interests were innate, my cultural inheritance and social surrounds played an obvious role. Perhaps seeing an older brother favoured with the responsibility of Cornish patriarchy, and noticing the extra adventure that pants afforded over dresses, were part of my early formation.

Tomboy traits were encouraged through physical activity outdoors, and my choices towards outdoor play were *only* made possible through the good fortune of timing and placing. Born in the 1970s rather than the 1950s, and into a family that valued such freedoms, meant that I was able to follow my innate interests with gusto. The timing of my life meant I inherited wide-ranging freedoms, including the choosing of my own career path. Although I noticed gender conformities, I was not required to be a girly girl, never rebuked for being able to throw balls, nor teased for making tomboy choices. Looking back, my father was a feminist at heart, and my mother provided generous levels of freedom and trust.

Finding Leverage

Family camping holidays on rivers and beaches and church-based youth camps were key ingredients in my upbringing. In primary school, we canoed up reedy creeks and at a nearby lake for whole days at a time with siblings and wonderful friends like Sarah Thomson. In high school, I and great mate Leanne McGain joined a couple of teacher-led mountain hikes and formed a hiking group with fellow students. More army-influenced outdoor trips rather than outdoor education, these school trips were instigated by two male teachers who unfortunately were as interested in adolescent girls as they were in hiking. Nevertheless, fellow students and I learnt some outdoor skills and gained a lifelong love of going bush—even choosing to cook on Trangia stoves at lunchtime back at school as a way of continuing the simple life tasted out bush.

Similarly discordant perhaps, was the outdoor imagery I received during this time from reality short films produced by adventurer Alby Mangles (a 1980s Australian version of Bear Grylls), in which adoring bikini-clad women were ever-present observers of Alby's adventurous antics. Needless to say, I identified more so with Alby than with the women portrayed in his films and was more interested in swinging from the mast rather than sitting on the deck. I liked to compete with boys as equals, and always held my ground.

Another ingredient in my formative years was encouragement by my parents to have a go, without fear of failure or the need for success. This atmosphere spurred me to participate widely and, whether true or not, to feel on a level playing field with boys and with people from all levels of society. Along with an unquestioning acceptance of equality, my father seemed to model a strong belief in the necessity of democracy and the importance of democratic political processes like consultation, agreement, and collaboration. These early values were laid deep within my bones and their ingraining may have meant that I would have exuded them in whatever career path I chose.

Looking back on high school life, I recall being asked by a teacher to write a short story about growing old. In the short tale, I wrote from the perspective

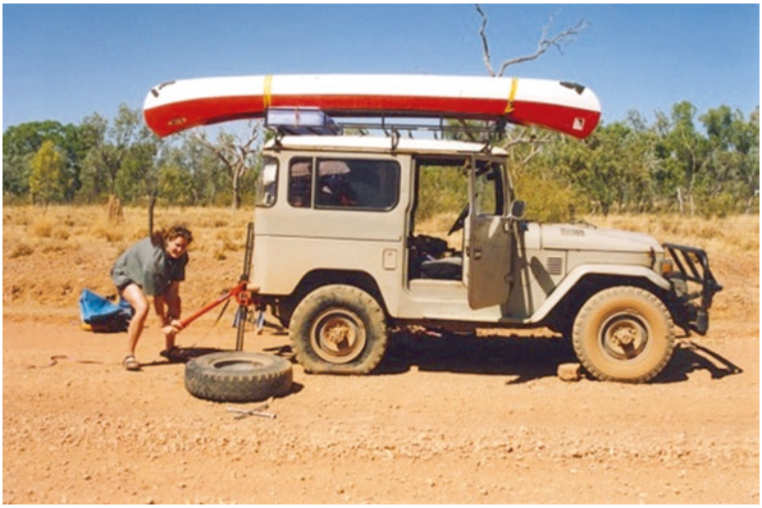

Fig. 10.2 Anita changes a tyre and finds her leverage on a round-Australia road trip at age 21

of an 80-year-old woman with weathered face, a beaten-up four-wheel drive (recreational vehicle), and a long history of taking people out bush to ‘feel better’. A surprising element of this short story written at age 16 was that I had not yet met any role models like the old woman I envisaged, nor even known of such a career path (Fig. 10.2).

Confronted by Feminism

In 1990, I embarked on a three-year Bachelor of Arts degree in Outdoor Education at La Trobe University, Bendigo. At the time, this course was considered exemplary in academic rigour, depth of social/cultural critique, and in producing high-quality educators who could talk the walk. An example of course philosophy was the relative low emphasis placed on the physical and technical aspects of outdoor leadership compared with the importance of recognizing cultural assumptions, gender biases, social psychological processes, and the reflective intentions that leaders brought to their role as outdoor educator. The course critiqued many and possibly all cultural biases, including over-simplified and sexist dichotomies such as hard and soft skills.

This was a course of study founded by critical outdoor leaders and ecofeminists (both women and men), and predominantly chosen by thoughtful, mature students. In contrast, I was young and naïve and there for the fun of it—I had not been exposed to the political side of feminism or the illumination of cultural blind spots, nor the ways in which humans had disrespected and devastated natural environments. I'd taken for granted gender equality, social justice, and environmental stewardship and was now confronted by stark new realities and non-realities.

My first impression of feminism, eco-feminism, deep ecology, and environmentalism was that they could be rather aggressive. A tertiary education received from staff grounded in these "isms" could feel harsh and critical, illustrated by the amount of red pen used to correct essays and other assessment tasks that had included assumptions and biases I'd taken for granted. What I'd considered simple, normal, conventional ways of expressing ideas, such as using men/he as a dominant gender description, or statements that implied humans were somehow separated from and above other species and natural environments (e.g., humans and animals), were no longer acceptable. Whilst the red pen helped me uncover cultural and gendered blinkers, positive encouragement helped uncover my confidence to share ideas and explorations with honesty, from the heart. Mary-Faeth Chenery, Lorraine Smith, and Monica Green were amongst the lecturers whose care and corrections made the greatest impact on me.

Another noteworthy influence amongst staff and students at La Trobe was the high proportion of lesbian women in positions of strength and power. At the time, I couldn't understand the prevalence or appeal of this orientation, nor the apparent lack of gay men. I respected the confidence and sense of community that lesbian women brought to the outdoor field, and held my lesbian friends and teachers in high regard. I recognized the full range of mighty women, wonder women, Xena warriors, and earth mothers present amongst lesbians, bisexual, and heterosexual women alike, not to mention other sexual identities that may have been present. And it was the older female teachers at La Trobe who happened to be lesbian, and their partners, who inspired me the most. I now acknowledge these women (then in their 50s) as my early guides on the river that took me towards outdoor leadership. They had negotiated difficult hazards long before I knew of such a career, and dealt with obstacles long before I and other young women felt free to run the outdoor leadership river. Along the way, I inherited a critical eye for the social, cultural, and environmental dimensions at work within outdoor leadership, and later on, came to fully understand the appeal of intimate relationships with women.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

In my early outdoors work, which included summer canoe-guiding jobs before and whilst studying outdoor education, I found that some men in positions of power (my bosses) seemed to hold an inflated sense of confidence that their sexual affections for young female staff were mutual. I also learnt that an overrepresentation of men in some outdoor leadership contexts appeared to go hand in hand with a culture of sexism, sexual objectification of women, and an overemphasis on sexual prowess on the men's part. These less-than-appealing traits observed in men in power and groups of men seemed to be present in settings where strength, physicality, and risk-taking were valued.

In my experience, the fewer women in these male-dominated settings led to the women having to find a kind of personal armour and to the women forming strong bonds with each other based on mutual respect and shared tolerance. An everyday example of this was working in a male-dominated rafting operation, where female patrons were regarded as meat and pursued like a hunt, even spied through holes in the walls of change rooms made for this purpose. Rather than passively observing these extremes, I was compelled to confront the subcultural status quo and challenge the disrespect shown to women. I found that some men understood and joined the effort, yet many remained oblivious to their own words and behaviours. Looking back, a show of strength and level of competency shown by me and female raft guide friends Dani and Vroni proved more effective than words in compelling respect from men; yet with the advantage of retrospect, such actions may have perpetuated the valuing of such traits rather than a dismantling of the status quo.

In the early 1990s, amongst the glaciers, ridges, and moraines of Mt. Cook in New Zealand, some less revolting yet equally confounding differences between men and women became apparent. After a ten-day mountaineering skills course attended by five women and five men on the upper shoulders and peaks of the Tasman Glacier, most of the group members decided to undertake a self-led training trip in a nearby alpine saddle. This group of newly trained mountaineers established a base camp and set out on some peak-climbing adventures by day. Women teamed up with women—my partner was wonderful Jo Foley—and men teamed up with men, and each night we returned to share our mountain tales. To me, the women's tales were stories of consolidation and steady skill development, whereas after the same level of

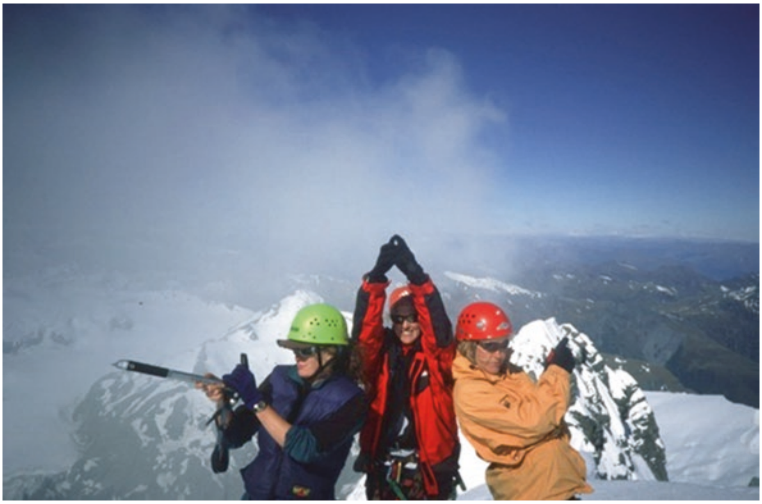

Fig. 10.3 Charlie's Angels summit Mt Aspiring in New Zealand's South Island

training, the men tested their skills beyond known limits and took risks at the edge of survival. As a result, the men had tales of avalanche, protection coming loose, long slides, and danger. Not so much impressive as confounding, these differences in the nature of adventures sought by young men and women were stark. Of course, there are other examples of both women and men to contrast this picture; nevertheless, the experience was influential in my thinking about what motivates men and women in the outdoors (Fig. 10.3).

A Narrowing Channel

In the mid-1990s, I was drawn to work within a field of practice then known as adventure therapy or wilderness therapy in North America, and understood as alternative or experiential outdoor programmes in Australia, and since called bush adventure therapy (BAT). When I entered the field of BAT-type work, it had been happening in Australia in a range of formalized ways since at least the early 1950s, notwithstanding the reality that Aboriginal communities had been using bush adventures throughout Australia for therapeutic, medicinal, and health and well-being purposes for millennia.

In the 1980s and 1990s, BAT-type programmes were provided in a range of contexts for children, young people, adults, families, and with different cultural groups. Some therapeutic outdoor programmes had a boot-camp flavour, with mostly male staff hounding the mostly young participants into prosocial behaviours and compliance; others were delivered by teams of qualified staff operating within the parameters of identified professional practices.

After experiencing a boot-camp style programme for young people who had been involved in antisocial and offending behaviours ('young offenders')—established with goodwill but rather punishing in style—I decided to write a short letter of feedback to the manager. Whilst I could see good intentions and possible rationales for the practices, they didn't sit well with me. The letter included my rather critical observations of contrary practices and conflicting justifications, including

- *a lack of information, preparation, and skill development prior to the group members embarking on a challenging remote expedition*. The lack of information and preparation removed participants' power and control, and made them dependent on the facilitators.
- *incidents of staff asking group members to share and care for each other, yet refusing to share even a spoon if a participant lost theirs*. This dogmatism appeared hypocritical and arrogant.
- *the decision by staff to leave untrained participant groups to fend for themselves on Class 2–3 white water with overhanging willow trees*. This was a dangerous practice and did not necessarily train good leaders.

In time, the manager wrote back asking if I would help to reinvent the model. He was planning to redevelop the model to be therapy-oriented, employ a therapist, and evaluate outcomes for participants. I jumped at the opportunity to help establish this new model with a client group I enjoyed. My role at The Outdoor Experience (TOE) lasted nearly ten years and saw a boot-camp style programme transform into an integrated therapeutic six-week programme involving a 12-day remote journey for young people experiencing drug- and alcohol-related issues and mental health concerns.[1] I gained two older sisters in Rose Curtis and Jane Conway, as we forged new working ways.

TOE staff considered 'contact with nature' as a key characteristic of the intervention experience for participants; "Wilderness therapy is not merely adventure therapy in the bush, but an experience for participants of a therapeutic relationship with place" (Pryor, 2003, p. 221). TOE defined BAT as "an intentional, active and social experience within nature, usually incorporating adventure pursuits or a journey, which may or may not include intentional psychological intervention but in all cases is facilitated by a trained staff team" (Pryor, Maller, Townsend, & Field, 2006, p. 116). From a therapy perspective, TOE interventions operated from a "case-managed, participant-centred and solution-oriented approach" (Pryor, 2003, p. 117). Participants were amongst my greatest teachers at this time.

Along the way, and with strong support from Karen Field within a wider program called Gateway, TOE expanded to deliver wide-ranging BAT services across the state of Victoria in Australia, and offered training and vocational pathways for participants. Through a partnership with Cathryn Carpenter at Victoria University, TOE provided master's-level training in uses of bush adventures as experiential interventions with wide-ranging target groups. A partnership with Parks Victoria and the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation and hard work by Fiona Cameron led to the establishment of The Bush Hut, an inner-Melbourne hub for bush-based therapy and learning, hosted by Jesuit Social Services (Fig. 10.4).

Fig. 10.4 BAT participants get high together on a mountaintop

A Wild Way for Women

Within the range of BAT programmes developed and delivered by TOE, a programme was established for young women experiencing difficulties associated with alcohol or drug misuse, and mental ill health. Developed by all female staff, the programme was delivered annually from 2001 to 2006. One of the great benefits of this programme was the creation of a culture and feeling amongst the participants of being Xena warriors.

In general, participants had experienced

- trauma in early life, including physical and sexual abuse;
- histories of suicide ideation and episodes of self-harm;
- a mental health diagnosis;
- alcohol- and other drug-related issues;
- physical ailments;
- estrangement from families;
- growing up in care;
- living in supported accommodation;
- fear of meeting new people, lack of trust, and a sense of safety;
- difficulty with interpersonal relationships; and
- school leaving at young ages and unemployment.

The six-week women's programme involved two weeks of preparation, a remote 12-day coastal bushwalk and two weeks of intensive follow-up support, culminating in a graduation celebration. Aftercare involved one-on-one support into vocational pathways or other support services.

The first few days of the bush walk were usually tiring and painful for everyone. With bodies and minds not accustomed to the activity or the setting, participants struggled to get through the day. During this phase, the natural landscape was considered impressive, but the physical challenges meant that nature was confronting rather than nurturing. Wanting to go home, the momentum of the journey compelled the women on. As participants' bodies became stronger, the experience became enjoyable. The women crossed rivers, navigated off track, followed sandy beaches, searched for fresh water, and made their way south, inlet after point. Contact with nature remained challenging but came to be seen as nurturing and strengthening rather than daunting and intimidating.

During days 7–10, participants' bodies were able to cope with the walking, and group members spoke of having a clearer mind. Many participants spoke of dreams they had, and that they appreciated nature as a powerful motivator towards personal development. On the ninth day, thick scrub raised challenges again, and sandstorms could force the group to camp in sand dunes overnight. Nature compelled participants to focus on their own needs again. On reaching the destination, participants' pride and strength was palpable.

The many changes in the women were remarkable, even transformative in some cases. Within individual debrief interviews, participants articulated new-found strengths, clarified future-oriented goals, and identified strategies for helping them stay strong back in normal life. Without exception, participants spoke of the persistence they had found in themselves and viewed themselves more positively.[2]

The Silencing Dogma

At the First International Adventure Therapy Conference (1IATC) held in 1997 in Perth, Western Australia, some practitioners tried to confine adventure therapy by discrediting nonclinical approaches and programmes not delivered by qualified psychologists (or therapists from a treatment approach). Their rationale was that the term therapy should only be used in relation to clinical approaches where an assessment or diagnosis had been made, a treatment plan prescribed, the plan implemented, and outcomes evaluated—in other words, applying reductionist, mechanistic, and empirical methodologies reliant on expert scientific practitioners at the helm of the treatment process.

These views were at odds with many contemporary approaches to therapy being used around Australia and beyond from naturalistic and humanistic approaches, such as narrative and strength-based approaches (whereby a therapist's role in the therapy process was to provide a conducive relationship, space, and opportunities for self-directed personal change) or the suite of family and systems therapies that support systemic whole-of-system changes (understanding that individual problems arise within wider circumstances). These contemporary approaches tend to focus on providing nonjudgemental, collaborative, and intentional opportunities for people to move towards their own preferred futures. From these perspectives, the therapist's job is to facilitate or co-create the emergence of solutions to people's difficulties in non-pathologizing ways.[3]

Whilst the majority of BAT-type programmes support participants exhibiting health-risk behaviours (including substance misuse or offending) programmes may or may not highlight the pathology or illness as a central focus within the intervention. Some treatment programmes focus on providing safe physical, emotional, and social environments, and the development of skills, confidence, and behaviours to build participants' personal resilience, leading to a reduction in risk-taking behaviours and greater protection from ill health (Pryor et al., 2006, p. 116).

A somewhat dreary debate ensued, involving dogmatic opinions about what constituted therapy with a big T (Therapy) versus therapy with a little t (therapy), or therapy versus therapeutic, or primary therapy versus adjunct therapy. What seemed to be forgotten was the question of what qualified someone to lead people responsibly within natural environments; for some, nature seemed to remain the venue or clinic for therapy rather than an essential part of the therapy. Practitioners from a range of BAT-type programmes continued to meet and share practice, and the attempts to discredit relational/naturalistic or humanistic approaches to BAT failed.

At the Second International Adventure Therapy Conference (2IATC) held in 2000 in Munich, Germany, a group of practitioners from Australia and New Zealand noted differences between European approaches to adventure therapy (which appeared to ignore or downplay the importance of nature and the outdoors) and US approaches (which seemed to highlight the clinical or scientific elements), leading to the suggestion that Australia and New Zealand should host a local regional gathering to clarify rationales, practices, and outcomes in our own region.

A year later, descending from a high alpine saddle in New Zealand's Mitukituki Valley, my imagination started to craft a regional gathering that would embody some of the values I wished for in our professional community. We would prioritize the importance of democratic political processes like consultation and agreement, and involve attendees in a method of collaboration and learning whereby small groups from the delegate body would workshop ideas they were passionate about through robust discussion at circular tables or outdoor spaces. We would call the gathering a forum rather than a conference and establish a flat structure where everyone was equal in perceived expertise. Whilst we would invite an international guest and select lead facilitators, no one would hold a higher or more important role as keynote speaker or expert. The forum would be based on the assumption that a rich variety of approaches was useful, and that amongst the differences some common ground was to be found.

It was not lost on me that the assumptions and judgements made by the white male psychologists back in 1997 had fanned my drive to push back the forces of those who would choose to define the whole field with their reductionist approaches and glorification of mechanistic and empirical ideals. That some of my deepest values were at stake helped motivate my initiation of the First South Pacific Wilderness Adventure Therapy (SPWAT) forum held in 2002 in Bacchus Marsh, Victoria.[4] Thus began a long and fruitful relationship with Cathryn Carpenter and Ben Knowles, who came to be treasured friends, along with a whole community of practitioners who have come to be my clan.

As a result of a white male psychologist trademarking the term Wilderness Adventure Therapy in 2004, a small group of practitioners from Australia and New Zealand met and developed a working title and definition for the field that has proven useful ever since. Cathryn Carpenter, Paul Stolz, Val Nicholls, Blair Gilbert, and Julie Burns were amongst those most willing to thrash out meanings, definitions, and ways forward.

> We have changed the title of this gathering of professionals within this field to the more culturally appropriate term for practice within the South Pacific region, recognising that the term 'wilderness' is a colonising term [implying 'people-free'] that ignores the indigenous presence in the land. The new title of bush adventure therapy emphasises our relationship with the natural environment in our work and practice. The word 'bush' is relevant to the South Pacific region because it encompasses the whole range of environments, from small areas to vast expanses of natural bushland and coastal areas. Our understanding of the term 'adventure' includes activities in mind, body and spirit, for people of all ages and stages. Our understanding of the term 'therapy' is inclusive of general therapeutic outcomes and the specific intent of therapy. This definition has been influenced by the definitions discussed at the South Pacific Wilderness Adventure Therapy Forum 2002, and is seen as a broad definition open to discussion and feedback. (Pryor, Carpenter, & Townsend, 2005, p. 4)

Instead of shutting down nonclinical approaches, early criticisms motivated the wider community of practitioners within Australia and New Zealand to consolidate their practices and articulate their working ways. The establishment of this professional BAT community was a time of huge learning and growth for me. Looking back on this era in my life, I had found my professional path—a determined thread on my river of life.

Wild Adventures in Well-Being

As manager of TOE, I had the perpetual task of explaining the merit and benefits of BAT to wide audiences and gaining funding to deliver BAT programmes. I longed for an evidence base I could draw from and for wider recognition by policymakers of the legitimacy of BAT.

Fig. 10.5 Kayak landings can be iffy in Australia's southern island state, Tasmania

With encouragement from Karen Field, Cathryn Carpenter, and my father, I undertook a PhD in Public Health within Deakin University's School of Health and Social Development to examine the effects and effectiveness of what I called Australian outdoor adventure interventions. My aim was to build a body of evidence that could be used to gain policy support and funding for BAT programmes, as well as develop a map upon which to place future BAT research. The project was entitled "Wild Adventures in Wellbeing: Foundations, Features and Wellbeing Impacts of Australian Outdoor Adventure Interventions." Through the study, it became apparent that what differentiated BAT from other medical, rehabilitative, and educational experiences was the holistic environment within which change takes place, and the potential for BAT to benefit communities and the natural environment as well as individuals (Fig. 10.5).[5]

Integrative Flood Plains

In 2008, the national network of BAT practitioners who had been meeting each year in a different state or territory since the South Pacific forum took the decisive step of incorporating a national peak body called the Australian Association for Bush Adventure Therapy (AABAT). True to its inclusive origins, AABAT Inc. defines BAT as "a diverse field of practice combining adventure and outdoor environments with the intention to achieve therapeutic outcomes for those involved."[6]

To me, it feels like this field of practice has reached an integrative floodplain of openness, inclusiveness, and expansion, illustrated by the list of ethical principles developed to guide decisions within the BAT arena:

AABAT Ethical Principles

BAT practitioners work towards:

- Positive regard for all people
- Respect for differences in culture, gender, age, and identity
- Strong family and community connections
- Transparency, Informed consent, Confidentiality
- Voluntary participation (within the confines of service type)
- Selection for 'readiness' to participate
- Attention to individual and group needs and hopes
- Supportive physical, psychological, and social environments
- Tailored adventure experiences
- Provision of options and choices (including supported exits)
- Respect for cultural custodianship of country
- Increasing self awareness and reflexive practice
- Safety and no harm to self, others or natural environments. (www.aabat.org.au/ethical-principles/)

At the same time that Australians were consolidating a national field of practice within AABAT, the international community of adventure therapy practitioners who had continued to meet since the inaugural IATC in 1997 consolidated a leadership group called the Adventure Therapy International Committee (ATIC). ATIC was established in 2006 following the Fourth International Adventure Therapy Conference to oversee hosting of triennial International Adventure Therapy (IAT) conferences and publishing of IAT conference proceedings. ATIC is currently made up of some 40 members from 23 nations who together support adventure therapy around the globe.

I was pleased to co-chair ATIC from 2012 to 2015 with Luk Peeters (from Belgium), during which time we consulted international members on the values and practices important to them and developed a manifesto for international adventure therapy. An IAT website has since been established by the Australian local organizing committee, who will host the 8IATC in Australia 21 years after the first conference of its kind.[7]

As can be seen from these developments in Australia and internationally, a pathway towards inclusion and appreciation of diversity has been harnessed in the formation of these distinctive professional communities within the outdoor learning landscape.

As an active participant and leader in these processes, I've found that both women and men have been integral, indeed critical to the bringing of balance and cohesion to what might otherwise be perceived as disparate outdoor endeavours in Australia. Whilst to date no practitioners have identified as other than man or woman within the BAT and IAT communities, I envisage the time will come when more diverse genders and agender people will have key roles within the field.

Indigenous cultural approaches and awareness of the cultural history in the land has been an equally important feature and influence in the consolidation of these practices in this region. What Aboriginal cultural custodians have known for millennia connects all of us working in the outdoor learning landscape—that we are dependent upon and shaped by the land in which we live, love, and work.

Let's Climb the Big Tree at Midday

Once a glacial river reaches the flat coastal plains, it may carve out a single deeper channel and meander as a solid body of water with less urgency towards the ocean. The occasional piece of earth, embankment, or tree may hold fast within or along the edges of that deep river, but it is a special tree indeed that can hold firm and grow strong outside the mouth of a glacial river entering the sea.

Stories of mighty women, power, politics, and democratic evolutions, not to mention social revolutions, do not naturally end with a tree, but this story is entirely subjective, and so a tree will be the final feature of this river run: a tree standing tall, with toes in the wet, and wide branches proclaiming optimism against the odds.

In this chapter, I've pondered my past, laid bare my own imagery, and been reminded of the hopeful future I envisage for the field of practice and clan that I have come to treasure. And I let the reader know that whilst reminiscing my past and unpacking my baggage, I've been breastfeeding and cradling the newest addition to our family, baby Yana who will join her bigger sisters Grace and Hayley in the currents of an adventurous life just beginning (Fig. 10.6).

Fig. 10.6 Baby Yana in the currents of an adventurous life just beginning

Whilst reflecting on the colourful and awkward emergence of BAT in Australia, I notice the parallels of the colourful and awkward ways I've lived my life, and the roundabout ways in which I've sought to live the values and ideals born into me. I notice, too, the parallel journey of new beginnings, where awkward steps of babies and toddlers intermingle with the uncertain steps of motherhood. Underneath are feelings of thankfulness for wonderful business partners Pete Rae and Ben Knowles, who enabled the birth of Adventure Works Australia, and for loving life partner Mike Rice and my mother Bronwyn who enabled this chapter to be written. And to my deceased father Robin, who all his life worked on spiritual rivers. And around the edges, I'm dreaming of days ahead when this old mum will get on a river with each of her daughters when time and wills allow.

The tree I'm imagining invites people of all cultures and places to swim or paddle out and climb it, at any time of day, in silence, or with yelps of jubilation. The politics of power and cowardice have faded, and the opportunities are open for all of us to meet, climb, see, and converse about what further currents we might follow. The gifts of men and women are recognized, and the good, the bad, and the ugly all have their place … And if we're not there yet, then it's not the end! (Fig. 10.7)[8]

Fig. 10.7 A lone tree standing tall, with toes in the wet

Notes

1. For a summary of the changes that took TOE from being an outdoor programme towards being an outdoor therapy programme, see Pryor (2009a).
2. For more details about this programme and uses of contact with nature within targeted mental health interventions, see Pryor et al. (2006).
3. For more information on the spectrum of practices that span positivist and naturalistic approaches, see Pryor (2009a) and Norton, Carpenter and Pryor (2015).
4. For more information on the First South Pacific Wilderness Adventure Therapy forum, see Pryor and Carpenter (2004).
5. For the unpublished doctoral thesis on outdoor adventure interventions in Australia, see Pryor (2009b).
6. For more information on Association of Bush Adventure Therapy (AABAT), see www.aabat.org.au/aabat-constitution
7. For more information on ATIC, see www.internationaladventuretherapy.org
8. A play on the excerpt, "Everything will be all right in the end…If it's not all right, then it's not yet the end" from the film *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* (Broadbent, Czernin, & Madden, 2011).

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11

“Nature Study” as a Subject in the School Curriculum: A Female’s Voice from the Early Days

Rhona Miller

Introduction

In 1955, the author set out on a 32-year career in teaching. Although trained as a primary school teacher, eight years were spent teaching in secondary schools coupled with a short time assisting on field trips with overseas university students. This chapter is a piecing together of fragments of memories about how the natural world was incorporated into the lessons planned and taught across those decades.

The Early Days

In 1960, when headmasters patrolled the corridors in the mornings to ensure they heard the reciting of *times tables* and/or spelling, an entire Year 6 class huddled around a child who had brought a cicada shell. This was happening on the floor at the front of the class. Common sense dictated that the opportunity for learning which arose from natural curiosity was worth the risk of being found out and reprimanded.

Time was taken away from a teaching career in the 1960s, when resignation was the only option if women teachers wanted to start a family. In this case, returning to teaching in the early 1970s meant returning to a teaching context

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R. Miller (✉)
Blackbutt, NSW, Australia

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considerably changed in terms of the methods and content. That which was once thought *illegal* was now openly encouraged, especially in the area of the social sciences.

Professional Development

In 1972, seven or eight teachers in the south coast region of New South Wales (NSW), Australia, were chosen to pilot a teaching model called the "inquiry method." After a two-day live-in training camp, we were given the resource kit prepared by Margaret Simpson (1976) of the Sutherland region of NSW. The focus question of this example was "How do people live in hostile environments?" and the content example was the people of the Western Desert, NSW. The unit was to take 14 weeks and the planning was to include as many aspects of the curriculum that was appropriate. Of course, this lent itself to many outdoor teaching opportunities. Each teacher was encouraged to use his/her strength and initiative to approach the subject matter uniquely. This guideline leads to successful teaching, always.

Implementing the Inquiry Method

Several examples of this teaching approach in the early 1970s will now be discussed.

After studying the myths and legends of the Western Desert Indigenous peoples, the children were taken to the local sports oval, which had a perfect view of Mt Keira or Hat Hill as Captain Cook had named it. They were asked to imagine a new name for it and then to write a myth about how the name was given. This was a tall order for a Year 6 class; however, every child attempted it. Of course, the results varied, but the exercise proved that the students had a real understanding of the subject matter which had been presented. Whilst performing this task (in the outdoors at the sports oval), the children were asked to work quietly and then write their myth when they returned to class. The teacher's expectation was to set about attempting the exercise, and that was all.

As a conclusion to this study, the children, who had been divided into *skin groups* for the duration of the study, were asked to devise a *totem* which consisted of items from the natural world. These were made from wood, rock, bark, feathers, and so on. They were to remain a secret and were to be respected by each group. An excursion was arranged to Carter's Native Park at Foxground, NSW, as the final activity for the unit. With a teacher or parent accompanying each group, they were to find a suitable site for the installation of their totem. These sites were also a secret and the children were encouraged to return to these sites to check on their items in the future.

Two years later, this method was again used with Year 6 students. This time the unit was motivated by an excursion to an exhibition of ancient Chinese artefacts at the Sydney Art Gallery. The closing exercise was a re-enactment of an archaeological dig. This took place in the sandpit of the broad jump practice area in the playground. The roles children played included discoverers, workers, cleaners, researchers, and archaeologists. They were encouraged to imagine how future generations would interpret the finds.

Using Local Places, Opportunities, and Expertise

In the early 1980s, a student teacher was assigned to the author's Year 5 class at a school situated close to the beach. His interest was waning and he doubted his choice of profession. Locally, he was well known as an expert surfer. Using the inquiry method, a thematic course was planned around surfing. He was surprised that this could be an approved method of teaching and was wholehearted in his approach. He planned two activities: one was an excursion to the beach, which provided an opportunity for the children to learn firsthand the dynamics of surfing, the effects of wind on the waves, the formation of rips, the swells on the ocean according to seasons, and the geography of the area, especially the landforms. By studying the dynamics of surfboard construction, they learnt the physics and properties of shape, form, building material, and the function of the fin. Following this, they carved their own board using a large cake of soap.

Second, a nature awareness exercise was undertaken by Years 3 and 4 students at a similar time. An excursion was organized to Minnamurra Falls, NSW. The national parks provided their own education officers for information classes. However, whilst hiking through the park, an extremely old Morten Bay fig tree was observed. The small group was encouraged to sit quietly amongst its roots and to imagine that the old tree was telling its story or passing on messages. Notes were taken and discussed at a later date.

As far as is known, this student teacher is still following a successful teaching career.

Trialling Integration

On the campus of a primary school in the Illawarra area of NSW was a small, separately administered unit for children with physical impairment. At this time in the early 1980s, very little was formalized as a personal development programme. The two principals and the author decided to incorporate the children into the mainstream primary classroom.

After personal development programmes for the teachers and the students were devised and implemented, these children were integrated, with their carers, into the primary classes.

The Grasshopper and the Bark: Year 6

In the second year of the programme, whilst teaching Year 6, the children took part in a nature awareness programme. A simple relaxation technique was taught. The children were given a shortlist of interview questions and their task was to quietly sit outside and choose some aspect of the natural environment to interview. When they had their answers, and after returning to the classroom, they were asked to write a story about what they had learnt.

One response is worth mentioning. Two boys, one nondisabled and one a wheelchair user, had struck up a deep friendship, which I later discovered lasted many years. The speed at which the boys could explore the playground with the wheelchair brought much joy to them both.

The story, written by the nondisabled child, showed a depth of understanding and empathy well beyond his years. In the story, he became a piece of bark which had a conversation with a grasshopper. He asked questions about how freedom of movement was experienced as a grasshopper. He played this role throughout the story, even to the point where the grasshopper was asking the bark what it was like to have restricted movement.

The Peace Garden

During the International Year of Peace in 1986, the school where the author was teaching had an unused teacher's residence removed from the grounds. Motivated by the fact that the Education Department was marking the year with a donation of peace roses, a project was undertaken to designate the area a peace garden. With the help of teachers and parents, this became a reality. The garden was to be used only by those students who wanted quiet *time out*. The rules were *no speaking* and a limit was set as to how many students could be present in the garden at any one time. It became a refuge for those who were being bullied but also for those children who just wanted to be out of the hustle and bustle of the day. Today, it is still called the peace garden, but as to its use, there is no information.

University Field Trips

Finally, in 2000, the author accepted an invitation to work with overseas university students on their field trips. A perception-based programme was devised, which included nature awareness activities designed to exercise the imagination. This programme enacted the importance of combining the creative and rational parts of their minds.

The students were 20- and 21-year-olds, and often their academic studies had created an imbalance in the use of the creative and rational parts of their minds. In the outdoors, the interview technique was again used (as with the Year 6 activity), and although sceptical at first, the young adults were amazed at the results. For instance, the activity resulted in writing a poem. One girl was reluctant to do the exercise, but at its conclusion, she commented almost in tears at the brilliance of what she had written. Nor could she believe what she had discovered about herself. At least 95% of the participants who tried the exercise were pleasantly surprised at the results that emerged.

Another activity engaged the senses whilst outdoors. The students were encouraged to choose a simple activity like walking on sand, wading in the water, or locating and scanning a small item in the natural environment and to imagine they were encountering it for the first time. The students were encouraged to use all their senses to engage with the activity or object and to later record their experiences.

The students commented that they had forgotten how important their creative minds had been in the past and how enjoyable it was to awaken it. For practitioners wishing to expand on these teaching methods see Cornell (1998) along with Hendricks and Wills (1975) for further ideas and activities.

Final Thoughts

The natural environment is a powerful resource for teaching and learning for all ages and provides a perfect backdrop for that great teaching adage that in order for real learning to occur, one must link the known to the *unknown*. On a personal level, I am now in my mid 80s and the natural environment continues to provide me with solace, health, and wisdom, and this is what I wish for all readers of these memory fragments.

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Part II

Contested Spaces: Gender Disparity in Outdoor Learning Environments

Tiffany Wynn

Gender disparity is a prevailing and painful paradigm in mainstream outdoor learning environments (OLEs) and has been for the industry's entirety. Whilst many hope that the patriarchal, misogynist, and colonialization factors that influence greater society would be omitted from a field that strives for inclusion, authenticity, and brave learning spaces, we would be naïve to believe it is not present and pervasive. In visiting many outdoor education programmes in higher education and the agencies who hire those students, a chronic message given is about the difficulty of recruiting and retaining those who identify as women or those who do not conform to gender constructs. This stems from an egocentric culture based on colonial ideas of conquering and taming the wilderness, and specifically, using nature as a testing ground to prove competency (Mitten, 1985, 2017). This culture limits who is heard and who feels welcome.

Women have chronically throughout history been omitted and erased from OLEs. One of my stories is more recent, having been part of the steering committee and one of the primary editors for a large writing project where no names were attached so that all voices could be coalesced. However, this meant that the three editors who brought those voices to print have no marked professional notice for their many years of work. As importantly, this example illustrates how easily, even with the intention of inclusivity, systematic erasure

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T. Wynn
Blackheath, NSW, Australia

occurs. No credit was given to the hundreds of people involved, which included many women and a substantial representation of other typically marginalized voices; instead, we left it to people's imaginations to discern authorship. That has had the impact of erasing most of the voices. Upon reflection through an ecological lens, it is clear that people who contributed one or two thoughts or hours or days of work together created a document, which had a substantial impact on the field. We needed all those contributors, and by not acknowledging the people involved, the richness and diversity embedded in the end result is unseen. Through a social justice lens, systematic erasure occurred, and the primary authored texts in the field are by a handful of people, primarily white men.

It seems that we have reached a point in the OLE dialogue where an invitation to explore who has power and privilege within our communities is crucial. It is time to give consideration to the complex nature of inviting in and valuing marginalized populations and what it takes to move with as opposed to move for. If the industry does not expand its market to include all people, then it may dissipate as a result of primarily appealing to white men, a shrinking population in comparison to others.

Part of the exploratory conversation should attend to who is listening to whom and who is choosing not to look or listen to whom and why. This helps move into an environment where previously marginalized people are given a place at the table rather than merely accommodating them. Through this shift, we may produce courageous, inclusive spaces where perhaps women and others outside of the white, male, heterosexual norm can find other people with shared experiences of dismissal and discrimination. This could lead to a decrease of fear related to revealing our stories, thereby helping all of us to change OLEs to be genuinely more inclusive.

The chapters in this part highlight specific examples of discrimination, misogynistic behaviour, and other evidence illuminating the tribulations faced by women and others outside of the white, male, heterosexual norm in OLEs. Whether it is speaking from the heart and experience, as women from Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, the UK, and the US have, or looking at the reality of who is represented or published in OLE texts and journals, there are significant barriers for nonconforming people, and the numbers corroborate an uneven playing field. Whilst some have navigated the cultural nuances in a way that has allowed them some access to power and privilege, many have not. As such, this part exists as a testimony to the difficulties that many women, and by extension gender nonconforming leaders, have experienced. These authors investigate intersectional narratives, disparities in the literature, ecofeminism, actionable spaces, and sense of place as an invitation to explore more inclusive paths forward. They are voices different than mainstream giving a glimpse of what can be learnt from women's experiences in heteronormative OLEs. Further, these authors offer and provide examples of what can be learnt from women- or lesbian-led OLEs in all-women spaces. Whilst answers may not be forthcoming, there are brilliant voices to consider as we move towards more inclusive and courageous spaces and create procedures and practices that align.

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12

Nourishing Terrains? Troubling Terrains? Women's Outdoor Work in Aotearoa New Zealand

Martha Bell, Marg Cosgriff, Pip Lynch, and Robyn Zink

Introduction

Women's experiences in the outdoors have long been the source of contradictory constructions of identity, culture, and politics. These have challenged women to confront the cultural frameworks used to define "the outdoors" and to explain the historical accounts privileging particular narratives which displace women's experiences to the margins (Dann & Lynch, 1989; Schaffer, 1988). Women have also had to confront their own cultural and differential positioning, in relation to each other and to the many intersections of biography, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, education, nationality, and gender in discursive relations of power (Daley & Montgomerie, 1999; Gunew & Yeatman, 1993).

When we were young feminist women going into the outdoors for our chosen careers in the 1980s in Aotearoa New Zealand, we believed that experiences

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M. Bell (✉)
Dunedin, Otago, New Zealand

M. Cosgriff
Faculty of Health, Sport and Human Performance, University of Waikato,
Hamilton, Waikato, New Zealand

P. Lynch
Richmond, Nelson, New Zealand

R. Zink
Enviroschools, Dunedin, Otago, New Zealand

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outdoors were stimulating and profound in a universal way. The experiences we had of the cultural dimension of the outdoors challenged us to confront relations of colonization, appropriation, exclusion, and collusion, at times in antagonism with our own colleagues and friends. This chapter focuses on our perspectives now as four women who have worked, explored, investigated, and taught in the outdoors for over three decades. Reflecting on our experiences unearths memories of ways in which working and being outdoors has nourished each of us. It also exposes deeply troubling situations and practices.

As four Pākehā (non-Māori) women living in Aotearoa New Zealand, we note from the outset that we do not speak for or about the experiences of other women, including wāhine Māori (women of Māori descent). We acknowledge the importance of Aotearoa New Zealand's bicultural foundations, the founding document of the Treaty of Waitangi, and the necessity of enacting a cultural dimension in our work (Cosgriff et al., 2012). We recognize that our attention to gender issues was and is in bicultural partnership with Māori outdoor women, always involves ethnicity, and attempts to lead to a postcolonial relationship. This case study, therefore, takes our own past experiences as four Pākehā women as the objects of analysis. It considers the particular and the general by conceptualizing our subjective experiences in light of the objective conditions of the time.

The purpose of the study is to examine aspects of our professional experiences as women outdoor leaders that reveal how gender influenced our professional outdoor lives. We have worked in outdoor education in many roles from teacher to researcher, from instructor to guide, from policy adviser to tertiary programme coordinator. We undertook this study in order to return to moments in time that still hold meaning for our individual understandings of lived relations of gender. Various moments formed narratives for some and mere fragments for others. We make no attempt to connect these other than as the ground for "a conception of gender as a constituted *social temporality*" (Butler, 1990, p. 141, italics in original). Physical movement and perception could sometimes suspend such temporality and, whenever we encountered this phenomenon, we tried to examine it more closely.

The study used a feminist methodology of starting with our own perspective. We begin by briefly reviewing selective English-language literature on "women," "gender," and "outdoors." The methods we employed in this project, including writing letters to each other and engaging in framework analysis, are then introduced. We sorted the data into four "terrains" each of which is described. Our experiences in these terrains were then "troubled" in the context of our professional lives from the understandings we hold now of this professional field through collective, abductive analysis (Bryman, 2012).

Reviewing the Literature

Feminist Outdoor Leadership

Early reflection by women outdoor instructors suggested a reconsideration of their instructional style when teaching women. The implication was that skilled women rather than men must teach women learning physical confidence and competence (e.g., Johnson, 1990). In some programmes, there is an intentional philosophy that men and women leaders demonstrate nontraditional roles for the first week of every course or that students role-play nontraditional roles in a teaching exercise (Haluza Delay & Dyment, 2003). Even so, questions emerge as to the naiveté of reinforcing oppositional practices of power as if they could be traded or shared (e.g., Newbery, 1999).

Feminist critiques of outdoor leadership encompass further explanations for how women may achieve equality with men in opportunities for and positions of leadership as well as proposals for how women may create empowering forms of women-centred outdoor leadership (Henderson, 1996). Proposed models of leadership have sought to embed feminist practice and pedagogy for outdoor learning groups, suggesting that feminist outdoor leaders advocate for learners who are women whilst also developing teaching approaches that divest practices of power (Warren & Rheingold, 1993). Most importantly, feminist outdoor leadership establishes a commitment to egalitarian decision-making and strengths-based participation (Warren, 1996). This contrasts a liberal approach that expects every group member to be an "equal player" in group life, no matter their proximity to its norms.

Some feminist approaches to outdoor leadership suggest that outdoor leadership itself must move to a transformational model that shares leadership expertise to decentralize authority (Henderson, 1996; Kiewa, 1997/8). Others suggest that the experiences of the leader herself/himself must always influence how that leader facilitates empowerment for others. However, feminist outdoor leaders who commit to uncovering the multiple knowledges of their own dis/advantaged positions, that is, clarifying the experiences that have led to a feminist politics, may still be at risk when working with men in professional and pedagogical contexts who do not value the politics at stake (Bell, 1996). More than one feminist perspective may be applied to specific gender conflicts through "gender responsible" leadership, according to Morse (1997, p. 128), but ultimately "responsibility lies with men as well as with women in pursuing more equal power relations." Allin and West (2013) argue that multiple and contradictory feminist perspectives may, however, be even more conflicting for women outdoor leaders.

Social justice leadership has also been suggested for expanding a responsive pedagogy to accommodate the complex oppressions and exclusions, whether historical or personal, experienced by overlapping identities that represent difference (Warren, 1998a, 2002, 2005; Warren, Roberts, Breunig, & Alvarez, 2014). Such leadership involves more than just a feminist concern with the treatment of women but also acknowledges that leaders encounter groups from subordinated cultures, working-class positions, and minority ethnic groups. A social justice philosophy comprises "intentional steps that move society in the direction of equality, support for diversity, economic justice, participatory democracy, environmental harmony and resolution of conflicts non-violently," according to Warren (1998b, p. 134).

Women in Outdoor Leadership

Another group of literature examines the professional context of women as outdoor instructors. In such literature, the tone changes from that of women teaching women students.

Importantly, this literature began to reveal incidents of professional-level gender conflict (e.g., Morse, 1997), hostility (e.g., Bell, 1996), and sexual harassment (e.g., Bell, 2002; Levi, 1991; Loeffler, 1995, 1997). Some linked these to wider society: "Gender conflict is still a factor in our [Anglo-European] society and at times seriously holds back women from entering a variety of professions" (Morse, 1997, p. 124). Others explained that women, but not men, in incongruous gender roles are labelled with negative judgements (Haluza Delay & Dyment, 2003) and stigma (Wright & Gray, 2013). When women in leadership exhibit competencies required of *both* genders in leadership roles, it is argued, there is "inevitable conflict" between leaders that produces "a difficult dilemma" (Wittmer, 2001, p. 175). This outcome exposes the inadequacy of androgynous outdoor leader prescriptions.

Some women said that they anticipated or feared more overt gender threats in outdoor leadership spaces (Bell, 2002; Loeffler, 1997; Newbery, 2000; Wright & Gray, 2013). Despite obvious strength and competence far from the trailhead, for example, a Canadian outdoor instructor suggested that women outdoor leaders were "looking over our shoulders all the time … in the outdoors" (Bell, 1996, p. 152) to keep themselves and their groups physically safe. Loeffler (1996) advocated for organizational policies on sexual harassment to ensure safety for women staff—especially from sexual advances by male co-instructors whilst in "the field."

In research addressing women's outdoor leadership career decisions, Allin (2000) examined the influence of women's bodily strength and physicality on their outdoor careers. She found that the women interviewed did not associate "being physical" with "being masculine" even though the women discussed developing outdoor skills in a masculine physical environment. They did not see a strong and forceful physicality as innately inappropriate for women. However, the women did admit to "managing their physical identities in order to comply with the dominant male culture" (Allin, 2000, p. 58) when working with men.

Australian research suggests that gender "turmoil" for women in outdoor leadership can lead to stress, disillusionment, exhaustion, and "burnout or early exit of women from the industry" (Wright & Gray, 2013, p. 14). The professional disposition towards competence and control is shattered for these women by gendered "environments perceived to be out of their control" (Wright & Gray, 2013, p. 19). This literature shifted the debate from gender difference to gendered social space: "that contradictory and complex space variously known as 'wilderness,' 'the outdoors,' and 'nature'" (Newbery, 2002, p. 20).

Gendered Outdoor Spaces

Competencies are already deeply gendered in recreation outdoors, which Newbery's (1999, p. 4) experience showed when she received low-level verbal abuse disciplining her exhibition of strength whilst steering a canoe with a male partner and carrying the canoe alone. This experience produced an "extremely conflicted" professional identity for her. Strength was associated with her body moving in space rather than a competence. Strength competencies are not only associated with men's physical abilities, she argued—precisely because they are not particular to male biology—but are more widely associated with men's appropriation of space (Newbery, 1999).

In Australian research, Kiewa (2001, p. 10) studied climbing competencies in recreational settings concluding that traditional climbing settings were gendered by "a generalised expectation of difference," such as that women would be less "efficient" and less "reliable" as climbing partners for men. Individual women often had to work hard to dispel such expectations. When this was not possible, whilst climbing with men, the women in the study said that they chose to climb with other women out of frustration. The study also found that at least one woman also had low expectations of women as climbing partners. The study concluded that the time given to establishing the relationship between climbing partners meant that such expectations could be eliminated through the intense relational context of the climbing experience itself. Gender conflict could be dispelled through the physical relationship in the activity space.

Allin (2000, 2003) also asserts that the space of the outdoors is gendered by the interactions of those using it for activities that have particular gendered practices, dispositions, and values. Her UK research posed the question of how 21 women capable of such physical practices and dispositions move from a recreational level of meaning, where they were quite often taught skills by men, to an occupational level of commitment and competence. This question builds on Loeffler's (1995, 1996) US study of how 25 women outdoor leaders negotiated a career path whilst also perfecting their skills.

Humberstone's (2000; Humberstone, Brown, & Richards, 2003) anthologies were influential in shifting the explanations of women's experiences to the space in which sociocultural relations build an expectation of which group belonged there. Prince (2004) explored the spaces of gendered experience outdoors in Aotearoa New Zealand and Newbery (2003) elaborated on the spatial relations of the constant work required to (re)construct gendered expectations.

Our own experiences as participants helped shape our future interests in working professionally outdoors and with women in particular; our experiences of professional outdoor leaders shared the harassment, stress, and disillusionment found in this brief overview of the literature. We now turn to the methods guiding the study.

Methods

Data Collection

The collective practice of sharing and analysing the data of our own lives in order to shed light on and better understand troubling experiences in our work as outdoor educators and researchers meant that data were self-generated and reflective, taking the form of letters that we each wrote to each other as co-researchers. An open-ended brief of writing a first letter of approximately 500 words provided an initial stimulus to the writing process. In these first letters, we wrote about our experience/s or aspect/s of our professional lives in the outdoors that troubled each of us and that were "subjectively significant" (Haug, 1987, p. 40). Once each woman had written and disseminated her first letter, the others generated individual responses that summarized the main points, raised any questions or contradictions they wanted to highlight, and suggested the points of analysis for the writer to consider in her second letter. Rather than introduce new ideas, the second letters aimed to give more contextual depth to the first letter and where possible, refer to relevant published literature. The second letters ranged in length from 1300 to 2400 words and formed the data set on which this chapter draws.

Data Analysis

The research adopted a framework approach (Bryman, 2012; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) to enable an interpretation of how our experiences in the outdoors raised issues that traversed through the letters. The framework contained the data, allowing us to work on our writings to each other in a collaborative way, whilst maintaining the systematic, comprehensive, and dynamic features of this analytical approach.

To establish the analytical framework, two co-researchers first discussed their own responses to the first letters and then discussed potential framework components. These discussions generated a preliminary framework of categories within which the second letters would be analysed. One co-researcher then read and annotated the textual data, sorting and coding data fragments and inserting them into the appropriate category cell in the matrix. This preliminary sorting of data was shared between the two co-researchers working on this task and, following discussion, was revised. We decided to highlight four component categories that were found to shape the concerns and struggles of one woman in a strong way and the other three women in relevant ways. This meant that each category could be said to be a particular concern of one woman and a shared concern by the others. Within a framework such as this, important cross-referencing would be found, but the impetus for excavation in each category was located in the lived experience of at least one participant. We avoided naming an issue or incident as belonging to any one participant. The purpose of writing to each other and receiving critical questions for further excavation from each other was that we each shared in the outcomes. Therefore, the data framework encapsulates collective concerns. We designated the components of the data framework "terrains," building on previous researchers who noted the "gendered terrain" of outdoor leadership (Bell, 1996; Newbery, 2002, 2003, 2004). Letters were reread in light of the revised framework. Relevant data fragments from the first iteration of the framework and from further reading of the second letters were tagged to the appropriate terrain cell. Once complete, the contents of the framework were circulated to all co-researchers for agreement.

The Letters

The Terrain of Outdoor Pedagogies

Feminist theorising was clearly unwelcome or ignored in outdoor education professional and academic forums. (W3, L2, 102–103)

The terrain of outdoor pedagogies concerned teaching and research processes and activities in various settings including tertiary programmes, women-only outdoor programmes and organizations, residential outdoor centres, and school-based outdoor education programmes. It arose as a central feature of one writer's letter as she examined her own and others' endeavours to interrogate commonly used facilitation and instructional practices in the Outward Bound context and in tertiary settings. Despite experiencing a vibrant women's outdoor community that vociferously critiqued their own and others' leadership and teaching practices for the inclusion of women and indigeneity, foregrounding gender in tertiary teaching outside this collective community proved to be an ongoing struggle for her (W3, L2, 155). In a similar vein, the difficulty of countering traditional gender stereotyping when leading coeducational tertiary groups appeared especially poignant for another writer, leaving her to feel that she and her colleagues had "failed" their students by not explicitly addressing gender in the curriculum. A sense of failure, blaming, self-questioning, and "lacking the courage" (W2, L2, 33) to centre gender in teaching and research was noted by three writers, even when working in environments in which feminist concerns and scholarship appeared to lack support, credibility, status, or value.

The Terrain of Outdoor Work

Why are you here? (W4, L2, 35)

The terrain of outdoor work relates to our experiences working in residential outdoor centres, programmes, and tertiary settings in Aotearoa New Zealand through the mid-1980s to 1990s. The social experience of gender meant women working in the outdoors experienced hostility, struggle, and conflict, in some cases rendering their work life "unsettling and difficult" (W4, L2, 20). In explicating this from her present position, one writer noted the interplay of social class and gender in a post-industrialized economy. She suggested the resistance she experienced was in part due to her feeling entitled as a middle-class woman to work but finding that the labour market was still "constructed as 'traditionally male'" (W4, L2, 37–38). At the time, however, this writer assumed that *she* was "responsible" (W4, L2, 34) for gender conflicts, for women working in the outdoors were seen to be "'too stroppy' and 'too strong'" (W4, L2, 34) in that setting. Gendered conflict in outdoor work was experienced variously by each of the four women: through the employment exclusions they faced juggling working, studying and raising children; the undue and differential scrutiny their or other women's technical and physical skills weathered in comparison to male counterparts; and men's ready dismissal of feminist concerns and analyses in professional settings. In this era, women appeared to understand that challenging gender relations in outdoor workplaces was "high stakes." As one writer aptly surmised, "to speak on the basis of gendered labour relations was to risk one's employability" (W4, L2, 92–93).

The Terrain of Outdoor Skills

I longed to do the things that I saw boys doing …
And I aspired to do things I heard about men doing. (W1, L2, 32–35)

A strongly expressed need for embodied outdoor experiences was a clear motif in one writer's letter. Whilst other women also articulated a strong pleasure for being in the outdoors in their letters, this writer conveyed a deep sensory longing from a young age to develop outdoor skills so that she could climb mountains, sail oceans, and "nourish [her] need for physical activity in natural environments" (W1, L2, 6–7). Living in small-town New Zealand "steeped in 1970s rugby culture" (W1, L2, 7–8), however, meant normative gender relations prevailed, with this writer experiencing gender as her "problem" during her childhood and adolescence (W1, L2, 28). It was boys who got to roam around and play in rough terrain and boys who accessed boys-only, school-based outdoor learning opportunities. Even when girls were finally allowed entry to outdoor education at school in Year 12, this writer was barred from going on the tramping trip by the school principal—she was the only girl who signed up. As with another writer, this writer's observations that her own students continued to face gender conflicts in outdoor field experiences when learning skills and completing outdoor tasks deeply troubled her. From her present-day standpoint, pedagogical questions arise; this writer no longer considers different social and practical competencies to be adequate explanations for the denied opportunities that the less skilful, confident, or assertive women (or men) garnered, particularly in challenging environmental conditions.

The Terrain of Outdoor Bodies

> *Being in the outdoors is physical and sensory …*
> *yet there is a deafening silence around bodies and movement.* (W2, L2, 46–47)

The bodily, kinaesthetic, sensory, and affective nature of "being" and "doing" in the outdoors was a dominant thread in the writing of one writer. Similar to other women, she liked "the way [moving outdoors] feels" when she was on water especially (W2, L2, 51). Although this writer noted that gender did not simply "disappear" (W2, L2, 16) in the outdoors, she also found she could move in ways that meant she could "'do gender differently' from other spaces" (W2, L2, 13). Even so, she wondered why the body seemed to be absent in theoretical and pedagogical discourses, something that a contemporary pedagogical focus on "place" had contributed to. For this writer, place pedagogies were potentially "suffocating" (W2, L2, 64) in the way they shape experience and work to render bodies and movement "invisible" (W2, L2, 66), and to privilege particular types of movement (typically "slow"). Questions about agency and subjectivity linked to bodies, discourses of movement in outdoor activities, and notions of connection and care unfold as this writer grappled with how gender is constructed and mobilized (or not) in outdoor pedagogy.

Troubling the Terrains

In the letters we wrote and responded to, we remembered and questioned situations that we had experienced. The situations we remember have stayed with us at a level of depth unlike other memories relating to experiences outdoors or mundane reminders. The personal meaning they possess is like a certain energy that we have started to call a "sting" standing out in our past experiences. The sting of being wronged, humiliated, excluded, or discredited in front of others is very real to the person perceiving the affect of the experience and is sometimes even recognizable to others present as a time-stopping moment.

The letters for each other and for collective probing represent our constructions of knowledge of the "stinging" situations in which we found ourselves. We retold the situations not to define an objective reality, but to refer to a subjective affect to which we were forced to respond at the time.

Wright and Gray (2013, p. 12) describe a "conundrum" facing women in the outdoors as "the double bind of prejudice" in which women unable to prove physical prowess as well as men are thought to be inadequate as women and as outdoor leaders. They are judged as "inadequate or even odd for wanting to be in the field" (Wright & Gray, 2013, p. 12). Our letters revealed further aspects of "the field" that also require a particular disposition: pedagogical knowledge and ability, professional conditions of work, and the embodiment of subjectivity. Our framework outlines these four areas as "terrains" or spaces in which we experienced the "conundrum" of gendered conflict. Outdoor pedagogies, outdoor work, outdoor skills, and outdoor selves are all "subjected to unrelenting scrutiny and judgment" (Wright & Gray, 2013, p. 12) on particular occasions which we relate in our letters. Our analysis of the interrelationships of the terrains of encounters produced a further set of troubling concepts.

Conflicted Freedom

Alongside a longing to move freely in the outdoors, which we see as expressing emotion and desire, there are, in at least one narrative, strong gatekeepers imposing coercive norms of hierarchy and regulation. What makes three writers connect certain times of gendered conflict with a "love" of climbing, running, and moving on water? The motif of eros, central to feminist writing on a politics of nature, is found in New Zealand writing by women on wilderness (Johnston & Dann, 1989). We suggest that movement itself draws the four Pākehā writers here into the spaces of "the outdoors" despite the continuing exclusions we could now identify. Movement with nature's movement appears as one of many possible complex influences on an embodied freedom in the outdoors.

To "Do Gender Differently"?

If embodied experiences move us through space, as suggested above, beyond an individual choice, perhaps that is what is appealing: we can move to the point of feeling that our bodies are not acting mechanically. There is another energy that can be felt in the environment. Perhaps energy and experience in the outdoors are valued by women who feel especially restricted by coercive gender norms, because they perceive a time and space not structured by gendered movements until encounters with others construct gendered relations.

For at least one writer, moving in the outdoors suggested a sense of being moved *by* the outdoors. She wrote that there, she could "do gender differently" (W2, L2, 13). The analysis therefore explored how she/we could perform hegemonic gender differently. This writer, especially, noticed that the social body is "absent" in explanations of how identity is enacted or changed in the outdoors. She questioned how her woman's body was always made to be present when she was identified as a "woman in the outdoors":

> *I am … reminded by both outdoor people and non-outdoor people that being 'female' means that my technical and physical skills are called into question in a way that I think men experience differently. Gender certainly does not disappear in the outdoors.* (W2, L2, 14–16)

She wondered if embodiment could be enacted differently when being moved *by* the outdoors and thus experiencing freedom from gendered presence. She was, in effect, raising an issue that has not yet been adequately studied in critical gender studies in the outdoors. Men's bodies are accepted as "natural" in the outdoors to the extent that they are absent from theory on gender and social difference, whereas women's bodies and capabilities are always made present and anomalous so that "gender certainly does not disappear" for women. Phenomenological philosophy suggests that the disappearance of "the experiential body" is affected by our rich perception of the sensory world, whereas the appearance of the body is a sign of dissonance. Thus, the absent body is considered "normal" until its objectification, such as in social struggle, renders it present.

If it might be possible to "do gender differently" in this temporal space, it becomes pertinent to ask how it might be possible to do gender differently in the other spaces that regulate the outdoors, such as workplaces, staff meetings, staff trainings, management decisions, a principal's decision, the secondary school curriculum, or new research knowledge. These are the more entrenched locations in which to challenge gendered practices and dispositions with few opportunities to move "differently."

Feminist Practices and Professional Settings

Grappling with "doing gender differently" necessitated that women politicize their experiences of exclusion from moving spaces. For at least two women living in "formal" outdoor centres, an "informal" women's community within and across outdoor centres emerged to provide an important forum to achieve this end. In small groups, women came together to share and enjoy outdoor activities and to wrestle with the nuances of feminist politics in the outdoors. One writer recalled Women Outdoors New Zealand gatherings when

> *women [would] actively challenge each other about the need to enact feminist practices that did not essentialise women and their lives … [and did not] replicate 'colonial' attitudes towards the land.* (W3, L2, 94–95)

Although inspirational for pedagogical practice, all four writers found "doing gender" to be deeply confrontational, painful, and destabilizing work. Gender was articulated via transnational difference (Larner, 1993), postcolonial culture (Jones, 1992) and lesbian inclusivity (Dignan, 2002) at the time. Yet it was important that our voices be heard by each other.

Away from women's-only spaces, in work and professional settings, these writers found that men in the professional communities rarely took up gender work or troubled the hegemonic social order. Women politicizing social practices like instructional language used with groups appeared to be very demanding, with two women noting their male colleagues' resistance to this. Deemed to be "'too stroppy' and 'too strong'" (W4, L2, 34), these women found that men's responses appeared to question them: "Why are you here if you can't work with us?" rather than "Why are you working in the outdoors?"

How Does Gender Become Women's Problem?

At least one writer experienced the embodiment of gender as her "problem" (W1, L2, 28) during childhood and adolescence as boys and men around her excluded her from the outdoor spaces and activities which boys pursued. It was much harder for her to understand gender as socially constituted in particular moments in time, when it seemed that gender was a burden to do with her body. Yet, if gender's temporal relations require that women meet or negotiate "the generalised expectation of difference" (Kiewa, 2001, p. 10) in every encounter and every space, then women's bodies, however dissonant, and therefore prominent, are never actually the source of their problem. Gender can become girls' or women's "problem" through the re-embodiment of restraint on their labour to the extent that they do not want to raise gender as an issue; this was apparent in all of our letters. The risk of speaking out and becoming "one of them," or the feminist voice, is of taking on the problem that is not ours. In the end, the failure of feminism to create a nourishing practice as each of the writers moved into tertiary sites of pedagogy and research was part of an ongoing struggle.

Social change in gendered relations depends not on women's and girls' physical participation and psychological "need" for courage, but rather on the willingness of men and boys in groups and men in leadership to reject gender stereotypes that "sting" and to create the elusive environments of nondominating, nonstigmatizing, mixed-gender participation (Haluza Delay & Dyment, 2003; Pate, 1997).

Conclusion

Looking back on our decades of engagement in diverse outdoor settings, we recognize how recreating and working in the outdoors nourished each of us. In this chapter, we surfaced how some experiences are also sources of lasting, deeply felt "stings." These gender conflicts and exclusions were experienced in and across four interlinking terrains encompassing outdoor pedagogies, outdoor work, outdoor skills, and outdoor selves. Troubling these terrains reveals very real experiences in which women risked their employment and relationships in order to create consciousness of injustice. This study raises research and pedagogical questions that need further attention to realize outdoor leadership and outdoor programming. We suggest a research agenda that can, if taken up, re-ignite and give momentum to feminist outdoor leadership research and, ultimately, encourage outdoor leaders and participants to "do gender differently."

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13

Ongoing Challenges for Women as Outdoor Leaders

Debra J. Jordan

There is no question that opportunities for women (predominantly Caucasian) in outdoor leadership have increased over the past 25 years. Once viewed as having no place in the out of doors let alone in outdoor leadership, women's status in the backcountry has improved. Having said that, as with all things related to the social construction of gender, female leaders in the out of doors continue to struggle for full acceptance by both participants and peer leaders.

The natural environment continues to be a male domain where women tend to be either inconsequential or invisible. Further, it continues to be acclaimed, both covertly and overtly, as a male bastion (Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Ghimire, Green, Poudyal, & Cordell, 2014; Little, 2002; Schwartz, Figueiredo, Pereira, Christofoletti, & Dias, 2013; Warren & Loeffler, 2006). The many exploits of men exploring and conquering the outdoors (think of expeditions to Mount Everest, the North Pole, and the historical record of European discoveries [sic] of various continents) have been recorded, are taught in schools, and documented through popular media.

McNiel, Harris, and Fondren (2012) conducted an investigation of how female outdoor recreationists are commonly portrayed in American mainstream media. They found that not only are women underrepresented in outdoor magazines, when they are depicted they are portrayed as having limited and passive roles in the environment. The authors found that women in

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D. J. Jordan (✉)
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, East Carolina University,
Greenville, NC, USA

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advertisements were portrayed as having low levels of engagement with the wilderness and wilderness-based recreation. McNeil et al. noted the primary themes of how the genders were depicted, such as: (1) women are followers who need guidance, (2) women's involvement in the outdoors is to mimic the home environment in the woods, and (3) women who engage in outdoor recreation are unique and need to be feminized. As a portrayal of women's helplessness in the out of doors, in the most common advertisement that included photographs of both women and men, the male models were holding maps and pointing the way for their female companions.

Culp (1998) and Ghimire et al. (2014) noted that socialization and stereotypes play major roles in creating barriers to women's participation in outdoor recreation. Social pressure to conform to traditional gender roles and participate in only feminine-acceptable forms of recreation has been and remains pervasive throughout society. And, surprisingly to some, gender stereotypes are alive and well into the 2000s (Crites, Dickson, & Lorenz, 2015; Nelson, Bronstein, Shacham, & Ben-Ari, 2015; Rhee & Sigler, 2015); they continue to exert a strong influence on the acceptance and evaluation of female outdoor recreationists as well as leaders.

The Leadership Dilemma

When women entered the outdoor profession as coleaders in adventure recreation and on outdoor trips and expeditions, anecdotal evidence suggests that they were typically viewed as the experts in the social and nurturing aspects of outdoor programming—mediating conflicts, setting up camp, cooking, providing basic first aid, and the like. Male coleaders taught the real outdoor skills such as climbing, route finding, and backpacking. In addition, as many women have attested, during those early years, male coleaders were considered the leaders whilst female coleaders were seen as forever-apprentices to the leadership role, or they were invisible—particularly to participants. This relationship was perceived as appropriate both by leaders and by participants (Jordan, 1988), and women have found it challenging to break away from those expectations (Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Wright & Gray, 2013).

As in most settings whether as a participant or leader, male competence is assumed in the out of doors. Women, on the other hand, have to continually prove their competence and place throughout the outdoor experience. Proof of competence occurs through the ongoing evaluation processes participants and coleaders engage in as they observe and interact with outdoor leaders. These internal and unspoken evaluations involve the totality of the leadership experience—competence in outdoor living (technical) skills, interpersonal skills, and meta-skills such as judgement and seeing the big picture. Problematically for women, research has demonstrated that men are preferred as leaders in more masculine or gender-neutral settings and women are disadvantaged; this is attributed to the finding that resistance to women in leadership is stronger in highly masculine domains and in leadership positions that have rarely been occupied by women (Ko, Kotrba, & Roebuck, 2015; Lopez & Ensari, 2014). Relatedly, Jordan (1988) and Wright and Gray (2013) found that participants preferred male instructors to female instructors when engaging in outdoor programmes and expeditions.

Women, then, are at a distinct disadvantage in outdoor leadership as the heavily male domain favours men. As an additional element, women are judged against male standards and thus are exposed to the potential of being held to represent the entire sex. If a female leader makes a mistake, participants (and coleaders) may judge her as proof that women do not have a place in the outdoors (Evans, 2014). At the least, perceptions of her competence drop precipitously. In response, many female outdoor leaders find themselves striving to outperform male coleaders (Schwartz et al., 2013; Warren & Loeffler, 2006; Wright & Gray, 2013). It is common to see women in the backcountry carrying backpacks that, in relation to their body size, are heavier and larger than the men's packs. In addition, numerous outdoor leaders have shared stories of female participants who suffered horrendous blisters because they did not speak up at the earliest sign of a blister out of fear of being perceived as weak or holding up the group.

You Want It, You Have to Take It

Simply being identified as a trip leader does not make it so; we might have the title of a leader but if others do not actively accept us in that role, then a leader we are not. Similarly, if a group accedes leadership to an individual who does not accept that status, the group will be lacking a leader. Many years of research tell us that leadership is a cocreated process that requires one or more persons to grant leadership status to someone who, in turn, claims that leadership status. Both the granting/claiming processes are necessary and are constantly being negotiated—sometimes on a conscious level but more often at a subconscious level. It is the cocreation process that can make it challenging for any one individual, those who are marginalized in particular, to attain and maintain a meaningful leadership position. One may wish to be a leader and have all the competencies and skills necessary to be a leader, but if the group members and/or coleader do not ascribe leadership to that person, challenges will result. This is what commonly occurs with women in outdoor leadership positions.

Whilst there are many theories that help to describe or explain leadership, there are few that serve to explain how people engage in the process to grant someone leadership status. One of those that has particular relevance to how we recognize and concede leadership in others is implicit leadership theory (ILT; ILT also refers to implicit leadership traits). This theory has applicability across settings, organizational structures, professions, and hierarchical positioning; it is particularly meaningful in outdoor recreation settings.

Are You the Leader? Implicit Leadership Theory

Something that is implicit is something that goes without saying; the process or characteristic being described is inherent in the event or activity in which people are engaged. In this case, implicit refers to the underlying assumptions, perceptions, and realities that occur whenever people think about and enact leadership and followership. Thus, the ILT explains how we make use of subconscious interpretations to know whether we should grant or claim leadership. It is activated in situations where leadership is expected or a leader has been appointed.

Hoption (2016) explains that all of us have a preconceived notion or picture in our minds about what a leader looks and acts like. These subconscious pictures about what we consider a leader to be are called schemata; schemas help to make sense of what we observe and instruct us about how we should interact with others. We learn and develop these underlying mental representations from childhood based on experiences with leaders and followers within our particular culture. These relationships are inferred when we observe the interactions between and amongst our parents, teachers, religious figures, and peers. When we see or are involved in situations where leader and follower roles are acted out, our brains spontaneously (within milliseconds) capture those observations and create mental images of what a leader is and does, which remain with us across the lifespan.

The image of a leader that comes to mind in the way just described is called a prototype; it is a mental model of what and who a leader is and how leadership is supposed to happen. Van Quaquebeke, Graf, and Eckloff (2014) note that prototypes of a leader can be based on two frameworks. One is the concept of central tendency where we merge the traits and behaviours of all the leaders we have known and from that information create a generalized notion of what a leader is—this is considered a typical prototype. The other model we may hold is one of an exemplar—our notion for what an ideal leader is and does. We attribute and grant leadership to people who most accurately match our prototype of leader. Conversely, we are unlikely to recognize the leadership capabilities of those who do not fit our leader prototype (Carnes, Houghton, & Ellison, 2015). Research supports the depiction of what a leader looks like and he happens to be a white male (Berkery, Morley, & Tiernan, 2013; Crites et al., 2015; Netchaeva, Kouchaki, & Sheppard, 2015; Sczesny, Moser, & Wood, 2015).

Women Care, Men Act: Agency and Communality

Researchers have identified several traits associated with a prototypical leader and noted that prototypes are context specific (females tend to be accepted as leaders in female-dominated workplaces or other settings). Leaders are expected to be agentic—that is, to take initiative, be assertive and action-oriented, dominant, powerful, competent, and masculine. Other traits ascribed to the leader prototype include intelligence, dedication, sensitivity (to others), and charisma (Cairns-Lee, 2015; Carnes et al., 2015). Thus, according to the ILT, when we are faced with someone who demonstrates these characteristics, we are likely to accept and trust them in a leadership role.

Similar to the ILT, people hold expectations of what females and males are supposed to be and how they are expected to act. Various writers have referred to this theory as social role theory, role congruity theory, or sex role theory. No matter the terminology, the theory posits that society holds well-understood expectations for what women should do and be, as well as what men should do and be. These gender-role expectations are developed in early childhood, defined through culture, and reinforced across the lifespan. Sturm, Taylor, Atwater, and Braddy (2014) and Williams and Tiedens (2016) report that it is common that gender-role beliefs become internalized and we tend to respond accordingly, regardless of our sex.

Prototypical female and male roles are both prescriptive, which is a belief about how females and males should behave, and proscriptive, which is a belief about how females and males should not behave (Berkery et al., 2013; Rosette, Mueller, & Lebel, 2015). In terms of the prescriptive stereotype, females are expected to be communal in nature (a feminine characteristic) whilst males are to express themselves in agentic ways (a masculine trait). The communal role includes being kind, caring, other oriented, nurturing, and selfless. Agency includes power, dominance, individualism, mastery, and assertiveness (Ko et al., 2015; Mendez & Busenbark, 2015; Nelson et al., 2015). As a male dominion, the out of doors is, by nature, agentic.

As a concept, leadership is strongly associated with agentic attributes like powerful or dominant, which men represent to a greater extent than women. Thus, the prototype of leader is most similar to the stereotypical traits for males than for females. A dilemma arises, then, when females are in leadership positions. If female leaders want to fit the leader role, they face higher expectations than men because female leaders have to be high on both agentic and communal attributes to be perceived as effective (Fiske, 2012). At the same time, however, females who expressed what is perceived as too much agency are reviewed negatively. Fiske's research demonstrated that when women expressed both communal and agentic characteristics, they were evaluated as competent, aloof, and cold—the proscribed agentic traits weighed more heavily than the communal traits in others' evaluations. At the same time, when male leaders expressed both agentic and communal characteristics, they were seen as competent, trusting, and sensitive.

Inesi and Cable (2015) reported a similar situation where, due in part to gender-role prescriptions, women are perceived as less competent than males (particularly in leadership positions) and if they try to overcome this view by engaging in male-stereotyped behaviours, they face backlash. Further, if women do enact agentic skills and are perceived as competent, that perception of competence is not long lasting. In fact, a woman who continues to exhibit more agentic than communal traits faces later prejudice and backlash for failing to return to a more appropriate female role. For extended wilderness expeditions or outdoor trips, this is troublesome.

Rhee and Sigler (2015) and Rosette et al. (2015) identified two forms of backlash: (1) agentic deficiency and (2) agentic penalty—essentially, a catch-22. On the one hand, women are perceived to not have the skills and traits necessary to be a leader (they lack dominance, power, assertiveness, competence) and if they express these characteristics to demonstrate leadership they are penalized—evaluated less favourably, less liked, and essentially dismissed—their voices are not heard or if they are, they are not respected. Further, the mere indication that a female leader is successful in her position leads to increased ratings of selfishness, deceitfulness, and coldness (Netchaeva et al., 2015). Interestingly, women tend to be penalized only when they have success in a male arena—it is not their success per se that leads to the negative evaluations but rather the threat that such success poses to men's superior position in the gender hierarchy in a stereotypical male domain.

The Impact of Microaggressions

All of us act and react to others at two levels: subconsciously and unintentionally and consciously and intentionally. It is the instantaneous, subconscious, and unbidden reactions we have when we interact with people who represent cultural groups different from our own that are the focus of what is called microaggression. Much of the research about this phenomenon is situated in the experiences of people of colour; however, the concept of microaggression applies equally well to a wide range of dimensions of diversity (e.g., sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion (Wong, Derthick, David, Saw, & Okazaki, 2014)).

Microaggressions may be understood in terms of microassaults, which are fairly easy to detect, and two less explicit forms: microinsults and microinvalidations (Sue, 2010, 2013; Wong et al., 2014). Microassaults are the most blatant form of microaggression and fit into what is primarily conceived of as blatant sexism, racism, or homophobia. Perpetrators of microinsults, on the other hand, are often not consciously aware that they have said or done something that could be interpreted negatively, and in some instances are even attempting to pay a compliment ("Wow, you are really good at rock climbing"). Microinsults are less obvious than microassaults but can actually be more stressful because the target of such an insult has to expend energy determining if a slight actually took place.

Microaggression consists of subtle verbal, nonverbal, and environmental signals that relay alienating or demeaning messages on the basis of sex, gender, and other dimensions of diversity; the subtle forms are typically not intended to cause distress or offence. To outside observers, the comments or actions may have little meaning; however, they speak volumes to those who experience such consistent messages throughout their lives. Not only are microaggressions stressful due to their insulting underlying content, they are often so ambiguous that women may question their own perceptions of what actually took place. If they do not confront the microaggressor, the event remains invisible; yet if they do choose to confront the microaggressor, they are often perceived as irrational, angry, or hysterical (Sue, 2010, 2013; Wong et al., 2014). This results in a double bind that is indicative of the oppression existing in many areas of women's lives.

Microinsults are subtler than microassaults, but still include the interpersonal and environmental messages that convey stereotypes of and biases against women (Nadal, Mazzula, Rivera, & Fujii-Doe, 2014). In the outdoors, microinsults might be demonstrated by the assumption that since women are good at soothing someone who is physically or emotionally hurt, one should seek out a woman when such skills are needed, or, we might overhear someone in our group whisper to a peer in a surprised voice that she really knows her stuff when a female leader expertly teaches route finding. Yet another example of a microinsult is when a man helps a woman put on her backpack without asking if she needs that help (and not doing the same for men); the underlying assumption is that a woman is not strong or skilled enough to make it in the outdoors without help from men.

Lastly, microinvalidations are the interpersonal and environmental messages that negate, nullify, or undermine the experiences, feelings, and realities of marginalized groups. When someone says that discrimination no longer exists or they don't see any differences between women and men, for instance, they are invalidating the daily subtle sexist experiences faced by women. Such a statement might express the belief that overt signs of discrimination no longer exist or no longer matter; it also conveys the idea that if a person thinks they experience sexism, they are overreacting. This type of attitude or denial negates the small, cumulative experiences of microaggression that people who are marginalized face every day. Microinvalidations are often invisible as they are subtle by nature and may not be regarded as insults in a society that accepts the out of doors and physical labour as a male domain.

Kaskan and Ho (2016) identified nine different underlying microaggressive themes that are commonly expressed towards women: (1) sexual objectification, (2) second-class citizenship, (3) use of sexist language, (4) assumption of inferiority, (5) restrictive gender roles, (6) denial of the reality of sexism, (7) denial of individual sexism, (8) invisibility, and (9) sexist humour/jokes. Due to space limitations, only some of these themes are addressed here.

Sexual objectification may be observed in comments made about the way female participants and leaders look or the clothes they wear (often hinting at an undesirable overly masculine appearance), whilst such comments are rarely directed at males in the group. An underlying belief that males have and should have higher status than females, that female voices are not the final word (or do not count), and that females do not belong in outdoor leadership is an indicator of awarding women second-class citizenship. It is common for women leaders to respond to a participant question and then see the participant look to the male leader for confirmation. Often, those women who are successful in wilderness leadership are either viewed as anomalies who are not representative of women in general or their success is attributed to luck (e.g., she was lucky the canoe didn't capsize) or the simple nature of the task (after all, how hard can it be to teach campsite management?).

Part of the reason that female outdoor leaders may be viewed as anomalies is a result of restrictive gender roles, which are both prescriptive and proscriptive and relegate women and men into stereotypical roles. Both sexes are impacted by stereotypes and both sexes tend to internalize those that apply to their gender. Marivoet (2014) and Schwartz et al. (2013) found that when women internalize restrictive stereotypes they tend to engage in apologetic behaviours. These include acting in ways to highlight a feminine appearance or to emphasize their heterosexuality by mentioning children or a male partner. Men, on the other hand, rarely feel the need to share such personal details. In the world of sports, evidence suggests that not only do female athletes feel pressured by their peers, coaches, and significant others to engage in such behaviours but that they become more accepted as athletes once they do so. This likely holds true for female outdoor leaders, as well.

Those who are not marginalized, in this case men, cannot identify with the lived reality of women who are constantly reminded that they are other or less than; thus, men often have little patience for women's reactions to what they perceive to be either nonexistent or minute slights. For example, when someone expresses the sentiment that women are equal to men (which everybody knows [sic]) and therefore should stop complaining about perceived inequalities, they illustrate the disparity that exists between the perceptions of those who live with pervasive microaggressions and the perceptions of those who perpetuate them.

On the cognitive level, targets of microaggressions expend a lot of cognitive energy trying to determine whether or not they have been discriminated against; this outlay of energy can be intellectually disruptive (Sohi & Singh, 2015). For example, if a female leader loses her train of thought she is likely to be perceived as unprepared, ill qualified, or flighty. This type of disruption and its resultant behaviours can be used to strengthen the stereotype that women do not belong in outdoor leadership (McGlone & Pfiester, 2015). Women who find themselves on guard to avoid failure so as not to be cast in the "Well, what do you expect; she's a woman" view are experiencing a stereotype threat. The constant hypervigilance can be exhausting and detract from one's real and perceived competence.

Speaking of Microaggressions: The Impacts of Sexist Language

An often-unacknowledged form of microaggression is that of sexist language. We know that language functions as a device not only for transferring information but also for expressing social categorizations and hierarchies. In the case of sexist language, the communication includes messages of the superiority and worth of one sex (male) over the other (female).

One form of sexist language persists in written as well as verbal form—the generic use of masculine pronouns, which many authors have noted, has far-reaching consequences in restricting the degree of female visibility (Goh & Hall, 2015; Koeser & Sczensy, 2014; Swim, Mallett, & Stangor, 2004; Weatherall, 2015). Gender-exclusive language is a relatively subtle means of conveying information about women and men and generally, the messages result in biased outcomes in favour of men to the disadvantage of women. In one study, Koeser and Sczensy (2014) found that in reaction to gender-exclusive language (he) during a mock job interview, women experienced a lower sense of belonging, less motivation, and less expected identification than women exposed to gender-inclusive (he or she) or gender-neutral (one) language.

Yet another aspect of communication that continues to have an impact on how women and men are perceived is the language and terminology we use. Sexist language is that which separates and elevates one sex (male) over the other (female) resulting in the maintenance of sex-based stereotypes. And unfortunately, sexist language continues to persist. Part of the problem is that sexist language perpetuates sexist attitudes, which lead to sexist and sex-limiting behaviours (Weatherall, 2015). The good news is that when people are reminded of what sexist language is and why it is problematic, they are reminded to use gender-fair (or gender-neutral) language. Not only do such individuals change their language, but their behaviours change as well (Koeser & Sczensy, 2014).

Sexist language is used by females and males alike, often without an understanding of the impact of such language. There are three common ways that sexist language affects girls and women. It may:

1. exclude or ignore the female gender (e.g., using the supposedly generic he, two-man tent);
2. trivialize the female gender, which is often done by defining females in relation to something else. For example, using the phrase women and children puts women in the same light as children, that is, weak and in need of protection; and
3. demean the female gender (e.g., women's work is neither desirable nor important work).

Research has shown that using the male pronoun he when addressing mixed groups sets a tone of exclusivity (Douglas & Sutton, 2014; Koeser & Sczensy, 2014). An example of how pervasive gendered language can be is when we assume that an animal is male. For example, we might hear a friend say something like, “See that deer? I wonder where he’s going?” even when it is clear the deer is a doe. This is also true when people consistently use male-based examples as in “The leader, he …,” when talking about leaders in general, and “Talk to one of the instructors. He can tell you,” even though there might be instructors of both sexes available.

Trivializing the female gender in communication is a common and typically unintentional process. The most common way women are defined in relation to something else is seen in the phrase women and children. We also might hear or see phrasing where adult sports teams are identified as men’s teams and girls’ teams, as in men’s basketball and girls’ basketball. When women are lumped in with children or are referred to as girls (and both females and males use this language), we are deprecating the contributions of females of all ages. The subconscious message is that adult women are weak, vulnerable, without power, have few skills, and have little to contribute.

To avoid this pitfall, leaders can take care to use parallel terms when speaking about or referring to the two sexes. Examples include women and men (not girls and men), girls and boys, and ladies and gentlemen (not ladies and men); there is no gender-neutral term for guy. Just as identifying adult males as boys is inaccurate (and often a put-down), so too is referring to a woman as a girl. This form of microaggression is often used and accepted without question and by both females and males.

An example of how we demean the female gender is when we use adjectives to discredit females as in, “That’s a girl’s toy!” or “You throw like a girl.” Calling boys sissies is another example of a put-down and is a form of verbal bullying. Another example of lessening the importance of the female gender is in the way we habitually use the phrases males and females, men and women, and boys and girls. The subconscious yet consistent ordering of the male gender first sends subliminal messages about value and worth. Notably, we turn the ordering about when we use the phrase “ladies and gentlemen.” In the connotations associated with these words, females are to be treasured and put on a pedestal to be looked at and admired but not engaged in meaningful activity. It may seem a minor thing, but the cumulative effect of the many ways we belittle females makes a difference in our thoughts, words, and deeds (Sczesny et al., 2015).

In practical terms, leaders can combat sexism in language by doing the following:

- Examine one’s own use of verbal, written, and symbolic language for inclusiveness (use the term “woman” rather than “girl” when referring to adult females);

- Avoid qualifiers that reinforce stereotypes ("She is a really good kayaker—for a woman");
- Avoid using the male pronoun as an inclusive term (he means male, not male and female);
- Avoid minimizing the female sex by omitting a clarifier when not needed (woman leader when leader would suffice);
- Avoid patronizing others (saying, "Now, now, don't get all emotional"); and
- Actively respond to and address sexist language.

Word choice can alter meanings, result in misunderstandings, and provide only partial information (Jordan, 1990; Warren & Loeffler, 2006). Gender-identified language often obscures the contributions and existence of the disregarded gender; it presents imprecise and half-true information. As an example, the generally accepted terms "hard skills" and "soft skills" can denigrate the female gender and its contribution to the field of experiential education by the phallocentric nature of the words. Hard and soft skills generally have been recognized as two types of skills in the practice of outdoor leadership (Jordan, 1990). Hard skills are those that encompass such things as logistics, planning, and technical skill development; soft skills are those that involve human relations, communication, and social skills. Technical skills were those competencies people bragged about (and some still do) and at which people trained long and with focused effort to become the best. There is little or no formal training in interpersonal skills for outdoor leaders.

Since the male sex is more highly valued and attributed more status than the female sex, it is easy to see why in the past skills labeled as hard have been more highly valued—they are masculine, and according to social norms, masculine is the way to be. The term "feminine" elicits an image of gentleness and delicacy, softness, and giving way under pressure. One who is considered soft often is denigrated by being referred to as a wimp, pansy, or soft-hearted. In the out of doors, being soft or giving way under pressure is an undesirable trait. A leader who is able to make sound decisions without being unnecessarily swayed by popular thought is preferred over the leader whose decisions can be influenced by the most vocal group members (Jordan, 1990).

Sczesny et al. (2015) and Swim et al. (2004) surmise that people use sexist language for several reasons. They may do so because it is traditional, it is ingrained in current written and spoken language, and can be difficult to change: people lack knowledge about what constitutes sexist language, people do not believe that such language is sexist, or people are attempting to protect established social hierarchies. Others fail to use gender-inclusive language because of their negative attitudes towards using such language, along with their conscious intentions to avoid engaging in such types of communication. Such individuals might deliberately avoid using gender-inclusive language because they view it as a kind of oppressive political correctness, or they might claim that is unnecessary because the masculine generic includes both women and men. Thus, Swim et al. (2004) note that sexist individuals do not fail to use gender-inclusive language because they cannot be bothered to adopt new terminology. Instead, they have made explicit choices not to vary from language forms that reflect the male norm and in which women are relatively invisible.

Summary

It is clear that well into the twenty-first century, the outdoors continues to be the province of males. Males tend to be exposed to recreation opportunities in the natural environment sooner and more frequently than females. The effects of this psychological (and physical) gap in contact with the natural environment continue to impact the field of outdoor leadership. And, the impact is felt by women who continue to struggle to be fully accepted by both participants and peer leaders as competent and qualified leaders.

We know that for leadership to exist the role of the leader must be claimed and granted—the leadership process is cocreated between leaders and followers. This works well for men who are considered agentic and presents challenges for women who are considered communal by nature. This is because the expectations we hold for leaders include the mandate that leaders demonstrate agentic qualities. Women who behave in agentic ways can face backlash from both males and females for stepping outside of the female stereotype. This backlash may be overt or subtle and is expressed through microaggressions—microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations.

One type of microaggression that pervades society and is perpetuated in settings for outdoor leadership is the continued use of sexist language. Sexist language has three types of impacts on women and girls—it can exclude the female gender, trivialize the female gender, or demean the female gender. As one example, the sustained use of the terms “hard skills” and “soft skills” has a negative impact on the full acceptance of females in the outdoors.

Opportunities for Action

Whilst women in the experiential education professions face challenges to being fully accepted, we are not helpless bystanders. And, we have many allies in our male counterparts. Based on the research, there are many small but consequential actions we can undertake to influence others' perceptions of our place as outdoor leaders.

Gender-based stereotypes dictate what and who women (and men) should and should not be. As research has found, women who purposely express themselves in agentic terms face backlash. In response, Williams and Tiedens (2016) suggest that rather than verbally and blatantly claiming and using dominance and power, women should strategically use indirect forms of dominance. Such indirect approaches might include engaging in power-based nonverbal behaviours such as a more expansive posture, a louder voice, and standing tall; these types of behaviours are below the level of conscious recognition and result in less aggressive pushback from others. Netchaeva et al. (2015) propose that to pre-empt the backlash effect on women leaders, all of us provide information about the caring, sensitive, and supportive nature of an agentic woman, thereby reinforcing the communal aspects of an agentic leader. Whilst perhaps distasteful to some ("dominant and powerful female role models are needed"), Netchaeva et al. (2015) indicate that this approach can help to reduce negative reactions to women who are agentic (more so than communal).

To address microaggressions and sexist language in particular, it will be important for outdoor leaders to openly identify such behaviours and talk about (and reiterate) the negative effects of such words and actions. One might even challenge the group and/or colleagues to use female pronouns throughout their speech (for one or more entire days—it can be a difficult cognitive task for some) and re-order their use of relative terms such as women and men (rather than men and women). Continuing to be aware of, actively address, and share our knowledge of the challenges of women in outdoor leadership can only enhance the profession for all.

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14

Alice Through the Looking-Glass: An Autoethnographic Account of Women's Leadership in Outdoor Education in the UK

Kaz Stuart

Would I like to write a chapter for a book on women's leadership in outdoor education? Of course, I would—I have ideas and views and opinions to offer to the wider world! My usual style, to be credible in the conventional world, would be to engage with the ideas of others and present case studies of the lives of fabulous women. "I" would be hidden behind the voices of others, and my ideas would be presented through the work of others.

Today, however, is a "frabjous day." In this chapter, I am going through the looking-glass just as Alice did in Lewis Carroll's (1872) second tale of Alice—*Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*. In the story, nothing is quite as it seems. Logic and rationality do not exist, the meanings of words are uncertain, and everything animate or inanimate can speak. In this land, I can find my voice and speak directly of my experience as a source of knowledge as valuable as logic.

In the world of rationality, such a personal descriptive account is identified as autoethnographic. Ellis and Bochner (2000) refer to *autoethnography* as "action research for the individual" (p. 754) and, indeed, the process of reflecting on my experiences of leading in the outdoors has created learning and action for me, and I hope these reflections may contribute to women's outdoor leadership per se. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) define autoethnography as a systematic description and analysis of personal experience that allows understanding of wider cultural experiences, for example, experiences

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K. Stuart (✉)
University of Cumbria, Lancaster, Cumbria, UK

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of pain or depression. This definition is highly congruent with the aims of this chapter. Autoethnography emphasizes ways of knowing that are different to objective logic and makes it possible for critical theories to emerge and take hold in research and academia. I, like Wall (2006), "find the relentless nudging of autoethnography against the world of traditional science holds wonderful, symbolic, emancipatory promise. It says what I know matters. How much more promise could it hold for people far more marginalised than I?" (p. 148).

The unique literary form of autoethnography means that past experiences are related biographically, helping insiders and outsiders to better understand culture (Ellis et al., 2011). Further, Bathmaker and Harnett (2010) identify the potential for these personal stories to raise to the political as "possibilities for social change need, at least in part, to be understood and conceived of through the small everyday acts of individuals, and the histories that have brought them to their present place" (p. 3). From this subjective perspective, they are a feminist researcher's tool of choice (Neuman, 1994).

Autoethnography has been criticized for being too artful, insufficiently rigorous, self-absorbed, and narcissistic (Anderson, 2006; Keller, 1995; Madison, 2006). Autoethnographers, however, believe that research can be rigorous and theoretical whilst also remaining emotional and inclusive of social and personal phenomena. They therefore find it futile to debate whether it is a process or product, as the goal is to make the world we live in a better place (Dumtrica, 2010, p. 31). With that in mind, I share my story in the hope that it might contribute in some way to making the outdoor world a better place for women leaders and support women leaders to make the outdoor world a better place.

In My World

Living in the "real world," I always felt compelled to measure up to societal norms. I had experienced a highly patriarchal and sexist upbringing that convinced me that women should be inferior to men, should know their place, and generally be second best. I experienced "othering" (Jensen, 2011), as my dad referred to women as different and inferior: the second sex (De Beauvoir, 1997). Unconsciously furious, I set out to prove my dad and all the males in the world wrong. Brought up in the lower classes of a mining town, this sexism was compounded by class-based prejudice; I was shamed by my second-hand and home-made clothes and felt abject within peer groups (Tyler, 2013). Although sexism and classism were different forms of oppression, they became intersubjective (Garcia, 2015), and my sense of worth became inappropriately attached to equalling or bettering male counterparts.

The first competitive arena I chose was academic; however, my brother aced super grades whilst I flunked out, reinforcing my shame and worthlessness. After battling through school and university, I gained a job as a primary school teacher. I loved it. I excelled at it, but it felt too conformist. I was doing well in a role ascribed to women—caring and educating children. My unconscious drove me on to compete in a "man's world" and I started paragliding, my first foray into the outdoor world.

Looking back, I now realize that this sporting choice enabled me to compete with my brother, who was a Royal Air Force pilot. I am astonished at how clever our unconscious can be. I was an obsessive pilot, quitting work, avoiding friends and family, and only spending time in the air or with fellow pilots. I was daring and brave and soon became a chief flying instructor and completion pilot. I won the women's gold medal at the 1997 World Air Games Paragliding Championships and felt disappointed to have "only" won over fellow women, illustrating how dysfunctional my sense of self and feminism was. I did not want to compete with peer women, and I did not want to be equal to men; I wanted to be better than them.

I launched into an outdoor career collecting outdoor qualifications or "tickets" at a pace, spending as much time as possible outdoors and doing everything as hard as I could, exalting the masculine, physical, aggressive, competitive, and task-oriented hegemony of the outdoors (Humberstone, 2007, p. 26). Climbing was not about the experience but about the grade. Walking was not about the scenery, but about the mileage. Mountain biking was not about the fun, but the exposure to risk. Road cycling was about the distance and pace rather than the lunch along the way. This is not to say that I was "good" at anything, but that I was compelled to try, and to try so hard that I missed much magic along the way striving to prove that I was as good as men, in their territory, on their terms. I had been buying into the machismo of the outdoors sector. This is epitomized in the existence of a UK paragliding manufacturer "Never Say Die," whose T-shirts bear the logo "Hero or zero." The hero's journey is a metaphor promoted as supportive of personal development in the outdoors (Loynes, 2003), but at what cost? Must we all struggle and battle to grow and develop? This discourse is no doubt as problematic for some men as it is for women (Clare, 2000). In the 1990s, I was unable to conceptualize an alternative discourse let alone live it; as such, I was running to keep still, to keep pace with the machismo, which reminded me of the Red Queen's comment to Alice: "Now, HERE, you see, it takes all the running YOU can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!" (Carroll, 2013, p. 32, emphasis in the original).

Through the Looking-Glass

At the same time as trying to prove myself within a dominant discourse, I was facilitating learning experiences for people in the outdoors. I sought positions of responsibility managing an overseas paragliding operation and facilitating learning in the outdoors for Brathay Trust, Karakorum Experience, World Challenge, and Trek Force. These were positions that enabled me to compete with men and yet, paradoxically, it was in these environments that I felt as if I had fallen through the looking-glass into the mirror-image world.

My leadership in the outdoors focused on empowerment, not oppression. I strove to create socially just spaces where people could be together in different ways in different places and find out who they are, and who and how they want to be. Being in outdoor spaces was like going through the looking-glass. Theoretically, they offered a “third space,” a particular social environment for development. Notions of the third space are drawn from Bhabha (1994), who defined such spaces as places of in-between-ness that allowed the expression of different perspectives. In this chapter, these third spaces are outdoor spaces free from the constraints of daily norms (the first space) and those of the formal learning institution (the second space). As Gutierrez (2008) said, these are places “in which students begin to reconcile who they are and what they might be able to accomplish academically and beyond” (p. 48).

The following are hallmarks of third spaces developed from Oldenburg (1991):

- Free or inexpensive
- Feature food and drink
- Accessible
- Involve consistent people
- Welcoming and comfortable
- New and old friends meet there
- No obligation to be there
- Status does not matter
- Conversation is the main activity
- Inclusive and accepting and not grandiose
- Playful.

These seem to be the criteria that the outdoors can often meet. The different participation structures and power relations in these third outdoor spaces potentially allow a different way of being to emerge.

In these third spaces, I employed empowerment and the freedom of the space to create learning. My colleague and friend Lucy Maynard theorized a process of empowerment from her research, and I found this incredibly helpful in understanding what it was that I did within my outdoor leadership practice. To introduce the empowerment framework, I have drawn heavily on a paper that Maynard (2013) wrote for Brathay Trust drawing from her PhD research (Maynard, 2011).

The Process of Facilitating Empowerment

Campbell and MacPhail (2002) suggested that most empowerment work starts with the assumption that there is powerlessness or lack of control over destiny. We therefore can assume that empowerment comes from a disempowered place. This is defined in the model of empowerment as a *reactive* place. In my autoethnographic account, I am reacting to the oppression that I have experienced as a woman and am trying to live up to the machismo, heroic, masculine outdoor norms. I was not aware of this at the time, and Freire (1973) defined this as people's naïveté rather than critical consciousness. At this stage, people lack insight into the way in which their social conditions undermine their well-being and so do not see their own actions as capable of changing these conditions (Campbell & MacPhail, 2002).

With time and space comes the opportunity for the discovery of self. This, I believe, is where the role of the outdoors came in for me personally and as a space to effect change professionally. An increased self-awareness is underpinned by the concept of raising critical consciousness. As Maynard (2013) said:

> This can be seen by understanding an individual's journey through gaining awareness of their power (or lack of); learning to question, rather than simply accept the status quo; leading to insight into other opportunities and ways of being, and their potential to change their circumstance. Increased self-awareness and thus critical consciousness, is depicted in the empowerment model as three levels: Sparking, Realising and Wanting. (p. 4)

Sparking moments have been theorized for a long time. They are critical moments (Henderson & Hickerson, 2007), epiphanies (Denzin, 1989), and fateful moments (Giddens, 1991). Positive or negative events may create sparking moments. For me, the positive spark was that I wanted the people with whom I was working to experience the outdoors in a different way than me. Sparking leads to reflection and realization that things can be different.

The "penny has dropped" so to speak. Realizations about myself led to changes in identity (Summerson Carr, 2003), as identity is not a static, fixed, or attainable notion of self, but rather an ongoing process, changeable, and full of potential (Lawler, 2007). I decided that I would fit the existing norms of outdoor leadership but bring authenticity and vulnerability to the table, and in so doing, I changed my perception of myself and the values for which I stood.

After this comes the wanting. Summerson Carr (2003) suggested that opening up a range of possibilities about who one can be and how one can act inspires mobilization for change and that was exactly how I experienced my realization; it led straight to wanting my life, and the experiences of others, to be different. This led me to an intrinsic motivation. Such motivations can initiate pro-active commitments, illuminating a distinct shift from the previous *reactive* state. This is a commitment to action and marks the mobilization for change (Friedmann, 1992). As Hur (2006) stated, "At this point, empowerment reaches the point that the people feel able to utilise their confidence, desires, and abilities to bring about 'real change'" (p. 530).

At this stage of mobilization, there needs to be some support mechanisms. These help the person have a sense of how to move forward, how to transfer learning from one situation to another, and how to *sustain* the changes made. For me, the support mechanisms were other, equally feminist colleagues and friends, reading, and ongoing reflective practice.

There were a few occasions when I was not able to sustain the changes that I had committed to—I was asked to deliver a programme in a style that was not congruent, I ran out of energy, I got scared of being me. These were all points of recycling, of reduced empowerment, or even reactivity again. Maynard theorized this as a natural and expected process within the empowerment framework. How many of us, for example, have failed to maintain a new exercise regime? Ryan and Deci (2000) suggested that nonsupportive conditions and social environments are antagonistic towards positive developmental tendencies. This reinforces the need for social networks that can sustain the changes that you have committed to. And indeed, I started to carefully choose whom to hang out with!

Maynard's framework is shown in Fig. 14.1.

Surrounding this empowerment framework is a range of structural forces, including rules, discourses, and norms. These can enable or constrain the process of empowerment. I believe that outdoor leadership can suspend these structures in the third space of the outdoors. For example, being away from the norms of society leading a three-month jungle expedition, I developed a greater sense of who I wanted to be, no longer shaped by home or work. This

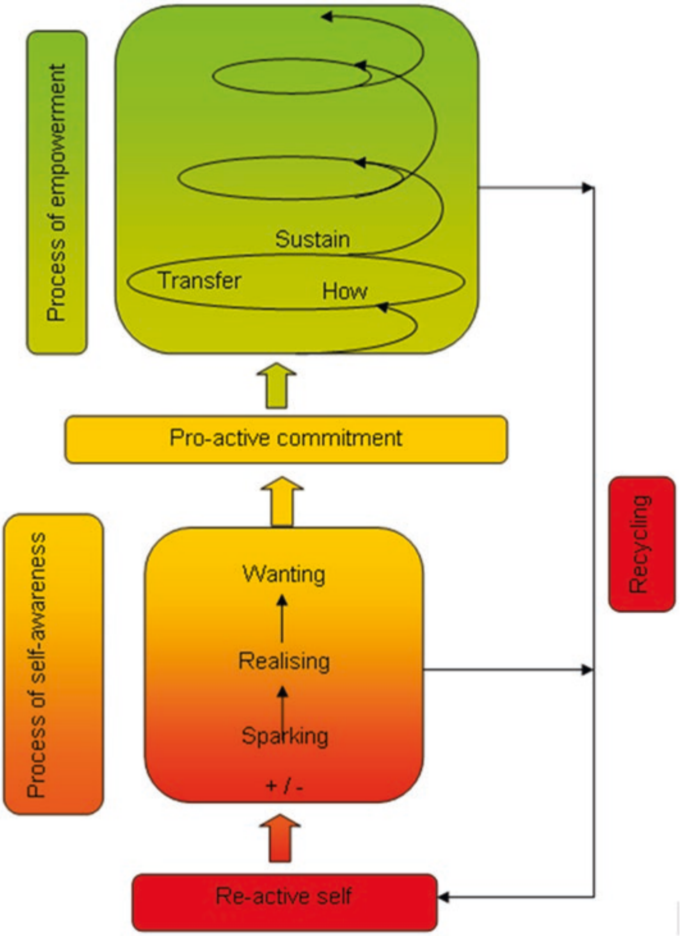
Process of empowerment
Sustain
Transfer
How
Pro-active commitment
Process of self-awareness
Wanting
Realising
Sparking
+ / -
Recycling
Re-active self

Fig. 14.1 A framework for empowerment (Maynard, 2011)

space, I believe, enabled participants to empower themselves. For me, the end point of the empowerment is someone who has agency, who is aware, can make choices, and can act to bring those choices about. My outdoor leadership practice was all about developing people's agency through empowerment. And personally, I had realized that I wanted to be different, too.

The Jabberwocky

The oppressive patriarchal discourse manifest in the outdoors had been written clearly in the structural, institutional, and ideological power sources in society, and I had been living it unconsciously. I had adopted powerful gender schemes (Valian, 1999). Now, it was as if my experiences of leading in the outdoors had rendered the discourse back to front, a nonsense, much like Alice's reading of the poem *The Jabberwocky* that is printed back to front:

> 'It seems very pretty,' she said when she had finished it, 'but it's rather hard to understand!' (You see she didn't like to confess, even to herself, that she couldn't make it out at all.) 'Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas—only I don't exactly know what they are! However, somebody killed something: that's clear, at any rate—' (Carroll, 2013, p. 20)

This realization was sparked by the completion of my outdoor ambitions—climbing a big wall. I had wanted to climb the wall to prove to myself and to others (men) that I was worthy. I wanted to go with my husband, but he did not want to spend several days on a rock face, so I arranged to go a year later with a best friend and climbing partner. On the day we left, my husband had a break down. He sobbed and asked me not to go; he said he could not cope without me, said he did not know what he would do if I went. Feeling a total and utter wretch, I left. I knew that if I stayed I would perpetuate the codependent relationship, and I would resent it forever. Instead, I found myself cold, ill, and worried sick on Half Dome. My friend and I were not good enough climbers to lead, nor could we afford all the kit, so we had hired guides. So I summited only through the support of male leaders without any shred of joy or fulfilment, only guilt and sorrow. I realized I did not want to be the wife, outdoor gal, or woman that I had become. I wanted to live authentically in the space that I created for other people. I no longer needed to be better than anyone or anything, and I no longer subscribed to dominant patriarchy; I did not need to be a hero and was no longer abject. The Jabberwocky was dead.

It's My Own Invention

To borrow one of Lewis Carroll's chapter headings, I had to become my own invention. I had therapy, worked on my marriage, studied empowerment and agency and the contra forces of oppression and marginalization, and slowly walked my talk. I threw away the outdoor uniform and started to wear what I liked. I only did things that felt nourishing, and I stopped measuring my performance. I spent time with people who were nonjudgemental and who loved experience. I became increasingly authentic and vulnerable. I did not know it at the time, but now I see how I was "daring greatly," an approach to living life in full cognizance of shame and vulnerability as researched and popularized by Brené Brown (2012). I was "daring to rehumanize education and work through disruptive engagement" (p. 184), a process that demanded that I "show up, let myself be seen and be courageous, to dare greatly with others" (p. 212). This was a daring discourse but not a heroic one. This discourse demands authenticity and vulnerability rather than the suppression of one's own needs to overcome adversity.

Workwise, I moved away from outdoor activity and started to work to shape how it is positioned in various professional roles in society, first through a research role at Brathay Trust and now as an academic at the University of Cumbria. In each role, I have worked hard to be the embodiment of my beliefs, to work authentically and vulnerably, and to create egalitarian spaces where people can be who they are and who they want to be, and, of course, it is a continual journey navigating various layers and interstices of gender schemas.

Being creative is a central part of this. I had dared to live creatively in the development of new ideas and the generation of ideas. I am no longer limited by pen and paper, or mouse and keyboard, but increasingly use creative media to generate and capture ideas, reclaiming my ways and positioning them as equally valid alongside technical rational approaches (Belenky, 1986), and no longer need to be silent. This is always fraught; I have been subjected to healthy professional challenge and toxic unprofessional rebuke for my ideas. Those experiences hurt and can also lead to growth in a quiet and gradual way. I do not think I can change global gender schemas and am happy to play my part quietly with deep curiosity and daring: an Alice of the day.

Conclusion

So what of this autoethnographic account—what might it offer others?

Women's position in the outdoors has been much contested. Although notable women have always held their own, there was a hard battle fought by suffragettes for women to have basic human rights throughout the first wave of feminism. From the 1960s onwards, women had a much more secure position in society and the outdoors through the second wave of feminism, the women's liberation movement (Redfern & Aune, 2010). This second wave, however, excluded women of different race, colour, ethnicity, religion, and so on (hooks, 1984). Some women may have been in the outdoors, but not all women. Whilst this third age of feminism may lead us to believe that women's rights are accepted universally (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000), sexism and gender schemas still run deep in the media and advertising. Any woman may be able to take part in an outdoor activity, but there may be expectations on how she will look and behave (Henderson & Hickerson, 2007), demonstrating that there is still much to be done (Page, 2006). My focus has been on women, but the same discourse limits what men can be in the outdoors, and equally needs challenge and redefinition. Like Humberstone (2007), I believe that cultural theory can help us to understand and achieve this.

For me, now, due to the intersubjectivity of discrimination and oppression, feminism has become synonymous with social justice (Kalsem & Williams, 2010). For me, social justice is my quest to make the world a more equitable place for everyone in every way. I work to achieve social justice in a nonheroic way; I do what I can, within my capacities and capabilities, to create socially just spaces in the world. I do so particularly within spheres where I have some control—my leadership of outdoor practice. In this way, my personal actions become political (Zimmerman, McDermott, & Gould, 2009) and I embody that change that I want to see happen. Creating as socially just space as I can, and daring to connect with people within that space, prevents "othering" and abjection. It is a relational form of leadership in its widest terms, seeking understanding, respect, and relationship with the environment and one another.

I offer this chapter in a quiet and humble manner, authentically and vulnerably presenting my ideas that they might resonate, disrupt, support, and challenge others to lead as women in a world that "is but a dream." Some may think that I believe the impossible, but only in believing the impossible can we render it a possibility. I hope that you, too, can believe.

> 'I can't believe that!' said Alice.
>
> 'Can't you?' the Queen said in a pitying tone. 'Try again: draw a long breath, and shut your eyes.'
>
> Alice laughed. 'There's no use trying,' she said: 'one can't believe impossible things.'
>
> 'I daresay you haven't had much practice,' said the Queen. 'When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.' (Carroll, 2013, p. 69)

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15

Challenges Faced by Women Outdoor Leaders

Karen Warren, Shelly Risinger, and TA Loeffler

Introduction

Working as an outdoor leader in a profession with a male-dominated history and practice (Bell, 1996; Lugg, 2003) presents unique challenges for women. Women leaders continue to face problematic work environments, sexual harassment, questioning of their technical outdoor skills and competency, and gender-role stereotyping. In addition, lesbian and gender-nonconforming leaders encounter discrimination rooted in heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia in the outdoor leadership field. This chapter examines some of these dilemmas using both anecdotal stories and research to uncover lessons for making the outdoor leadership field more friendly for women.

The authors are outdoor leaders with over 100 years of collective outdoor leadership experience. As we believe positionality and identity inform our

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K. Warren (✉)
Outdoor Programs, Recreation and Athletics, Hampshire College,
Amherst, MA, USA

S. Risinger
Greenfield, MA, USA

TA Loeffler
Outdoor Recreation, School of Human Kinetics and Recreation, Memorial
University, St. John's, NL, Canada

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stories and writing (Allison & Pomeroy, 2000), we identify as White cis-gendered female and gender fluid, raised working class, able-bodied, and lesbian. Two of us made a career of outdoor leadership by teaching and leading in higher education environments, whilst one of us faced challenges that caused her to leave the professional field of outdoor leadership. Two of us are mothers who negotiate constraints in the outdoor field, and all of us are aging in a youth-focused profession.

Skill Development and Questioned Competency

To make the transition from outdoor participant to outdoor leader, women must traverse troubling terrain in developing both the interpersonal and technical skills necessary, as well as the sense of competency to use them. Appling (1989) described how gender-role socialization limits the experience of outdoor education students:

> Women avoiding leadership, being fearful of physical challenge, avoiding assertiveness, manifesting feelings of intimidation or inadequate self-esteem…. Or tent group dynamics: she does almost all the cooking, he usually sets up the fly, she barely knows the knots to do so herself, he can't cook an edible meal, she gives up weight to him every morning, he makes a point of passing her with it on the trail every day. (p. 11)

TA observed similar dynamics in a technical mountain search-and-rescue course that was required in her degree programme.

> *I observed one of my female peers struggling to set up the knots and carabiner arrangement of a lowering system. Before I could step over to assist, I heard a male peer say, "Women just can't understand mechanical things" and he proceeded to grab the carabiners out of her hand and set up the system without her participation. After that moment, the student began to doubt her technical ability and she hesitated to volunteer again to set up the lowering system. As a result, she never really learned the system and eventually she failed the course because she could not demonstrate the necessary skills in the practical exam. I invited her on several occasions to join my nightly "pull the chairs around the kitchen with rope systems" practice sessions but her confidence was too shattered by both her male peers and male instructor telling her every day (both verbally and nonverbally) that she was incapable and didn't belong in the course. There were eight men and three women in that month-long course and we were taught by a male instructor. Each day, new technical skills were presented with little time for practice. Soon after a skill was presented, we were*

> *required to demonstrate it within a team-based, pressure-filled scenario where generally, my two female peers were relegated by our male peers to background support positions.* (TA)

Loeffler (1995) identified competency as a major constraint in women's outdoor leadership career development. She found that women tended to perceive themselves as less qualified or competent than their male colleagues. Almost all (*n* = 21) of the women in the study described how they were limited in their careers by a lack of self-competence. "Competence development is a complex process that is shaped by gender-role socialization, learning environments, and by individual differences. We, as experiential educators, need to further our understanding of this process so we can fully empower ourselves and our students" (Loeffler, 1997, p. 119).

Mulqueen (1995) found a critical distinction between competence and sense of competence. Because women often view their actual competence through a lens of societal perceptions and responses, which are often sexist and degrading, their self-perceptions and evaluations of their competence may be incongruent with their actual competence (Sternberg & Kolligian, 1990). This mismatch can result in women perceiving they are less competent than they actually are (Mulqueen, 1995) and, as a result, they may hold themselves back or be held back by peers, instructors, or supervisors, in both learning and leadership situations (Bell, 1996).

Problematic Work Environments

For women navigating the field of outdoor leadership, the terrain might be anything but nourishing with entrenched gender-role conditioning and sexism complicating their leading and teaching. Pinch (2007) pointed out the gendered nature of power that results in a system based on hegemonic masculinity that complicates women's experience as outdoor leaders. Trip participants may have certain performance and behavioural expectations of leaders based on attitudinal beliefs about gender (Jordan, 1992) causing them to exhibit a lack of confidence in the ability of female leaders to facilitate a group or perform technical outdoor skills (Frauman & Washam, 2013).

> *After a week-long trip in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, I had an older female participant tell me that had she known how to paddle back to her car, she would have left the trip. She was not convinced upon first meeting me and my female coguide that we were competent based on our age. She confessed that she didn't think that,*

> *"girls our age" had enough time to learn the skills to lead a trip. By the end of the trip, she not only realized our skills, we were able to teach her many new skills to assist her in becoming a competent paddler and enhance her love of the outdoors. She came back to do two more trips with the organization.* (Shelly)

Research has shown that participants have a distinct gender bias in favour of male leaders in the outdoors (Cousineau & Roth, 2012). These stereotypes can lead to assumptions about who is qualified to lead and cause women to internalize messages questioning their leadership. Therefore, regardless of their gender, people who interact with female outdoor leaders can subtly devalue their leadership capability.

> *I often wonder if young women today face some of the challenges I faced early in my outdoor leadership career. Recently, in the gender issues class of my outdoor leadership course, I recounted a story about coleading a trip with a male student intern in Canyonlands to show how sexism pervades outdoor leadership. Years ago, when I spread the topo map in front of the ranger and asked directions about a complicated route into a section of the park, the male ranger picked up the map and set it down in front of my male student leader and proceeded to tell him the directions. As I told the story to my class, one woman student burst out with, "That's exactly what happened to me this summer except the ranger was a woman."* (Karen)

Women outdoor leaders teaching in a co-ed leadership role often find students seeking advice on technical skill development (TSD) from their male co-instructor. Though equally skilled, women may find their skills tested and/or questioned before they are accepted by participants or other leaders (Warren & Loeffler, 2006). Women may find they need to continually prove their skills though they have completed the same training programme as their male counterparts.

> *While on a wilderness educators' course, I had two very experienced and skilled instructors. Students, on their first day, usually asked the male instructor for advice whether it was about proper packing of a backpack or how to fix a blister. The male instructor was very charismatic and knowledgeable but did little to make it a co-instructing environment. I watched, as the first week went by, the female instructor take more of a backseat role unless it was her day to teach a specific lesson. She was very knowledgeable and on a one-on-one basis she was confident in her skills. As our course progressed, students could see she was skilled and able to critique our techniques on lessons we presented. When the time came for our evaluations of the instructors, the majority of the students were very critical, feeling she did not show enough confidence in the field. I remember seeing her crying when she came out from behind the rocks where the evaluations were taking place.* (Shelly)

Female outdoor leaders are also faced with the "superwoman" dilemma that causes them to attempt to exhibit exemplary outdoor skills in order to be recognized as competent (Warren, 1985). Burnout can occur for women leaders who feel inclined to overcompensate or outdo male leaders in order to be accepted, with this turmoil causing them to question or truncate their outdoor leadership careers (Wright & Gray, 2013). Equally troubling is the flip side of this dynamic, whereby highly competent appearing female leaders have to be aware of situations where trip participants can't use them effectively as role models because the participants believe their leaders' superwoman status is unattainable for them (Warren, 1985).

Sexual harassment in learning and workplace settings remains problematic for women in the outdoors (Clark, 2015).

> *This is another story from near the end of that same mountain search-and-rescue course referenced earlier … the course was to culminate in a two-day field scenario involving a technical rescue simulation on a remote rock spire. During the bus ride home from the last class prior to the field trip, a male student told a story of a woman climber who had large breasts. He said, "I'd sure like to climb those mountains," while gesturing suggestively at his female peer sitting beside him. The female student was visibly shaken by this, and though this sexually harassing interaction was heard and seen by the male instructor, he did nothing. He did not intervene nor let the male student know this type of behaviour was inappropriate and damaging. After being dropped off at the college, we, three women met to express how unsafe the interaction made us feel and how we no longer felt we could participate in the final field experience in such a hostile environment. We communicated this to both the instructor and the college. The field trip went on without us, I received a "B" in the course because I opted out of the field trip, and the other two women received poor or failing grades. During the next year's offering of the course, the instructor was replaced but our grades were never changed.* (TA)

Compared to other less remote workplaces, escaping a coworker's sexual harassment can be difficult or impossible when one is a week's walk from the trailhead (Loeffler, 1996b).

> *As a graduate student, my teaching opportunities were often with male instructors. On a scouting trip, one of my male graduate student co-instructors made some off-color sexual remarks about what he'd like to experience with me. Not only was he a large man, but we were in the middle of the desert with limited places to escape if he were to pursue his imagination. I was able to remind him of his family and kids and managed to redirect his focus. I spent the next 3 hours afraid he might change his mind and pull over the van. Upon returning to the office, I informed*

> *our boss of the incident. He believed I misunderstood his intentions and told me not to make a big deal out of nothing, since nothing actually happened. I was told to teach this course with this co-instructor despite requesting his or my removal. I was scared to be alone with him and teaching with him was humiliating; he clearly had no respect for me as a peer. I felt conscientious of how I taught and how I spoke with him and my students. I became more aware of my body, worried that somehow I was encouraging his behavior. It made me question my ability to teach in an outdoor setting.* (Shelly)

Outdoor Leadership Career Challenges

Women seeking a path in outdoor leadership careers often encounter barriers to entry and longevity due to inequities embedded in the profession. Women working in the outdoors often lack a clear long-term career ladder and encounter lifestyle and self-identity constraints that cause questioning or deviation for a planned career trajectory (Allin, 2003). For example, in addressing those female outdoor leaders who chose to be mothers, Allin (2004) suggests that "the fragility of women's career identities in the outdoors is evident where mothers struggled to identify a coherent sense of their occupational future" (p. 69).

As with many male-dominated professions, being a female outdoor leader offers different challenges for women choosing to be parents than their male colleagues making the same choice. Having a career that often takes a mother away from her children may make her appear as a negligent mother. After the death of British mountaineer Alison Hargreaves whilst descending K2 in 1995, the media blasted her for being an "unfit parent" because she left behind two kids and a husband and chose to climb (Frohlick, 2006). When male climbers die in mountaineering accidents, there is no mention of them being derelict fathers because of the high-altitude career they have chosen.

In terms of advancement within the outdoor field, Loeffler's (1996a) study on women's involvement in outdoor experiential education careers found that "glass ceilings" for women seeking promotion in the outdoor field were prevalent and difficult to navigate beyond. One of Loeffler's (1995) participants described it this way:

> I have always sought challenge in my work. I eventually felt my head bumping the glass ceiling. After much soul searching and frustration, I decided to leave the organization and move in a new career direction. (p. 28)

Another participant noted that competencies in the outdoor leadership field have traditionally favoured men and that women look to the presence or absence of women in power positions as a measure of organizational climate and commitment to women staff.

For women of colour interested in outdoor leadership, the lack of race/ethnic diversity in the field is concerning and their outdoor education careers might be more community based and concentrated in communities of colour rather than traditional wilderness programme trajectories (Roberts, 1996). Hegemonic views of outdoor adventure based on rugged individualism and risk may not resonate with how women leaders of colour relate to the outdoors (Warren, 2012). Socioeconomic class issues can also challenge women in outdoor leadership. Low pay, training costs, and assumptions of the value of leisure are all class-based barriers that limit women in outdoor leadership professions.

Further, sexual orientation or gender expression harassment can cause leaders to avoid or continually have to negotiate outdoor adventure careers. Spaces in outdoor education environments are often conceptualized along a gender binary with male-female sleeping spaces and bathrooms being the norm. Transgender and gender-variant outdoor leaders are marginalized by this gendering of spaces and attitudinal adherence to a gender binary.

Bell (2008) pointed out that "gendered identities are not 'stable,' but have been changing social effects in Western society that inform everyday experiences. Still contemporary arguments and insights have hardly influenced the literature of outdoor experience" (p. 430). Lesbian outdoor leaders are viewed through the lens of gender transgression by calling into question what might be acceptable behaviour or appearance based on perceived gender or sexual orientation. Over its history, the outdoor adventure field has been slow to relinquish a heteronormative perspective and a gender-binary assumption rooted in practice and principles.

Finally, as outdoor leadership education is one avenue of entry into the profession, it is critical that subtle sexist beliefs and practices embedded in the hidden curriculum of outdoor leadership training be exposed, understood, and eradicated. (Lugg, 2003; Mitten, Warren, Lotz, & d'Amore, 2012).

Nourishing Terrain for Women Outdoor Leaders

In order to support outdoor leadership that values the experiences of women and nonbinary gendered leaders, the contributions of feminist outdoor leadership to the outdoor adventure field need to be considered

(Warren, 2016). The outdoor adventure field has evolved over the years, with feminist philosophies applied in leadership practice being a key motivation for change. These practices include an ethic of care; inclusive, nonconquering language; cooperation and shared leadership; and reliance on conscious choice in participation that eschews subtle influences to conform to facilitator or programme values (Mitten, 1985; Tyson & Asmus, 2008).

> *After grad school I got a job working for an all-women's outdoor organization. I was excited but it was completely foreign to me. During the leadership trip, one thing that stood out for me was the emphasis on language that was inclusive and not dominating. We never conquered anything wilderness related; we experienced it. There was quite a bit of time spent understanding each woman's frame of reference and meeting her where she was, without expectation. We were given opportunities to try out various lessons and received feedback that was encouraging and helpful. There was never a sense of competition; we all had the goal of learning and attaining skills.* (Shelly)

Ultimately, support for women in outdoor professions requires staunch ally support from those with power in the field. An ally is a person from a dominant group who acts in support of those from groups that experience discrimination and oppression. Allyship has the potential to be mutually beneficial to both groups (Edwards, 2006). Male allies can critically interrogate outdoor learning situations for unearned entitlements and work with women for just and equitable systems. They can "see escaping, impeding, amending, redefining, and dismantling systems of oppression as a means of liberating us all" (Edwards, 2006, p. 51).

Strategies to Support Women in Outdoor Leadership Positions

There are many ways to support women in outdoor leadership positions and careers. The strategies below were borrowed and/or adapted from Loeffler (1996a) and Warren and Loeffler (2006), and though many organizations have made significant changes in their organizational climate and structure, there is still much work to be done to support women in outdoor leadership organizations. It's clear that the strategies below, if widely adopted, can create a positive cycle of empowerment and change that may, in turn, lead to further empowerment and change.

Create an organizational climate that supports women employees

Establish and maintain nondiscriminatory employment policies and procedures. Publish sexual and gender harassment policies widely and strongly enforce them. Provide training to all employees in harassment prevention. Pay men and women equally for equal work. Provide a liveable salary. Reduce bravado and macho attitudes in programmes. Focus on creating curriculum and work environments which provide support, are free of harassment, and which dispel stereotypical roles of women and men. Support increased social justice awareness and sensitivity in all programme areas. Provide training in gender-role socialization for all staff. Interrupt derogatory use of gender-based comments that put down women's outdoor experience. Avoid sexism in language by using gender-neutral pronouns, by not calling women girls, and by stopping inappropriate joking and teasing. Give greater credibility to risk management orientations that value prevention of accidents. Consider expanding definitions of adventure and risk to include women's experiences in the outdoors. Assist women in balancing work with family and relationship commitments. Provide day care, staff housing that works for families, parental leave, courses on which parents can include their own children, and flexible scheduling options to support parents. Allow partners to work courses together or have field times that coincide. Give women leaders the opportunity to work in the field with other women leaders.

Actively recruit and encourage women to apply for outdoor leadership positions

Value interpersonal skills as highly as technical skills when hiring. Set up recruiting networks between organizations. Provide scholarships for women to attend instructor-training programmes. Use gender-inclusive marketing to attract more women and girls to attend outdoor leadership programmes. Use the language "technical skills" and "interpersonal, communication, or leadership skills" instead of "hard" and "soft" skills. Publish books and articles by women authors and about women's accomplishments in the outdoors. Encourage and assist women in becoming recognized and visible in national organizations. Find and/or produce literature and popular images that portray women and girls in powerful outdoor situations requiring mechanical manipulation and advanced technical skills. Closely examine the hidden curriculum of outdoor adventure education for subtle messages challenging to women.

Offer skills training in both single-gender and mixed-gender environments

Eliminate territorial sexism by developing an awareness of the position of men and women in the learning environment and attempt to equalize it. Provide outdoor instruction that takes into account women's lack of childhood technical conditioning. Provide pre-teaching or additional support for skills involving spatial ability. Educate staff and participants to recognize gender-role incongruence and internalized gender bias and its effects on women learning technical skills and men learning nurturing leadership skills. Encourage cooperative learning. Provide noncompetitive learning environments where performance pressure is minimized. Give women opportunities for repetitive practice of technical skills. Single-gender training allows women to learn in a safe, nurturing, and harassment-free environment where they feel more comfortable taking risks. Provide a wide variety of professional development opportunities. Provide single-gender courses and learning spaces on mixed-gender courses including advanced technical skill courses. Teach participants to GRAC: a process whereby participants gain, recognize, assess, and claim their competence in a particular area. This can involve providing opportunities for participants to perform tasks on their own as a way to recognize and claim their competency. Encourage instructors to teach subjects outside of their traditional gender roles (e.g., have a male instructor teach baking class whilst a female instructor teaches rock climbing anchor construction).

Hire and promote more women into administrative and executive positions in outdoor leadership organizations

Develop executive training programmes for women. Develop formal and informal mentoring programmes for women at all levels within outdoor organizations. Provide women with role models and mentors by employing female instructors, course leaders, and programme administrators.

Conclusion

Whilst the outdoor leadership field has seen some advances regarding social justice, there is still much change needed for women and sexual/gender minorities leading in the outdoors to experience full equity and inclusion. In talking to our students and colleagues whilst writing this chapter, we were dismayed to hear that some of the same challenges we had faced in our early careers were still in existence. We hope these stories and strategies can further the dialogue so that the terrain of outdoor leadership can include paths to success for women and identity groups who still encounter challenges that range from subtle messages to blatant discrimination.

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16

Telling My Story: Being Female in Outdoor Education in Higher Education

Beth Christie

Introduction

When I was asked to contribute to this book, I pounced. As a female working in outdoor education, I was keen to add my story to this important collection to explain the road that I have travelled, the place I am in now, and comment on how I see the future unfolding. The invitation was fortuitous, as, at that time, I was delving into areas around practitioner enquiry (Drew, Priestly, & Michael, 2016), biographical narrative research (Horsdal, 2012), research as lived experience (van Manen, 1990), and the complexity of identity (Griffiths, 1995). The opportunity to combine these interests through the story of my experience gave grist to my mill. Also, the narrative style of the book spoke to me; I believe there is great potential in personal storytelling as a way of (re) imagining our relationships with one another, both human and nonhuman forms, and I celebrate the act of storytelling as a way of nourishing inter- and intragenerational conversations that work to challenge, rather than simply affirm, the hegemonic discourse of the time. This process of telling, retelling, and shaping as we go reinforces our existence as political beings and reminds us that our stories form part of a bigger narrative, one that persists beyond our individual contribution (Gersie, Nanson, & Schieffelin, 2014). This is

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B. Christie (✉)
Outdoor and Environmental Education, University of Edinburgh,
Edinburgh, Scotland

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important, as if we are to engage in any kind of cultural examination or shift within the broad field of outdoor education, if that is in fact what we aspire to do, then we must understand our situatedness within this deeply political and complex ecology.

> The self I am—the identity I have—is affected by the politics of gender, race, class, sexuality, disability and world justice … the feelings I have, the reasons I recognise, the wants I act upon—they are all deeply political. (Griffiths, 1995, p. 1)

With this chapter, I would like to tell my story as a female, who is a wife, mother, sister, friend amongst other things, carving out her career. By sharing my experience, I hope to shed some light on the competing identities we must hold if we are to flourish in the largely male-dominated field of outdoor education (Wright & Gray, 2013) and higher education (Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016). This chapter is not given with the aim of *solving* the issue but with the hope that by sharing experiences we may come to see ourselves within others' narratives and, in doing so, recognize that the lone voice is not so quiet when it is heard as a collective.

The Process

So far, I've mentioned personal storytelling, autobiography, practitioner enquiry, all terms related to the examination of the self, but the approach I've focused on is "life-narrative" (Griffiths, 1995, p. 56). I turned to life-narrative to make sense of the iterative process or the to-ing and fro-ing between self-reflection and theoretical examination that I became engaged in, which, eventually, gave rise to this chapter. The guiding epistemological position throughout being constructivist in the Gadamerian sense that the individual is always in relation with and for other people (Lawn & Keane, 2011). We are situated beings and so exist in relation to the sociocultural context we inhabit. We cannot remove ourselves from this; therefore, we must acknowledge the influence it exerts and that we can exert upon it.

My understanding of the dialectic between personal experience and theoretical reflection has been influenced by Susan Noffke (1997) and her position that the "public sphere of professionalism and the domain of the personal are also particular manifestations of the political" (p. 306). Her introduction of the "personal, professional and the political" as organizing principles helped me to get underneath the "multiple layers of assumption, purposes and practices that exist" and the messiness I've uncovered within my life-narrative

(Noffke, 2009, p. 8). In other words, they allowed me to (re)imagine how my story could be considered from these linked perspectives. I also found McNiff (2014) helpful, especially her reference to a process of writing for you, for others, and the world. This allowed me to consider to whom I might tell my story and where my voice could lend itself to a bigger conversation. At this point, I consciously likened this process of self-examination as being similar to looking through a kaleidoscope, and I became aware that much of my subconscious, evidenced through my thinking, being, and doing, related to that metaphorical conceptualization. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) claim that “metaphor is not just a matter of language,” rather “human thought processes are metaphorical.” They also suggest that we seek out “personal metaphors to highlight and make coherent our own pasts, our present activities, and our dreams, hopes and goals too” and that self-understanding is “the search for appropriate personal metaphors” (p. 233). Whilst I am still exploring much of Lakoff and Johnson’s writing, their work has encouraged me to examine the way in which I spoke/wrote/thought about myself and how that *thinking* is evidenced within my life-narrative. This process revealed that I view identity as fluid and kaleidoscopic, the point being that the image may alter with each turn but all pieces remain in the frame, so that nothing leaves; we simply bring a change of focus by looking through a specific lens. For example, I may frame my narrative with a particular heading—professional, personal, and political—but my experience isn’t altered as such; rather, it is how I’ve gazed upon it that alters the perspective. My experience remained but the assemblage, or my understanding of that experience, transformed. Much of my writing perpetuates this metaphorical concept.

I’ve structured my story using Noffke’s conceptual framework, albeit a re-ordered version. These headings are offered as signposts for the chapter rather than strict disciplines and as such, the edges are fuzzy and loose; aspects of the professional, personal, and political permeate each experience, as they should.

The Road I Have Travelled: My Background

At secondary school, about age 14, I remember trying to describe the type of work I hoped to go into when I *grew up*. Whilst I don’t remember the exact words, I know I mentioned *the outdoors*, *being active (both physically and politically)*, *working with people and the environment* and *teaching, but not in a classroom*. I’m writing this now, some decades later, employed as a lecturer at the University of Edinburgh, part of a team that focuses on outdoor and environmental education, whose previous and current work has enabled me to work with groups outdoors in a mix of urban and more rural, wilder spaces, from short sessions to day trips and longer residential experiences. Such work has allowed me to engage in conversations with a range of people, from young children to older adults, whose thinking, practice, and passion has challenged and continues to challenge and develop my own. On reflection, I can say that I think I've managed to weave most of my 14-year-old self's imaginings into my life so far. However, as part of this life-narrative process, I wanted to take time to look at this *weaving* in more detail. I wanted to know where my early motivations and desires came from, how have they shaped my work with others within higher education, and how has my embodied experience, in my case as a female, influenced that process. Whilst these three questions are irrefutably linked, I have filtered my attention through the latter, my experience holding a space in outdoor education in higher education as a female.

I have been involved in outdoor education, or outdoor learning as it is more commonly referred to in Scotland (I'll use the terms interchangeably here as I hold no definitional preference), for most of my adult life. In fact, my childhood and early recollections are interspersed with outdoor connections. I can immediately cast my mind back to gardening with my mother, spending time on my auntie's farm, camping trips, hill walking, and kayaking; the *outdoors* has been a constant backdrop in some form or another. I have also been linked to outdoor education within higher education institutions since I began my undergraduate studies in 1994 and then my PhD in 1998. My experiences so far have allowed me to work with children and adults in kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, residential centres, national parks, on rivers and lochs, mountains and hills, in public parks and city streets too; my academic research has been informed by my practice and, so too, my practice has been informed by my research. All aspects are important to me and all have shaped my professional development, in various ways.

One constant throughout this process has been my gender. I cannot separate my female-ness from those experiences and this is often brought to my attention by others—people and contexts—during my work. These moments remind me that my embodied identity, that is, as a gendered and relational self, has shaped my career.

Let me share some of my stories.

The Place I Am in Now: Professional

I teach across a number of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Two years ago, I walked into a class to work with a group of final-year primary education students who had opted into an elective in outdoor learning that I lead. I began the session by introducing myself and providing a little background to my work. Drew, a student, caught my eye. He looked puzzled. I turned to him. The conversation went like this:

Me: *Everything OK, Drew?*
Drew: *I'm confused, so you are 'Christie, B'?!*
Me: *Yes. B for Beth … Beth Christie.*
Drew: *But you're female!*
Me: *Yes.*
Drew: *I'm confused … I always thought when I saw Christie, B as an author that you were male, because you are all blokes in outdoor learning are you not?*
Me: *No, this female is a female.*

We continued with the class. But, his surprise to find a woman writing and teaching in the field of outdoor learning is a stark reminder of the gender imbalance in my own workplace and in the field of outdoor education more generally (Allin, 2004; Humberstone, 2000; Wright & Gray, 2013). Recently, I supervised an MSc Outdoor Education student, Brianne, who was examining the history of the postgraduate programmes that we offer through the Outdoor and Environmental Education section at the University of Edinburgh (Milano, 2015). Her examination took her through the 45-year history of teaching in the institution, collating student demographics, course reports, and interviewing current and past students. She gave me access to her data and I looked at trends relating to female student intake. I considered how gender is raised as an issue in our course reports, the place where we record student feedback and staff reviews. I reflected upon these findings in terms of my own experience. I have been part of this section, as student and staff, formally and informally, for over 20 years, and have gained a good insight into the changing demographics and the workplace culture during that time.

Brianne's work (Fig. 16.1) shows, amongst other things, that since the course records began 45 years ago, the number of female applicants has steadily increased and we are now experiencing a situation where female students outnumber their male counterparts (Milano, 2015, p. 38). One possible explanation for this growth is the expansion of the field, and our programme content, to include not just predominantly male-dominated adventurous activities (Wright & Gray, 2013) but other forms of outdoor learning, too, whether that be in urban locations, community spaces, and more formal educational contexts, for example, school grounds. Certainly, in Scotland, over the past decade, we have seen outdoor learning develop as an approach to

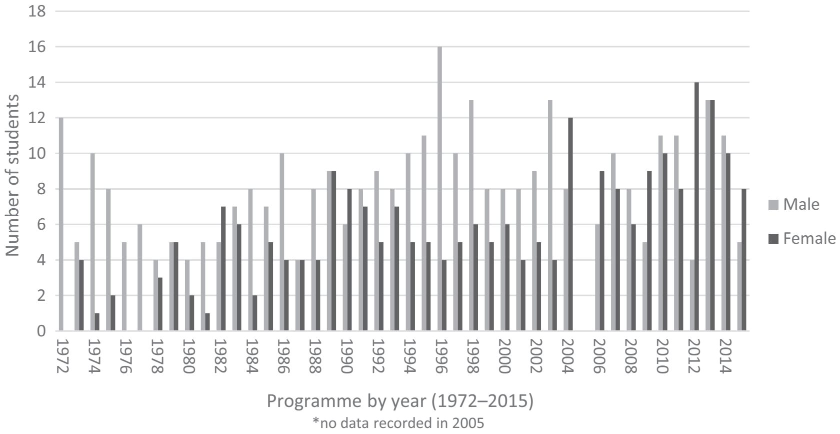

Fig. 16.1 Number of male and female students by year of programme delivery (1972–2015)

delivering our formal curriculum, Curriculum for Excellence, and this is the area where I have increasingly developed my own research and practice (Christie, Beames, & Higgins, 2016).

Milano's research (2015) also revealed that

> as ratios of women participating in the OE [outdoor education] programme have risen, there has been an increasing call [from the student body] for more female lecturers and PDP [professional development programme] instructors to match the ratios of women on the course, as well as setting an example for the profession as a whole. (Milano, 2015, p. 38)

This call has been partly addressed with my own appointment in 2013; however, in terms of full-time lecturing staff, I still remain the only female alongside four male colleagues. The last female lecturer left her position in 2007 and my appointment followed almost a decade later.

On reflection, I am encouraged to see more females entering the programmes, but I share the students' concern that this pattern of growth is not reflected within the lecturing staff. I recognize that there is a double bind at play here, where female staff are not only underrepresented within our discipline but across higher education more generally. Yet the Outdoor and Environmental Education section within the University of Edinburgh sits within a School of Education that has a high proportion of female staff. And, perhaps, it could even be considered a triple bind, that is, unique to the outdoor education profession, as there is an implicit and often explicit demand for a range of technical skills as well as the required academic credentials; *all* applicants can suffer under this impossible wish list.

It is hopeful to witness the increasing number of females entering outdoor education within higher education and this shift can only be positive for gender representation. However, I offer a cautionary note here that we shouldn't simply look to *count more women in* as a marker of redistributive justice or the gender equality end goal. What we need to address is the more complex structural discrimination—existing within such systems—that devalues women's capital and marginalizes their career progression, often going beyond the glass ceiling analogy and reducing women to "incarceration in an identity cage" (Morley, 2013, p. 116). Whilst a more thorough investigation is beyond the scope of this chapter, a contextual awareness of gender challenges within higher education gives nuance to what it means to be an outdoor education lecturer within that particular system.

The Person I Am Becoming: Personal

Let me share another occasion.

In discussion with a male colleague on the way to an outdoor education conference, I was challenged on my authenticity as a *member* of the field. Their comments were *"Don't you feel like a fraud?"* and "*Well, you don't really do this kind of stuff, do you?*" This threw me. I believe I have a good sense of my own self but like others, I do suffer from doubt and am no stranger to questioning my role, my worth, my contribution, and so on; usually this occurs before a major conference or other such occasions. But this was not a product of my insecurity. This was different; it was a colleague making a direct, explicit challenge to my professional and personal identity. It left me hurt and then angry. An uncomfortable silence didn't fill the space. They continued the conversation as normal, as if the question they had asked was as straightforward as *"Do you take sugar in your tea?"* However, the only similarity was in my response: *"No,"* which I resolutely qualified with, *"I do not see myself as a fraud."*

I am aware of impostor phenomenon (Clance & Imes, 1978; Hutchins, 2015) where individuals experience conflicting external and internal experiences of success; externally they are accomplished, but internally they believe they are fooling everyone. One explanation for this identity conflict within high-achieving females, offered by Clance and Imes (1978), stems from early childhood experiences where another sibling, or close relative, is labelled as the *intelligent* one and, indirectly or directly, the other is told they are the sensitive or socially adept one. In my case, I am sister to an older and a younger brother, both of whom are very academic and biddable. I, however, fell into the *spirited* category whose academic prowess was dependent on my mood and my social calendar. I enjoyed being referred to as a *tomboy*, being described as *headstrong*, and I loved exploring my competitive athletic ability through kayaking, climbing, running, and other adventurous activities. Whilst I am not entirely convinced that the impostor phenomenon manifests itself as a consequence of those experiences, what interests me is that the allegedly *problematic* monikers are the very qualities that I have drawn on throughout my outdoor career, that is, the identity that I return to when I question where I fit, when I don't see another like me in the field, the classroom, or the conference hall.

Interestingly, when I worked as a park ranger I saw these identities called into question continuously, largely dependent on who I was with and the context in which we met. During my work, I drove a 4×4 and a minibus, often towing a full canoe trailer behind those vehicles. I worked outdoors teaching environmental education, windsurfing, kayaking, and sailing. I drove and maintained powerboats and I carried out heavy maintenance and conservation tasks. My friends (who don't work in the field) saw this as largely masculine work and I remember being described as *boyish*. I had rough hands, short hair, and was often turning up to social occasions with scrapes on my arms and bruises. However, that same summer, I remember a female colleague, who worked closely with me, judging me on my physicality and appearance, suggesting I was *too precious* as I was smaller in height and stature than her, and *too girly* as I shaved my legs and painted my toenails. I only paint my toenails to hide their real colour, which is usually different shades of black from marathon running, but my colleague never asked why. She just assumed she knew my motive. This experience left me confused and very aware that a particular quality, or perhaps more correctly my identity, could be viewed as incongruent depending on who was looking in and where they were looking from.

Such assumptions around male and female capabilities and normative stereotyping reinforce the traditional binary system around gender roles: such framing is suffocating and rarely freeing. It seems that women in outdoor education pose transgressive challenges to deeply embedded gender stereotypes both within the field of outdoor education and within society more generally. Such provocation can be posed by anyone, of any gender, who does not conform to the group norm and/or does not fit a particular gender script. In my case, the tension I have experienced highlights the liminality or incongruence between female social identity and the normative, masculinized identity of an outdoor educator, and indeed the identity of an academic. Morley (2013) suggested that managing one's identity in this way, that is, navigating "discrimination and other people's negativity" can lead to additional and energy-sapping workloads (p. 124). I would agree.

I have come to realize that others' conflicting perceptions of my ability and some of the challenges levelled at my competence stem from where the gaze is cast, rather than being driven by the identity that I hold. Griffiths (1995, p. 93) offers a way forward here. She states that "self-identity is to be understood as a kind of web, the construction of which is partly under guidance from the self though not in its control." And Taylor and Coia (2009) offer support by suggesting that one's understanding of self is in constant flux as we grow, develop, and change. Here I return to my earlier kaleidoscope metaphor and the continual alternating, shifting, and repositioning of oneself throughout the life course where, as Griffiths (1995, p. 93) summarizes, "plurality is the norm, rather than the exception."

Shifting Identities

As a PhD student, I juggled motherhood, part-time work, and my fledgling research career, but I struggled to feel able to maintain an identity within any of those spheres. I struggled to juggle the days I needed to spend on the water and the hill to gain enough experience to turn my trainee instructor statuses into full qualifications. I struggled to spend enough time in the mother and baby groups to qualify with full motherhood status. I struggled to spend enough time in the university where I held a part-time position to feel like I truly had an employee status. I struggled to share in the experiences of my fellow PhD students, as I dipped in and out of my studies. During that time, my attention was constantly turning to each aspect of my life but never resting long enough to feel satisfied or part of any particular group.

I recognize that I made the decision to place my family above my career, so building a stable home and being present was core to my son and daughter's early upbringing. Despite studying and now working in Edinburgh, I chose to live two hours further north in a small coastal town so that my children could have a rural lifestyle and live close to both sets of grandparents.

This lifestyle choice came at a cost, the biggest being the progress of my practical outdoor career and the most constant being my four-hour round trip to work. This *cost* was felt most acutely when I was called a *"fraud"* for not *"doing the hard stuff."* That *"hard stuff"* was delivering the practical outdoor skills to our students; this was the one plate I couldn't spin fast enough. How could I justify more time away from my family to cultivate my practical skills, whilst at the very time I was pursuing these qualifications, I was juggling the other roles I already held: wife, mother, academic, and so on? Other female outdoor educators in similar positions have shared their stories; for example, Allin (2000) considered the significance of childbirth and pregnancy in her life-history work on women outdoor educators, highlighting the complexities that exist when making such a lifestyle-changing choice. These choices are not easy, nor are they made lightly.

I chose to pull back on the time spent away from home. I was already following a PhD that required me to spend a lot of time in a residential outdoor centre working alongside instructors, researching the relationship between informal and formal educational contexts and the developmental opportunities that exist therein. Following my PhD, I chose to move towards the formal educational context and consider curricular opportunities for outdoor education. This came at a time when the Scottish curriculum was undergoing revision and the emerging framework offered a greater opportunity for such embedding. Increasingly, outdoor learning has become recognized as spanning a range of contexts, including school grounds, local and urban places, more remote and wild spaces, and residential and expedition experiences. Yet this questioning or claiming of outdoor education as one specific doctrine only defined by the *"hard stuff"* limits what it can and should be. Such monochromatic visioning stems from an outdated, anthropocentric, male-dominated view of what *counts* and what doesn't, where legitimacy is awarded through physicality, the toughness of the approach, and the severity of the conditions. This view still exists within the field and it is problematic in terms of gender inclusivity for two reasons. First, teaching and education largely comprises female professionals (Mistry & Sood, 2016) and, second, the *"hard stuff"* is not frequently called upon in those spaces. Rather, most curriculum-linked outdoor learning happens in school grounds and local spaces, negating the need for technical mastery.

The Future Unfolding: Political

How I view myself and how others view me are two questions that form a difficult relationship. Griffiths (1995) writes about wanting and not wanting to belong. She provides a helpful account of the personal examination process she undertook to adequately untangle, or at least understand, the network of political and contextual factors that contribute to the *web of identity*. I do not have time or space to do justice to a similar investigation here. However, I can say that my identity is shaped by my view of myself as a mother, a wife, a daughter, a friend, a sister, an aunt, a lecturer, a runner, a walker, a skier, a snowboarder, a traveller … the list continues. But, what is important here is not so much how I view myself but how others view me and how they construct those views. My identity is fluid. Its construction is a collective process whereby I am in as much control as the political dimensions, both the material and the social, that structure the circumstances in which I exist.

Following my research, that is the critically reflexive life-narrative process I have been through, I contend that our identities are mutually constructed and not simply reducible to *given* or taken-for-granted gender characteristics. Morley (2013) is useful here as she writes that it is "the gendered world itself that represents the problem, not simply the exclusion of women or the existence of the male norm" (p. 126). Therefore, we need to get at the structural processes that perpetuate these gendered views as ultimately, they permeate the field and become the culture of our profession. This is not a revelation; it is a constant theme.

Almost two decades ago, Humberstone (2000) made a similar point, stating that "it cannot be assumed that the 'outdoor industry' in all its constituents has not been touched in some way by dominant ideologies" (p. 26). To progress, we (all genders) need to hold our own practice up to the mirror and interrogate ourselves as part of the cultural construction that is defining our profession. This critically reflexive process encourages us all to interrogate our practice—and the circumstances in which we practice—an act that will ultimately move the field forward beyond operating in a state of unquestioned acceptance. Such questioning, and sharing of the questioning process through our stories, is important as acceptance perpetuates the hegemonic discourse.

It was my aim to share one such reflective life-narrative process in this chapter, through my own story.

Closing Comment

I remember when my children (son and daughter) were younger, we read together, often. We still do. One of the books that I bought for them, and for me, was titled *Not One Damsel in Distress: World Folktales for Strong Women*. It brings together tales of strong women who challenge the dominant male narrative in their respective cultures by offering authentic stories where girls don't need to be rescued; rather, they rescue themselves or come to others' rescue. Jane Yolen brought the collection together for her daughter and granddaughters, not to offer heroines or *sheroes*, a term introduced by Maya Angelou (Ventura, 1998), but to introduce "regular sword-wielding, spear-throwing, villain-stomping, rescuing-type heroes who also happen to be female" (Yolen, 2000, p. xi).

Yolen's daughter and granddaughters responded to her collection saying:

> we need this book to remind ourselves that girls heroes have always been around, hidden away … these great stories need a shaking out every so often, like some old camp blanket that's been packed away all year. And boys need to read it, too. Because while we know girls can be heroes, the boys need to know it even more. (Yolen, 2000, p. 103)

This response stirred me. Within outdoor education, we need to shake out our own camp blanket, share the past stories, and encourage new ones to be told. I've read that the "most captivating stories are the ones that help us understand better what is common, most taken-for-granted and concerns us most ordinarily and directly" (van Manen, 1990, p. 19). Often the narrative of the female outdoor educator is not the dominant discourse. We are not common in the field. We don't always fit the gender script, and so our voice, whilst strong, is not heard above, or equal to, the male storyline. Therefore, we need to strengthen our collective voice by reminding ourselves and others (all genders) of the backstory, which existed when we entered the field and persists by shaping our everyday experiences. But in doing so we must remember that we are not powerless, as much as we struggle to fit the shape that exists, for our actions, as we live them, can alter the landscape for those entering the field in the future; their starting point does not need to feel similar to ours. I hope it doesn't.

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17

The Intangible Assets of Women as Leaders in Bush Adventure Therapy

Fiona Cameron

Background

In the early 1990s, I incidentally came across using the outdoors as a medium for therapeutic intervention with young people experiencing difficult life circumstances. I was employed as a youth justice case manager at a non-government organization in a regional town in Victoria, Australia, which was my first job since completing a social work degree. A programme then funded through Drug Services Victoria, namely The Outdoor Experience (TOE), approached my organization to offer a journey-style outdoor programme for youth justice clients. TOE cofacilitated wilderness programmes for small groups of young people selected by the agency. The youth justice case managers participated in all aspects of the programmes, being engaged as "support workers" for the young people given that they already had established relationships and could continue with post-programme support. Having a personal passion for the outdoors and an interest in adventure sports, I immediately agreed to accompany some of my clients on these programmes, which included a seven-day bush walk across the Bogong High Plains of Victoria and a five-day rock-climbing expedition to Mount Arapiles. I succinctly recall thinking "this is how we need to work with young people" due to the depth of the relationships that I established with participants, the

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F. Cameron (✉)
Surrey Hills North, VIC, Australia

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positive changes I witnessed in the young people, and the connections I saw the participants made with their bodies, their surroundings, and with each other regarding community and a sense of belonging. I thought such progress would take months or years to establish through traditional forms of counselling and office-based interventions. I have since become aware of research and evidence that supports such propositions (Australian Association for Bush Adventure Therapy [AABAT], 2013; Davis-Berman & Berman, 1994; Pryor, 2003; Russell, Hendee, & Phillips-Miller, 2000), but at that time I was just starting out in the field of social work and continued my focus on consolidating such traditional methods of intervention with young people.

As time passed, whilst I was pursuing my social work career focusing on youth justice, drug and alcohol, and mental health, TOE received a grant to employ a "wilderness therapist" and to subsequently develop a model of "wilderness therapy" incorporating a variety of principles and approaches such as

- experiential learning
- outdoor education
- deep ecology
- adventure education
- adventure therapy
- outward bound
- social work
- harm minimization
- narrative-, family-, and strength-based therapies
- wilderness therapy
- informed decision-making/"challenge by choice"
- adventure as safe risk-taking
- healing power of wilderness
- transparency
- process-oriented
- motivational interviewing. (TOE, 2010)

The programme evolved into a 6-week "core" model revolving around a 12-day/11-night extended wilderness journey, based on the acceptance of and group selection from individual referrals from a broader premise of young people experiencing issues with alcohol and/or other drugs. TOE also continued with the cofacilitated community-based programmes but the focus had turned to the core programme of wilderness therapy (now called bush adventure therapy [BAT]).

Fig. 17.1 My first all-female TOE programme—Soul Sisters

Paralleling the developments at TOE the field of BAT in Australia was also growing (AABAT, 2013). This is where my personal story intercepts.

Fast forward to the year 2004, and after returning from working with Indigenous young people in Far North Queensland, I relocated to Victoria and gained a job in a youth justice-funded programme with Jesuit Social Services. By this time, TOE had become part of Jesuit Social Services and I was intent on learning more about BAT and becoming involved with what was an innovative and inspiring programme. I commenced a Masters in Experiential Learning and gained a position at TOE as the wilderness therapist. Shortly afterwards, I gained the position of TOE coordinator and I recall sitting in my back garden one night, looking up at the stars and thinking, "What do you do when you have gained that ideal job of which you always dreamt, but never knew actually existed?" I soon realized that for me, BAT was/is not just a professional pursuit but a holistic approach to life and that being a "leader" in this field was/is not about a job but a way of being (Fig. 17.1).

Definition of a Leader

In terms of BAT, the term "leader" may not be so conducive given the nature and intent of BAT programmes (Pryor, Carpenter, & Townsend, 2005). Additionally, many BAT practitioners may define themselves as "facilitators" or their job title may include words such as “therapist” or “educator.” This is not unique to BAT, as it is a theme throughout outdoor leadership research (Ringer, 1999; Smith, 2011) and general leadership literature (Daft, 2005; Landis, Hill, & Harvey, 2014). However, for the purposes of this chapter, the term “leader” is used to encompass the staff employed to facilitate BAT programmes. The stories are about a range of female staff with a variety of backgrounds, including outdoor education, outdoor recreation, experiential education, adventure therapy, social work, psychology, teaching, and youth work, but all have been in leadership positions on BAT programmes. The stories are about women who have been leaders on all-female programmes, mixed-gender programmes, all-male programmes, and with mixed-gender leadership teams. Where relevant, the gender of the group and/or colleagues is highlighted as this obviously impacts the context and discussion.

The Basics

In order to be a leader on a BAT programme, a woman requires the qualifications, knowledge, and skills to fulfil her job description. Building on Priest and Gass’ (2005) description of skills needed in leading outdoor programmes, (see Jordan 2018 for a critique of using the terms hard and soft skills) a more holistic approach has been developed, especially when focusing on the therapeutic intent of many programmes (Smith, 2011; Thomas, 2008) and BAT programmes have incorporated a more integrated framework. Such a list can be exhaustive depending on the activity, the group, the individuals, the style of programme, the specific role of the leader, plus the countless incidents and unexpected situations that can occur on a programme. So, checklist number one is to consult with the job description and programme requirements and ensure that the leader has the necessary knowledge and basic skills to undertake her role.

The complexity of being a female leader on BAT programmes arises in a nontangible set of traits, characteristics, and approaches. Gender has to play an important role, particularly as the typified outdoor leader characteristics to be “admired” are male dominant (Bell, 1996; Hoffert, 2008; Humberstone, 2000; Warren, 2002). Based on the thesis written by Smith (2011) about outdoor leadership, we should all strive to be extraordinary leaders. However, due to the often-unassuming nature of many BAT practitioners and perhaps an Australian cultural slant on modesty, I opt to not use descriptive words and simply refer to “leader” in the BAT field with the assumption that this incorporates a level above effective and competent. I am aware that I cannot divorce myself from my individual belief system, cultural context, and other influences, and so I have chosen to use language with which I am comfortable and which I believe resonates with my peers and colleagues in the field.

Collaboration

The first concept I wish to identify as significant for women as leaders on BAT programmes is collaboration. I realized (in hindsight) that before I even started to write this chapter, I approached a number of female colleagues in the field. I asked for their opinions around leadership in the BAT field and whether they thought it differed for females and males. The strongest theme that emerged from all responses was collaboration. One quote that stood out for me was, “I know many collaborative women. I don’t know that many truly collaborative fellas [men] … somehow the need to be visibly responsible and in control increases the need to be a leader. I am not sure it is ego driven as much as a gender based trait.” This may relate to the historical male-dominated traits of outdoor leaders and the emphasis on male qualities such as physical strength and adventure pursuits. Perhaps it is also based on the stereotypical man who is attracted to work in the outdoor field or is it a reflection of our historical cultural discourse of men as leaders and women as mediators and nurturers? Much literature on leadership styles highlights the feminist attribute of “relational” leadership and the emphasis that women place on collaboration (Chin, 2007; Hoffert, 2008; Regan & Brookes, 1995).

In the context of BAT programmes, “the action of working jointly with someone on an activity or project” (collaboration), as cited by the Oxford Dictionary (Simpson & Weiner, 1989), is not always possible in all situations (e.g., a crisis where an immediate response is required). Collaboration can also be difficult to maintain over long periods in situations when people’s physical, emotional, and psychological resources are stretched. Collaboration requires a balance of power and the programme example below demonstrates how to set the groundwork for collaboration in such challenging times.

Best practice would specify that a BAT programme involves two or more leaders and the need to work collaboratively with each other is paramount. The leaders may be from the same organization or from different organizations, as highlighted in TOE cofacilitated programmes. When working with young people who exhibit challenging behaviours and may have a range of difficult life circumstances, the need for staff to work as a tight team and to truly integrate is of utmost importance for the positive therapeutic and learning outcomes of participants and to maintain the “sanity” of staff. The staff team needs to operate as “one,” particularly where individual participants may have the susceptibility to play staff off against each other. I have witnessed a few all-female teams of three BAT leaders at TOE working extremely effectively with small groups of four to eight female participants who were experiencing comorbid mental health issues and alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues. With such participants, taking them away on a 12-day/11-night BAT journey requires abstinence from AOD, which subsequently often amplifies their mental health concerns. Some examples of true collaboration from these programmes include the following:

- The pre-programme phase of ten single-day group sessions was collaboratively developed and jointly facilitated amongst the three leaders. End-of-day debriefing amongst the leadership team set the tone for collaboration throughout the journey aspect of the programme where everyone’s opinions and ideas were valued.
- The roles, expectations, and responsibilities of each leader were clearly articulated and each maintained their boundaries. Although one leader was the trained therapist and the other two were outdoor educators, they worked succinctly together to meet the needs of individuals and the group. For example, a participant not always chooses to engage with or disclose to the trained therapist. In circumstances where a participant identified with or put their “therapeutic” trust in one of the outdoor educators, each would consult with the therapist to ensure the therapist could still maintain her responsibility to hold the emotional and psychological well-being of participants. Collaboratively, the staff team worked together towards best approaches to support participants. Full credit is to be given to all three leaders who were open and honest about their own knowledge, skills, and capacity, when to engage, how far to take certain conversations, and when it was time to hand over to a colleague. Similar situations occurred where the therapist had to defer to her colleagues, especially with a medical emergency and various first-aid interventions. Each leader respected her colleagues and the team constantly communicated and consulted with each other as to who was best positioned to deal with certain events.
- A specific example of true collaboration was quite an extreme circumstance but worthy of retelling. The group were sitting around the fireplace on the first night. Leader 1 (therapist) had gone to her tent to write up notes for the day when sometime later, Leader 2 (outdoor educator) came over and said she believed that one of the participants was experiencing the onset of mental health issues as “her laughter and character had changed.” Leader 1 had conducted an extensive pre-programme interview with this participant

and was aware of her mental health concerns and diagnoses. Leader 3 was in charge of carrying and dispensing all medications, including pro re nata "PRN" (emergency medication) in the event of a psychotic episode.[1] Leader 1 went across to the group at the fireplace and tried to engage with the participant but quickly assessed that the participant was in fact beginning to "disassociate." The three leaders subtly moved away from the group to discuss the situation and they agreed that PRN medication needed to be dispensed as soon as possible. Amongst them, they came up with the plan that Leader 2 would ask the other girls to help collect firewood, whilst Leader 1 and 3 would talk with the participant and tell her they were going to give her PRN as they believed she was not "travelling so well." She was compliant, but the leaders soon realized that the participant was much further past the stage she had previously identified as when she would ask for her PRN medication (e.g., the moon was talking to her and telling her to kill people, she could see a crowd of people in the (deserted) campground, including the devil and the perpetrator of her abuse amongst them). Knowing the PRN would take 30 minutes to be effective, Leader 1 and 3 walked away with the participant and nurtured and comforted her in the midst of her hallucinations. Leader 1 kept asking the participant certain questions that would give them an indication of when the medication was taking effect and the participant was lucid. Meanwhile, Leader 2 looked after the rest of the group through distraction of collecting firewood but answered honestly without breaching confidentiality to allay their fears about what was happening.

- For me, the importance of Leader 2's role is often overlooked, as often everyone feels the need or wants to get involved with the crisis and leaders are drawn to "take control," but often the rest of the group requires information and placation. This example demonstrates true collaboration amongst the three leaders with an emphasis on consultation and communication, everyone knowing and staying within the confines of their job roles, and the emotional safety of all participants being considered and supported.

The importance of collaboration amongst the leaders was summarized by this particular participant who later said, "If that had happened at home, I would have been shackled up and taken off to the psych ward. I now know, with the right supports, I can manage my mental health." If the leaders had had that option available, it might well have been implemented; however, this example demonstrates how leader collaboration was the only option for successful outcomes.

Be Real! Authentic Relationships with Participants

In order to work effectively with young people in any context one needs to be "real" but especially when working on BAT programmes where the leader is often spending multiple days and nights with participants. Taking into consideration the constant 24/7 interactions, the potential, perceived, and real risks involved, plus the overlay of constant learning and therapeutic opportunities, BAT leaders often develop a broader and deeper level of trust with participants. BAT programmes are shared experiences where participants are taking risks, sharing, and journeying with each other; they, and at times staff, feel emotionally, mentally, and physically exposed. In order to establish trust and build such deep relationships, the leader needs to be authentic and I often use the term "genuinely curious" about participants' histories, stories, thoughts, feelings, hopes, dreams, goals, and ideas (Fig. 17.2).

A prime example of the relationship established between a leader and a young woman who had experienced significant drug issues and extensive mental health concerns highlights the importance of the leader's authenticity and honesty. This participant was intelligent and highly insightful, with a very astute "bullshit metre." At TOE, pre-programme interviews were conducted with all prospective participants from whom a selection was made based on a number of factors. The process was twofold: first, to assess each individual's suitability for the programme (goals, ability, motivations) and second, to try to select a cohort of individuals who could effectively "fit" together as a group. This particular young woman had previously applied for programmes but she

Fig. 17.2 Participant reflection

had been deemed unsuitable due to various factors. At one time, her physical well-being was assessed as unsuitable due to a number of recent physical injuries. Another time, staff had assessed that her mental health issues were so severe that it could be unsafe to take her out in the bush and/or her impact on the group could be detrimental to other participants. All of these were very valid points in the process. Take note if you are ever involved in group selection.

A new leader had joined the team with extensive experience working with young people with mental health issues, who underpinned her work with a narrative perspective and collaborative approach but had limited experience in formal outdoor training. During the initial interview, the leader managed to get the participant to identify in her own words stages 1–4 of the onset of her dissociative states, such as physical symptoms, feelings, thoughts, behaviours, and involuntary movements (for staff to notice), and then to describe what she had previously found helpful at each stage ("holding my hand to keep me grounded," "don't keep talking at me," focusing on something tangible like a map, PRN medication, or "call a chopper to evacuate" at the most extreme). After lengthy discussions and debate, the staff team agreed to accept this young woman onto the programme and each one's roles and responsibilities were clearly identified. As it happened, there were a number of incidents. These included on Day 2, one of the leaders noticing certain behaviours described by the participant which she relayed to Leader 1 (keeping to role clarification), who then took a hold of the participant's hand, as agreed. However, the participant then began to run, carrying a 20 kg backpack, and the leader subsequently had to run along with her, so tight was the grip. When the participant had finally exhausted herself (and the leader was nearly on her knees), they stopped and the leader got out a map for the participant to study. With time, patience, and understanding, the "episode" was managed effectively. Another example occurred each night when the participant asked the leader, "What do you think about me today?" and the leader had to balance assessment with compassion and diplomacy whilst also voicing genuine concerns. As outlined in Smith's (2011) thesis around the need for authentic leadership and spiritual leadership in outdoor programmes, such qualities of leading with the head, heart, body, and soul could not be more valid than when working with this particular participant. The significance of the leader's authenticity here is multifaceted: she had the confidence based on knowledge, experience, and the relationship with the young person to offer appropriate and effective support; she knew her capacity but relied on her intuition at times; she was able to assess at an intellectual and emotional level that trusted the participant's ability to identify and articulate detailed signs and symptoms

Fig. 17.3 Head, heart, body, and soul

of increasing mental health episodes; and the leader skilfully engaged her head, heart, body, and soul in a holistic approach to support the participant (Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005) (Fig. 17.3).

The leader was also open to saying "I don't know" at times with this participant and suggesting ways of working things out together (collaboration). For example, one strategy developed during the programme when the participant felt a sudden onset of symptoms, sometimes to the stage of almost not being able to speak. Following a stage 3 episode, the leader and the participant devised a code between themselves which effectively meant the participant required her PRN medication immediately, as she was adamant that she did not want the other group members to know the extent of her mental health crisis. It was quite simple: the PRN medication was a type that made the skin more sensitive to sunburn and so the participant was able to force out the words "purple top" from which the leader knew she needed her long-sleeved shirt to wear, which meant she required her PRN.

A contention often raised concerning authenticity is the issue of leader self-disclosure. Given the therapeutic context of BAT programmes, and the challenging participants with whom we work, my approach is to try to avoid personal disclosure as far as possible. Obviously, to engage in conversations, to establish trust and depth of the relationship, and to spend extended time with others in the bush, a leader needs to have an element of personal investment to be authentic. At the same time, she also needs to be aware of the potential consequences of self-disclosure and to be constantly mindful that it is a "therapeutic setting" for participants. Any self-disclosure must be justifiable as beneficial to the young person/participants. I recall overhearing a leader relaying stories to a group of female participants about the various places she had travelled overseas and all the things she had done. The young women were listening with a kind of "wow" look on their faces, but it soon became obvious to me that these stories were actually giving the leader a superiority status and a sense of admiration from the participants. I question what "learning" the participants might have had or what therapeutic intent was behind the storytelling. Whilst I agree there can be a message of "anything is possible" and "there's a big world out there," this leader was the same age as some of the participants and had come from a privileged background, having resources on hand that the participants could not have imagined. Effectively, it created more of an expanse between her and the group rather than bridging any gaps. It also took away from participant-focused discussions.

Often when participants ask questions about the leader's personal life, it is simply to create conversation and to be "friendly" (but remember, leaders are not there to be friends with participants and are not there to be "liked" or "admired," although this can make the job easier). At the risk of sounding cynical, such questions from participants can create a sense of personal relationship that can then be used against the leader or can be detrimental to the therapeutic relationship. I know that some schools of thought will disagree with this contention about self-disclosure. I am not saying a leader should lie or be inauthentic, but there are strategies for deflection or ways to turn a conversation around to refocus on the participant. In the above example, if the participant had asked if she had ever been overseas, the leader could have replied, "Yes, I've travelled a fair bit, but if you could go anywhere in the world, where would you choose to go?" This can then be followed up with "Why?" leading to wonderful exploratory discussions, which can then take many tangents. I can almost guarantee that the conversation will continue with a participant-centred focus rather than leader-centred focus. Authenticity has not been compromised and the young person's sense of the relationship will have strengthened as the leader has shown genuine interest and curiosity about the participant's thoughts, hopes, fears, and dreams.

Obviously, there are more sensitive issues and questions that participants will ask leaders on BAT programmes, such as "Have you ever taken drugs?" Again, some leaders will reply honestly about their history, as there can definitely be learning for participants in such stories and a sense of empathy and understanding of what they are going through. Likewise, for similar reasons as above, some leaders may disclose their own experiences of trauma or past/

current mental health issues. However, I believe this is fraught with risk for the leader and the participant, adding a level of complexity to the relationship that needs to be managed very skillfully. No one's experience is the same as another's. I have seen that a leader's experience, interpretation, or way of dealing with a situation has actually taken away from the participant's experience or problem-solving capacity. However, this is my opinion and my approach to practice. I can only emphasize that the leader needs to be very skilled and experienced if she chooses to follow the alternative approach.

On the flipside, a heart-warming example of where I have seen self-disclosure work well was on an all-female programme and one leader mentioning to her colleague that it was her wedding anniversary of nearly 20 years. One of the participants overheard and was amazed that she could have stayed married for so long. The participant proceeded to ask a range of questions about love, marriage, and sexual relationships. The experienced and skilful leader answered honestly about concepts such as compromise, respect, realistic expectations, and the changing nature of love, companionship, intimacy, and sex as people and relationships age over time. The other participants were slowly drawn to the conversation and an enlightening, open, and honest discussion ensued around respectful relationships.

In most instances, I believe it is "safer" to deflect (e.g., "I'd rather hear about your experience" and follow up with a question or "Would it make a difference to you if I had?" and "Why?" and then carry on this vein of conversation). However, the marriage example highlights how some disclosure can be turned around to encourage valuable and inspiring participant-centred learning. The danger arises when a leader is carried away in conversation (and this has happened to most of us at some point or another) due to our role in BAT programmes where we are sharing and experiencing together. Just remember, any self-disclosure from a leader needs to have a conscious therapeutic intent for the participant, which can be explained and justified.

Another "trap" that leaders can fall into through conversation without realizing the possible detrimental effects is when participants ask about previous programmes, journeys, or groups with which they have worked. Obviously, a leader wants participants to have faith in their knowledge and experience and so will often refer to such instances. However, there is a balance between being "real" and authentic and the risk of overshadowing the current experience. For example, participants might often ask, "Are we the best/worst group you've ever had?" It is important for them to have some reference point but they do not need/want to hear stories about other groups unless there is some direct relevance or learning linked to their current experience. Likewise, I have heard leaders casually talking amongst themselves about "last time we were here" or "remember that programme when such and such happened." Whilst validating our knowledge, experience, and capacity as leaders, we also need to remember that this is usually new for the current participants and we do not want to detract from their experience by being "too" honest about our previous experiences. To remain authentic in the excitement, newness, and wonder of a place and programme often means a leader needs to be able to tap into something internal and not become "bored" or nonchalant, which ideally leads onto the next theme.

Passion for Nature and the Outdoors

Having previously been personally involved in adventure sports, I have seen a number of people participating because they thought it was "cool" or there was some perceived status attributed to involvement. In reality, however, those people were petrified and did not really seem to enjoy the actual activity. I think this can sometimes be said in connection with being a leader on a BAT programme, particularly where females can be seen as "hard core," daring, and adventurous. In line with authenticity, however, a leader needs to have a deep passion for their work environment as this will impact the participants' experiences, learning and connection with nature and the environment.

In some cofacilitated programmes, I have had to "manage" the behaviours of leaders from other organizations who were obviously uncomfortable in the outdoors. I recall one leader saying to me, "Well, if the participants know that I am cold and wet and tired, then they will feel okay to say the same." Yes, perhaps—but it is the delivery of the message. We all experience challenges on BAT programmes, but a leader needs to be aware of the negativity she can impose on a group. Likewise, as mentioned above, a leader who is "bored" of the same route or activity or a leader who gets "destination fixation" or who is "not present" through being distracted by her own personal issues can be detrimental to the experiences of the participants. A leader needs to have a genuine passion for the outdoors, appreciate the health benefits of nature (Parks Victoria, 2014), and be able to immerse herself in the experience. Either through intentional interactions and activities that highlight the surrounding environment or through a kind of osmosis, a leader's own passion (or lack thereof) for nature and the outdoors will greatly impact the participants' experiences and relationships with their natural environment.

Not every woman who becomes a leader on a BAT programme has an understanding of the complexities involved, and generally, she will not know until she engages in a programme. I think if we are honest, we have all felt a certain sense of discomfort or "fear" at some stage in some situation in the outdoors. Our comfort levels are not always static and our passion for the outdoors can certainly waver during a programme. Memorable moments for me as a leader have been walking along a steep side of a mountain covered in snow, carrying a heavy pack and slipping down sideways with every step; off-track bushwalking and having a "dry" night, aware that we had strayed off course and having to place my trust in the other leaders who were much more experienced and knowledgeable about reading maps and navigation; and being caught in a violent storm on an open beach and having to manage my own fear along with supporting two participants experiencing severe anxiety attacks—just to name a few (Fig. 17.4).

The importance here relates back to my previous points about leaders working collaboratively to support each other and the group and of being authentic and honest but remaining calm and remembering that participants are the priority. It is also then about how we process and reflect upon that experience, how it can in fact enhance our passion for the outdoors, our connection with nature, and our respect for the natural environment and all its elements, and how it can increase our own self-efficacy in assessing and managing risk.

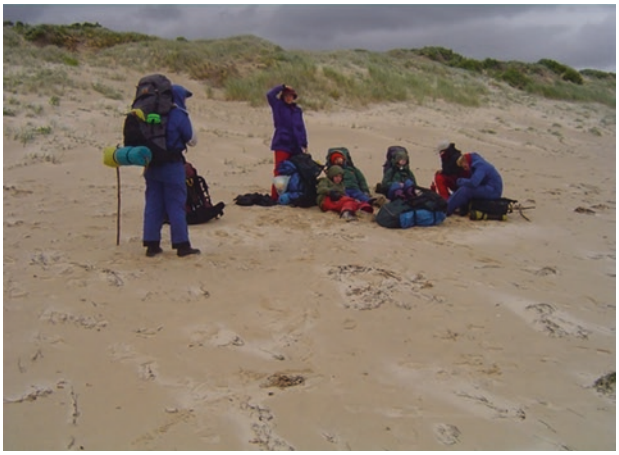

Fig. 17.4 Sitting out the storm

Intentional Role Modelling from a Feminist Perspective

Women as leaders on BAT programmes are in a unique position as role models. As highlighted by Humberstone (2000): "Through the construction of sets of binaries, masculinity became associated with science, rationality, objectivity and culture, whilst femininity became equated with emotionality, subjectivity, irrationality and nature" (p. 23). Such discourses are still present in our society and thus, women outdoor leaders are already challenging the stereotypical traits. We need to be aware of this, particularly in contrast to many female role models that some participants (male and female) may have as reference points in their lives. Historically, male constructs are typified as strong and adventurous whereas female constructs reflect nature and nurture. This can work to the female leader's advantage or disadvantage and so leaders need to be conscious of how they are perceived by each participant on each programme. I have seen a mixed-gender team of leaders where some participants inadvertently defer to the female leader as the "nurturer." The most important point here is not to challenge this for the sake of challenging but to assess the individual or group needs and then to adopt roles accordingly. I am not necessarily a natural nurturer in a professional context; however, I have been on BAT programmes with male participants whose mistrust of male adults was so strong due to histories of trauma that I had to adopt the primary role of "nurturer." Whilst the two male leaders on this programme were constantly subtlety challenging the preconceived ideas of male adults by being caring, compassionate, and gentle in their approaches, as a female, I was deemed less threatening and more trustworthy with emotional vulnerability. In contrast, with this same team of leaders, at times we managed to overtly challenge stereotypes and consciously swap gender roles. For workers in the BAT field, men doing yoga or talking about the serenity of nature, and women leading a rock-climbing expedition, carrying the heavy packs, or collecting firewood, might seem "normal"; however, we need to be conscious that these are genuine teachable moments that offer prime opportunities for challenging stereotypes and implementing positive role modelling.

Another example of intentional role modelling in which women as BAT leaders can capitalize is around language. Levi (1995) discusses the cultural practice of many derogatory terms being gender based, such as "stop being such a girl" when someone is perceived as performing half-heartedly, or is upset, or crying. This is not unique to male-gendered programmes. It often extends into all-female programmes where we risk not being as diligent in addressing such comments. There is also the cultural acceptance that "boys will be boys" and we cannot deny that many of our male (and some female) counterparts as BAT leaders are not exempt from this. On a number of occasions, I have overheard male participants "teasing" each other with reference to homosexuality, sexual innuendo, talking derogatorily about women, and such like. Other male leaders have sometimes been present but have not necessarily been sensitive to the connotations or tuned into the conversations. At times, I am sure female leaders have also not noticed this. Recently, social-networking campaigns have been attempting to address the implicit nature of such language (Titan Man, 2014; Care Norway, 2015), and it is of vital importance from a feminist perspective to make this type of language and behaviour totally unacceptable.

Self-Awareness

Underpinning all of the above points, as leaders on BAT programmes, women require a deep level of self-awareness. This not only means clarity of your own personal belief system (Priest, Gass, & Gillis, 2000) but knowing your biases and judgements and how these have been influenced by your own life experiences. Understanding your own cultural context and how this intercepts with and/or differs from those of participants and colleagues is also important. Self-awareness means being conscious of all of these but not allowing them to negatively impact your role as a leader. Know your limitations whether they be physical, mental, emotional, or psychological, and be aware that these can and will change at different points on a programme or in different circumstances. Ensure that you know your job role and stay within those confines and always maintain professional boundaries. Develop and refine your instincts through experience, collaboration, supervision, and support. At times, you may need to trust your "gut feeling," especially when so much is happening that you and your team may not have the time or space to sit and analyse before making decisions. Take an ethical stance and be true to yourself and those around you without causing harm or sacrificing your integrity.

Concluding Remarks

An entire book could be dedicated to the subject of women and leadership in BAT. It is my ambition that this chapter provokes questioning and inspires more research and writing to be dedicated to the topic. The five concepts of collaboration, authenticity, passion for nature and the outdoors, role model-

Fig. 17.5 Silhouetted self

ling, and self-awareness are only the tip of an intangible iceberg awaiting further investigation. More exploration and understanding into the interwoven confluences of gender, leadership, and the outdoors will not only benefit the field of BAT but will continue to challenge many assumptions and preconceived ideas. This can only lead to a fairer and more just society where women are equally valued, sought after, and revered as leaders in their chosen fields (Fig. 17.5).

Notes

1. PRN is from Latin "pro re nata" from an occasion that has arisen or as circumstances require.

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18

Messages About Women Through Representation in Adventure Education Texts and Journals

Sarah Martin, Sarah Maney, and Denise Mitten

In the United States, adventure education (AE) articulates a social mission: to be inclusive and serve members of all communities with their respective diverse complexities. Yet the needs of many people are not being heard or addressed adequately. This study focused specifically on gender, one aspect of a pressing concern of inclusivity in AE, offering evidence to demonstrate that AE needs to routinely examine and expand its practices to effectively meet its social claims. This study did so by asking the question: what messages about women are manifest in the scholarly literature and during the publishing process in AE?

As educators, we have been drawn to the field of AE for its potential to be inclusive of all populations and its agency to serve individuals in discovering, affirming, and strengthening their values. We want to consciously understand, accept, and support others using AE's unique approach to learning. The first author, holding strong beliefs that align with this description of AE, decided to research gender equity, particularly how women are represented today in this historically male-dominated field.

S. Martin (✉)
National Outdoor Leadership School, Lander, WY, USA

S. Maney
Red Spruce Grove, Farm & Wilderness Camp, Greenfield, MA, USA

D. Mitten
Adventure Education & Sustainability Education, Prescott College,
Prescott, AZ, USA

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What is Gender?

Gender is a large and significant part of a person's identity. Humans are social beings. As such, the ability to relate to others is necessary for our survival. To continually improve our ability to relate, we categorize, label, and try to define ourselves in relation to others and others in relation to us; this includes gender. Gender is socially constructed, and a person's gender identity or gender presentation does not always "match" their biological sex at birth. Gender identity is the way you feel about your gender; gender presentation is the way you present your gender to the world and has a large impact on how people see you. Gender may be presented through choices in clothing, grooming, and pronoun usage, amongst other things. Within Western cultures, the most common understanding of gender is within a binary paradigm, where two genders exist: women and men. Alternately, gender can be seen to be a spectrum, with people falling in various places between male and female, or gender can be seen as a spectrum along multiple axes, not just between male and female. People also choose to identify as agender, meaning they choose to not identify with gender. Gender is significant because, like ethnicity, it can help people to understand each other, and it can help individuals create a working understanding of themselves in relation to society.

Why Use the Binary in This Research?

Since gender is so powerful in an individual's identity and their ability to relate authentically with other people, it seems problematic that the dominant paradigm only offers two options. It would not be possible for the options of a man or a woman to capture all the actual gender identities that exist, including agender. However, since the binary is currently the dominant paradigm, most people comprehend gender as being one or the other. What many believe the words *women* and *men* to represent includes assumptions about clothing, grooming, pronoun usage, overall presentation, and more. When a person's idea of their own gender does not conform to the meanings attached to the words *women* or *men*, it can result in a lack of understanding of them from others and can create a barrier to authentic being and relations.

There is an increasingly popular assertion that the elimination of gender in the society would result in the elimination of the social hierarchy that is attached to gender (Piercy, 2016). Is it possible to move towards a collective way of being wherein people do not identify with any gender specifically and, thus, everyone is equal? Would a societal agreement to simply stop acknowledging the existence of different genders really result in a levelling of the playing field, or would it serve to further erase less common expressions of gender? It is not clear, but eliminating the binary paradigm in which gender exists *may* be part of the solution. Eliminating the social hierarchy attached to gender may mean, first, expanding our understanding of gender beyond simple binary categorizations and, second, ensuring that all people are accurately represented and able to contribute to research and literature with equal credibility.

In this research, drawing from the work of Mitten, Warren, Lotz, and D'Amore (2012) and Wright and Gray (2013), the gender-based power differential that exists in the AE field, and in society as a whole, was examined. Speaking specifically about women and their role in the field of outdoor, AE is an effective way to expose this gender-based power differential. As awareness of the limitations of the gender binary increases, we can continue to focus on and give a voice to the many other variations of gender, including agender, that exist, examine where they sit within the gender-based matrix of domination, and continue our efforts towards progress and social justice (SJ).

In many Western countries, the 1970s was a rapid growth phase for AE. Possibly in part because of the women's movement, women began to participate increasingly in AE organizations in varying capacities as students, instructors, programme specialists, and course directors (Mitten, 2018). However, many women did not stay in this profession as long as men or work as often in the same technically skilled positions (Loeffler, 1996; Lotz, 2018). This period also saw growth in women-only outdoor programmes, which have provided opportunities for women to adventure together and develop their skills in supportive environments in the company of other women (Mitten, 1985; Warren, 1996). In fact, oft-cited reasons for participating in women's programmes include the ability to not be judged by gender and opportunities to fully participate in all aspects of the course (Mitten, 1992, 2018). In co-ed programmes, gender disparity remains (Mitten et al., 2012; Wright & Gray, 2013). The prevailing power structure in Western cultures and AE accommodates men, and often women do not fit into this paradigm (Padavic & Reskin, 2002). Whilst the gender disparity in AE could be explored in several ways, this research specifically focused on the representation of women in AE scholarly literature, since persons interested or already participating in AE likely will be influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by what they read and see in textbooks and who they see publishing in professional journals.

Over the last ten years as a student and instructor, the first author observed that in AE different characteristics often are still attached to and subscribed to by each gender. For example, it was more likely that instructors chose male participants to go on a multipitch climb or to orient a map, whilst female participants were sought out for advice about relationships or to prepare meals. Dominance of one gender over the other promotes the limitations of gender characteristic assignments. If such roles remain as assumed norms, opportunities for growth will most likely be restricted and inhibit the potential of participants. AE's commitment to social inclusivity needs a balanced representation of men and women as role models and contributors to the professional literature.

Methods

To discover messages about women that are manifest in the AE literature, a multimethods approach was used to collect qualitative and quantitative data. The authors engaged in two major activities: (a) a citation index with what was determined to be the two leading AE profession's peer-reviewed journals and (b) a feminist content analysis with five commonly used AE texts.

Citation indices were created for the *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education* (*AJOE*) from 1995 (inception) to 2016 and the *Journal of Experiential Education* (*JEE*) from 1978 (inception) to 2016. These indices display the frequency of articles written by men and women and whether articles written by men were referenced more often than articles written by women.

The data for the feminist content analysis were collected by the lead author from the five AE texts and included counting the authorship of texts and chapters, classifying and counting the gender representation within photos, and counting the chapters devoted to SJ. The goal was to identify emergent trends and detect the presence and content of messages, hidden or overt, that may contribute to gender inequity. Data were studied and coded for how women are represented in pictures and the written word, with the following questions and concerns in mind:

- Do women appear to be in subservient, neutral, or powerful leadership roles?
- Are women pictured with other men or women?
- How are men and women portrayed in relationship to each other?
- How is power manifested in these portrayals?
- Do women appear to be represented in traditional gender role constraints?
- Are women excluded from the content? If so, how are they excluded?
- Do women appear to be represented as task oriented and technically skilled or in prominent leadership positions?

- Do technical skills appear to be privileged over interpersonal and intrapersonal skills?
- Where and in what ways are women omitted from the literature, if any?

To determine commonly used texts, the lead author reviewed 19 syllabi from AE undergraduate programmes used in 2012 and chose the five texts required the most for students' readings. In alphabetical order, the texts used for the content analysis were *Adventure Programming* (Miles & Priest, 1999), *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming* (Priest & Gass, 2005), *Sourcebook of Experiential Education: Key Thinkers and Their Contributions* (Smith & Knapp, 2011), *Teaching Adventure Education Theory: Best Practices* (Stremba & Bisson, 2009), and *Theory and Practice of Experiential Education* (Warren, Mitten, & Loeffler, 2008). In the syllabi used, some instructors assigned select chapters from these texts and not the entire book. Therefore, it is unknown if students read each chapter.

Data about authors' gender were from personal knowledge about the author or an Internet check to see how the person is identified (e.g., an organization or university profile). A limitation of this study was not asking each author their preferred gender identification.

Findings

Four of the five texts from which the emergent themes were gathered had editors and contributing authors, and one, *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming* (Priest & Gass, 2005), was the work of two male authors. Within these texts, one text had three female editors, and the other texts had all-male editorial or author teams. Because the Priest and Gass text was authored and not edited, it was excluded from certain analyses, and it is noted when this occurred.

Sourcebook of Experiential Education: Key Thinkers and Their Contributions (Smith & Knapp, 2011) and *Teaching Adventure Education Theory: Best Practices* (Stremba & Bisson, 2009) were each compiled by two male editors. *Theory and Practice of Experiential Education* (Warren et al., 2008) was edited by three females and the only text authored or edited by more than two people.

At the time of this research, the earliest text in this sample, *Adventure Programming* (Miles & Priest, 1999), had been in circulation for 18 years, whilst the most recent text, *Sourcebook of Experiential Education: Key Thinkers and Their Contributions* (Smith & Knapp, 2011), had been in circulation for six years. The time span of this sample is 12 years, and the three edited texts published after 1999 were within a four-year period (2008–2011). The text most frequently used, *Adventure Programming* (Miles & Priest, 1999), has 61 chapters, and has the greatest breadth of topics of the five texts. The other four texts were all used in moderate amounts.

In the four edited texts, there were 172 chapters. Women wrote 51 (30%) chapters, men wrote 99 (58%), and 21 chapters were co-written by men and women (12%). If a chapter was co-written by all men or all women, it was classified as a man's or woman's chapter. If the book edited by women, which had more women authoring chapters than men, is removed from the sample, then 30 (23%) chapters were written by women, 82 (63%) were written by men, and both genders co-wrote 14 (11%).

The texts closest to gender parity in chapter authorship were *Theory and Practice of Experiential Education* (Warren et al., 2008), with 21 (47%) chapters written by females, 17 (38%) written by males, and 7 (15%) written jointly, and *Teaching Adventure Education Theory: Best Practices* (Stremba & Bisson, 2009), with 13 (45%) chapters written by females and 16 (55%) written by males.

Within the five texts, 40 chapters had more than one author. Of these 40, a team made up of women wrote 4 (2%), a male team wrote 15 (9%), and women and men co-authored 21 (12%). Women were involved with 25 (62.5%), and men were involved in 36 (90%) of the co-written chapters. These numbers indicate that women rarely jointly authored chapters without men, although overall, when authors collaborated in publishing for these texts, they did so with someone of another gender about 50% of the time.

The authorship of the most recently published text, *Sourcebook of Experiential Education: Key Thinkers and Their Contributions* (Smith & Knapp, 2011) (22% women and 78% men authors) is most similar to *Adventure Programming* (Miles & Priest, 1999), the earliest text in the sample. In *Sourcebook of Experiential Education*, the authors have highlighted philosophers, educational theorists, psychologists, and sociologists and have labelled key thinkers whom the book editors stated have influenced experiential education. Along with only 22% of the authors being women, only eight (<25%) women were highlighted as key thinkers, while 28 males were named. These content choices are important, because these authors have written about people who they believe—and encourage their students to believe—have advanced the field of experiential education and therefore AE (Mitten, 2013).

The findings of this numerical examination of authorship provide practitioners and scholars evidence to support the contention that women are not equitably represented as authors in AE scholarly literature. Overall, about 30% of the authors represented in these texts were women, and a relationship between the publication dates of the texts and the inclusion or omission of women represented did not seem to exist. There may be a relationship between women editing texts and parity in women and men authors.

The data collected regarding gender representation from these AE texts included examples used, pictures, and gendered language and formed nine major themes. Overall, the AE texts used in this study

- used masculine normative language (MNL) and only sporadically used [*sic*] to identify MNL;
- continued to use informal and pejorative terms (e.g., soft or hard skills);
- portrayed women and men in relation to each other with no emergent patterns;
- continued to use stereotypical gender roles in examples (e.g., men in technical positions and women in communicative leadership positions);
- contained conspicuous reversal of stereotypical gender roles in examples (e.g., a short, small woman carrying a canoe next to two taller men);
- contained an underrepresentation of women adventurers;
- underrepresented women or omitted women in authorship and in examples;
- underrepresented women in technical and nontechnical photos; and
- committed 12% of total content to SJ issues.

Citation Index

The citation indices for the *AJOE* and the *JEE* display the frequency of published articles written by women and the frequency of times these articles are cited, and form the third leg of triangulation for this research design. These are summarized in Table 18.1.

Table 18.1 A comparison of the number of articles in the *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education* and the *Journal of Experiential Education* written by women and men

	Number of articles through 2016	Articles by women	Women's articles cited	Articles by men	Men's articles cited	Articles co-written
AJOE	232	59 (25%)	309	127 (55%)	724	46 (20%)
JEE	912	244 (27%)	2349	465 (51%)	4226	203 (22%)

Australian Journal of Outdoor Education[1]

The *AJOE*, a peer-reviewed Australian journal, has been in circulation since 1995. It produces two journals per year. From 1995 to 2016, there were 232 articles published with 59 (25%) authored by women and 127 (55%) by men. Cumulatively, the articles written by women have been cited 309 times and men's articles 724 times (a 1:2 ratio). The average of an article written by a woman being cited was 5.2 times; the range was from zero to 102. Men's articles have been cited on average of 5.7 times; the range was from zero to 68. Co-authored articles were not calculated into the female and male authorships and comprise 20% of the publication.

Journal of Experiential Education

The *JEE*, a prominent, peer-reviewed journal within the United States, has a large following of AE professionals. The *JEE* has been published at least two times a year since its inception in 1978. For 32 years, it has produced three or more journals in one year. Between 1978 and 2016, 912 articles were published, of which 244 (27%) articles were authored by women and 465 (51%) articles were published by male authors. Women's articles have been cited 2349 times, with an average of 10.4 times, with a range from zero to 195. Men's articles have been cited 4226 times, with an average of 9.1 times, with a range from zero to 174. The articles that were co-authored by women and men comprised 22% of the articles published.

In both journals woman-authored articles are published about half as often as those authored by men. The frequency and patterns of citations within the *AJOE* and *JEE* are similar. There is not a statistically significant difference in authorship when comparing the *AJOE* to the *JEE*.

Discussion and Practical Suggestions

The research question for this investigation was: what messages about women are manifest in the scholarly literature and during the publishing process in AE? The project design followed a phenomenological, interpretative approach, and the means to collect and measure data adhered to a feminist methodological concept. This study provided evidentiary research to support the contention that women are not adequately represented in AE literature. This uneven exposure to gender representation by students, educators, and interested persons can unintentionally promote gender bias and limit opportunities for women to contribute effectively to the field of AE (Mitten et al., 2012; Wright & Gray, 2013). For example, as college professors choose texts to use in their classes, the importance of certain people and ideas over others, including the subtle and not-so-subtle messages through pictures and examples, is furthered.

The research findings fall into three categories:

- The ways in which many authors write about women marginalizes them.
- Women authors are underrepresented in AE literature.
- Editors have control over who is represented and what topics are published.

These findings are discussed below with recommendations.

The Ways in Which Many Authors Write About Women Marginalizes Them

*Authors continue to use MNL and sporadically use [*sic*].* Many authors who contributed to the five texts recognized the negative implications of the exclusive use of MNL and inserted the writing device [*sic*]. Its use was infrequent in the earliest text examined, *Adventure Programming* (Miles & Priest, 1999), but in the more recently published material, its application increased, though inconsistently. *Theory and Practice of Experiential Education* (Warren et al., 2008), edited by three women, used [*sic*] most frequently. This progress is encouraging; however, MNL continues to have a strong presence in AE. The use of sexist language to describe the relationship humans have with nature can invalidate or marginalize women's experiences and their contributions (Jordan 1996; Mitten, 1985; Warren & Loeffler, 2006). Subtle versions of MNL, such as the idea of "mastery over the outdoors," still appear in the literature. Ecofeminists, feminists, and progressive thinkers continue to challenge these perspectives and their inherent attitudes and have suggested non-hierarchical relationships between people and nature (Fullagar & Hailstone, 1996; Mitten, 2017).

Authors continue to use pejorative and informal terms in the literature. Pejorative terminology and jargon belittling to women were frequently and consistently used in articles published prior to 2000. Whilst their usage has decreased over time as attention was brought to their implied gender hierarchal connotations, this jargon still remains. A classic example is "hard skills and soft skills." For more than 20 years, authors have specifically written about the detrimental impact of using gender insensitive terminology (Fullagar & Hailstone, 1996; Jordan, 1996). Yet, its continued use indicates that others are either unaware or not convinced. Within the texts, there were authors that focused on using gender-inclusive terms, such as technical/activity skills and communication skills, interpersonal skills, and intrapersonal skills. In Western, mainstream society, where men are assumed as superior to women in terms of status, due to their masculine association, technical/activity skills are more valued than interpersonal skills (Jordan, 1996; Mitten et al., 2012). By emphasizing the use of gender-inclusive terms, one skill set may cease to be privileged above the other; both skill sets would be considered essential to acquire and develop.

Recommendation: Authors Need to Use Inclusive Language and Avoid MNL

- Authors can choose quotes that do not contain MNL. If authors must cite a quote containing MNL, they can insert [*sic*] to show their awareness that the language they quoted was exclusive and that it should not be.
- Authors and practitioners need to replace pejorative terms and informal jargon in AE with language that does not devalue women or compromise feminine contributions overtly or subliminally. Avoiding language and implied concepts that typically have masculine connotations, such as mastery, domination, or hierarchical structures, removes them, *thus* removing their connotations (Mitten, 1985, 2018).

Women are Underrepresented in AE Scholarly Literature

As authors. Female authors were underrepresented in the texts reviewed and the journals examined. They represented approximately 25% of the authorship. Women authors have reported barriers to publishing, including the unwillingness of some male authors to collaborate with them and their adherence to traditional gender role socialization for their familial responsibilities (Martin, 2013). These obstacles compromise the opportunities for women to be promoted to positions of higher responsibility with commensurate pay and to attain tenure in academia with parity to men.

In both journals articles written by men are cited twice as often as articles written by women, partly because there simply are more (twice as many) articles published by male authors. Importantly, once published, as a group, articles from the *AJOE* and *JEE* written by women were cited as frequently as articles written by men. However, this rate maintains the same discrepancy (a 1:2 ratio); it also indicates that the articles written by women are used and needed. The underrepresentation of women's articles and chapters means that women's perspectives and contributions have fewer opportunities to be reviewed and appreciated for their significance, which likely has a negative impact on the field of AE. This uneven flow of evolving ideas, first noted in the field of social work, describes the challenges women faced and continue to face as professionals, practitioners, and academics in AE and other social science disciplines (Barretti, 2011; Loeffler, 1996). It is likely the impediments within academia and the publishing process is why a discrepancy exists in the gender of authorship within textbooks and journals.

It is not known how many omissions of the contributions of women educators and professionals there are that might have enlightened AE, but educators have benefited, even belatedly, when they learned about Sylvia Ashton Warner (Smith & Knapp, 2011) and Marina Ewald (Mitten, Gray, Allen-Craig, Loeffler, & Carpenter, 2018). Aligning with this spirit of evolving AE, the *JEE*'s current criteria for publishing and *AJOE*'s structure of its advisory board may increase inclusion, and hopefully more publishing enterprises will soon do the same.

As key thinkers, adventurers, in textbook examples, and technical and nontechnical photos. Women were present in examples in *Effective Leadership in Adventure Programming* published in 2005, but practically absent in examples of adventurers, educators, and other professionals in *Adventure Programming* published in 1999 and *Sourcebook of Experiential Education: Key Thinkers and Their Contributions* published in 2011. In chapters dedicated to the history of outdoor adventures, hardly any mention of female expeditions could be found unless a woman authored the chapter. Such omissions or sporadic representations reflect the hidden curriculum that perpetuates subtle and not-so-subtle cultural assumptions, reinforcing the lower status women have been struggling against in AE (Mitten et al., 2012). When students read such literature in AE courses, the messages they receive about AE are distorted for both genders. Young women, with aspirations to enter the field of AE, may be discouraged; women, who might potentially be excellent AE educators, may turn away feeling unwelcomed. Women who succeed in AE may feel exceptional and believe they are better than other women, or they may feel lonely. For young men, the impression that males are primarily responsible for the leadership in AE and that they have better technical skill sets than women in the wilderness can feel unduly burdensome and stressful. Or, the men may believe they are better than women, furthering an already challenging situation for women. People identifying as agender or gender nonconforming also are disadvantaged. In any of these situations, the stereotypical attitudes and behaviours perpetuated are to the detriment of AE.

Recommendation: AE Literature Needs to Reach Gender Parity

- Editors need to purposely strive for equal gender representation of authorship in the textbooks they compile and the potential journal articles they review and accept. Doing so can reduce the discrepancy in gender authorship and allow the debate on SJ issues to advance more steadily and inclusively.
- Authors need to continue to use examples that include women to enhance a more accurate representation of women as people who hold positions of leadership.
- Strategies for creating a welcoming atmosphere for women to fully experience AE have become a distinct subject in its literature (Mitten, 2018). These prescriptions need to be transformed from words to practice to be effective. Expanding opportunities for women-only groups guided by transformational types of leadership would likely accelerate discussions on topics relevant to diversity in various domains.

Editors Have Control Over Who Is and What Topics Are Published

There are sparse discussions or references to social justice topics. Female authors have reported that they are strongly motivated to research and articulate issues related to gender and SJ, because they feel a responsibility to bring integrity to the field with its AE claim for social inclusivity (Martin, 2013). However, editors of journals have not always been receptive to publishing articles about gender issues or SJ-related subjects, nor enthusiastic about expanding the boundaries of traditional research methods (Martin, 2013). Being willing to include new ideas in texts and journals rests with editors and guest editors.

People's demographics, including gender, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, influence their world outlook. Given these differences and the lessons drawn from the different life experiences of each participant in an AE venue, to offer a meaningful course requires addressing aspects of diversity. Instructors can be more effective in their programming and curriculum development if perspectives other than the dominant one are given a voice. Publishing more articles that address SJ topics can aid practitioners as well as academicians.

Recommendation: Seldom-Represented Populations Need to Be Represented

- Women need to be represented with realistic characteristics and strengths and portrayed in the literature as frequently as men.
- People of colour, those with a lesbian/gay/bisexual/queer/questioning orientation, transgender people, and people with a low socioeconomic status need to be acknowledged, understood, and represented in AE literature and programming to cultivate inclusive and authentic social environments.

Conclusions

The results offer evidence to demonstrate that AE scholars and practitioners need to examine and expand their practices to effectively meet its social claims. Editors need to purposely strive for equal gender representation in the authorship of chapters in the textbooks they compile and the journal articles they review and accept. Doing so can reduce the discrepancy in gender authorship and allow discussion on SJ issues to advance more steadily and inclusively.

Notes

1. In 2016, *AJOE* changed its name to the *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education (JOEE).*

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19

Locations of Resistance and Agency: The *Actionable Space* of Indian Women's Connection to the Outdoors

Vinathe Sharma-Brymer

Into the High

When I climb a hill
There's a flute playing in my ears.
Boulders become the drums,
My heart beats match the choir.
Lightening in my eyes,
With feet dancing
Whilst my head spears
Through those silvery clouds,
My mind wanders
Into the unseen wonderland.
I desire to stop the Time.
I wish to spread my wings.
I dream the free flight.
I climb up, fly down.
Like him, the Seagull.
(Sharma-Brymer, 2015)

V. Sharma-Brymer (✉)
ActionAble Living Trust, Brisbane, QLD, Australia

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Introduction: The Multilayers of Indian Women's Connection to Land

Thimmakka, a woman in her late 90s (approximate age)[1] with no literacy, is spending the evening of her life in her village near Magadi town of Bangalore Rural District in Karnataka state, India. Media, social organizations, and environmentalists still visit her wishing to know why she grew trees. In the 1990s, the local community of villagers added a prefix to her name—*Saalumarada*, meaning "a row of trees" in Kannada language. More than 50 years ago, Thimmakka, along with her husband Chikkaiah, started planting hundreds of ficus saplings along a treeless, barren road-stretch of four kilometres after the couple had come to the harsh realization that they could not conceive children. Over the years of planting and nurturing the saplings, the couple invested their personal resources and faced many hardships including carrying pots of water along the land stretch to feed the young trees. By 1991, when Chikkaiah died, there were 284 healthy ficus trees providing shelter to numerous birds and animals, besides shade and a resting place for the passers-by. For Thimmakka, the trees were and still are her children. Much later, after the local community appreciated the couple's selfless and unique effort, state and national governments and many public and private organizations lauded Thimmakka for being an unassuming environmental conservation leader. Thimmakka has also initiated building a water-storage tank and is still pursuing the government to build a maternity hospital in her village. She continues to motivate others with her passion for afforestation and the simple philosophy of sustaining natural resources.

I have chosen to quote Thimmakka's media-popular story (Madur, 2013) to open this chapter to show how, in the later sections, Indian women's connection to land and environment is a location of resistance and agency. It is their actionable space[2] (Sharma-Brymer, 2007; Sharma-Brymer & Fox, 2007), dotted with their lived experience of conflict, denial, and capabilities arising from a disproportional status of equality, and widely practised in the Indian society. The contested location is an intersection of gendered economics, male-dominated sociocultural and religious beliefs, practices, perceptions, attitudes, and the realization of their relative capabilities with agency amidst unfavourable policies and malfunctioning development programmes run by governments.

This chapter addresses the complex multiple layers of Indian women's lived experiences related to land and environment that are acutely influenced by caste, class, family, ethnicity, economic status, material conditions, an ingrained belief system, and the inhibited application of formal education to address inequalities and female agency. The overarching discussion presented in this chapter is that women are challenging inequalities and discrimination in many ways: whilst living in agrarian communities fighting to acquire rights to land/property/resources and thereby a satisfactory quality of life; as caretakers and guardians of replenishing food and water resources; and, as emerging leaders in the outdoor education industry by overcoming gender-related barriers. Their paths—meeting at the intersection labelled as *female, therefore*—are etched with denial of rights, their resistance, and their agency. Therefore, my discussion of Indian women's land-based practices is invariably a location registering the Voice for social justice and social change. I use Thimmakka's case study, an interview with Nomito Kamdar, and my own autoethnographic account (Reed-Danahay, 1997) of being a supporter, follower, researcher, and activist seeking equality and justice as a woman in the context of my own lived experience of the outdoors.

My Personal Engagement with the Outdoors

The core problem for most Indian girls and women, if one wishes to connect with the outdoors—as opposed to the indoors which is defined as women's identity—is their access to, presence in, and engagement with the land for their own good, well-being, and individual purpose. Without bargaining and negotiating their reason, purpose, and position with intrafamilial and intercommunity agents, a girl's or a woman's engagement with the outdoors is weighed down. Being outside one's home just to enjoy the outdoors is still a challenge for an average, middle-class Indian girl, as safety and gendered perceptions arise immediately (Sharma-Brymer, Fox, & Brymer, 2008). Reason and purpose are defined, decided, and measured by religious, social, cultural, and economic frames and lenses.

As a very young girl, I fetched water twice a day from a well for the family's needs and assisted my mother—a school teacher—in washing clothes in the local village lake twice a week. We lived on the outskirts of Bangalore city. Density of population was low, the city rightly lived up to its image of a *garden city*, and natural resources were healthy. Many *luxuries* of life, such as having a water tap with running water at home, were absent in the outer suburbs of the city. Those early experiences of spending abundant time outdoors whilst doing gendered chores, being witness to the bargained gender relations within and beyond my household (Agarwal, 1997), consciously influenced my perspectives on the gendered human–nature connection. Girls and women were expected to be outdoors only for carrying out defined types of work, not to enjoy or experience the benefits of nature for their *own* well-being.

As a growing-up girl and as a young woman I faced rebuke, resistance, and opposition from the males in the family, questioning and often removing my right to be outdoors and engage in the outdoor and adventure-based activities. I eagerly seized all the opportunities entailing such activities through college and university. Later, as a postgraduate researcher of biopsychology studying bonnet macaques in the *field* for a doctoral degree programme, I became a symbol of challenge and resistance within my family circles (again), local communities, and also within the academia. In between the two ends of my *actionable space* spectrum—negotiating gender relations and choosing to live with personal agency—were my varied experiences of overcoming stringent gender barriers to get involved in outdoor and adventure-based activities, doing a postgraduate diploma in environmental planning, and being my Self, which was deeply problematic for the conservative society. My connection with the outdoors has always been the same—I transcend all human-constructed boundaries when I am outdoors. I simply *am*. Such an experience of transcendence, especially when I climb a hill or a mountain, is my core lived experience.[3]

A woman's status and position in Indian society is a complex web of beliefs and attitudes defining the quality of her everyday life with *own* choices, decisions, and capabilities. The daughter/woman is in the custody of a male family member, supervising her existence and lifestyle. The male members of my birth family did not make sense of my well-being linked to my connection with the outdoors, as they practised gendered divisions.[4] The family's economic and material conditions did not influence their attitude; their religious and sociocultural beliefs did.

With reference to Thimmakka's case study, she was not dependent on *her* trees for livelihood as the trees she planted *with* her husband were not on their own land. The couple could have devoted their life to religious activities as childless couples mostly do in Indian society. Her material conditions, acute poverty, social exclusion, and stigma as a childless woman and hardships of her everyday survival were not directly linked to those trees. Nor was she inclined towards creating for herself an image of Mother Nature and, therefore, affirming women's special relationship with nature. The couple chose to give back to the community in the form of trees (as their children) and doing the community a service which would not alter their personal circumstances of economic hardships. When the media broke Thimmakka's story and put a spotlight on her, she was elevated to the status of Mother

Nature. The complexity of preferential gender relations, as both my personal and Thimmakka's cases show, is multilayered.

The belief that evolved within me since my childhood was that we were part of the much larger ecosystem; I could only be my individual Self in the natural world. It has influenced my thoughts and actions whilst connecting with nature throughout my life. Such a belief grew and developed without a definite schema or subscription to the feminist, political, and environmental movements, which were attractive choices for women like me in the late 1980s and 1990s. I was active in environmental conservation efforts, participated in many annual mid-winter Asian Waterfowl Censuses, took personal interest to study medicinal plants, tried to address human–animal conflicts, became involved in outdoor and adventure-based activities and ecological studies, and took up a challenging doctoral research study of free and wild bonnet macaques in the field. Nonetheless, the debates, perspectives, movements, and practices related to women's right to land and resources, the feminine associated with nature and women's access, presence, and involvement in outdoor environments—all these have resonated within me at different phases of my life and prompted me to be an active agent.

Land of Their Own: Locations of Social Change and Justice

Academic research applying the theoretical frameworks of social choice, education, and development has suggested that the marginalized groups may be habituated to their conditions of oppression and inequality, being unaware of social change and justice. Indian women critique their oppressive everyday life circumstances, yet they seem to collude in it (Burra, 2001; Cranney, 2001; Sen, 1999). However, within their actionable space, women need to be supported in believing they are active agents in their everyday life, and therefore they can do better to change their economic and sociocultural position (Agarwal, 2009b; Agarwal, Humphries, & Robeyns, 2003; Sharma-Brymer, 2006).

Thimmakka firmly believes that nature protects all life forms; therefore, we need to protect and care for nature. Although this is partly associated with Indian women's connection to land and environment, it is not the sole ground from which they connect with nature. Thimmakka chose to plant trees in place of nurturing her own children, overcoming social stigma. Her act signified a need for social change and justice ensuring women better dignity and choice as individuals. Although Thimmakka was equated with nature as mother (which ecofeminism embraces), her personal life quality as a poor peasant woman did not change. She has stated that she was forced to give up her small landholding to her family relatives only because she did not have an heir. Bina Agarwal (2009b), responding to Amartya Sen's (1993) profound work on gender (in)equality which has a spread across several academic disciplines, has illuminated women's position determining their access to and use of land (the feminist economics framework). Familial positions, conflict, and discrimination, as well as the level of support strongly impact on women's right to property, resources, and quality of life despite their individual, absolute, and relative capabilities (Sharma-Brymer, 2007).

Women in agrarian communities in rural India need the land for their livelihoods—hence, they must protect and conserve the land as the best practice to sustain themselves and their families. The rich oral traditions of rural communities echo women's struggle for fodder, fuel, and water for themselves, their livestock, and their families (Tharu & Lalita, 1991). Their struggle, which is their everyday lived experience, reflects female subordination as well as the celebration of female agency, as women are the caretakers. Family males control their land resources and land-based practices; yet, women ably demonstrate their resistance and register their Voice to gain power to use land-based resources. Bina Agarwal's seminal work on Indian women's access to and use of land resources and their struggles with resistance has provided a deeper insight into how Indian women are positioned in an environment of gender inequalities (Agarwal, 1997). I have resisted the efforts of my birth family's male members to take away my small plot of residential land in Bangalore city just because I am *female*. I have questioned their decision of excluding me from being part of the family's agricultural landholding rights and giving me an authorized place and position within the family as an equal member and an equal share of the property. Hence, my connection to land and environment is a fruit of labour, a recurring question disassociated with the romantic notion of women as the caretakers of land.

Indian women have continually repositioned themselves registering their Voice amidst the unfavourable structural policies of the postcolonial decades and the present changes that the process of globalization has brought in to the Indian society. These different but deeply interconnected issues present themselves as necessary critical discussion threads, if one is to understand Indian women's connection to the outdoors. Such threads, academic research, and theoretical frameworks often collide with and circumvent each other (Rao, 2012). However, ensuring individual justice for women by upholding their personhood, rights, status, and dignity has been at the core of any such critical analytical threads whether it is ecofeminism (Shiva, 1988) or feminist economics (Agarwal, 1994, 1997, 2009a; Sen, 1993, 1999). All these frameworks are needed at different levels with different impacts with different stakeholders. Women's resistance and agency are relative to their individual contexts and are indeed multilayered.

According to the 2011 Indian Census, nearly 70% of the Indian population lives in rural parts of the country. Indian rural women's standpoint on land is therefore strongly intertwined with accessing and conserving resources such as water, fodder for their livestock, and fuel for cooking (Agarwal, 2003). This aspect has almost defined their role and shaped their involvement in many environmental movements in the postcolonial society—rural women's livelihoods depend on the productivity of land. Although women of the household play a key role in the production and sustenance of food and home-based occupations, most are excluded from the inheritance of property and permanent assets, although they labour unconditionally. Indian women's access to wealth, resources, and inheritance is much contested even in the rapidly changing times despite their personal awareness, and favourable laws and structural adjustment policies.

As caretakers of their families, women have rightly recognized the critically significant interdependence between humans and natural resources. For example, 300 years ago, a young woman called Amrita Devi stood in the way of the workers representing the Maharaja of Jodhpur in Rajasthan when they came to fetch timber by felling trees from nearby her village to build a palace. Her death in that struggle prompted the villagers to protest so vigorously that the king apologized to them which saved the community forests. Inspired by her example, hundreds of women launched the *Chipko* ("to hug") movement whilst protesting against the government-appointed contractors felling trees in the 1970s in the Himalayan hill regions of the then Uttar Pradesh state of India. The movement became world-recognized in the 1980s for its nonviolent and peaceful resistance led by ordinary people to save forests, create ecological awareness, and promote afforestation and sustainability. The Chipko movement has heralded many such nonviolent and tree-hugging protests within the country (e.g., the *Appiko* movement in Karnataka) and continues to inspire environmentalists. Remarkably, most participants have been women.

Thousands of women over the decades have challenged the bureaucracy, extended their protest to empower women on social issues, set up women-led cooperatives to guard their village community forests, taken up social forestry to restore the green belt in the country, have become seed-savers, and are promoting the birth of daughters as positive. *Narmada Bachao Andolan* ("save Narmada River Valley") is a shining example of major land-related movements involving millions of women and led by women. Medha Patkar led the struggle in the late 1980s and continues to do so, protesting with thousands of village farming and Indigenous communities. Their lands were submerged by a series of dams being constructed across the River Narmada in the Indian states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Patkar was supported by Arundhati Roy who donated her Man Booker Prize award money to the cause.

Women have also combined their acute sense of social change and environmental justice with literature. Noted poet Sugatakumari championed the cause of saving the pristine rain forests of Silent Valley in Kerala state of south-west India through environmental activism and her poems. Mahashweta Devi supported the Indigenous peoples of the north-eastern parts of India. She involved herself in activism and literature to voice her own dissidence with the policymakers and bureaucrats who would craft means and methods to *develop* the Indigenous communities by removing them from their homeland. Devi's powerful writing and her contribution to the subaltern notion has been applied to the study of gender inequalities within postcolonialism.

Women's land-related activism applying nonviolence, *satyaagraha* ("agitation for truth," which was the prime avenue Mahatma Gandhi used against British colonization), honouring the local and Indigenous traditional wisdoms, their folklore, oral traditions have demonstrated women's unique ways of doing justice. Those ways have illuminated the agrarian and Indigenous women's close connection with the place, every feature of their homelands, the identities of their individual communities, and their rich cultures. For women who have resisted attempts to empty them of their crops, water bodies, livestock, their grains, their fuel sources, and of their carefully sourced produce from the forests, the struggle to save the environment is not separate from saving their own self. Hence, nurturing nature is part of women's everyday life out of necessity and need as their whole communities are nourished.

Indian Women in the Outdoor Learning Area: A Growing Participation

The British colonial period promoted the formal practice of outdoor learning in India, giving it a clear structure in elite schools. The Doon School in the foothills of the Himalayan mountain range and several other private schools in the mountain ranges throughout India serve as good examples. Interestingly, outdoor and environmental learning is still elusive in the mainstream Indian education system whereas most alternative and democratic schools and elite private schools have embraced it for its core values of learning from nature and character building. On the other hand, a handful of individuals has created a culture of outdoor and adventure education for all in the country by setting up their own organizations.

Fortunately, outdoor/environmental education and adventure activities are progressing the acts of social change and justice related to *women outdoors* beyond the theoretical frames of ecofeminism and feminist economics. Rapid changes in accepting women in outdoor learning professions are raising hopes to involve women participants from different sections of the society. Nomito Kamdar, the leader of The Adventurers organization operating in the Western Ghats of Karnataka, has heralded such remarkable newer interventions.

Nomito, who started working with The Adventurers nearly 30 years ago, was one of the first Indian women to engage herself as a professional in the outdoor industry. Today she is proud to note that women form 65% of the organization's clientele. Although girls and boys, men and women have been offered inclusive opportunities to be involved in their outdoor and adventure learning programmes, girls' involvement could be curtailed due to familial beliefs and perceptions. Perceiving this gender-related constraint, Nomito has focused on bringing adult and mature women into the field—mothers, mothers and daughters, professional women, grandmothers, mothers and their children with mental challenges (children with special needs), and women-only members from clusters of families. Nomito says they are slowly coming forward to be involved in diverse outdoor and adventure activities as they are assured of a physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe environment with a woman leader. She underlines that women take away more outcomes and experiences than male participants, as women share stories of curtailed childhood, denied opportunities, gender barriers, and restricted financial freedom. Nomito relates to such stories as she herself felt relieved of her pent-up anger and frustration when she involved herself in the outdoor education area. Indeed, nature heals humans. Connection to the outdoors is undoubtedly beneficial to women's well-being, as I noted in the section on my personal engagement with the outdoors.

Not surprisingly, even with her strong leadership capabilities Nomito has faced resistance from men showing dissonance as the idea of a woman professional leading them in the wilderness was unacceptable to them. This particular experience brings out males' ingrained images of women as soft, subordinated, and as homemakers (Burra, 2001; Sen, 1993). Teaching men about environmental conservation, sustainability, and asking them to adhere to the principles of "no smoking" and "no alcohol" zones, not littering, and recycling are many of the challenges Nomito has faced over the decades. Resistance and expression of agency are part of most Indian women's everyday life as they demonstrate remarkable strength to reposition themselves amidst gender inequalities.

Such repositioning with negotiation of their personal self is unique in many ways. Nomito narrated a young man's story where his grandmother employed a man every summer to teach swimming and cycling to her grandchildren which she could not do in her own childhood. Nomito prefers to view the image of Indian women as change agents. She notes that women are capable of bringing in changes in their everyday realities if they wished to. She quotes the story of a woman who attended their field programme. She took in the benefits of the programme—self-confidence, leadership, decision-making, and newer ways of relating to her world. Her husband, with a physical disability, realized that he had a resource at home and not just a wife.

Nomito acknowledges the benefits of learning from the outdoors as healing, empowering, self-exploratory, and calming whilst also teaching humans acceptance and humility. Such benefits need to be incorporated into everyday life, human health, and well-being. Seeing Nomito as a woman impacting on other women's lived experience in the outdoor environments is opening up avenues of empowerment for women having different personal contexts. For example, women who have been sexually abused, women seed-savers, widows who have been excluded, and whole family units of women who return home with enabling experiences, strengthened relationships, and better health. The hopeful location of Indian women who are connected to the outdoors (land and environment) is that more women have been emerging strong with a definite meaning-making process, self-identity, self-realization, and personal well-being.

Conclusion

The essence of Indian women's lived experience in relation to the outdoors is seen in multiple complex layers and at relatively synchronizing echelons. Firstly, it is women's resistance to policy and power-holders' interference with the lands with which women are intrinsically linked as providers of fuel, food, water, and fodder for their families. Unfavourable policies combined with systemic practices of denying women the right to access and own land have resulted in many social and environmental movements which have eventually led to their ownership of land and resources, thereby gaining a better quality of life. Secondly, women carrying out their gendered roles have also resisted, questioned, and challenged the systemic beliefs whilst living their connection with the outdoors. The third intersecting platform on which women have emerged reveals strong and capable women choosing outdoor learning as their profession. This has a ripple effect on empowering other women to access the outdoors and gain meaningful experiences for enhanced health and well-being. Whilst all three intersecting points are interwoven with women's multilayered personal and political domains, they have signified the changing face of women's unique ways of living the outdoor connection.

Notes

1. Several media articles have quoted her age as around 100 years.
2. I proposed *actionable space* as a theoretical construct to interpret women's lived experience. The construct is a five-stage spectrum registering women's agency from the first stage of not being aware of the problem (internalizing it) and therefore not taking action to address it to the final stage of taking and consolidating their action to change their problematic situation.
3. My poem at the beginning of this chapter captures the essence.
4. My father's family practised farming besides other professions. I always wanted to be a farmer. In my 20s, I wanted to save money and buy agricultural land. I was told that as I was a female member I would not be given the family's right to land entitlement. Right to land entitlement is a policy requirement in my home state.

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20

Becoming Relational in Outdoor Education: Not Just Women's Work

Alison Lugg

Introduction

This chapter functions on two levels. It is in part a reflection on my experience as a female outdoor educator pursuing gender-based research in a university context. It is also a reinterpretation of the outcomes of that research. In considering both my own experiences and those of the third-year students who participated in the research, I draw on Lave and Wenger's theory of communities of practice (CoP) and Edwards' (2005, 2007, 2011, 2012) notions of relational agency and relational expertize.

Fifteen years ago, a female colleague and I conducted a case study investigating the *sense of competence* (Loeffler, 1997) of outdoor education students in a university degree course in Victoria, Australia (see Lugg, 2003). As female lecturers involved in some practical field trips, the motivation for our study was our concern that female students often sought our advice when they were struggling with technical outdoor skill development elements of the course. Previously, two studies—one by Green (1994) and an unpublished study conducted by three female staff members in 1996 at the same university—had explored similar issues. Following these studies, our research was an attempt to better understand students' (female and

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A. Lugg (✉)
RMIT, Melbourne, VIC, Australia

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male) experiences of the practical elements of the programme. Because of the issues presented by female students, in particular, we were interested in what Loeffler (1997) defined as "sense of competence" or "the active perception a woman holds of herself acting within her environment" (p. 120). Loeffler maintained that because women's sense of competence in outdoor education or adventure contexts is shaped largely by their perceptions of themselves within a masculine construct, their "sense of competence and actual competence may not be congruent" (p. 120). To investigate this perception that female students may need further support, we drew on the findings from the previous studies and from our own conversations with students to frame three focus group interviews with six male and nine female students who were randomly selected and who volunteered to participate.

We presented our initial findings at a local outdoor education and camping conference and, in so doing, raised the ire of two more senior male colleagues who felt that, in reporting our findings, we were undermining their work and that of the department as a whole. They felt they (and others) had worked hard to be sensitive to gender differences in outdoor education practice, and that by focusing on gender in this space, we were calling their efforts into question. In so doing, they seemed to overlook that we, too, taught in the practical programmes and were implicated in the outcomes for students. Unfortunately, the effect of our colleagues' reactions was that, to avoid further conflict, we did not pursue this or any further research around gender in our programmes. It could be argued that this was a very female response to such a situation. In retrospect, I am disappointed that we did not pursue our research. I am even more disappointed that we needed to fight this battle at all. Why were these colleagues so defensive about our research and the issues it raised? Why didn't we challenge and discuss their concerns with them? If we were not able to pursue our research interests with impunity, how were the experiences of our students to be represented and our collective assumptions about gendered experiences of outdoor education practice examined?

These issues highlight particular challenges for women working in outdoor education, a historically masculine cultural domain. It raises questions around the normative power of cultural practices and assumptions around agency and expertize in outdoor education (and in universities). In the next section, I summarize the findings of the 2002 study and then revisit these from a situated and sociocultural perspective.

Women's Sense of Competence in Becoming Outdoor Educators

Our 2002 study revealed outcomes that can be summarized as follows:

1. Female students tended to lack confidence in their performance of physical and technical skills, which affected their actual competence in the following ways:

   (a) They were reticent to put themselves forward in skill learning situations.
   (b) They tended to respond more emotionally than their male peers to feedback about practical performance from staff.
   (c) They were often reluctant to ask for help from peers whom they felt were more competent because they didn't want to impose on them or hold them back.
   (d) They experienced more stress and less confident performance due to reduced opportunities to practice.

2. Male students, on the whole, did not express a similar lack of confidence in their performance of technical or physical skills.
3. Several male students felt that their female peers were less inclined to adopt a "fake it 'til you make it" approach to skill learning and were more sensitive to feedback about their physical and technical competence.
4. Female and male students perceived that female students and leaders in the outdoors tended to be competent in and confident about their *interpersonal* skills such as responding sensitively to others, building relationships, and negotiating group dynamics.
5. Most males and females perceived that interpersonal skills were not as highly valued in the outdoor education course or in the outdoor industry in general. This value system was often not overtly expressed by staff or peers but was evident through the hidden curriculum, particularly in relation to white-water paddling and climbing activities.

The outcomes of this study highlighted the importance of *emotional* and *relational* dimensions of learning for building the women's sense of competence and the subjective impacts of socialization in learning to become outdoor education leaders or teachers. They drew attention to particular ways in which outdoor education practice is socially constructed and negotiated in a historically masculine framework of embodied notions of competence, performance, and leadership (Bell, 1997; Payne, 2005). The last two findings (points 4 and 5), for example, were reinforced in a larger scale and more recent study of the hidden curriculum in outdoor adventure education in the United States (see Mitten, Lotz, Warren, & D'Amore, 2012). Mitten and her colleagues found that physical skills in adventure education were more highly valued than interpersonal/emotional skills, and that the latter were seen as the domain of women. They concluded, "The HC [hidden curriculum] in adventure education promotes the undervaluing of the skill sets women are expected to perform" (p. 39).

In our 2002 study, feminist theory was the lens used for interpretation of results. In this chapter, I revisit the findings using alternative interpretive lenses, namely Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Wenger's (1998) theory of learning in CoP and Edwards' (2005, 2007, 2011, 2012) theory of relational agency and relational expertize. I assert that female (and possibly some male) students participating in outdoor education field trips in a tertiary context can be caught in a bind. On the one hand, they need to conform to existing practices to be accepted as legitimate practitioners; on the other hand, those very practices may compromise their own values, dispositions, and/or professional trajectories. How can women students negotiate the process of enculturation to professional practice in a historically masculine model of outdoor education? In learning how to negotiate membership of outdoor activity-based CoPs, how can interpersonal skills and strengths be legitimated? Are women to continue to operate at the periphery of outdoor activity-based CoPs, or can those practices be changed so that relational and technical/physical skills are equally valued? Following Edwards' (2011, 2012) view of teachers and educators as *gardeners* engaged in the complex activity of nurturing and cultivating the potentials of learners, I argue that relational agency and relational expertize are important skills for all future outdoor educators. In a field that emphasizes embodied, experiential, and collaborative learning, relational skills are not desirable, they are essential.

Learning Through Participation in Communities of Practice

Lave and Wenger's (1991) study of apprentices revealed learning as "concerning the whole person acting in the world" (p. 49) and shaped by mutually constitutive relationships with the social contexts in which it occurs. Their notion of *situated learning* was not just about learning in situ (in space and time) or that learning is a social activity occurring in relation to others, but that knowledge and learning are *negotiated* through engagement in social practice. According to Wenger (1998), a CoP is not just any group or community. It requires the "sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise" in which three dimensions are essential: (1) mutual engagement, (2) a joint enterprise, and (3) a shared repertoire (p. 45). CoPs are dynamic, as they involve diverse members, changing roles and competencies, complex relationships, and differing levels of membership. The shared repertoire of an outdoor education CoP, for example, may include; terminology, stories, symbols, safety routines, concepts of best practice, interpretations of regulations, and so on. Levels of engagement depend on individual roles within a joint enterprise, whether that involves leading a particular trip such as an expedition, working in an outdoor education company or organization, or professional engagement in a tertiary outdoor education department. Most people belong to multiple CoPs throughout their lives and may bridge several at any one time; thus, negotiating tensions between multiple CoPs is a significant process of identity formation (Wenger, 1998).

According to Lave and Wenger (1991), membership of a CoP can be partial, peripheral, marginal, or full, and the notion of *legitimate peripheral participation* (LPP) explains learning in relation to increasing levels of participation in CoPs. Lave and Wenger asserted that learners or "newcomers" to CoPs initially engage in peripheral practices, developing more complex knowledge and skills as they take increasing responsibilities in a move towards full participation. LPP involves shifting power relationships and levels of engagement rather than simple movement from a periphery to a centre of participation. In assisting learners, experienced members of CoPs such as managers, teachers, instructors, or leaders give learners access to particular knowledge, skills, and relationships, acting as gatekeepers and mediators of their learning. As an analytical lens, LPP theory offers a way of understanding how engagement in situated activity reproduces *or* transforms the social order through systems of relations. It enables consideration of questions of legitimacy, power, organization, and control of resources. In the context of our 2002 study of women's sense of competence, understanding factors that constrained or enabled learning in CoPs becomes particularly important, because:

> Denying access and limiting the centripetal movement of newcomers and other practitioners changes the learning curriculum. This raises questions—in specific settings … about what opportunities exist for knowing in practice: about the process of transparency for newcomers. These questions remain distinct from either official or idealised versions of what is meant to be learned or should be learnable. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 122–123)

This last point about differing versions of what is to be learned is particularly relevant to this discussion. Wenger (1998) argued that practice as a social and cultural phenomenon includes "the explicit and the tacit … what is said and what is left unsaid; what is represented and what is assumed" (p. 47). Wenger refers here to the *hidden curriculum* (see, e.g., Mitten et al., 2012). Lave and Wenger (1991) maintained that learning a trade, craft, or profession incorporates an understanding of the tangible artefacts (or *reification*) of practice, such as language, symbols, tools, documents, or images, as well as the subtle codes of relational interactions such as nonverbal communication, intuitions, embodied understanding, prejudices, and underlying assumptions. These subtle codes are referred to as the hidden curriculum because they are not overt and are often unintended but, nevertheless, convey strong messages to learners about what is valued or devalued. Wenger (1998) was concerned with how participation and reification together shape our experiences and understanding of the world by focusing attention or reinforcing particular ideas or beliefs whilst, at the same time, potentially obscuring other ideas and perspectives. Through the interweaving of participation and reification, Wenger (1998) argued we negotiate meaning and form identities in relation to the multiple CoPs in which we participate.

Following Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Wenger's (1998) theory, students' interpretations of outdoor education practice can be understood as historically and culturally constructed, as it has evolved through organizational, regulatory, recreational, and educational institutions over time. From this perspective, the participation and influence of members of outdoor education CoPs, including my colleagues and me, have been shaped by traditional outdoor education practices and, in turn, shaped those practices. Our identities have formed through participation in and mediation between the CoPs to which we feel most strongly affiliated (Preston, 2012). For example, identification as a climber or a paddler, an outdoor educator, or a physical educator holds emotional traction that binds individuals to particular ways of being and modes of practice that reinforce and legitimate their membership of these CoPs. Preston (2012) argued that her students navigated the "tensions and pleasures" (p. 34) between being both physical education and outdoor education (or "green") students, creating a hybrid subcommunity of practice that gave them sufficient cultural capital to successfully negotiate membership of both CoPs.

In learning to become outdoor educators, the students in the 2002 study were involved in similar negotiations in a comparable tertiary context. Like the students in Preston's (2012) study, they needed to decipher codes of practice and negotiate tacit or unspoken rules about what/who was valued or ideas about how things should be done to be perceived as competent outdoor educators. This tacit knowledge was often conveyed, perhaps unwittingly, by staff or peers who were more experienced and/or skilled and therefore held a certain level of authority. For these students, skill development and sense of competence in the outdoor education context was highly interdependent with the views of experienced others, thus emphasizing the level of performativity and relationality involved. The challenges of learning to negotiate this sociopolitical terrain of skill development are evident in this female student's comments:

> There is just a sense that even though we have run the river and accomplished everything and run every rapid there was still that feeling of I still haven't accomplished anything really worthwhile because I didn't spend all that time doing what the better paddlers did … the tricks and the more daring stuff. At the end of the day thinking that if I haven't got to that stage which is encouraged by the leaders and staff, then even what I have accomplished isn't that good. (Second-year female, 2002)

This student's awareness of the subtext in this paddling trip revealed that regardless of stated aims or achievement of curriculum goals, success and competence in paddling were more subtly measured by the performance of "tricks and the more daring stuff." Ironically, the stated curriculum emphasis of the course was concerned with developing critical understandings of human interactions with natural environments; thus, concerns with elite physical performance were a dimension of the hidden curriculum attributable to some extent to the Anglo-Saxon, masculine construction of outdoor adventure activity (Allin, 2000; Payne, 2005). The challenge for novices learning a craft, trade, or entering a profession is how to negotiate the complex and often contradictory value systems and relationships within CoPs and across multiple CoPs. Learning from this perspective is, at least partially, about working out what is prioritized and how to negotiate the culture of an organization or group in relation to these priorities. In this case, the skills performed by the "better paddlers" were outside the subject aims and requirements. How should the student negotiate this space as a young female wanting to become an outdoor leader? How might her participation or nonparticipation in these tricks impact her advancement in the field of outdoor education?

These are significant questions for students and teachers/leaders/instructors in the outdoor education field. From an LPP perspective, the transition from learner to practitioner is an ongoing process of renegotiating roles and realigning participation in multiple and sometimes conflicting CoPs. Wenger (1998) identified two key processes: (1) identification—investment of self in relationships and (2) negotiability—degree of control over meanings in these relationships. The interplay between these processes brings questions of power into focus. A contradiction exists between the desire for continuity—reproduction of practice—and displacement of experienced members by newcomers or generations (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Tensions may arise from assumptions and prejudices held within a CoP or how individuals' trajectories and multimembership of CoPs are negotiated. In some outdoor education CoPs, women might be interpreted by some as newcomers, regardless of age or experience, because they bring different attitudes and skills that could be interpreted as disrupting the social order of the field. For example, in our 2002 study, another student perceived a male emphasis on practical and technical skills but, in contrast to the previous example, she felt no compulsion to comply. Rather, she felt competent to enact her interpersonal skills:

> I concentrate on the soft skills as in facilitating discussions, facilitating learning, making sure that everyone's emotionally ok and safe … whereas leading with men I've seen … they just get the fire happening or they get all the boats onto the bank or they get the tarp up, all that sort of stuff which is a secondary thought to me. (Third-year woman, 2002)

The divisions of labour illustrated in this example are somewhat stereotypical in terms of the woman taking a nurturing, supportive role whilst the men take, arguably, the active roles. In this sense, she was not disrupting but reinforcing social mores as Mitten et al.'s (2012) study showed. However, in making these choices, this young woman consciously prioritized the well-being of participants, illustrating a different process to the centripetal orientation of Lave and Wenger's (1991) LPP theory.

In focusing on the relational aspects of being in the outdoors, this student showed a high level of agency and confidence to act in ways that she considered important but were possibly not as highly valued in terms of perceptions of competence. Her actions contradict Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of LPP that suggests that newcomers to a CoP learn by aligning with the values and notions of expertize of experienced members to advance towards full membership. This conservative orientation is considered one of the weaknesses of LPP theory, because it does not allow for creativity or self-regulation within a CoP (Edwards, 2005; Preston, 2012). In this instance, the student's actions risked putting her in a more peripheral position in that outdoor education CoP and could be interpreted as displaying a self-regulated ethic rather than "obedience to a system of rules" (Preston, 2012, p. 36). Alternatively, the student's choices could also reflect adherence to a broader set of social rules about female (and male) roles, perpetuating the notion that caring and nurturing is women's work (see Mitten et al., 2012).

These tensions highlight the contingent nature of learning and identity formation in professional practice. The assumption is students' perceptions of what it means to be an outdoor educator and how they envisage themselves and others in those roles are likely to shape how they approach their work as practitioners. The comments by most students involved in the 2002 study highlighted a common perception that interpersonal skills in outdoor education were predominantly women's work and that the technical and physical activity skills were the domain of men. The importance of interpersonal skills and attributes in outdoor education practice has long been acknowledged by employers (Carter, 2000; Munge, 2009) but has not necessarily been prioritized in outdoor education training programmes (Mitten et al., 2012). To consider a possible approach to relational processes more closely, I introduce Edwards' (2011, 2012) *gardening tools:* relational agency, relational expertize, and common knowledge.

Gardening Tools for Collaborative Work

Anne Edwards (2012) used the notion of gardening in the context of a study of expert practitioners working collaboratively across children's services in the social care system in the UK. Her sociocultural analysis focused on the middle layer between the individual and the activity system (refer to Cultural Historical Activity Theory), particularly how practitioners collaboratively developed expertize in improvised situations. Her metaphor of gardening as working from the ground up through cooperative, connective, or nurturing processes resonates with the intentions of many women in our 2002 study. Edwards' (2011, 2012) sociocultural research in collaborative engagement in professional practice holds that practitioners need to develop relational tools that enable productive and generative work.

Edwards (2012) contended that relational expertize involves "building, contributing to and working with common knowledge," which, in turn, mediates relational agency (p. 26). Edwards' (2009) studies of preservice teachers produced a view of teachers' expertize as "becoming resourceful" or "knowing what needs to be taught … knowing when to teach it … knowing how to teach it … [and] knowing who can augment one's practice" (p. 160). The latter skill, which differentiates relational agency and expertize from more individualistic interpretations, was generated in Edwards' studies of children's services practitioners working on complex problems across professional boundaries. Relational expertize involves "recognizing what engrosses others, taking their standpoint and mutually aligning motives so that engagement continues" (Edwards, 2012, p. 25). In studies of preservice teachers in the UK, she argued that the increased complexity of subject knowledge and uses of information and communication technologies has changed teacher roles to the extent that expertize should be reconceptualized as resourcefulness rather than merely purveying information. From this perspective, expertize is "not a stable body of knowledge to be acquired through participation in accepted practices" as in LPP, but "the capacity to learn and act on and transform the problems of practice" (Edwards & Kinti, 2010, p. 128).

Expertize in outdoor education could be similarly construed if members of outdoor education CoPs are open to generative and genuinely collaborative (rather than cooperative) forms of participation. Edwards' (2012) view of expertize as relational, challenges universalist notions such as best practice, or competency-based approaches to outdoor education participation. Such normative concepts deny the potency of people working together in specific settings to create new forms of practice. They ignore how relationships and interactions between participants can enrich and expand practice and expertize by drawing on the distributed expertize, multiple skills, and abilities that people bring to any outdoor education context. That is not to deny the value of particular traditions or expert skills but to recognize that expertize may take many forms and require modification as responses to contemporary social and environmental imperatives such as poverty, sustainability, or mental health, for example. Recognizing and valuing what others bring to a situation, what engrosses or matters to them, and aligning our motives and responses to those of learners and peers in the outdoors, as Edwards (2011, 2012) suggested, holds considerable potential to enrich rather than dilute outdoor education experiences.

Edwards' (2011, 2012) second gardening tool, common knowledge, follows the premise that the relationship between the subject and object is "mediated by the knowledge and values that matter in practice" (2012, p. 24). In collaborative work amongst practitioners (or participants) with different specializations, expert knowledge needs to be clearly articulated and justified. Collaborators need to understand the relevant knowledge and skills others bring and how they can align these with their own expertize. Therefore, to facilitate productive joint activity, motives, values, and practices need to be sufficiently aligned to broader public values, and to the specialist knowledge of others, to enable *shared interpretation* of concepts, categories, intentions, and skills. This process creates new *common* knowledge that facilitates productive work across practice boundaries. Common knowledge does not entail having the *same* expertize as someone else but having enough shared understanding of the language, roles, interpretations, and motivations of others to contribute effectively to joint projects. Common knowledge does not pre-exist but needs to be cultivated, thus inducing the notion that it is a tool for gardeners' work (Edwards, 2012) and drawing attention to the conditions for its development.

In outdoor education practice, building common knowledge should act as a mediator between the differing expertize and perspectives that people bring to any outdoor education situation. Working collaboratively from this perspective entails seeking to understand the skills, knowledge, and values that others bring and the way establishing common ground enables participants from different backgrounds and belief systems to work productively together. This is a very different notion to expecting all participants, regardless of their diverse backgrounds and abilities, to fit in with traditional practices. Building common knowledge is about a coming together, a meeting or negotiation process that enables relational agency and development of relational expertize. In relation to the gender-based research issue referred to at the beginning of this chapter, making an effort to build common knowledge to understand others' motivations and perspectives may achieve some common ground from which to work together as colleagues on a mutually agreed research project, for example. This relational work could have reaped multiple benefits if all participants (the students, my tertiary colleagues, and me) had worked together to understand each other's perspectives, negotiate some agreed approaches, and draw on our collective strengths.

Such work would require *relational agency* (Edwards, 2005, 2007) as a means of understanding how professional practitioners working together on complex tasks can negotiate differing knowledge, skills, and understandings to function effectively. Relational agency requires sensitivity to the motivations and interests of others and willingness to collectively build capacity to generate alternative ways of learning with and within diverse communities. It transcends individualistic interpretations of agency to embrace a broader moral framework that considers the well-being of others as well as the self (Edwards, 2012). Edwards (2012) contended that relational agency develops in two stages:

1. Working with others to expand the object [motive] of activity so that its complexity is revealed, by recognizing the motives and the resources that others bring to bear as they too interpret it;
2. Aligning one's own responses to the newly enhanced interpretations, with the responses being made by the other professionals as they act on the expanded object. (p. 26)

Edwards and colleagues' UK-based research has determined that the capacity to recognize and use resources is essential for learning and professional development in complex activity systems. Within this framework, establishing productive relationships with others is the most important factor in supporting learners' trajectories, identity shifts, resilience building, and capacities to respond effectively to diverse student needs (Edwards & D'arcy, 2004; Edwards & Mackenzie, 2007). Edwards (2007) concluded that collaboration with colleagues and other practitioners involves joint problem solving and negotiation as essential elements of *strong* professional agency. Strong professional agency from Edwards and colleagues' perspective means being able to respond productively to change, complexity, diversity, contradiction, and emergence in school and education settings.

Extrapolating this concept to outdoor education leadership, Edwards' concept of gardening tools for enhancing practitioners' collaborative professional work has the potential to expand individual outdoor educators' repertoires of practice, relationships between colleagues and with participants, and the ways in which practices are collectively conceived and enacted. Working relationally with peers, mentors, and learners can expand outdoor educators' knowledge, skills, resources, resourcefulness, and creativity. As Edwards (2005) maintained, however, relational agency requires the capacity to *seek* help as well as give it: the former for outdoor educators may be a significant challenge. In the 2002 study, seeking help was an emergent issue for the female participants who were reluctant to ask experienced or highly skilled male peers for assistance. In so doing, they inadvertently perpetuated the story in a masculine framework that for outdoor educators to be competent, they should be stoic, independent, and single minded. This myth persists in outdoor leadership training in the form of (often) unquestioned practices such as needing to "walk faster, carry bigger packs or whatever" (second-year female student). In this social milieu, a reluctance to ask for help is understandable lest one be considered weak or, worse, a girl!

Conclusion

To empower young women and men learning to become outdoor education practitioners in contemporary times, traditional outdoor education practices need ongoing review (Bell, 1997; Gurholt, 2014; Preston, 2012). A willingness to critically reflect on assumptions underpinning accepted practices may uncover *blank spots* (those issues we can question but not answer) and *blind* *spots* (those we cannot even recognize as needing attention) (Wagner, 1993). Had my colleagues and I, all those years ago, engaged in a collaborative critically reflective process, the outcomes for all, including our students, could have been far more productive. Such self-critique leaves open possibilities for more relational interactions that expand outdoor education CoPs and enable outdoor educators of any gender to negotiate differences in a nurturing, responsive, and collaborative space. Relational work is often complex and messy and the outcomes uncertain; however, the potential benefits are substantial. To extend the garden metaphor, if outdoor educators can create fertile conditions for diverse views, dispositions, and abilities to be nurtured and shared, everyone benefits and the garden or CoP as a whole may flourish in new ways. If designing the garden is a collaborative and dynamic process where the contributions of diverse members are valued, stability can be found in the relationships established, whilst outcomes and practices can be fluid, surprising, and open to reinterpretation. This relational work has the potential to enhance outdoor education practice and, as such, is everybody's business, not just women's.

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21

Living Lesbian Lands and Women-Led Experiential Living: Outdoor Learning Environments for Gaian Flourishing

Marna Hauk

The estimated 2700 intentional communities internationally are sites of lived sustainability practices (Birnbaum & Fox, 2014; Federation for Intentional Community, n.d.). Included in this larger, international movement are land-based feminist and ecofeminist communities. In the United States, there are over 100 women's lands and lesbian lands (SheWolf, 2013). This culture has its own publications (e.g., *Maize, Lesbian Ethics, SheWolf*, and *Lesbian Connection*). Oregon in the Pacific northwestern United States features a network of 10 of these womyn's lands, many of them over 40 years old (Burmeister, 2013). There are a handful of women's outdoor education organizations (different from outdoor organizations that offer one or a few women's trips amongst their main programme offerings) that offer women's trips that include living and travelling in outdoor areas, often engaging in activities such as hiking, backpacking, skiing, mountaineering, kayaking, canoeing, and rafting. In a search for outdoor education companies, over 2300 organizations came up; using a filter, 2 came up that focused on teaching women and 35 came up offering girls' programmes, of which most of them were Girl Scout camps (Mitten, 2017b). Resonant with the land-based feminist intentional communities, women's outdoor programming in the United States has featured nonprofit endeavours centred on an inclusive ethic of care and environmentalist ideals (Mitten, 2017b).

M. Hauk (✉)
Institute for Earth Regenerative Studies, Portland, OR, USA

Prescott College, Prescott, AZ, USA

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Oregon's network of these queer womyn and lesbian lands and women-led expeditionary, wilderness skills, and healing journey programmes represent various permutations of collective ownership and decision-making, resource sharing, culture making, creativity, sustainability skills building, and living praxis. These types of programmes have great potential to contribute to educational research. Not resulting from national mandates, structures, and testing, they serve the processes of self-liberation and mutual liberation from intersecting systems of oppression and can offer patterns and provocations for liberatory educational praxis. They feature emergentist, feminist, land-based knowledge sharing and cultivate ways of undomesticated being and knowing. These dynamic, living sites of ecofeminist culture are cauldrons for decades-long lived learning in what we could understand as environmental and sustainability-focused outdoor education (Hauk, 2014b; Mitten, 2017a).

Some research has been conducted on the womyn's lands movement, including its sustainability dimensions and unique positionality and ethics (Sandilands, 2002; Santana, 2015), as well as on the intensions and benefits of women-only outdoor learning organizations (Hornibrook et al., 1997; Mitten & Woodruff, 2010). Little research has been conducted about the import of the women's land and lesbian land community movements and women-led, informal experiential immersion programmes focusing on the lived experience and land connection. Adding to the limited research is recent research confirming the active erasure of the contributions of feminist and lesbian programming and culture by the academy and mainstream (Barrett, 2016; Dashú, 2015; Morris, 2016). Education researchers have called for extending research to ignored communities and to learning in informal contexts (Dillon, 2003, p. 216). This chapter begins to fill this gap in educational research. To study women's experiences, I listened to women describe their experiences and understandings and the meanings they create from them, as Galman (2013) and Gough (2013) recommended.

Interviews conducted with practitioner-innovators of womyn's lands and women's outdoor programming included 15 founders and participants at eight women's lands and women-led educational organizations. The outdoor and eco-programming ranged from culture trek/expeditionary learning programmes such as from Ecotours International and Woodswomen to Motherpeace and Sofia University, all programming internationally. West Coast women's and lesbian lands and programmes include representation from Artsprings, Dyke Art Retreat Encampment (DARE), Women's Art Week (Gaston, Oregon and Yelapa, Mexico), Fly Away Home (Myrtle Creek, Oregon), Oregon Women Land Trust (OWL-T, near Roseburg, Oregon), Rootworks (also with DARE connections, Sunny Valley, Oregon), and We'moonland and We'Mooniversity (Portland, Oregon).

Interviews highlighted how these land-based programmes have served as experientially immersive nonformal adult learning centres innovating outdoor learning and exemplifying a spectrum of nonformal educational contexts with the lived experience as classroom. Multirounds of coding of qualitative interview transcripts triangulated with Likert scores on optimal learning factors surfaced three types of emergence: (1) land as sanctuary, (2) land-connected creative collaborations, and (3) catalytic biocultural teaching and learning networks. The chapter concludes with how these herstorical living land-learning cultures might help inform the future of gender-informed outdoor learning programmes as contexts for Gaian flourishing.

Theorizing from lesbian land research (Aguilar et al., 2012; Burmeister, 2013; Santana, 2015), queer ecologies (Mitten, 1997; Mortimer-Sandilands, 2010; Russell, Sarick, & Kennelly, 2003; Sandilands, 2002), regenerative ecofeminism (Gough, 1999, 2004; Harvester & Blenkinsop, 2010; Shiva, 2014; Warren, 2015), and outdoor learning environments (Mitten, 1985; Warren, 2015) frame this chapter.

Whilst acknowledging important contributions of these spaces, it is also noted that these experiments in land-based learning continue to be plagued by the intersectional challenges of settler colonialism, classism, racism, ableism, and access, with some organizational and cultural designs intended to mitigate these effects. These land-centred cultures reflect the gap between feminist utopian dreams and limitations imposed by patriarchal structural violence across dimensions of economics, equity, and ecology and the internalization of that oppression.

This chapter is informed by my trajectory from sedentary, book-learning contexts as an undergraduate at a small liberal arts college towards my life as a female-bodied, queer ecofeminist teacher and feminist faculty in outdoor learning environments. In particular, my experiences over seven years living and learning at places such as We'Moon Healing Ground and Rootworks, lesbian and womyn's lands in Oregon, inform my positionality. These were experiences living in temperate rainforests companioned by extensive libraries of feminist literature, by the vitalizing presences of the forest, and by the inspiring second-wave lesbian foremothers of sustainability cultures and communitarian sister-journeyers in creatrix cultures of Gaian flourishing. Indeed, these experiences were so formative and informing of my educational praxis that I pursued and completed advanced and doctoral study in education exactly so that I could establish programmes I wish had been available to me.

Land as Sanctuaries of Relief, Homecoming, and Discovery

Many interviewees described an initial motivation towards the immersive or land-living experience as a desire to experience sanctuary, to experience relief from modern life's cadences, technologies, and power relations. Queer land living has long been motivated by a desire for sanctuary from patriarchy (Of-Hearts, 2016). Those seeking refuge at women's lands or women-centred outdoor programming envisioned for "there always to be a space for women to be with women on the earth" (participant data quoted in Gagehabib & Summerhawk, 2000, p. 156). These sites suggested how environmental and sustainability educational encounters and outdoor learning environment design can partake of some of the aspects of retreat or relief from systems of domination: from everyday rigours of mothering or calendar-based obligations; the impetus for cultural perspective shifting with trekking; or the relief from danger because of removal from potential physical, structural, or cultural assault. A related theme arose around a desire for healing (Hauk, 2014b, pp. 422–425). Several programme founders who were interviewed reiterated the value of holding programmes in cellular phone-free and internet-free zones (whether by dint of geography or relinquishing of technological access) to support a techno-fast to further extract participants from hypermodernity and to open to an experience of sensory and depth immersion.

Sanctuary-To

These programmes and places appear to be as much of a turning towards as a sanctuary-from. Responses include descriptions of participant processes of slowing down, of coming home to a convivial pro-woman community, of opening, sensing, of internal connection with self and inner sovereignty, of relating, of a blending biocultural twining with land, of a depth of listening, of creative explorations singly and collaboratively, and of inspiration to catalyse larger networks of such becoming.

Presence and Acceptance

One Oregon Woman's Land Farm alumna shared, "I'm talking about just being here, and allowing myself to feel the earth turn" (Participant 4, Group

Interview, September 2, 2012). Another interviewee affirmed that a critical orientation in these types of experiences is about not pushing or changing the participants or the places:

> The most important thing about relational leadership was that women did not need to be changed to fit into adventure programs or taught anything in order to be good enough. The women who came on our programs were just fine absolutely the way they were. They wouldn't have to change one bit. (D. Mitten, October 18, 2012)

This kind of slowing, being, and accepting to allow emergence reflects a fundamentally different approach to outdoor learning. Another Oregon Women's Land alumna confirmed how "This place is a sanctuary or respite from the part of the culture that attacks women" (Participant 3, Group Interview, September 2, 2012). And another participant in the group interview described how the womyn's land experience had strengthened her to do feminist culturework, how the land experiences had bolstered her, about "the way I've seen throughout the years is the strength that we've developed that seems to have been rooted here…there's a real rooting" (Participant 1).

Whereas a large body of the literature on outdoor learning environments describes activities, programming, and curriculum with agendas for acting upon learners for particular outcomes, an important dimension of the emergence of cultures of land-based experiential living as sanctuary is the invitation to being and presence. It is reminiscent, instead, of a post-oppositional pedagogy of invitation featuring radically interdependent and interconnective approaches that foster emergence (Keating, 2013, pp. 183–185). This type of learning features a midwife facilitator (Warren, 1996), who engages in an ethic of care to generate a sanctuary of acceptance rather than an agenda of transformation. "[Many] women perceive they can meet certain emotional needs, such as unconditional support, attention, and acceptance for who they are, and personal time more readily in an all-female environment" (Mitten, 1992, p. 57). Generating choices, inner sufficiency, and a strengths-based approach are hallmarks of effective women's outdoor learning (Mitten, 1985). Importantly, these sites of learning offer profound sanctuaries from industrial approaches of high-structure, top-down hierarchies and learning agendas. Women-led outdoor experiential learning environments offer open spaces for slowing and presence and affirm sufficiency, emergence-from-within, strengths-based skills, opportunities, and sanctuary-towards.

Land-Connected Creative Collaboration and Land Symbiosis

Participants reported, from this experience of sanctuary and healing, a creative opening as a result of being on land, including inspiration to create. Bethroot Gwynne (Fly Away Home) noted, "So something about coming to the land for restoration, personal restoration, was part of what has always been true about women's lands in general, but also about women being on the land and experiencing healing." She emphasized this dimension of "finding new parts of yourself—growing toward wholeness just in being on the land, regardless of any formal offerings" (Research Interview, September 2, 2012). This process includes collaborating together with other womyn on outdoor projects, land infrastructure, gardening, and how these activities spark creativity.

Collaborative Creative Emergence

Outdoor learning characteristics in these women-led programmes included "collaborative emergence in creative experiential wisdom learning" (Hauk, 2014b, pp. 414–417): Unleashing the imagination is central to the curriculum. A nexus of founders demonstrated the deep-scale emergence proliferating from collaborative creativity to support outdoor environmental and sustainability learning contexts, institutions, and cultures. Oregon land woman Bethroot Gwynn (Fly Away Home) noted:

> I write, of course, to please my very own self, to pour my imagination out onto the page and marvel. But to have these women/this community available in my life as listeners, as editors, as excuse for crafting something sooner rather than later, as fans—ah, this is living among The Muses! (Research Interview, September 2, 2012, quoting 1988, p. 2)

"Living among The Muses!" is emblematic of the regenerative emergence available in these collaborative creative contexts. Several participants named the value of having other land women read, experience, and appreciate their creative works, which catalysed a generative feedback, where their creative expression was seen and their work, process, and insight witnessed and valued. This happened if their creativity was seen in print, for example, in the *We'Moon* or *WomanSpirit* magazines, which were/are both women's land creative outlets (Musawa Moore, We'Moon; Jean Mountaingrove, Rootworks), witnessed in performance (Bethroot, Fly Away Home), or shared in conception and editing in writing groups (several).

Through both the wisdom circles of ceremonies and the natural cycles, Musawa (We'Moon) articulated, this form of women's culture and natural cycle curriculum is connected radiantly to natural circles and cycles of embedment, empowerment, and connection as a flowering of ecosocial creativity:

> The circle. The circle is a pattern of nature. There're cycles, there're orbits, there're flowers. There are mandalas of all kinds. The cycles are really a basic part of this. So natural cycles. So that's one thing *We'Moon* fosters is connecting with the natural cycles and seeing how that affects your life. (Research Interview, November 11, 2013)

These "weaving circles" and cycles help midwife the culture publication that then goes out internationally to tens of thousands of cultural participants (Moore, 2016, pp. 184–185). Thus, at different scales, the research reflected a recurring theme of wisdom-learning midwifing creativity and cultures of creativity. This finding relates to Warren's (1996) schema for teaching as midwifing in experiential education.

Creativity with the Land

The land is a co-creative presence in women's outdoor learning and generates land-based environmental and sustainability education. Collaborative creativity and sustained, generative cycles of creative sharing are some of the greatest fruits across the gamut of outdoor living and learning contexts. The research emphasized how emergent creativity was also creativity with the land. Women's lands learning and gatherings generate larger processes of land-based biocultural articulation, culture making, and regeneration. These land-connected relationships were not Pollyanna: Bethroot Gwynne mentioned the intensity of land living, including the heartbreak of rain washing out weeks of work on paths and roads, or the surprise of a bear tromping through the water line, or the sometimes seemingly adversarial relationship with creatures stealing crops (Research Interview, September 2, 2012). Nicole Apelian and Sierra Lonepine Briano both described how land experiences include eating and the possibility of being eaten. These vital, vibrant, gentle, and fierce land presences bring perception, the senses, and creativity to life.

This land mutualism also meant that the women interviewed used nature patterns to conceptualize creativity and regeneration: the earth was a repository for as well as generated creativity (see also Hauk, 2014a). Vicki Noble described the suppression of women's traditions as "underground streams":

> It's always alive, even if it's not manifested in a particular time and place. It's always alive, it's always waiting for the next opportunity to come up above the ground and become a living spring again, so that's what we have to trust in. (Research Interview, October 25, 2013)

Art Springs founders described how the ocean, the forest, the weather, and the tides were the teachers and content as well as the context for women's upwelling art making (Research Interview, November 4, 2013). Holistic tracking, bird language, and deep nature connections are sourced in relationship (Nicole Apelian, Research Interview, November 18, 2011).

Other researchers have described these effects within a landfullness framework (Baker, 2007) in which, in ecofeminist terms, the place becomes the co-teacher (Harvester & Blenkinsop 2010, p. 128). Santana (2015) typified these lesbian land women's ontoepistemic affiliation as a form of realization in practice of feminist materialist "old growth feminism" in which "the creative and transformative agencies of women and trees in this particular community in southern Oregon have produced an especially catalyzing space-time context in which to rethink ethics and agency between and among humans and nonhuman nature" (p. ii). Land, trees, and nature are seen as co-feminists to the landdykes in resistance and resilience (p. 95). This insight is congruent with recent scholarship on the creative possibilities in queer biocultural fusion, how "bioculturally responsive curriculum weaves also in a biocultural, human/ecology, ecotonal perspective that queers the boundaries between bios [body/life] and culture" (Hauk, 2016, p. 189). The kinds of implicit and explicit learning theories and praxis that these land-based lesbian and women's lands and learning programmes have been embodying for decades offer biocultural embedment and collaborative land creativities for other outdoor learning environments.

Critical Decolonization of Outdoor Learning Environments

These findings apply to land-based pedagogies for critical decolonization in outdoor learning environments. The research echoed the repeating omission of the dynamics of settler colonialism within this land connection. As Calderon (2014) described, "One of the major limitations of critical place-based education as it is generally theorized is that it does not go far enough to connect how place in the US has been inexorably linked to the genocide of Indigenous peoples and continued settler colonialism" (p. 2). The wisdom collaborations with the more than human and the land are significant features of these queer womyn's land-based communities and experiential adventure programmes. And this gap in failing to acknowledge and reconcile this deep land connection within a (potentially unconsciously reinforced) context of neocolonialism requires attention in future research and participatory action. The research in land-based pedagogies and Indigenous ecological knowledges (Calderon, 2014; Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014) can support extending and strengthening these dimensions of womyn's land research.

Catalytic Biocultural Teaching and Learning Networks

Lesbian land and outdoor women's programming generated ecofeminist cultures rippling outwards from the experiences across networks, generations, and teachers.

Ripples and Recursion: Building Networks of Regenerative Action Learning

Many women's land programme founders reflected on how emergent wisdom-learning collaboratives and communities continued after the immersion was over. Kaseja Wilder, an OWL Farm alumna, mentioned the sustaining mutualism of the outdoor immersion long after the learning immersion was (ostensibly) complete:

> I always carried it with me. And not only did I carry it with me, I knew that there were women still here carrying it. Maybe not here specifically at OWL [Oregon Women's Land] Farm, but at Fly Away Home or Rootworks—or wherever, this community carried me. And I honored it on a regular basis to know that that was here. (Research Group Interview, September 2, 2012)

These living land cultures sparked culture-making networks of Gaian flourishing. Gatherings, such as the biennial Land Dyke Gathering (part of the research in 2013), served as a nexus for regenerative, land-based learning and included daily councils, open-space courses, and listening circles. Furthermore, these nonformal wisdom-learning spaces were nodes in a complexity-webbed network, which represents a nonhierarchical, autopoietic, and intergenerational learning system. These complex, living sustainability education networks were characterized by emergent, regenerative creativity and collaborative emergence. These rippling land creativities regenerated continuities for next generations of outdoor learning residents, teachers, and catalysts.

Regenerating Generations

One programme visionary mentioned how, in intergenerational, ecofeminist, land-based learning contexts, supporting the next generation to empower themselves is very important. Musawa suggested that it "is like having children…. Your job is so they can move out in the world and then be on their own." She distinguished between patriarchal cultures in which the generations are in an adversarial fight with each other and one must try to destroy the next and wisdom-learning contexts of ecofeminists that featured complementarity, mutualism, empowerment, and power sharing (Research Interview, November 11, 2013). Jean Mountaingrove emphasized the need for different generations in wisdom land communities to look for language that can bridge and connect and to stay reflectively open to modifying cultural practices or habits that may put up unconscious obstacles (Research Interview, July 6, 2012).

Building in revitalizing processes and practices for multiscale recursion and feedback generates vibrancy. These approaches relate to a concept Dashú (2012) described in the matrix or matriarchal culture of "culture mothers" or "social mothering" and connect with ethic of care (Mitten, 1996; Mitten & Woodruff, 2010), eco/feminist power sharing (Noble, 2003), and tend and befriend (Allen, McKenna, & Hind, 2012; Taylor, 2002) approaches to culture nurture. Morris (2016) emphasized the importance of attention to the intergenerational transmission of such creative cultural spaces (pp. 110–111).

Regeneration Through Teach the Teachers, Train the Trainers

A particular dimension of this ripple effect is that wisdom learning should be designed to generate teachers and teachers of teachers, facilitators, and creative wisdom catalysts. Nicole Apelian described the priority on training mentors: "Then that information gets brought back to local communities all over the world—whomever goes on the trips, will come from all over the world on these trips, and then that gets disseminated [sic] out" (Research Interview, November 18, 2011). Thus, reflective and recursive loops and spirals of what in complexity is termed amplifying feedback all support learner efficacy to encourage emergence, catalyse creativity of creativity, encourage next generations, and generate teachers of teachers.

Conclusion

Herstorical living land-learning cultures may help inform the future of gender-informed outdoor learning programmes as contexts for Gaian flourishing. Land-based ecofeminist programmes catalysed spaces of sanctuary where cultures of creativity, including in symbiosis with the living land via biocultural creativity, thrived. These land-affiliative creative outpourings further catalysed intergenerational, intercultural, ongoing networks of Gaian flourishing. The expansive dimensions of emergence in lesbian and women's land and programmes include dimensions of sanctuary, creativity, land connection, and generativity.

Outdoor learning environments have natural affinities with queering, querying, and undermining (post-) modernist sensibilities. They lean learning towards regenerative ecofeminist and sustainabilities thinking and being. "Earth can be the great subversive…. Dirt undermines domestication and reconnects with wilderness" (Hauk, 2016, p. 192). Dashú's (2012, 2015) work argued for the role of social mothers or culture mothers as part of the resurgence of ecofeminist culture. Queering the field, campy-ing camping (per Doll in Gough, Gough, Appelbaum, Appelbaum, Sellers 2003, pp. 48–49)—queer womyn's land cultures have been social mothering living sustainability outdoor learning for decades. These living land laboratories and outdoor informal learning programmes have been catalysing generations of radicalized nature-culture symbionts who have been practising earthen building, permaculture gardening, deep nature perception, and collaborative eco-social living skills, what are elsewhere termed "ethical naturecultures" (de la Bellacasa, 2010; Fawcett, 2013), generating networked matrix cultures (Flinders, 2002; Hauk, 2014b, pp. 111–115, 2015) of collaborative sustainability creativity. This research suggested how land-based lived and outdoor learning grounded in compassion and an ecofeminist ethic of care catalysed creativity within and amongst learners, land livers, and catalysed regenerative ripples and generative webs and networks of sustainability learning that can further nurture and liberate other educational contexts. "Human/nonhuman binaries dissolve with Gaian education methods, and bioculturally responsive curricula offer more robust, post-anthropocentric, earth-human fusion of truly queer pedagogies" (Hauk, 2010, 2016, p. 190). Daly and Caputi (1987) affirmed the value of being guided by crones to collaboratively learn liberation:

> As the freed words speak/sing, we learn to follow the skeins of their flight. Guided by these sisters, these ungagged Holy Crones, we tour the Realms of words, learning New meanings and connections. We see/hear that words fly together, sounding each other to freedom. They free each other as well as our Selves, breaking the patriarchal prison-keepers' patterns and soaring in Musing Metapatterns. Wise Women, who know that our Race is akin to the Race of Wild Words, find here clues to our own liberation. Words and women reclaim our own Nations, our tribes and formations. In this process, words and women aid each other. Our guiding is reciprocal, requited. United, we work to expel the bore-ocratic chairmen of the bored. We strive to make the world Weirder. (pp. 42–43)

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22

Justice for All: Women in Outdoor Education

Sarah A. Dubreuil Karpa

Introduction

I have always considered myself to be a bit of a feminist, believing that women and men should be treated similarly with equal access to opportunities. As an educated, able-bodied, mid-30s, middle-class, nonvisible minority woman, I come from a place of privilege regarding most areas of social justice. However, working in social work, I am often advocating for the needs of my clients, and I need to be understanding of the barriers they face. Oppression due to social justice factors is something that many face on a daily basis.

Recently, while pursuing postsecondary studies in outdoor education, I had a surprising encounter with oppression. I was suddenly quite aware of my gender, and that being a woman could influence my development in the field. No one overtly stated that the outdoors is a man's domain but that was the underlying impression. There was discussion of making the outdoors accessible to varying socioeconomic sectors, to be culturally sensitive, to be accommodating to varying physical capabilities, but no mention of gender was evidenced in the readings. In fact, the assigned readings not only neglected to address gender but, in addition, were predominantly written by men. Whilst some contained useful information, I felt like I could not see myself fully represented in any of the research we were provided in class.

S. A. Dubreuil Karpa (✉)
Calgary, AB, Canada

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As a social worker in Canada, I am directed to have an awareness of social justice issues that I may encounter (Canadian Social Workers Association, 2005). This consciousness has led me to examine different facets of my own life and question certain practices that I have encountered. Reflecting on my experiences within outdoor programming and the outdoor industry, I realized that certain expectations were put in place without considering my experience or abilities. Examples of this have spanned my personal, professional, and educational domains. I was told I am not a strong paddler before getting on the water, although I have been asked to work as a white-water rafting guide. Customers questioned my knowledge regarding outdoor equipment whilst I was working for an outdoor retailer over a span of 14 years. Repeatedly, I was shown how to tie a climbing knot in a course, despite the fact that I have taken several climbing courses and inexperienced male participants struggled to complete the same task. I began to wonder, were these assumptions based on my gender? More importantly, was my experience indicative of what girls and women encounter when trying to engage with the outdoors?

My Story: How Did I Get Here?

From an early age, I spent much of my time outside. No matter what I was doing, I often did it outdoors. My parents fostered my enjoyment of the outdoors by registering me in Girl Guides. Most of the year, I was engaged in outdoor activities with either Guides or my family. I was quite active in Guiding, completing my All-Round Cord (former highest achievement as a Girl Guide), the Canada Cord (highest level of achievement as a Pathfinder), and becoming a Junior Leader. I felt great pride in my accomplishments, gaining both experiences and skills over the years. My parents chose a gender-specific programme with the hope that it would provide me the opportunity to develop outdoor skills in an accepting environment. However, as I progressed through adolescence, I became less engaged with outdoor activities and Girl Guides. Outside of Guides, spending time outdoors was not considered something that girls did amongst my peer group and, as such, it became something I distanced myself from. The outdoors was not considered fashionable and, as a teenage girl, it was expected that I desire to be trendy. I hid my outdoor activities from my peers. Where I had once spent most weekends outdoors, I was now shopping at the mall, playing school-based sports, and going to parties. Whilst once being central to my identity, the outdoors became something that I felt I needed to enjoy in secret.

As a young adult, my peers once again wanted to spend time outside and started going camping and hiking. However, the activities I wanted were not in line with what my peers expected. Camping in a co-ed group involved driving to a local campground to sit around the campfire and drink all weekend. Yet, when the young men went camping on their own, they went backpacking, rock climbing, canoeing, and hiking. When I expressed interest in joining one of their trips, I was dismissed as not knowing enough about the outdoors to go and that I would not enjoy it. I recall one specific time when I was told that I would have more fun staying in town to do "girl" things. When I questioned my peers about this, I was told that camping was "guy time," and that I should not concern myself with it. Again, I was forced to enjoy the outdoors in secret and alone.

Examining the Literature

Boniface (2006) explains that men dominate participation rates in outdoor programmes, and that women are less likely to participate in outdoor activities unless there are other women present. Even then, mixed groups tend to have more men than women participating, which can cause seclusion of female participants (Autry, 2001). Societal gender norms are often maintained within conventional outdoor programming (Warren & Loeffler, 2006), where expectations of ability are often based on normative gender beliefs (Morse, 1997; Warren & Loeffler, 2006) causing assumptions of skill level (Wittmer, 2001). I do not doubt that these beliefs of normative gender roles within the outdoors influenced my interactions with peers as an adolescent and young adult.

Visual media helps perpetuate gender stereotypes within outdoor activities. McNiel, Harris, and Fondren (2012) found portrayal of normative gender roles in two prominent outdoor magazines, often showing women to be passive in the outdoor experience, either sitting or walking, whilst men were shown participating in challenging activities, such as rock climbing or kayaking. As women were shown to be well groomed and exhibiting rather than engaged in activity (McNiel et al., 2012), societal expectations of women in the outdoors were underscored and emphasized that women should be stylish when participating in outdoor activities (Warren & Loeffler, 2006). Media presents a *hegemonic femininity* by depicting women to be overtly traditionally feminine, promoting social norms whilst objectifying and oppressing women in the outdoors (Smith, 2016), whilst promoting the outdoors and outdoor activity as masculine (Humberstone, 2000). This all may lead to women believing that they do not belong in certain outdoor activities and discourage them from engaging in activities of interest (Lee, Scott, & Floyd, 2001). Even if they do believe that they belong in the outdoors, they may fear the potential stigma of rejecting gender expectations within their social group, leading to an avoidance of outdoor activities (McNiel et al., 2012). In retrospect, I can attribute my shift in activities to an awareness of societal pressure to conform and fit in with my peers, as well as to the fear of social rejection.

My Adult Experiences

As an adult, I am fortunate to have found a partner who does not subscribe to gender-normative beliefs. Active in the outdoors, we enjoy a variety of activities that span all four seasons. Enthusiastic about our outdoor adventures, we want to inspire others to enjoy the outdoors and maintain social media accounts to share our passion. This has led to a variety of interactions with our friends and the public regarding our outdoor activities. Many people have assumed that our activities are motivated by my husband, not realizing that our choices are a 50-50 partnership. We each have our preferred pursuits and organize our excursions accordingly; our hiking adventures are his passion, our rafting trips are mine. Yet, we are often asked how he has convinced me to partake in outdoor activities, most often ones that are of my choosing. It seems to be difficult for people to understand that a woman can be as passionate for outdoor adventure as a man.

Throughout our experiences, we have witnessed those who have made assumptions about my skills as well as the skills of female leaders prior to the excursion. Whilst we have observed few females in leadership positions on our adventures, they have all been treated as less knowledgeable than their male counterparts by other participants. On one such trip, the trip leader was highly educated and knowledgeable in her field and was also co-owner of the adventure company. Despite this, she was disregarded by many participants on the trip. Two male participants in particular, after openly dismissing my abilities, ignored her directions and recommendations. The men were overheard making several derogatory comments about women and their outdoor abilities, and expressed that they would have a lesser adventure experience due to their female guide. Their disregard for her leadership resulted in an emergency situation from which she needed to rescue them.

Related Literature

Women's technical skills tend to be overlooked in the outdoors (Warren & Loeffler, 2006), and this is amplified when a woman is in a leadership role (Wittmer, 2001). Not only are female leaders disregarded but participants have also been found to prefer male leaders due to gender bias (Jordan, 1991). This gender bias can be difficult for women to overcome in the outdoors due to societal reinforcement of gender norms (Jordan, 1991; Warren & Loeffler, 2006; Wittmer, 2001). Gender stereotypes in the outdoors can also lead women to doubt their own skills (Loeffler, 1997; Warren & Loeffler, 2006), whilst men may identify their own skills to be greater than women's (Warren & Loeffler, 2006), which potentially speaks to the greater gender issue of power imbalance (Jordan, 1991; Morse, 1997). However, these trends differ when participating in all-women activities, where societal gender norms can be challenged in a safe, supportive environment (Hornibrook et al., 1997; Loeffler, 1997; Mcdermott, 2004), indicating that a shift in how outdoor programmes are designed and delivered is required in order to provide equitable experiences to all participants.

Higher Education: An Unchanged Landscape

In spite of all my previous encounters regarding my gender in the outdoors, my recent experience in postsecondary was surprising as I thought that higher education would be more mindful of the need for inclusive practice. Classmates admitted this was not something that they had thought about until I mentioned it and agreed that gender, as well as all social justice issues, was something important to consider in outdoor education. This led me to locate literature on experience in the outdoors by women and about gender.

Using my social work roots, I looked at the role of social justice in education. As Warren (2005) explains, outdoor education "is a mirror of the prevailing social climate where changes in social structure affect theory and practice" (p. 94) signifying that if I wanted to look at how gender fits into outdoor education, I needed to understand more about social justice issues in general. Warren and Loeffler (2006) propose that an examination of social justice issues is important due to the changing societal climate.

Social justice teachings in outdoor education are lacking (Martin, 2013; Thomas, 2009; Warren, 2002; Warren, Roberts, Breunig, & Alvarez, 2014) indicating that those who are responsible for outdoor education programmes may not understand the importance of social justice. This can perpetuate disparity in outdoor programming regarding social justice issues such as race, gender, culture, age, ability, religion, or socioeconomic status (Warren et al., 2014). Furthermore, social justice issues do not exist independently of each other, and individuals may identify with many different areas within social justice (Warren et al., 2014). Picower (2012) explains that educators identify social justice issues as having implications for their work; however, it is something that outdoor education tends to overlook in training programmes (Thomas, 2009).

When social justice issues are examined in outdoor education, it is most often women scholars who address the subject (Martin, 2013). I found myself wondering: "If I had not brought up social justice issues in my outdoor education programme, would they have been addressed?" Whilst my experience led me to focus on gender, there was little consideration for social justice issues in general. Some discussion centred around how to make outdoor education programmes less expensive, but the way it was presented was still not accessible to those with a lower socioeconomic status. Had a classmate not brought up the importance of language, I am unsure that consideration of how outdoor education programmes are presented to participants would have happened. The curriculum placed emphasis on facilitating programming for those who were fit, able-bodied, high school students. However, even within our cohort a wide variety of ages, abilities, and previous experiences were apparent. There was also a focus on task completion rather than the journey itself, which speaks to the traditional masculine perspective that nature is something to dominate whereas women tend to see it as something to connect with (Cosgriff, Little, & Wilson, 2009).

Outdoor programmes have traditionally been designed by men (Gilliam, 1993; Warren, 2002; Warren et al., 2014), which has resulted in programmes that may fail to take into account feminist theory and the role gender plays in society (Humberstone, 2000; Mitten, 1994; Warren, 2002; Warren et al., 2014). Warren and Loeffler (2006) suggest that current outdoor education, with emphasis on technical skills over interpersonal skills, is a disservice to both men and women as it fails to provide a balanced leadership approach. This style of training lends itself to spreading gender bias and prolonging current gender norms in the outdoors. If outdoor education training was well rounded, a more person-centred approach could be taught in order to generate facilitators that are better equipped to support all participants (Thomas, 2009). This type of training would allow facilitators to consider each participant's needs individually and tailor the programming accordingly.

It has been suggested that when curriculum is taught with a "gender-conscious pedagogy" (p. 13), students are more likely to become agents of change towards gender equality in their respective field (Witt & Cuesta, 2014). Therefore, in order to see a change in how women are treated by society in the outdoors, there needs to be a change in how gender is addressed in outdoor education programmes. Whilst the number of women in outdoor education is on the rise, there continues to be unequal representation of women in positions of leadership in the field (Gray, 2016) and in literature (Martin, 2013). This may be due to societal beliefs of leadership roles being associated with masculine expectations (Jordan, 1991; Wittmer, 2001), leading women to be limited in their opportunities and desire to take the lead in outdoor education (Gray, 2016; Loeffler, 1997). The lack of women in visible leadership roles has led to a lack of pressure to change the current programming, as programmes were designed by an “old boy network” (Morse, 1997, p. 126) that has largely neglected the role of gender dynamics (Humberstone, 2000). It is important to note that people will resist oppressive practice in order to stimulate change within the current practice (Morse, 1997), which may be why women choose to focus on bringing gender and other social justice issues to the forefront of outdoor education scholarship (Martin, 2013). By critiquing gender inequality in my education experience, I chose to employ a feminist perspective in an attempt to liberate myself from the restrictions of the established norm.

Trekking Onward: Future Trails for Gender Equity

There is undoubtedly a need for social justice training in outdoor education as established through both the literature and my personal experience. Outdoor education seems to be caught in a circular argument—social justice issues are not taught so masculine perspectives remain; masculine perspectives remain so there is no push to change and include social justice issues. Awareness of gender disparity is central to creating opportunities for women to engage in the outdoors. The literature indicates that outdoor programming focuses on men and gender-normative representations in the outdoors, whilst my experience demonstrates that gender bias towards women in the outdoors endures. Feminist theory is fundamental for progression of gender equity in the outdoors. It is crucial that education and training programmes begin to teach social justice ideas in order to enact change.

It is important to note that the questions raised in my outdoor education programme did lead to meaningful conversations. After these conversations, one male professor began looking at how local outdoor education programmes dealt with various social justice issues, finding that one school had dealt with gender disparity in their programme attendance through addressing the students' needs for gender-specific programmes. Through questioning and challenging the traditional outdoor education curriculum presented, I was able to address social justice issues and gain further insight into the field. It is my hope that this provided a learning opportunity for my classmates that they would not have otherwise received.

Starting the dialogue around social justice issues seems central to making change in outdoor education. Morse (1997) suggests we need discussions on how "language, social norms and power issues" (p. 129) contribute to the climate of social justice in outdoor education. Conversations explicitly examining personal levels of privilege can be an area in which to start, as each individual needs to be aware of their own freedoms and biases (Warren & Loeffler, 2000). Wittmer (2001) recommends that programmes specifically discuss gender bias, both in programming and on a personal level. By using feminist perspectives, gender can be at the forefront of social justice conversations, leading to change within outdoor programmes. It is suggested that by creating a learning environment that is noncompetitive and supportive by design, participants may feel more confident, empowered, and engaged with outdoor programming (Hornibrook et al., 1997; Loeffler, 1997; Mcdermott, 2004; Warren & Loeffler, 2006). Whilst change will take time to infiltrate the entire outdoor industry, by starting with outdoor education training programmes, new facilitators will have the skills to support social justice in the field moving forward.

Without having these social justice conversations, it is impossible to inform the old boys' network of changes that are wanted and need to happen. Having recently given birth to a daughter, I have scrutinized the role of gender in outdoor programmes more than in the past. It is my hope that she adores the outdoors as much as I do and has unlimited opportunities to participate in outdoor activities. Through further dialogue, I am optimistic that gender and other social justice issues will be regularly addressed in outdoor programming and that she will not face the same barriers to experiencing the outdoors as I, and others before me, did.

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Part III

Motherhood and Outdoor Learning Environments: Chaos and Complexity

Bridget Jackson

In 1995, British mountaineer Alison Hargreaves died whilst descending K2. In mourning the loss of an accomplished mountaineer, a media furore ensued that focused on her as the mother of two young children—debating her motives whilst criticizing and challenging her reasoning and family responsibilities. Onlookers, at the time, would be forgiven for thinking that she was the only mother in the world pursuing an adventurous life. Starkly absent from the debate, though, was Hargreaves' voice and a true understanding of her personal motivations, rationale, and vision for her life; instead, Western society's interpretation and expectations of motherhood dominated.

For women whose lives are deeply intertwined with the outdoors, beyond the obvious practicalities and logistics, it can be particularly difficult to premeditate how children will impact their mother's relationship with the outdoor environment and the way of life she identifies with.

Most women find themselves encountering some difficulties, whether with their partners, children, or internally, when navigating the demanding landscape of motherhood. To raise children in parallel with extended time away from home can present even greater challenges and unexpected consequences. Visions of how working in outdoor environments and raising children will mesh cannot be underestimated or simplified—the decisions, the guilt, and emotional wrangling, the juggling, joy, and friction can be confronting, illuminating and contradictory.

B. Jackson
Blackheath, NSW, Australia

Authors in this part, “Motherhood and Outdoor Learning Environments: Chaos and Complexity,” raise myriad questions about the aspects of our lives that are sacrificed, challenged, enhanced, or exposed when a woman embraces motherhood and continues her involvement in outdoor learning spaces. The compelling narratives that follow explore and expose the competing demands and difficult decisions many women make around family and career. How does society accommodate this? How do our children interpret an adventurous mother? Or the absence of their mother?

For some, motherhood brings with it an enhanced sensitivity to the wilderness and transition, where physical risk taking is replaced with an appreciation of children’s love of nature. For others, gender sensitivity and identity dominate their discourse as a new “self” is defined. Buckley’s story is about the healing coming from being outdoors in the Flinders Ranges, South Australia. After disorienting grief from the death of her 22-year-old son, Buckley slowly and deliberately transitioned through this grief. She emerged as, among other things, an outdoor leader.

As unique as each of us is, so, too, is our response to the joys, demands, and heartaches of parenting and our relationship with the outdoor life and a world that nourishes our soul and being.

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Conversations with My Children: The Outdoors as a Site of Disaster and Triumph

Jackie Kiewa

Introduction

Many models and theories have been developed to describe the adventure experience (e.g., Ewert, 1985; Kiewa, 1995; Noyce, 1958), but a model developed by Samdahl in 1988 has always been my favourite. This model was developed specifically for women from a symbolic interactionist perspective, which focuses on the active development of personal meanings and understandings through interaction with generalized and specific others (Stryker, 2007, pp. 1088–1089). Although it focuses on leisure rather than adventurous activity, I always felt that it fitted my experiences. Samdahl suggested that leisure should be understood in terms of the roles that we negotiate through interaction with significant others. These roles are perceived to be more or less constraining, more or less self-expressive. Within this framework, leisure is defined through a two-dimensional construct: the first axis denotes freedom from role restraint, whilst the second axis becomes the degree of self-expression that we achieve through participation in the activity.

Freedom from role restraint is a dimension of leisure that points to its potential as a site of *resistance* (Rojek, 1995; Wearing, 1996) as a means of escaping or resisting the status quo, of achieving "relative freedom from the external compulsive forces of one's culture and physical environment"

J. Kiewa (✉)
Brisbane, QLD, Australia

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(Goodale & Godbey, 1988, p. 9). Such a notion has always appealed to me. I hated the idea of dresses, make-up, and high heels as my daily uniform, as well as the idea of spending my precious weekends cleaning the house. I wanted to wear jeans and T-shirts and spend as much time as possible outside. If I could get grubby, that would be even better!

To some extent, my research supported my natural inclinations. I read that, "Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are" (Foucault, 1982, p. 286). I read that resistance involved risks. Butler's analysis of de Beauvoir's suggestion that one "becomes" a woman led her to the conclusion that "to stray outside of established gender is in some sense to put one's very existence into question" (Butler, 1987, p. 132). I disagreed! I had been labelled a "tomboy" since I was six years old and was confident in my own existence. I wanted to *dislocate* gender norms and "infuse the process through which gender is constructed with emancipatory potential" (McNay, 1992, p. 71).

So I knew what I was running away from. But what was I running towards? The project of refusing what we are is an empty one if there is nothing to put in its place, as Bauman (1992) observed. Describing postmodern philosophy as the "critique that finds it ever more difficult to go on being critical just because it has destroyed everything it used to be critical about," he went on to say, "How empty seems the effort to show that what passes for truth is false when nothing has the courage and the stamina to declare itself as truth for everybody and for all time" (p. viii). But this didn't apply to me. I knew that the outdoors was real and that when I was climbing or kayaking all façade was broken away. I knew what I was embracing: a life of adventure. And I was lucky enough to have a job that allowed me—encouraged me—to fully embrace these pursuits. Nothing could be better.

There was one little hiccup. I had three children.

But I refused to accept the idea of constraint. Funnell (1995, p. 178) suggested that "forcing free from positioning is for most a pipe dream—jobs have to be held or sought, bills paid, dependents cared for, given and fought for, reputations have to be upheld." Symbolic interactionism, in particular, often focuses on the constraints that are imposed by society, and Stryker (2007) has observed that current sociological images emphasize society's "resistance to change and tendency to reproduce itself" (p. 1090). None of this applied to me. I had the dream job, and the only reputation I really cared about was my reputation as a competent outdoors woman and leader.

Dependents?

I was an adventurer. This was my identity.

It was a little disturbing to read Zweig's description of an adventurer, whom he describes as exclusively male, in flight from, and in conflict with women: "Women have the power to bind; they are witches whose secret ropes confine the adventurer's energies" (Zweig, 1974, p. 68). Zweig said that the notion of escape is the first defining characteristic of the adventurer; to exist at all, he must first escape from the confining chains of domesticity and enduring relationships. This was difficult. It helped to read alternative, feminist constructions of the adventurer (or hero), such as those written by Bologh (1990) or Polster (1992) who focused more on courage and an original perspective.

It seemed that an adventurer could be understood as self-in-isolation, engaged in grand projects that serve essentially to promote self-aggrandisement, or as self-in-relationship, whose "endless striving" necessarily involves a *loving struggle* to develop authentic relationships with others. I naturally preferred the second construction and focused my research on the notion that an important characteristic of involvement in outdoor adventurous activity is the construction of intimate, meaningful relationships with others that involve mutual and unconditional acceptance of the other's subjectivity (Kiewa, 2000).

But my children?

The Outdoors: A Site of Disaster?

My children are grown up now. They live independently, apart from me and each other. Yet when I asked them what was difficult about my involvement in outdoor leadership and recreation, they all said the same thing:

Matt	One thing really stands out and that was—you used to go away a lot, and that made me scared, or anxious. I think as kids—kids need stability, and that wasn't really a stable environment.
Danni	It's not really neglect, because it wasn't that, but it was a feeling that you weren't there, and also a feeling that you preferred to be away, that you preferred other things, to being with me.
Robyn	I felt that you loved me, but I felt that you didn't know me..... As I was growing up I felt like there were things I couldn't share with you because you didn't know me.

Matt I would be anxious that you would die, shooting some rapid or climbing some mountain, and when you're a kid your mum is the centre of your universe and I was always really anxious that you weren't going to come home. I remember I would be praying every night, and I would squeeze my fists together and say, 'Please let Mummy come home please God.'

Danni So I spent a lot of my life feeling this loss for you and always scared that you were going to die and feeling this emptiness of not having you there.

Robyn I remember….being worried, about things that might happen to you. …. I remember going to my psychic and bringing that up, and he told me that you weren't going to die. He said, definitely not Mt. Everest, as well, because I thought you might go climbing up Mt. Everest and die up there.

This was painful. These were painful conversations. My children were remembering when they were tiny, when I would pack them off to their grandparents, or to their father, or whoever would take them, so that I could spend my weekends and holidays immersed in mountains and rivers.

As my outdoor career intensified, camps, conferences, and workshops were added to the mix. By this time, the children were teenagers and no longer compliant about being farmed out to babysitters. They were old enough to look after themselves, they pointed out. Perhaps. I began to feel that I was living in a nightmare zone. As the children became teenagers, I had expected difficulties, of course—but the partying, the drinking, the drugs—it was beyond anything I had envisioned. Academic marks were down. No one was qualifying for university. No one had any career aspirations or prospects that I could see. They were always polite to me, agreed with everything I said, and then did exactly what they wanted. When I came home from a weekend away, the house was always impeccably tidy. The recycling bin was always full to the brim with beer cans. In the garden were bits of hose and plastic bottles filled with ugly brown fluid.

My weekends paddling and climbing were my sanctuary, and I loved the stimulation of conferences and camps, and workshops. But my nights away were often sleepless with guilt and worry: what were the kids up to?

In remembering these years, my children are not so unanimous. Robyn was living with her father and missed out on all the parties. Matt, who was the main instigator of the mayhem, is now not sure that it was a good thing:

> I would say that we probably were too free. Everyone else seemed to have much more rigid expectations of what your life should be right now. I don't think we

> had that very much. But I don't really see that as a negative, it was just part of the way I grew up, and I wouldn't go back and change it now. I think that—I'd look at it and think, well that's not how I'll bring my children up.

Danni, on the other hand, was more affected and absolutely adamant that it wasn't a good thing:

> And then as a teenager, definitely I definitely got into a lot of trouble. I had the opportunity to drink and get drunk and party and throw parties and have lots of alcohol around and Matthew's friends who were boys and that sort of thing. So maybe I missed a bit of guidance, or something—strong guidance.

I'd hoped I was guiding her, but Matthew pointed out:

> You were a strong, physically able, confident woman, and sometimes in today's world, women are seen as not being physically able, and they're pretty and beautiful, and—I think—for Danni—she was getting this role model of what a woman was like, and it was perhaps a little bit unconventional—and that made her grow up feeling different as well.

I'd rejected Barbie dolls, but my daughter had not. I was unable to accept the *girly* side of Danni, but she just wanted to fit in.

Matthew moved on, but Danni seemed stuck. Perry and Szalavitz (2008) observed that the developing brain of a child responds to a chaotic lifestyle by becoming more sensitized to stress, which can result in disassociation techniques such as daydreaming. This was Danni, and it took her a long time to recover.

For years, I have lived with a strong sense of guilt over the pain that I caused my children. When they were born, I was determined that I would provide them with the unconditional love and care that would ensure that they had the best possible nurturing environment. Instead, I was lured away by the call to adventure and left my children to stumble after me as best they could.

Blair-Loy (2003) provided an insightful summary of my situation. My devotion to the outdoors can be understood as a calling to a career or vocation that "deserves single minded allegiance and gives meaning and purpose to life" (pp. 1–2)—the "schema of work devotion." This devotion, however, was on a collision course with a second cultural model: the "family devotion schema" which defines a woman's primary vocation to be marriage and motherhood, and constructs an understanding of children as fragile and in need of a mother's care. Historically, men have been able to devote themselves to their careers, secure in the knowledge that their precious children are being well looked after. Women, generally, have no such comfort and find themselves torn by the conflict between these "irreconcilable commitments" (Blair-Loy, 2003, p. 1). I was one of these women.

Stryker (2007) provided an analysis of identity theory which throws further light on my conflict. He used symbolic interaction to develop a theory of a person's multiple identities. Theoretically, people have as many identities as there are "systems of role relationships in which they participate" (p. 1092). Unfortunately, these identities are often in conflict, as Blair-Loy (2003) observed. How much distress is caused by this conflict depends on the degree of commitment one has to these identities. In his studies, Stryker found two factors that contributed to the degree of commitment. The first is interactional commitment, which refers to the *number* of relationships that are involved in this identity. This was easily resolved for me; my adventurous identity was confirmed by hundreds of people: my work colleagues, my students (past and present), and my partners in adventure. Against these overwhelming odds were my interactions with three small children, which were all that were involved in my identity as a mother. But the second factor created the crunch: affective commitment, or the *depth of emotional attachment* to these others. Deep down, I knew that my children were more important to me than all those hundreds of others.

The Outdoors: A Site of Triumph

My involvement in the outdoors caused my children grief. It also provided them with inspiration.

Robyn Well, as a child, growing up, when we did things it was always exciting. Like, I don't think I would have my love for the outdoors if it wasn't for you and Dad and your passion for the outdoors—camping and all that sort of thing—even though Moreton Island was intense for a young girl, it's still something I look back on fondly. Not many people I know have stories like I do.

Matt Well, you instilled in us a love for the outdoors, and I think a real sense of environmental values and things like that. It was really exciting being able to go kayaking and paddling and feeling like we could climb mountains, whereas other kids—what would they be doing? They'd be doing things like staying at home watching videos. I'm sure that lots of parents took their kids camping, but I felt like we got a more—a truer sense of that adventure stuff.

Danni I remember you took me to New Zealand when I was sixteen because you wanted me to get away from Horrible Michael, and that is a really good memory that I have, because—yeah! That was you and me, spending time together, going bushwalking, having one on one time together and that was a really good memory.

My kids loved our adventurous weekends and holidays. But what of their adventurous mother? In our conversation, Matt observed that my unconventionality was difficult—neither he nor his sisters necessarily wanted such a strange mother—someone who picked them up from school, often late, dressed in peculiar clothing, and often covered in scrapes.

I remembered that Robyn had previously remarked on a photograph that featured my ever-present cuts and bruises, and I asked her about them:

> *What about all the Band-Aids on my legs and my rough hands that you remember about me?*
>
> Yeah, that's in the photograph too. It's a photograph of your legs, and I'm sitting on the floor, and you've got Band-Aids and cuts on your legs and your hands were always rough and callused.
>
> *And what effect did that have on you?*
>
> I really liked my hands. And I remember looking at my hands and admiring my hands but then when I got older I noticed that they were starting to become rough like yours. And then I remember thinking that your hands had a story and they might not be beautiful and dainty but they had a story.

At some point in her development, Robyn stopped worrying about my oddities and started enjoying them.

> My passion for the adventurous life made me strange.
> It made me absent.
> And it made me admirable.

Danni You were an inspiration in what women could achieve—like you were a strong feminist, and being able to climb and kayak and go all around the world—I'm really proud to tell my friends that. My friends are really amazed that I have a mother that does that, and that shows me that I can do whatever I want if I put my mind to it and that's been a big thing that's always existed in my life.

Matt I definitely see you as a role model. I look back on how you were, and how I was as a young teenager and a young man, and I have always been immensely proud of who you were—so proud of the fact that you lived your life the way you wanted to live it. It's not that you put us second, but you certainly put yourself—not first, but you lived the life you wanted to live, and that's something that I was proud of about you and I loved that.

Robyn And I think it's made me independent and confident when it comes to outdoor activities and things like that. Like when I took that hiking trip at Mt. Glorious, even though it was quite intense and could be quite dangerous in some ways. I don't think I would have been able to do that if I hadn't experienced—hadn't grown up with those sort of experiences. And I think, having seen that you were able to do that, and seeing your strength—that's had an impact on me and Danni. We're quite confident, strong women ourselves, leaders in some aspects.

And in this part of the conversation, Danni has more to say:

> And I guess also, even in my self-destructive behaviour—I also had this other side—like I knew what had to be done to be healthy, because you were so healthy, with your eating habits and your fitness and outdoor stuff. I knew what I had to do and what it felt like to be healthy, so I was also able to—I knew I had another option. I was able to choose that other option.

We talked about her taking the other option:

> *So, you can't really say you'd want to change your life because where you are now is a really good place, and although it was painful getting here, at least you got here.*
>
> Yeah.
>
> *You went through the trauma and difficult times…*
>
> But it was a really big lesson. Like it was almost like going to university and getting a degree. And then also what you did, that also helped me, so although part of it was what made me angry, at the same time it helped me move forward.
>
> *So it's a big contradiction.*
>
> Yeah.

The Loving Struggle

Contradictory is one word that fits my experiences as an adventurous mother. Another is *struggle*, or, more specifically, a *loving struggle*.

This term was coined by Jaspers (1955) as an alternative to the construct of *endless striving*. Endless striving is an idea often used by existentialist philosophers (e.g., Kierkegaard, 1941) to describe humankind's situation. To come to any kind of firm, unchanging identity amounts to the objectification of oneself—the end of subjectivity; a kind of death. An authentic life is one of endless striving for self-understanding. In many ways, it is an apt term to describe an adventurous life. Yet this is a term that is essentially individualistic and for this reason, Jaspers, still working in the existential tradition, preferred to use the phrase *the loving struggle*. In this meeting of existentialism with symbolic interactionism, Jaspers argued that the essential meaning of our lives arises through communication with others, communication that he described as a struggle:

> The unlimited will to communicate, then, never means simply to submit oneself to the other as such, but rather to know that other, to hear him, to will to reckon with him even unto the necessity of a transformation of oneself. (Jaspers, 1955, pp. 98–99)

My relationship with my children has been a struggle, as we each sought to find meaning in our personal lives and in each other. My desire for adventure conflicted with the children's desire for a mother who was always present, and my consciousness that I was not meeting their needs fed my guilt. As Matthew observed, I was torn:

> I have a really clear memory, of—you must have been away on some adventure and we were staying down in Sydney with Auntie Linda, and I remember meeting you at the airport and you just pounding down past the other passengers—you saw us and you just couldn't wait to hug us and we just ran into each other's arms—and I always knew how much you wanted to be with us. I guess you must have been torn—it must have been difficult for you.

Matthew's confidence in my love stands in marked contrast to Danni's belief that I preferred to be elsewhere and goes a long way towards explaining the difference in their ability to cope. But now Danni can say:

> Well, now I've done a lot of stuff like reflection and learning from that and so I think that my relationship with people is a lot better and my relationship with you is very close. We get to talk about whatever and have a very open transparent relationship and we think the same way and we like to talk about the same things and so I think that we get along really well.

And Robyn says:

> I felt that you didn't know me. But that changed because you retired. So then I felt like you started to know me. As I was growing up I felt like there were things I couldn't share with you because you didn't know me, but since then I feel that I can share with you a lot—I can be very open with you.

I retired. The camps ceased, as did the workshops and conferences. I grew older and sustained a few injuries. I stopped serious climbing and kayaking, and took up bushwalking, sea kayaking, and a science degree. I spent lots of time with Danni's two boys, whilst Danni studied for her degree in Indigenous Studies (majoring in trauma and healing). Robyn still worries that I might die on an overseas trip, but Matthew observed:

> Mum, I'm not sure that you're an adventurer any more. You've become a granny who likes science.

What conclusion can this chapter come to? That life goes on? That there are no easy solutions? That time resolves all dilemmas? That you need to be true to yourself (whatever that means)?

Perhaps one conclusion is that our society is not well equipped to support working mothers. The nuclear family is based on the premise that the man goes out to work and the woman stays at home, minding the children. This has changed, but the nuclear family has not. Perhaps other societies, where both men and women worked outside the home, have structures in place, whereby children are cared for by other adults. I have in mind a society where people live together in large extended families, so someone is always available to care for the children. Danni had a similar picture in her mind when she said:

> I guess society is not supportive of that sort of thing. …if there wasn't the nuclear family. …you were the sole mother and care provider—that was you—and so I was completely dependent on you.
>
> *And I was separated from your dad, so that made it even more so.*
>
> Yeah, that's not natural. It's not natural for one person to be the complete provider for everything with tribal kids.

I know my story is not unique. Other studies of women who have made a career in the outdoors (e.g., Allin, 2004; Lotz, 2017; Wright & Gray, 2013) have detailed the difficulties and contradictions that such a career involves.

Like me, these studies have no simple answers to these difficulties beyond a general call for support and flexibility on the part of workplaces, family, and community.

I think that life involves choices. And every choice involves loss, as well as gain. I chose to juggle the adventurous life with motherhood and lost the sense that I had provided a structured, supportive environment for my children. For this, I reaped a harvest of guilt. But I also gained many immensely powerful experiences which shaped the person that I became, the person that inspired my children to choose to become the dynamic and powerful adults of whom I am so proud.

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Mirrored Tensions: A Mother–Daughter Introspection on Gendered Experiences in Outdoor Recreation

Janice Oakley, Stephanie Potter, and Teresa Socha

Introduction

Active participation in outdoor recreation has prompted us to question why and how our experiences in the field have been shaped by the dominant discourse of hegemonic masculinity, and our modes of resistance to it. Together, we examined mother (Teresa)/daughter (Stephanie) narratives and subsequently deconstructed the recurring themes in our experiences. Frustrated by the extent to which our experiences mirrored each other, despite 30 years of progress, this chapter focuses on our lived experiences with the masculinity that characterizes outdoor recreation (Humberstone, 2000; Warren, 1996), the internalized pressure to *beat the boys* and become *superwoman* whilst participating in the field (Allin, 2000; Hoffert, 2015; Newbery, 2003), and the recognized importance of supportive males who resist dominant ideologies of gender to move the field towards social justice.

J. Oakley (✉)
Department of Women's Studies, Faculty of Education, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, ON, Canada

S. Potter
Thunder Bay, ON, Canada

T. Socha
Faculty of Education, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, ON, Canada

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This autoethnographic chapter presents a critical reflection of Teresa and Stephanie's experiences in outdoor recreation, and seeks to politicize dominant themes that shaped their gendered identities. Working in concert with a third author (Janice), we adopted a feminist lens to shine light on the social construction of gender in relation to the field and our experiences within it (Butler, 1993). Although our experiences often *mirror* each other, we do not assume that similar narratives are consistent across all realms of participation in outdoor environments—we recognize that our social locations deeply shape our perceptions and lived experiences. We thus acknowledge the complexity of the field of outdoor recreation for women and *others*, and we approach it as a realm that requires transformation from a masculinist construction to an inclusive terrain that acknowledges and celebrates diversity in experiences, abilities, bodies, identities, and desires.

Setting the Scene

Teresa	Stephanie
I was born in Montreal, Quebec, a second-generation Canadian of Polish descent from a white, working-class family. Exposed to car camping from a very young age, being involved in tennis, and playing outdoors with friends in our urban neighbourhood for hours at a time defined my childhood outdoor recreation experiences.	I was born in Thunder Bay, Ontario, into a white, middle-class family with a passion for the outdoors. From nearly the day that I was carried through the hospital doors, my parents fostered opportunities for me to explore the outdoors. From pushing the limits of my rubber boots whilst fishing in backyard puddles, to raft guiding in Jasper, Alberta, learning through challenge in outdoor environments played an integral role in shaping my childhood and early-adult experiences.
As a privileged, thin, athletic teenager, and young adult, I vehemently resisted the dominant culture's inscriptions of femininity, namely weakness, by seeking a strong, athletic body to prove that I was as good as, or even better than, the boys. This gender identity was established during my young adolescent years as a competitive tennis player.	Throughout middle and early high school years especially, I encountered significant pressure to conform to stereotypical social expectations of femininity that are shaped by the dominant discourse (Butler, 1993, 1999; Spade & Valentine, 2014): tight clothing, makeup, long straight hair, passivity, weekends spent at the mall, and so on.

I had strong female role models, Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova, to emulate, both of whom were aggressive on the court and fiercely competitive. These displays of "expected sporting masculinity" (Wellard, 2016, p. 3) were, however, juxtaposed with tennis dresses and frilly panties of the times, to keep us looking feminine—another site of resistance for me. Yet, beneath this athletic self-confidence lay my body insecurities, and as a result, I also embraced "technologies of the self," primarily self-surveillance (Foucault, 1988, p. 18), to maintain thinness.	Driven by the desire to fit in, I performed many of these normative practices despite my associated discomfort. Through sport, I began to challenge the gender policing/regulation (Preston, 2016) to which I was subjected. Although women's volleyball is inherently sexualized through dress, I connected with the sport as an opportunity to assert strength and confidence.

Our Approach

We approached our introspective work from a feminist perspective, using a collaborative autoethnographic approach (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2013; Geist-Martin et al., 2010). We acknowledge that introspection and reflection without guidance can, as Béatrice Boufoy-Bastick (2004) cogently articulates, "result in nothing more than pointless self-absorbing introspective 'navel gazing,' excessive subjectivity and self-delusion" (para. 3). We endeavoured to be critically self-reflexive of our "sociopolitical interactivity" (Spry, 2001, p. 713), and thus subjected our ideas to questioning from ourselves, co-authors, and significant others. We embraced the messiness of this iterative process and honoured the time it took.

Independent of each other, we (Stephanie and Teresa) began writing our personal narratives. Then, through sharing our stories with co-authors and significant others, we were able to highlight recurring themes and question our understandings and attachment of personal meaning to our experiences. In essence, we "held up mirrors to each other in communal self-interrogation," willing to be "vulnerable and open" with each other, and "explored our subjectivity in the company of one another" (Chang et al., 2013, pp. 26, 28). Doing so encouraged us to explore our ideas in more depth, which helped flesh out central themes across our stories and locate the political within our personal experiences. Overwhelmed by the complexity and multitude of intersecting identities and social forces (Thornton Dill & Kohlman, 2012), it was only after extensive discussion and questioning that we were able to begin to understand the depth and implications of our experiences in outdoor recreation.

A Discussion of Central Themes

Hegemonic Masculinity in the Field

Teresa	Stephanie
In my later teen years, I was introduced to hiking and rock climbing, and subsequently took up canoeing, kayaking, and backcountry skiing. I was quickly drawn to outdoor recreation as it afforded more opportunities to be outdoors, connected with nature; yet, hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) continued to rear its head. As a young assistant on a college co-ed hiking trip, and not much older than the students, I was asked by the male instructor to accompany a girl who was experiencing great difficulty on the trip back to the outdoor centre, and to then navigate to a rendezvous point with a map and compass. Two boys were sent with me. I remember questioning to myself: "Why boys, and why these two?" as I found them particularly annoying with their exaggerated displays of physical prowess. I felt compelled to show them otherwise, and proceeded to walk at a pace that taxed their fitness level, to demonstrate that women are highly capable.	With family and close friends, outdoor recreation represented an environment in which I felt a sense of emotional safety and freedom to step outside of traditional gender stereotypes and associated expectations (Hoffert, 2015). Outside of these close-knit groups, however, gendered social expectations were strong, and I accepted and took on the notion that being a *true* competent outdoor recreationist was synonymous with being perceived and accepted as *one of the boys*: fulfilling the ideals defined by hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Junior to my white-water paddling peers, for example, I was determined not to show how I struggled to carry my 23-kilogram solo canoe down the portage, slung on one aching shoulder, as I hurried after the men who carried much lighter kayaks. Like the image they emulated, I strived to be just as strong and able (Newbery, 2003; Warren, 1996). I was unaware of the social forces to which I was set against, and did not see these experiences as problematic until I began analysing them through a feminist lens in university.
On personal outdoor trips, I was often the only female participant—just *me and the boys* out *conquering nature*. In the 1980s there were fewer women participating in outdoor recreation and even fewer female role models to emulate. I generally felt accepted by the dominant male group until, on one occasion, when co-planning a canoe trip with them, one of the participants suggested it be *a boys' trip*.	Despite my growing awareness and understanding of the norms shaped by hegemonic masculine relations, resisting them continued to be a struggle for me in many social settings. For example, whilst beginning a day of climbing with a group of males I had never climbed with before, I found that I was very shy to participate in ways that I thought would reveal my *lesser* abilities in comparison to theirs. Although I wanted to push my abilities on the rock, I remained passive, waiting instead to be invited to become more involved.

It was then that I began to long for an all-women's outdoor trip. I had come to understand that my desire to be with women in the outdoors was, in part, a result of my resentment to have to defend my rightful place in outdoor recreation (Hoffert, 2015).	Despite my awareness of and desire to resist traditional gendered scripts, my experiences in the field continued to be heavily shaped by seemingly unfulfillable social expectations defined by hegemonic masculinity.

The field of outdoor recreation is a stereotypically masculine terrain, fuelled in the popular imagination by images of men engaging in risky, adrenaline-fuelled pursuits in which they test their bodies to the limits whilst *conquering* nature. Strength, ability, and skill are connected to this image, contributing to the construction of the outdoors as a space for men to perform an idealized, hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1990; Humberstone, 2000; McNeil, Harris, & Fondren, 2012; Messner, 2002). Through this portrayal, wilderness becomes a site for men to assert a rugged form of individualism, testing themselves against the elements. As William Cronon (1996) writes, "In the wilderness, a man could be a real man, the rugged individual he was meant to be before civilization sapped his energy and threatened his masculinity" (p. 78).

Where, then, does this leave women? Whilst boys and men are encouraged to display their bodies in forceful and skilled ways through sport and physical recreation, girls and women get the message that they should limit their strengths and enthusiasm, retaining a feminine, heterosexual presentation whilst participating in sports deemed *acceptable* for their bodies (Ezzel, 2009). Following this construction, outdoor recreation becomes a complex space for women to negotiate, as Teresa and Stephanie's narratives attest. Women may experience pressure to maintain a heterosexualized feminine presentation, or if they reject this cultural script, a pressure to *step back in line* to their expected gender role. Ultimately, through the hetero-masculine construction of the field, women who participate in it are seen as transgressing against the dominant order.

McNeil et al. (2012) explain that one of the ways the hegemonic masculinity of the field is evidenced is through a distorted presentation of women in advertising that portrays outdoor pursuits. Their analysis of outdoor magazine advertisements found that women are rarely depicted in such advertisements, but when they are, their physical accomplishments are either downplayed or heralded as *rare* or *unique* accomplishments that may stand in threat to a woman's *feminine* identity. In this way, women are literally erased from the popular imagination of outdoor recreation, or they are presented as rare exceptions to the rule. An internalized need to be an *exception to the rule* is clear in the narratives above.

The *boys' club* of outdoor recreation is also evidenced through the persistent lack of gender parity in the field. In some contexts, women have been outright excluded from the field—Outward Bound, for example, was almost an exclusively male institution when it began in 1941, and deliberations were still taking place in the 1970s regarding the *crisis* of young women joining their ranks (Warren, 1996). Sarah Hoffert (2015) writes that today, women are still represented in "appallingly small numbers…as technical trip leaders, directors of outdoor programs in university settings, and directors of national organizations with outdoor emphasis" (p. 29), and women are also frequently left out of leadership literature (Henderson, 1996). Despite the fact that women are active participants across all outdoor activities, the idea that men are *natural leaders* and superior to women in terms of their physical abilities remains a hegemonic patriarchal ideology (Cousineau & Roth, 2012).

Women—including the authors of this chapter—are drawn to outdoor recreation for various reasons. The benefits to their participation are numerous, including maintaining a connection to nature, experiencing spirituality, gaining a feeling of empowerment, and improved mental, physical, and emotional health (Henderson, 1996; Wesely & Gaarder, 2004; Whittington, 2006). Despite limited role models and the gender-role stereotyping that positions outdoor recreation as a site for men to enact a hegemonic masculinity, women continue to participate in every recreational form of outdoor programming. Doing so, however, means they must negotiate competing ideas about outdoor adventure and/or their very identities, or push their bodies beyond levels of physical comfort to *prove* themselves worthy of participating in the first place. As Michelle Wright and Tonia Gray (2013) note, "[Women] have experienced firsthand the ways that women in outdoor fields face stigmas…[and] must unflinchingly face any challenge, with fearless determination and a cup of 'toughen-up'" (p. 12).

Beating the Boys and Negotiating the *Superwoman* Complex

Teresa	Stephanie
As a result of my experiences in sport, I continued to enact a "particular masculinized performance of gender" (Newbery, 2003, p. 211) in the outdoors. I felt a strong need to demonstrate my competence and strength to male participants.	Whilst pursuing more technical activities such as white-water canoeing and climbing, where groups are primarily dominated by men, I continue to feel as though I have to demonstrate that my competence, strength, and tenacity earn me the right (Hoffert, 2015) to, for example, stern a canoe with a male bow paddler.

"If a guy can portage a canoe, so could I, [and] run the portage at the same time. If a guy can carry a heavy pack, I too could carry more than half my bodyweight" (Russell, Cameron, Socha, & McNinch, 2013, p. 29). I had to be stoic; to show signs of fatigue and pain would only highlight a lack of strength and reinforce assumptions of women's weakness. I remember one time crying in silence from fatigue, out of male view, and questioning my ability (rather than the load I was carrying on my back: alpine skis and boots, camping gear, clothing, and food, which exceeded 30 kg). This common behaviour came at a cost to my body.	Before attending university, I was a raft guide in Jasper, Alberta, in a culture dominated by *macho* males. Driven by expectations of being able to overcome daily physical feats, one of which was as *simple* as guiding heavy rafts of six or more adults, work responsibilities pushed my body past its limits, which contributed to a long-term shoulder injury. Due to the macho culture that shaped the rafting industry, *going easy* and seeking help for my injured body was frowned upon; to be a *real* raft guide, my body had to regularly sustain being pushed past its limits.

In a discussion of women's involvement in outdoor programming, Sarah Hoffert (2015) writes that "one of the many challenges for women in outdoor leadership is the pressure of having to consistently prove their competency to male participants, partners, co-leaders, and employers in an attempt to defend their right to a presence in outdoor adventure" (p. 35). For many women, this pressure is internalized as a need to possess outstanding technical skills and reject traditional notions of femininity: to become, in effect, a *superwoman* (Allin, 2000; Hoffert, 2015; Warren, 1996). Karen Warren (1996) describes the superwoman thusly: "She can carry the heaviest pack with a smile on her face. She demonstrates complete command of her campstove, compass, and canoe. She is comfortable in the mountains and woods, confident in her unequalled proficiency" (p. 15). She is, effectively, the exception to the rule of gender norm socialization, defying expectations of a woman in the wilderness.

One of these expectations is exceptional physical strength and endurance, qualities that are heralded as some of the most valuable characteristics in the outdoor field, particularly amongst outdoor leaders (Newbery, 2003). Hypermasculinist individualism is encouraged through a field that reflects ideas about the normative participant as not only male but also strong and able bodied. Whilst men are unduly privileged in the field, women and all *others*—those who are not able bodied, lean/athletic, cisgendered, and heterosexual—are relegated to the domain of unfit bodies: bodies (and identities) that do not *fit in*.

Not surprising, the ongoing pressure for women to defy gender-role stereotypes and *beat the boys* is difficult physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. Karen Warren (1996) notes that women who perform the superwoman role can temporarily relieve themselves of the conflicts inherent in being a woman in a masculine space, yet ultimately, being *exceptional* in this regard equates to holding themselves up to a highly taxing, and often unsustainable, standard (Warren, 2016; Wright & Gray, 2013). Women who do so maintain the masculine status quo of the field by enacting a masculine performance of gender and may also be intimidating other female participants in the process. This positioning does not result in a transformation of gender inequities in the field, nor does it acknowledge the problems in the first place (Hoffert, 2015). Rather, it leaves the women who are pushing themselves beyond their limits in a compromised place, at a cost to their mental and physical health.

Michel Foucault (2006) argues that disciplinary power is imposed on individuals by institutions (e.g., government, state, school, and sport), and individuals comply and accept responsibility for their control by conforming to its directives, rules, norms, and values. Bodies become subjectified, and thus sites for conformity and hegemonic control. Teresa's and Stephanie's experiences of internalizing the need to push beyond their limits to conform to the understood *rules* of the field demonstrate the way this power can operate on, and within, individuals' bodies and identities.

Resisting Dominant Ideologies of Gender: Supportive Males

Teresa	Stephanie
Whilst many men in outdoor recreation are focused on demonstrating their strength, physical prowess, toughness, and virility, I have also participated in outdoor pursuits with "other" men, the "bearers of alternative masculinities" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 846), who appear to resist normative, hegemonic forms of masculinity.	Although my outdoor recreation experiences have varied significantly between women-only and co-ed groups, they have, similarly, been drastically different with men who take on alternative forms of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Whilst recreating exclusively with these particular men, I do not feel the need to prove my right to participate or strive to become *one of the boys* (Hoffert, 2015).

With these men, I don't feel compelled to prove my competence and be *one of the boys*. They are accepting of me, regardless of my skill level; they also openly acknowledge my ability even when greater than their own. They have been willing to follow and have encouraged me to lead; with them, I have experienced little in the way of competition and no pressure to perform physically. I was more able to let my guard down in their company. Such experiences have helped me to question my gender performance and, as a result, adopt a more *balanced* gender performance, one that also allows for expressions of femininity.	These experiences have provided me with a stronger sense of emotional safety, which has allowed me to further resist gendered norms, specifically the passivity that is too often expected from female bodies. For example, whilst joining a new group of climbers who were much more advanced than I was, I began the day as a timid follower. As I got to know the group, I discovered that they all took on alternative forms of masculinity; they were supportive and noncompetitive. As a result, I felt confident and comfortable, rather than in need of proving my worth as a climber.

Feminist contributions have made clear the distinction between sex (a biological category) and gender (a social construction) (Butler, 1993). Whilst the two are highly conflated in Western culture, inscribing masculinity on male bodies and femininity on female bodies, the understanding of gender as a fluid construct is liberatory, opening pathways for all sexes to enact individualized performances of gender in accordance with identity, rather than biology. Despite strong pressures exerted on women and men to comply with gender norms, it is also possible for individuals to resist dominant, gendered ideologies. Teresa's and Stephanie's narratives reflect the ways that supportive males who are "bearers of alternative masculinities" can contribute to a transformation of the outdoor recreation field—and women's experiences within it (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 846).

The outdoor recreation field can provide a counterculture, a site where men may challenge hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity rather than reproducing it. Barbara Humberstone (1990, 2000), for example, suggests that some forms of outdoor education may offer males and females alike a place to practise transgressive gender behaviours, and that these programmes could provide "a shift in the construction of gender identities and relations" (1990, p. 199). She further encourages male outdoor educators to "become agents in resisting or challenging dominant ideologies" (2000, p. 27). These possibilities extend beyond challenging the hypermasculinity and male dominance that governs the field to equally challenging its heterosexism, ableism, racism, classism, size-based discrimination, and intersecting sociocultural forces and corresponding oppressions (see, for example, Henderson & Gibson, 2013; Russell et al., 2013; Russell, Sarick, & Kennelly, 2003; Warren, 2016; Warren, Roberts, Breunig, & Antonio, 2014).

We derive renewed hope for change from the photo of an outdoor educator and friend, Scott Read, playing dress-up with his young daughter, Jala, and crossing gender boundaries in dress. As an example of a supportive male who is resisting dominant ideologies of gender, Scott demonstrates the responsibility, as an educator, to foster an environment that challenges culturally imposed gender binaries and their associated meanings (Breunig & Rylander, 2016). Karen Warren (2016) writes that despite the fact that "men in the outdoors who resist dominant stereotypes are marginalized, expressions of alternative masculinities that contradict the prevailing ethos…may help reconstruct the male-dominated nature of the outdoor experience" (p. 364). Through role models such as Scott, women and girls like Jala can experience and celebrate more fluid representations of masculinity and femininity in environments that are relevant to their lives. By validating diverse gender identities and expressions, socially just relations may result (Fig. 24.1).

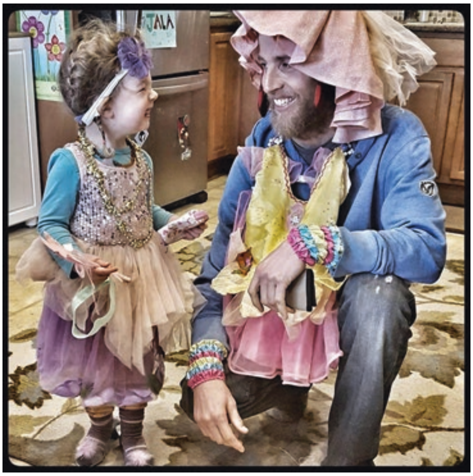

Fig. 24.1 Scott Read with daughter Jala playing dress-up. Reprinted with permission

Nudging the Field Forward: Concluding Remarks

The process of reflecting on our experiences and writing narratives about them has been illuminating. The commonalities in Teresa and Stephanie's narratives suggest to us that tensions in outdoor recreation have remained relatively consistent across a generation—that for us, and likely many others, the field has not changed considerably in the last 30 years. The masculine nature of the field and women's constrained experiences within it is corroborated by other authors (e.g., Newbery, 2003; Warren, 2016), and the literature referenced in this chapter outlines ways that women are written out of the field or held up to unrealistic expectations within it. Despite the recognition that there have been increases in girls' and women's participation in outdoor activities over the past decades (Warren, 2016), there is clearly much more work to be done.

Teresa	Stephanie
It is easy to call for change, but more difficult to engage oneself with it. Whilst the quote, "Change begins with the individual" is somewhat of a cliché, its importance cannot be overemphasized. I remember when I first became aware that I, as a health and physical educator, was a "functionary of the hegemony" (Fernández-Balboa & Muros, 2006, p. 208), fostering notions of scientism and healthism. The resulting distress was the impetus for additional discoveries and more importantly change. For example, reading *The Obesity Epidemic: Science, Morality and Ideology* (Gard & Wright, 2005) and unpacking my thin privilege were defining moments that helped me explore, alongside my students, the dominant discourses of health, body, and obesity, amongst other forms of oppression towards developing a critical consciousness. It also transformed my teaching. Change requires a never-ending cycle of unlearning and relearning and it's very hard work as it speaks out against our biases. It's work we all need to engage with, if we, as a society, are to relearn gender.	Enrolled in a postsecondary programme that focuses heavily on leadership, I have experienced a culture of awareness surrounding hegemony in outdoor recreation. However, there remains great potential for critical examinations of gendered messages and constructs within student experiences in the programme (Warren, 2016). By moving through an awareness of hegemonic relations to an understanding of one's personal biases and position (Wittmer, 2001), students can learn to bring a gender-sensitive approach to their leadership (Warren, 2016).

For example, whilst on extended wilderness trips through school, I see great potential to apply previous class discussions about hegemonic relations to our leadership field experiences. Building on this awareness, as a group, we can critically examine the gendered experiences that are relevant to the group's lives (Breunig & Rylander, 2016). Learning to understand my privilege, personal bias, and position as a young leader and educator has changed my leadership and professional aspirations. From my experiences, I believe that offering similar opportunities to students like myself has the potential to enable the growth of a body of socially just leaders and educators.

In contemplating where to begin our work, we draw inspiration from Peggy McIntosh's influential writing on privilege, and the need to consider our own positionality and unpack our "invisible knapsack" of privileges (McIntosh, 1989). We recognize that we (all three authors of this chapter) come to the field with significant privilege in terms of our social locations as white, able-bodied, and *fit* individuals—and also as women in higher education and leadership positions. For example, Janice teaches postsecondary social justice courses in university, many of which focus on challenging traditional gender relations. Stephanie is currently a university student in the field of outdoor recreation, with leadership experience as a raft guide. Teresa is a postsecondary health and physical education teacher educator and a department chair in Education. Clearly, these privileged positions bring a responsibility to *spend our privilege* wisely through our commitments to academic and outdoor pursuits. We recognize the need to continue developing self-awareness by examining our positionality (Breunig & Rylander, 2016) and, in doing so, recognizing the ways in which we might be unconsciously contributing to the dominant discourse that excludes individuals from outdoor participation.

The past 30 years have seen an enormous growth of scholarship documenting the experiences of women in outdoor education—books such as this one attest to this. Bringing forward marginalized voices, of women and *others* who do not fit the dominant participant mould, is essential to bringing awareness to social injustices and dismantling the hegemonic masculinity that governs the field. Of course, this work is not easy. Humberstone (2000), for example, draws attention to the difficulty in enacting practices that realize alternative ideological commitments. However, in the process of educating ourselves, and exploring the ways things have changed (and not changed) over the past generation, we remain committed to contributing to outdoor recreation's transformation. We hope that by sharing our *mirrored tensions*, we can add our voices to the many who are working collectively to nudge the field forward, creating a terrain that celebrates diversity in relation to sex, gender, class, race, and body size and ability in outdoor recreation.

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The Rebuilding of an Outdoor Identity

Erin Lotz

The stereotypical image of mother so often depicted in books and movies is a warm and caring woman who has birthed her own child and is subsequently responsible for, and happy to satisfy, her kid's needs. Though this description may fit for many, often middle-class white women, it is a social construction. In reality, motherhood may include adoptive children, it may represent a grandparent caring for a child, or it may be the role taken on by a nonfamily member. No matter the circumstance, one thing is clear: motherhood, though often gratifying, is hard work. In light of such a challenge, this chapter explores the premise that *adventuring mothers must redefine their identity relative to both the self and career*. My research and interviews have served to paint a picture for women who desire both a life of adventure and the outdoors but do not want to deny a supposed biological calling to birth and/or raise children. As such, the subset of mothers who may find this chapter most relevant are those who have gone through the experience of birth. That said, mothers of all types will likely hear their voice within the voices of these research participants. The following pages include vignettes and quotes from women woven into my research and my own story. Whilst the changes that adventurous women experience are dichotomously universal and culturally unique, my stance is from that of a heterosexual, coupled, white woman. With the help of

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E. Lotz (✉)
Adventure Education, Prescott College, Prescott, AZ, USA

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participating women with various other cultural intersectionalities, the concept of a mother's identity is explored, broken down, rebuilt, and redefined.

As females come of age, those able and willing to give birth face a question that has the potential to uproot our personal as well as our career identities: whether or not to have children. According to the US Census Bureau, there are about 85.4 million mothers in the US.[1] In an era of feminism, birth control, and career-track women, for the majority, motherhood is theoretically a choice. Even so, 94% of women who are married to men bear children (Wolf, 2003). About one-fifth of same-sex partners are raising children, and within those households, 84% are children from the current partnership (Lofquist, 2011). Dr Susan Maushart, speaking to those physically and spiritually able to have children, agrees with Wolf of her sentiment that, "from this point of view, motherhood seems about as much of a 'lifestyle option' as walking upright" (Maushart, 1997). Certainly today, the same question is contemplated by women of all interests and lifestyles. It is quite pronounced, however, for females committed to a practice of adventure.

The scale to which one's identity changes in new motherhood is astounding: more than is often spoken about, noticed, or personally acknowledged. This may be felt by women who often travel internationally, women in the military, or myriad other subgroups. The identity change for outdoors mothers is similarly complicated by the difficulties in continuing a physical lifestyle or risk-laden adventures. Cheryl, a mother and outdoorswoman, describes our breed well when she says that our uniqueness stems from our careers as outdoor educators where we receive our physical, mental, and spiritual stimulation in one package—wilderness travel. When removed from that arena (as is mostly inevitable when pregnant, nursing, or raising young children), we lose on physical, mental, and spiritual levels.

As I write, I am confused as to which tense to use. The project spans months and years. It spans being pregnant, a first-time mom, and pregnant again, and now raising school-aged kids. Along the way, I have wanted to climb and abhorred the idea of climbing. As I read and research, I cognitively learn more about the life I only knew viscerally. I have felt energy in my muscles and felt like a bowl of pudding. As I write about identity, mine continuously transforms. I am currently entering a time when my kids are more independent and I am able to rebuild my identity anew. Because I am changing as I write, I only make claims I am willing to amend. I do not say that there is one right way to be an adventure educator or to be a mother. What I try to do is to introduce ideas and thoughts that may help, or at least entertain, other women through their journey into and through motherhood.

Change in Personal Identity

Five friends sit casually together, chatting. We have shared climbing ropes, mountain bike rides, and impressive outdoor résumés. These days, we also share the hosting of sleepovers, hand-me-down children's clothing, and booster seats. One of the first comments made, though humorous, had everything to do with identity. Two of the five now drive minivans. Whereas once we relished in our trucks, the high clearance, and the four-wheel drive for rocky or snowy conditions, now a minivan fits the bill. Attempting to speak through a chuckle, one of the women asked, "What did you used to drive, and what do you drive now?" This question was to sum up what we were there to discuss—identity.

Naomi Wolf (2003) noted in her book *Misconceptions* that "a woman is not a mother just because she has had a baby, a mother is not born when a baby is born; a mother is forged, not made" (p. 291). Whilst this *forging* is happening, though, new mothers are subject to society's expectations, both supportive and critical. Worse, we are subject to our own impressions of society's expectations. This identity rebuild is monumental and only exacerbated by a previous lifestyle that in many ways appears mutually exclusive with motherhood. Comments with outdoorswomen centred on identity change in several key areas: independence, physical fitness, and adventure. Each of these is deconstructed in the coming paragraphs.

Long-time adventure educator Kara connects the dots brilliantly when she speaks of finding her true and unique, independent self through her intense adventures which require physical fitness. Each of those elements is stripped away from the new mother and for years. Most obvious is the loss of independence that once defined us. Now moms speak of the juggling of schedules with their partner, the desire to nest, and the overwhelming planning and packing involved in every move, be it to the supermarket or the woods. Second is the loss of fitness with an inability to engage in long days of exercise. Though an entire day of exercise, hiking, climbing, or bicycling may seem frivolous or even like torture to some, it is somewhat of a hallmark for outdoorswomen. A third category would be the changes in the adventure itself. Risk taking is being replaced with appreciation for our children's growing love for nature and outdoors. But the intense experience for the mother herself is at least temporarily lost.

Every seven to ten years, every replaceable cell in our bodies is replaced (Wade, 2005). Kara's eldest of three is now age seven. She has been pregnant, birthing, healing, nursing, and mothering small children consistently in that time. She worries that as her cells make their metamorphosis, she will completely lose her independence, physical fitness, and need for adventure. Her own body may forget who she once was. To some degree, we all have these fears. Who will we be if we are not strong, capable, unique women? As I share the thoughts of women in the adventuring mother community, the intricacies of these themes come clear.

Independence

A loss of some independence is enforced from inside our bodies with the physical changes we are unable to control as well as from the baby clinging to the outside of us. Whilst many changes occur to the pregnant woman, the hormonal surge rises to an all-time high in the last month of pregnancy, as Naomi Wolf (2003) stated, “making a woman more female than she ever has been before, or again, until another pregnancy” (p. 115). With prolactin, progesterone, and cortisol ebbing and flowing, we can feel weepy, needy, and depressed. Luckily, in the third trimester, a rise in oestrogen raises our spirits and the “love” hormone oxytocin makes us enjoy holding and breastfeeding our babies. As all of this is going on inside our bodies, we convey to our friends and partners, either gracefully and lovingly or demanding and clumsily, that we are vulnerable and need their help. Wolf (2003) explained that as new moms we may have to put our independent, and admittedly stubborn, feminist values on hold:

> We lower our flags of independence hoping that others will keep us safe…. My self sufficiency and independence, two qualities I admired most in others, shut down in me like the lights of a business that had lost its clientele. I was still a feminist. But I understood, at this point in my life, that it could be dangerous to be one. (p. 124)

During pregnancy, we may be content to be coddled, and after the birth of a child, we may be fulfilled being the coddler. That said, as time passes (and sometimes this feeling emerges quite quickly), outdoorswomen remember sometimes with accompanying resentment the independence we once had. How is this reconciled? By a necessary, though difficult, change in identity. Over time, quickly for some and slowly for others, some mothers learn the value in the time spent with our babies: the time spent becoming mothers.[2]

> *I don’t stress about [identity loss] to the degree I feared I would because I know this is where I need to be right now for the sake of my family. Though I stew at times, the discussion with myself comes to a comfortable close there. It’s easier to accept than I*

> *thought it would be because suddenly there's a little boy who matters so much more than anything else.*

In the meantime, however, we may stumble through the transition. We may notice others with the life we had and feel mourning.

> *That spring in Hawaii with Lauren, my partner and a couple of friends, I felt a real difference from my past life. I had adventured in Hawaii a couple of times before and had a blast. This time was fun, too, but I watched the group go horseback riding, go snorkeling, and go do whatever. Lauren [at 2 months and breast-feeding regularly] was too young to leave much and there was no one to leave her with. It felt fine/good/right but weird. I really was a mother and they really weren't. In a sense they were clueless that I was not able to participate.*

However, along the journey, there are many discoveries that eventually, through a process of questioning and rebuilding, allow us to incorporate motherhood into our lives (and vice versa).

> *These I think are just the questions that I will keep asking for the next twenty years: I'll keep coming out with different answers, but it's really the questions that will be more of the guiding force. Wilderness is one of my (and my husband's/partner's) highest values. So the questions are worth asking, the challenges worth figuring out piece by piece and that will literally make our new life. Different horizons: that's what we have in front of us right now, and I guess that's what adventure travel is all about! Some of my best learnings from motherhood are really how to let go of ideals and just live in the practical flow of life. But it's not always easy for me: I have too much of an idealistic streak.*

Eventually, what fills the void is valued for simply what it is, not what it once was:

> *What used to be a time of silent reflection for me—where I could really go to clear my head—has become a place and time for teaching my children and trying to instill in them a love for nature.*

All mothers I spoke to claim that they changed as a person and that there is a loss of identity of one shape or form. Much of this relates to a woman's orientation towards care and service becoming more relevant and necessary in their lives. Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings wrote of a woman's ethic of care in a female's moral development as being distinct from that of males (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 2009). Shelley Taylor (2006) wrote about women "tending and befriending" as opposed to fight or flight, which may be influenced by the oxytocin hormone. Wolf (2003) wrote of the effect of the baby's need for its mother eventually seems to change something in the mother's personal ego that is, in turn, rebuilt around service. Whereas once service may have been part of our jobs, now it may be for the women in this study that their greater purpose is to care for their infants—service is in the home. This relationship may be emotionally reciprocal at some point but is not the normal give and take that these women have counted on with friends, partners, and colleagues. Consequently, an ethic of service is necessary, and natural, to keep up a regimen of sleepless nights, endless soccer practices, and struggles with homework. In our drive to retain our recognizable identity with its aspects of independence, some mothers may not notice that this ethic of service eventually gets easier.

Physical Fitness

Backpacking trips, long climbing days, running for miles and miles—sure, our jobs and outdoor pursuits gave us personal growth experiences and an understanding of the natural world, but they also gave us well-conditioned bodies. Getting the requisite exercise now, as a mother, is a whole different story. Time is short, priorities shift, and an ethic of "my kids first" takes hold. Moms I spoke with talked much about the nuggets of exercise or the value of the 20-minute swim. In these short periods, however, we must focus our energy and get the most possible out of each experience. Kara admitted she was the best rock climber she had ever been after having two kids, because she realized how much she had previously taken for granted. Her climbing days post-motherhood were more focused. She was more determined to make her goals in the time she had.

Women able to advocate for their own leisure time are often seen as rebellious against patriarchal societal norms (Little, 2002). Under an ethic of care, women often are drawn to tend to the children as well as their mate, in addition to their own needs. Constraint theory suggests that women are expected to "keep themselves in a holding pattern whilst children are dependent and that their developmental tasks have often required that they promote the growth and well being of others at the expense of their own development" (Bialeschki & Michener, 1994).

This is not necessarily true, however, for men or fathers. There continues to exist a leisure gap between men and women. If one were to count the hours on the job, at home and at the office, women work between 10 and 30 hours more, a week, than men. The Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics in the US reported that parents with children under six are falling into "typical" gender roles (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Even when both parents work full time, women are more likely (89%) to do housework (childcare, cooking, lawn care) in an average day than men (64%). Thus, once a mother, women are partaking in fewer hours of leisure and recreation. In Denmark, women are finding 1.5 hours of childfree leisure time per day, whilst in the US we guiltily allow ourselves only 36 minutes (Loder, 2014). This is despite the fact that autonomous activities and the resulting endorphins coursing through our veins would likely make us happier and more content mothers. My sample group members struggled with this discrepancy:

> *I miss my athletic self terribly. I don't think I ever accepted that walking a four-mile loop while pregnant was a good exercise day.*
>
> *Lots of tears and struggle around all this for me over the years. Trying to see the value in what I'm doing even if it isn't as physical.*
>
> *Bummer when we have to decide which we value more: sleep or exercise or eating dinner.*

Much of the identity building has to do with accepting new priorities and being okay with leaving the old behind:

> *I am not the super fit person I was for so many years, and I miss long athletic days outdoors, but I don't stress about that to the degree I feared I would because I know this is where I need to be right now for the sake of my family.*

Adventure

Though not completely universal, I found that women predominantly felt a distinct shift in their willingness to hurt themselves once in the caretaking role of their own child. Though this shift is happening from within, it is still a catalyst for outdoorswomen to question their identity. When a friend asked to borrow it, I realized that I hadn't seen my ice axe in two years. Though clearly, for two years, I hadn't wanted to prioritize travelling in terrain that warranted an ice axe, I felt like an imposter to my sport, not knowing where the axe was.

The risk in adventure is often referred to as one of the more masculine aspects of the adventure education or the practice of adventure recreation. Whilst for men it is within their gender norms to engage in risk, society expects that women will avoid it whether or not they are individually attracted to risky endeavours. Females with children seem to be a controversial population, however, in this realm. In 1995, Allison Hargreaves, a Scottish mountaineer, perished on a climb leaving behind her husband and two small children. She received harsh comments from the press both with regard to previous climbs and after her demise for choosing a sport that could lead to her orphaning her children (Gilchrist, 2007). There have been countless men killed in mountaineering accidents, however, whose paternity status was never highlighted. How is it that men who do great things don't have to be labelled as fathers?

Ironically, one of the women I interviewed, who shares mothering with her female partner, claimed that she received less flack for going on trips since there was a second mother still at home. Why is it that a *mother* must be available and responsible for children but not the *father*? Why is it that the mothers, without being asked, take the initiative to curb their adventure as self-preservation becomes more important? Self-preservation of one's identity, however, is at risk. Another interviewee speaks of "three dads killed [in her community] in three years, all climbing." Most would say, "Three climbers killed" when referring to men. However, this mother, by saying "Three dads," makes clear reference to the loss in the widowed mothers' lives and in the children's who are left without a father. She went on to say:

> *I MISS the feeling of anticipating and embracing the risks that come with wilderness travel: with mountaineering, climbing, whitewater canoeing, bears, weather, remoteness, etc. [Before baby] it felt like I was embracing the world more fully…. But now I know up close that parents die. And I'm not okay with that yet. I feel too great a sense of responsibility. I'm meeting the potential of myself, or my husband, dying and leaving our daughter behind, with resistance. And I don't think I believe anymore that we have just as much risk of dying if we don't spend a lot of time in wilderness.*

Our challenge, then, is to continue embracing the world fully whilst keeping our families intact and our children safe. How this is done will look different for each parent, yet there seem to be some themes. First is a difficult comparison to our old selves and those who are not mothers.

> *I pretty much spent my 20s and 30s being in the outdoors—either personally or for work. I lived for it, loved it, craved it, felt empty without it. But I also lived for, craved, and felt empty without a child. The adventure was becoming tiring—I wanted a home, a base, a community that wasn't possible in the transient circles I travelled in. I do, however, often think of my former partner who continues to travel the world and pursue her adventures. I am slightly envious of that old life—because*

> *it is hard to envision having access to that part of me for many many years. I suppose in the interim, I find delight in the different 'adventures' … that are slower, more intimate, more gentle.*

We may subsequently create a community where the comparisons may be less striking.

> *Knowing I have two kids at home has made me more conservative about risk. It might be a factor of age as well but I definitely have seen the evolution of my propensity toward higher risk adventures move to more conservatism.… My circle of adventurous friends has declined as I'm not so readily available to drop everything and go paddling, etc.*

Eventually, though, we may reassess what risks are truly risks and what risks contribute to the life we want for our children.

> *My adventures now may involve a little less perceived risk taking, since there is a natural feeling and tendency to want to protect my young, and so although I participate in white water canoeing and rock climbing less, I have slowed down in the enchanted forest to take in the details with the renewed vision and excitement of my children. Longing to go to the wilds has, I believe, only encouraged positive role modeling for my children.*
>
> *While getting to know my stand up paddle board, I said to my daughter safe in the oar boat, 'I am going to run this class three rapid because if I don't sometimes try scary things, I won't learn what I am capable of.' That is a message I hope she will embrace and I hope that by seeing me try, even though I ended up wet, will set her on a course for courageous learning.*

So, we redefine what adventure means. Luckily, as one outdoors mother claimed, "we can get deep quickly because of the fact that we have a background in depth." We have a history to draw from where our minds, bodies, and spirits have been to the awe-inspiring locales and experienced the all-encompassing physical feats. Our short, mother-style adventures are informed by a past that allows us to drop into adventure possibly more efficiently than others.

Change in Career Identity

In my first eight years of teaching at a small liberal arts college with a very experiential, very field-based adventure education curriculum, I spent many seasons backpacking, climbing, and mountaineering with my students. I was fit, stayed relatively current on climbing techniques, and felt sharp in risk management of groups in remote settings. My administrators complimented me on my skill set and my colleagues believed that I could offer rigorous and educational courses to students. Students regarded me as a mentor for their development as outdoor educators and wilderness leaders. Then I got pregnant.

As soon as our climbing harnesses cease to fit or we need to resize our kayaks, the pregnant adventure educator can begin to question her contribution to the field. Those around us often begin to question our worth, as well. Whilst the field of outdoor and adventure education has put an unbalanced emphasis on more masculine attributes such as strength, speed, and risk taking, I propose that we take stock of many benefits students receive by having feminine and female leadership. We must redefine curriculum and expectations for female instructors to create a place where those who have kids maintain a valuable role. Participants at an Association for Experiential Education international conference workshop created an extensive list of common qualities of adventure educating women. These included *capable, flexible, accustomed to a male world, reject some traditional women's societal norms, dedicated, high threshold for pain*, and *independent*, amongst others. I argue that when such women become mothers, they do not lose these qualities. In fact, some are strengthened. Why then would we, pardon the pun, throw the baby out with the bathwater. When we make room in curriculum, programme activities, or in field settings for mothers and potentially children, we open a new and valuable world to our young students.

A recent study identified the unintentional messages delivered to both staff and students of outdoor and adventure education programming—the hidden curriculum (Mitten, Warren, Lotz, & d'Amore, 2012). Whilst the elements identified were not part of planned curriculum, they were often the most powerful learnings. A group of folks with an average of 24 years of experience in the field, both male and female, parents and nonparents, were polled. Researchers learned that amongst other things, the field of adventure education conveys messages about who and how people should be through programme type, through instructor word choice, and through feedback to students. In one question, respondents felt that more often than not, adventure education mirrored larger society in terms of social norms. That said, more than in larger society, within the hidden curriculum of adventure education, *physical skills* were valued more highly than *interpersonal skills*, whilst at the same time, women are expected to use interpersonal skills more than men. The resulting message is that women must outperform men in the more masculine physical skills to measure up. And if they do not, but instead offer interpersonal leadership, it will be less valued. Compounding this issue is the fact that in the midst of parenting young children, a mother's physical skills are deemphasized. This phenomenon was solidified by another question that demonstrated that the female respondents believed that there are higher levels of sexism in adventure education than in larger society. Consequently, some women feel they should take on more physical and operationally masculine traits and not have children. None of this bodes well for the new mother with a career in adventure education.

This phenomenon is not foreign to the general workforce. Aspects of women's lives are seen as messy if they clash with the function of an organization. Such challenges include lingering prejudices, cultural resistance, expectations of leadership style including the double bind, issues of family obligation, and challenges for women in necessary social networking (Audet, Miller, & Appelbaum, 2003; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Wittmer, 2001). This has become all too recognizable, even in adventure education, despite the fact that the field touts genderless pedagogies and aims to serve the spectrum of genders and sexes. Still, mothers are expected to adapt to the needs of the organization.

In my own study, I queried women about their career changes after having children. A mere 20% of participants kept working in the field whilst another 20% kept working but with far less field time. About 23% changed to administrative roles, and another 23% left work altogether. The remaining mothers changed careers. The result, then, is that more than half of the group chose not to work in field based roles after having children, solidifying the assumptions from the hidden curriculum study where adventure education is perceived as a less-than-hospitable work environment for mothers.

Since the 1970s, when women began working in earnest in the field of adventure education, they have adopted the stance of first-wave feminism. Similar to the early 1900s, when the fight was to allow women access but not to change social systems wholeheartedly, early women in adventure education accepted the male environment and adapted within its structure. Today, first-wave feminist views are not enough in both society and the field of adventure education. Women will rebuild their identities after starting families and they should be able to do so with more modern feminism platforms. As is being discussed by fourth-wave feminists, the most natural and ingrained part of women should be brought to the table, valued, and integrated.

During my last three-week field course, I was six-and-a-half months pregnant. In our campground between backpacking and climbing objectives, my students had the opportunity to put their hands on my belly during Braxton Hicks contractions. It was transformational for them not only to see what the human body was capable of but also to know that a pregnant woman is still capable of teaching and of adventuring. Lessons such as these illustrate that adventurous mothers have unique value as role models and teachers. Furthermore, as identity change is embraced, there will always be a place in the wilds for women.

Notes

1. Participant quotations are italicized.
2. Participant quotations are italicized.

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Navigating Grief in the Outdoors to Emerge as a Bush Adventure Therapy Leader

Abby Buckley

Introduction

Following the sudden death of my son, I drifted into the liminal space of becoming, located between an ending and a beginning. A liminal space is a temporary time-out threshold where connections with what has been and what is yet to come are severed. It is an intense place of fluidity, ambiguity, and disorientation where anything is possible during the time of withdrawal from normal life (Turner, 2011, pp. 94, 167).

After hearing the police officer's words, "I regret to inform you your son Robert has been killed in a car accident," I quietly and in slow motion disassociated from myself, from others, from my world. I mercifully floated away out of the right side of my head, just hovering about a metre above myself. There was a void in that disconnected, unembodied space. My emotions could not touch me; nothing or no one could reach me. Time slowed down to almost a standstill. I was lost in that inner liminal space of grief with no experience, map, or compass to help me navigate this unfamiliar terrain.

A compass and map are used to navigate in the bush. But what if your compass breaks and your map changes? How do you find true north? Four years ago, my 22-year-old son, Robbie, graduated from the University of Newcastle on his way to becoming an architect. He then graduated from the

A. Buckley (✉)
Western Sydney University, Penrith, NSW, Australia

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University of Life in a car accident on his way to the ATM. My internal compass broke the moment his brainstem snapped. Nothing on the map of my world looked familiar anymore. This was my disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22).

I am grateful my intrinsic, biophilic urge (Kellert & Wilson, 1995; Wilson, 1984) lured me out from under the duvet of my suburban comfort zone into the outback Flinders Ranges, South Australia. In the last four years, I have completed six very different trips. There were a few days of bush camping at the remote Douglas Hut, a ten-day vision quest at Blinman, and four Operation Flinders exercises as an assistant team leader at Yankaninna Station. These six trips became a metaphor for my internal journey through grief. The bush became the material representation of the liminal space.

Transformative Conceptual Frameworks

Conceptual frameworks exploring the transformational pauses (McWhinney & Markos, 2003, p. 22) between endings and beginnings are found in nature, narrative, and educational research.

Nature

In nature, we perceive transformation through the life–death cycle. When one process ends, another begins, such as a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly. The transformation takes place in the liminal space between the ending and the beginning; the caterpillar transforms in the cocoon before it emerges as a butterfly. I am interested in what occurs in that cocoon, in that space and time betwixt and between what came before and what is yet to be. The Flinders Ranges became my cocoon, my liminal space during the six trips. When I crossed the threshold into the remote bush after leaving the comfort of my home, I withdrew from my usual way of living, which had become untenable after Robbie's death. My hope was to emerge with a new and expanded way of knowing, being, and doing in the world.

Narrative

In narrative, we experience transformation through the universal pattern of the monomyth: the hero's journey (Campbell, 2008). Campbell's character arc was written for male heroes. The epic action adventure story of the lone male hero conquering adversaries in material worlds, overcoming conflict with an aggressive machismo and finding his treasure, is played out repeatedly on our screens, for example, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Star Wars* (Vogler, 2007, pp. ix–x). The solo quest has three stages: Stage 1: The hero experiences a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22); Stage 2: He sets out on a quest to quell disorder and vanquish challengers; and Stage 3: The hero returns home transformed with gifts to bestow on his fellow man.

Where is the feminine in this story? Murdock (2013, p. 2) asked Campbell this question and he replied that women are the place the hero is trying to reach. He believed that a woman's primary function was to support family and community. Murdock made the astute observation, that I profoundly resonate with, that "women who have embraced the masculine hero's journey [as I have done all my adult life] have forgotten how to foster themselves … and in the process have ended up with a hole in their hearts" (2013, p. 7). Murdock responded by writing the heroine's journey (2013), which answers my question: Who looks after the heroine when she has become disoriented by grief?

In contrast to Campbell's linear hero's adventure (2008), Murdock's cyclical heroine's journey (2013) is an inner healing quest, where body, mind, nature, and spirit are entangled in their collaborative becoming (Barad, 2007). The journey is about letting go of the masculine worldview and entering the liminal space to connect with feminine ways of knowing. Instead of slaying dragons and digging for treasure in remote worlds, the heroine's struggle is to overcome life's everyday challenges, such as grief, to reconnect with her authentic self. The transformation happens when the feminine and the masculine are united and the heroine emerges as a whole, balanced person with an expanded perspective. My heroine's journey is an inner healing quest to reconnect with myself after the disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22) of Robbie's death.

Educational Research

In educational research, permanent and irreversible change is interpreted qualitatively through transformative learning theory. This robust theory developed by Mezirow in 1978, which describes the process of adult learning, continues to be widely used and adapted by researchers and adult educators (Cranton, 1994; Dirkx, Mezirow, & Cranton, 2006; Freire, 2000; Howie & Bagnall, 2013; Kitchenham, 2008; Mezirow, 1994, 2000; Taylor, 2008). As a social ecologist, I am interested in Hill, Wilson, and Watson's (2004) approach to adult learning called *learning ecology* (p. 48) where ecological thinking and frameworks are applied to transformative learning theory.

Mezirow's (2000) ten phases of transformative learning theory are as follows:

1. Disorienting dilemma
2. Self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
3. Critical assessment of assumptions
4. Recognition that one's discontent and process of transformation shared and others negotiated similar change
5. Explore options for new roles, relationships, actions
6. Plan course of action
7. Acquire knowledge and skills for implementing plan
8. Provisional trying of new roles
9. Build competence/confidence in new roles and relationships
10. Re-integration into one's life with new perspective (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22)

To enable meaningful comparison with the other conceptual frameworks used in this chapter, these ten phases have been grouped into four experiences of: Phase 1, disorienting dilemma; Phases 2–4, critical reflection; Phases 5–9, trial new ways of being; and Phase 10, re-integration into life with new perspective (Thomas & Ryan, 2008, p. 212).

Transformative learning theory is founded on the assumption that we construct meaning from the way we perceive our experiences based on previous encounters with human and nonhuman others. We filter experiences through habits of mind, revealed as points of view, which include our unexamined ways of knowing, being, and doing absorbed from cultural and environmental cues. Transformative learning occurs when we encounter a sudden epochal or ongoing experience, which does not fit our worldview, and then undergo a process of critical reflection and discourse that leads to action, based on a revised habit of mind. Transformative learning results in a change to our worldview that is expansive, profound, irreversible, and emancipatory. (Cranton, 1994; Dirkx et al., 2006; Freire, 2000; Hill et al., 2004; Howie & Bagnall, 2013; Kitchenham, 2008; Mezirow, 1994, 2000; Taylor, 2008). My aim is to construct meaning from Robbie's death through critical reflection during the "transformational pause" (McWhinney & Markos, 2003, p. 22) afforded by the ecological liminal space of my six trips to Flinders Ranges.

Table 26.1 summarizes the transformative concepts being used to explore my story. Column 1 is the starting point of my journey where I found myself

Table 26.1 Transformative conceptual frameworks

1	2	3	4
My story	Cross threshold (Turner, 2011, p. 94)	Heroine's journey (Murdock, 2013, p. 5)	Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22)
My son's death	Ending	My father's daughter	Disorienting dilemma
Grief	Liminal space	Feminine ways of knowing	Critical reflection and trial new roles
?	Beginning	Union	Re-integration with new perspectives

lost in grief after my son's death, disconnected from self, nature, and others. Column 2 posits the concept of exploring my grief as a threshold or sacred liminal space between the ending of Robbie's life and a new beginning yet to emerge. Column 3 summarizes the heroine's journey where as I cross the threshold into my grief, I leave behind my old masculine way of perceiving the world and open up to connecting with feminine ways of knowing to navigate my grief with the aim of becoming whole again. Column 4 is the grouped outline of Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning theory (2000, p. 22). The question mark in column 1 indicates that I had no idea what would emerge from my time in the transformational liminal space of my six trips into the bush. The last row of Table 26.1 provides some clues. There will be a new beginning where the masculine and feminine will unite to support a new way of being in the world.

Trip 1: Bush Camping, Douglas Hut

Douglas Hut (Fig. 26.1) is located 700 kilometres north of Adelaide, South Australia, in remote, rugged terrain. The two-room tin-roof hut has a rammed earth floor. There are no urban comforts: No electricity, toilet, running water, phone reception, or people. Locals inform the hut was used by Sir Douglas Mawson, the geologist and Antarctic explorer, for shelter during field trips.

Ending

During the two weeks following Robbie's death, I travelled to the University of Newcastle to posthumously accept his testamur, attended his memorial service, then travelled back to Adelaide to organize and host his funeral. I was numb, functioning without emotion or feeling, disconnected from self,

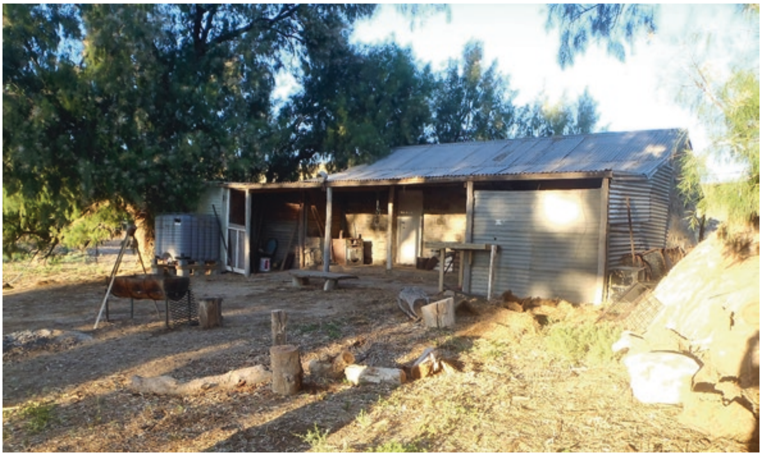

Fig. 26.1 Douglas Hut, Yankaninna, Flinders Ranges, South Australia

others, and my environment. After the funeral, my partner and I decided to get away for a few days to be still and quiet. Our first thought was to lock ourselves away in a luxurious hotel room where all our needs would be met at the touch of a button. I envisaged myself in a sterile room with a city view through a sealed window, hiding under the fluffy white duvet, mindlessly watching television as I ate and drank too much room service over the next few days. My biophilic urge (Kellert & Wilson, 1995; Wilson, 1984) kicked in and we headed bush to Douglas Hut: Not a fluffy white duvet in sight. We needed to leave our suburban comfort zone for a few days to reconnect with living systems in a nonhuman environment. We slept soundly on the rammed earth floor cocooned in our swags during the four-night stay.

Liminal Space

At first light, we climbed a different hill each morning to watch the sunrise. At dusk, we repeated the process to watch the sunset. These were sacred moments connecting us to this ancient landscape, giving our days a natural rhythm. The autumnal colours hidden in the time-worn rocks were set ablaze by the rising and setting sun. I sat in that timeless land in a timeless moment. The silence possessed an eschatological quality as it permeated my mind, body, and soul, filled with the promise of transcendence from grief. The slight breeze that caressed my face was like a reassuring kiss from the Ancient Mother.

To keep warm, we went for exploratory walks. We would smell and hear the wild goats before we saw them. To eat, we lit a fire to cook our food. The smell and sound of sizzling onions re-awakened my appetite. To wash, we took turns pouring heated water from the billy over each other by the light of the fire. The delicious warmth flowing down our naked bodies was sublimely contrasted by the goosebumps on our skin as the cool night air came swirling in with its evaporative effect. Each night my partner embraced me, rhythmically stroking my head until I slipped into a deep sleep. I felt myself being nurtured back into my body by my re-awakening senses and the reassuring pulse of my returning biorhythms.

My April 2012 journal recorded the signs that spoke to my intuition, providing a key to the door of the feminine realm (Murdock, 2013, p. 111). Robbie visited me in my dreams. "You told me you loved me. I hugged you. When I woke up—it felt so real … so real. Then I was so sad cos I was awake and you were not here." I can still feel the squeeze in that hug four years later. Returning to the hut on our last sunset walk my partner found an eagle feather (Fig. 26.5) at his feet. It felt a sacred sign that Robbie was okay.

Beginning

I returned home back in my body, reconnected with myself (Table 26.2, column 5). I felt enlivened by my senses perceiving the material world with an increased intensity. I had come back to my senses (Harper, 1995, p. 189). That would not have happened in a hotel room. In the liminal space of my time at Douglas Hut, I let go of city comforts, became grounded, and reconnected with Robbie through our ancient, timeless, forever love.

Trip 2: Vision Quest, Blinman

Synchronistic events are allied with the mysteries of the feminine (Murdock, 2013, p. 111). It was a series of synchronistic events that unexpectedly propelled me onto a vision quest in March 2015. Riley and Hendee (1998) wrote that a vision quest is a sacred ceremony used as a rite of passage for young Indigenous Americans (p. 128). It is an embodiment of Murdock's (2013) heroine's journey conducted in remote wilderness. Riley and Hendee (1998) reported that there are now outdoor education programmes (Pryor, Carpenter, & Townsend, 2005, p. 4) that offer vision quests for people who need time out as they traverse a significant life transition such as a career change, divorce, menopause, or loss. All programmes follow a similar three-stage process of severance, solo time in nature whilst fasting, and reincorporation. This sequence is akin to Turner's crossing the threshold (2011, p. 94) summarized in Table 26.1, column 2.

Ending

The ten-day vision quest in the remote bush near Blinman that I serendipitously found myself on included a three-day solo phase. There were three female participants, the guide, and his female assistant. It was interesting to realize the three participants represented the life–death cycle around children. The youngest woman, in her 30s, was transitioning from being single to newly married and considering motherhood. The woman in her 40s was transitioning from being a stay-at-home mum to running her wedding-planner business. I was a mum in my 50s transitioning through grief after the death of my son.

Liminal Space

My March 2015 journal recalls my answers to the three questions asked at our opening ceremony:

1. What is your intention? "My intention is to stare death in the face."
2. What do you leave behind? "I leave behind my fear of being alone."
3. What do you most fear about the Quest? "I fear being alone in the dark at night; that moment when I close my eyes and need to let go so I can sleep."

One of my biggest fears, which started as a child, is being alone at home at night. I stay awake becoming increasingly more afraid that someone or something will "get me." I felt even more alone in my disconnected state of grief after Robbie's death. Finding myself alone in the bush for three nights seemed incomprehensible to me. What had I done? This was the solo phase of the vision quest. I had a piece of plastic as my shelter, sleeping bag and minimal clothing, two litres of water per day, and no food as this was also a fast (Fig. 26.2).

My April 2015 journal reminds me that instead of being afraid and alone, I felt nurtured and supported by the bush and the animals. A deep knowing from the feminine dimension emerged in vivid dreams, synchronistic moments with animals, and participation in ceremonial rituals (Murdock,

Fig. 26.2 Solo campsite

2013, p. 111). An inquisitive pair of emus came within two metres as I sat quietly working on my ceremonial manifestation arrow (Fig. 26.5). At dusk on the first two nights, I sat with my back against the comforting presence of a tree I befriended. I remained seated in that spot silently observing the spectacle of the sunset, the star-spangled Milky Way, and the moonrise, before easily drifting off to sleep. The third night I stayed awake until dawn performing the sacred Circle of Stones ceremony, visited again by the pair of emus before dusk. The ten-day quest synchronistically culminated in a group celebration under a cloudless star-lit sky, showcasing a total eclipse of a full blood moon, on exactly the third anniversary of Robbie's death. What are the chances of those three rare events happening simultaneously? I became one with everything and everything became one with me, connected by love.

Beginning

I returned home reconnected with nature (Table 26.2, column 6). In the liminal space of my vision quest, I became known as "Sits in the night" and my fear of being alone in the dark dissolved. I realized I am never alone and am always supported because I am connected to everything by love, including my beautiful boy.

Trips 3–6: Operation Flinders, Yankaninna

Operation Flinders is a bush adventure therapy (Pryor et al., 2005, p. 4) programme for youth at risk aged 14–18. Each field trip is an eight-day trek covering 100 kilometres of rugged hilly terrain. All team members carry their own packs, sleep under the stars, learn bush survival skills, abseil, and discover the Indigenous culture and history of Flinders Ranges (Fig. 26.3). They do this in all weather conditions. Unlike other aspects of their lives, there is no opportunity to opt out. There are five exercises per year. Each exercise has nine teams. Each team has ten participants, two school counsellors, assistant team leader, and team leader, supported by an operations and logistics crew at the base camp. The organization was founded in 1991 by a powerhouse of a woman, Pam Murray-White. Today, Operation Flinders has its own property, Yankaninna Station, 650 kilometres north of Adelaide ("Operation Flinders," 2002).

Ending

I completed two exercises as an assistant team leader before my son's death. After his death, I stopped going. About 18 months later, I serendipitously came across Robbie's Facebook post, unabashedly proclaiming to the world "Proud of you mum!" (Buckley, 2010) beneath a photo of me on my first exercise,

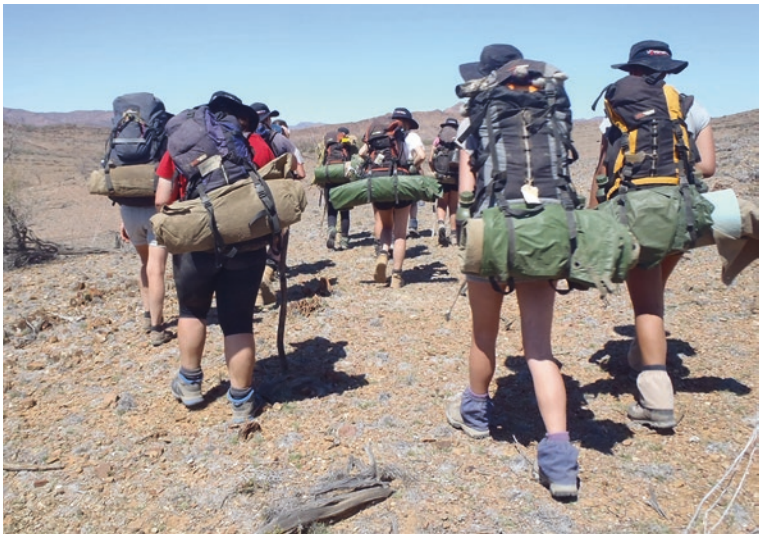

Fig. 26.3 Girls on the move

looking dishevelled and exhausted after summiting a tough climb in the rain. Robbie's words inspired me to go back and they continue to propel me up those metaphorical and real mountains when I feel despondent. I have since completed four additional exercises as an assistant team leader. I felt I would never progress to team leader because my sense of direction and navigation skills were tenuous. On the last two exercises, my confidence grew because I was more connected with myself and nature after my trip to Douglas Hut and the vision quest. Being united with my internal and external environment, I realized I could never be truly lost. My feelings are summed up in David Wagoner's (1999, p. 10) poem, "Lost," based on Indigenous teachings on what to do when lost in the bush. I carry this poem in my wallet and heart as a reminder:

> Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you
> Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,
> And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,
> Must ask permission to know it and be known.
> The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,
> I have made this place around you.
> If you leave it, you may come back again, saying Here.
> No two trees are the same to Raven.
> No two branches are the same to Wren.
> If what a tree of a bush does is lost on you,
> You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows
> Where you are. You must let it find you.
> (*Traveling Light: Collected and New Poems*. Copyright 1999 by David Wagoner. Used with permission of the University of Illinois Press)

Liminal Space

I stood still long enough for the Flinders Ranges to find me. In Operation Flinders, we twist a common idiom to remind ourselves: "Don't just do something, stand there" (personal communication). It is with this knowing (Murdock, 2013, p. 111) that I engaged with others to learn map-to-ground navigation skills. The two-dimensional maps became three dimensional when a team leader explained the main terrain features (J. Evans, personal communication, June 2014) by drawing them on her fist (Fig. 26.4). I learned that it is possible to find true north when your map of the world disintegrates and your compass breaks. The first step is to find out the time, then face the sun thinking of it as the point of 12 noon on an imaginary analogue clockface.

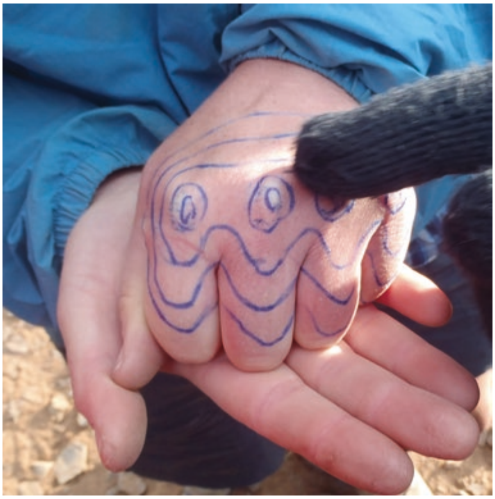

Fig. 26.4 Learning to navigate in 3D

Locate the centre point of the angle between the hour hand and the 12-noon mark and follow that line out past your imaginary clockface to locate true north.

Beginning

I returned home reconnected with others (Table 26.2, column 7) with a heartfelt gift as a material reminder that I did not need to travel this journey alone. Figure 26.5 shows the necklace the kids made me using hootchie cord to hold the ancient time-worn rock. My fear of getting myself and the team lost had disappeared. Learning to navigate in the Flinders Ranges by letting others help me became a metaphor for navigating my grief. I became a "teacher–student" thanks to my "student–teachers" (Freire, 2000, p. 80). By becoming present through the mindful activity of map-to-ground navigation, I was able to identify catching features to ensure that we did not overshoot our night camp and I did not slip into the abyss of grief.

Emerging as Operation Flinders Team Leader

As I wrote this chapter, I had my three tangible talismans of reciprocity (Fig. 26.5) beside me. These are precious gifts from nature and others. These remembrances transport me back to the six trips since the disorienting

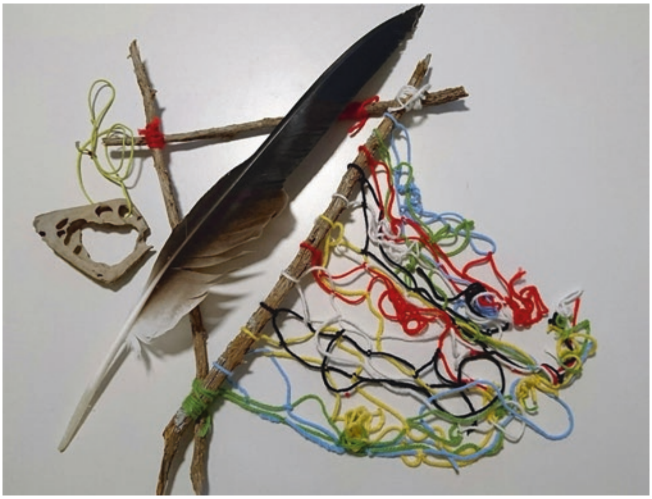

Fig. 26.5 Talismans from Flinders Ranges

dilemma of my son's death where I crossed the threshold into the transformative liminal space of feminine knowing held by the Flinders Ranges (Table 26.1). The eagle feather reminds me of my trip to Douglas Hut where I came back to my senses, reconnected with self (Table 26.2, column 5). The ceremonial manifestation arrow recalls my vision quest name "Sits in the night" where I realized I am never alone and can never be lost if I just stand still, be present, and let nature find me (Table 26.2, column 6). The rock necklace recollects my memory of reaching out to others on Operation Flinders exercises to learn navigation skills (Table 26.2, column 7).

Reconnecting with self, others, and nature has empowered me to not only traverse the external landscape of the Flinders Ranges but also the internal terrain of my grief by resetting my bearing towards my true north. As the heroine of my inner healing journey through grief, I have emerged feeling like a whole being, where masculine skills, like map-to-ground navigation, and feminine ways of knowing, like trusting my intuition, are valued equally and work collaboratively together. The question mark in Table 26.1, column 1, has been answered. Through critical reflection and trialling new ways of being in the ecological liminal space of the bush (Table 26.2, column 4), I have moved beyond my disorienting dilemma, traversed grief, and emerged from my bush cocoon, transformed as a fledgling Operation Flinders team leader at the age of 55 (Table 26.2, column 1). This is a waypoint worth noting considering only 9.7% of team leaders and 22% of assistant team leaders are female and their average age is 40 years (J. Kowalik, personal communication, 2 February 2016).

Table 26.2 Emerging as an Operation Flinders team leader

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
				Social-ecological lens		
My story	Cross threshold (Turner, 2011, p. 94)	Heroine's journey (Murdock, 2013, p. 5)	Transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000, p. 22)	Trip 1: Douglas Hut	Trip 2: Vision quest	Trips 3–6: Operation Flinders
My son's death	Ending	My father's daughter	Disorienting dilemma	Leave comfort	Leave comfort	Leave comfort
Grief	Liminal space	Feminine ways of knowing	Critical reflection & trial new roles	Bush camping	Solo	Assistant team leader
Operation Flinders team leader	Beginning	Union	Re-integration with new perspectives	Connected to self	Connected to nature	Connected to others

I am grateful to be starting out in the profession of outdoor leadership when other women are struggling to sustain career longevity in this field (Wright & Gray, 2013, p. 12). I am feeling empowered as I blaze a new trail beyond the socially and personally imposed limits (Gray & Birrell, 2015, p. 207) of my world map. I have found a transformed, expanded (Mezirow, 2000), and emancipatory (Freire, 2000) way of being in this world without my beautiful boy who is no longer physically here. I am booked to lead my first Operation Flinders team in six weeks. “Proud of you mum!” (Buckley, 2010).

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27

Wild Abandon

Ruthie Rohde

It was during a break from working upstairs in my office archiving photos, articles, and memorabilia, that I came downstairs into the family room and caught sight of my old canoe trailer outside the wall of windows recently added during our house renovation. Just that morning, a landscape crew had extracted it from the pokeweed and vines that crop up each year on the periphery of the property. Rust-stained, paint peeling, frayed ropes hanging from the centre pole, the trailer was a cherished vestige from a past life leading outdoor trips for women.

Inside the trailer bed, weeds, leaves, and the paper entrails of a huge hornet's nest, downed in a storm and brought home to show the kids years prior, created a curious compost heap alongside an assortment of other man-made junk: an old car tyre, a retired ski pole, a yellow raft I had discovered some time ago in a melting snow bank. I could already hear what my husband would say when he returned home and saw this sorry spectacle. *Isn't it time we got rid of this?*—a question he occasionally raises in the hopes that we could tidy up the yard and perhaps, more importantly, lay the past to rest.

In truth, the trailer that has served as the mothership, faithfully carrying kayaks, canoes, and gear to and from every trip I led from 1985 until 2000, hasn't been used in over 15 years—not since the demands of parenting had ground my trips to a halt, ending with a last-ditch effort to juggle building a

R. Rohde (✉)
Concord, MA, USA

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family with keeping the business afloat by offering weekend retreats in Maine. I still have all my trip equipment and gear, stowed in bins and boxes throughout the house and garage at our homes in Concord, Massachusetts, and Phippsburg, Maine. And, it wasn't until 2009 that I let go of the business name New Routes that I had held onto like a talisman. But, with each passing year as our children get older and as I age, this year celebrating my 60th birthday, my fantasy of returning to guiding has done a slow fade—but not so my core sense of identity as an outdoorswoman and Maine Guide, an identity tied to the trailer and the boats stowed in the backyard, artefacts of a former, formative existence.

Just before coming downstairs and catching sight of the trailer, I had come across a photo of my daughter, decked out in a paddling outfit that dwarfed her then three-year-old body. From the time she was seven days old and placed in our arms at the adoption agency, we took her everywhere with us into the suburban and rural wilds, packing her into a snuggly, then a backpack, or onto my lap in a canoe or kayak. In the series of photos, she is dressed in a toddler-sized bright orange life vest, with royal blue straps around the waist and legs, and a modified Elizabethan collar circling her neck like a florescent lily pad. A loop at the top promised easy access to pluck her out of the water in the event she fell overboard.

In the photo, Nora is wearing a baseball cap inscribed with the previous winter's destination, Moab, Utah. The Southwest is a place where I have previously led hiking and canoe trips. As such, it is a place I associate with that period in my life when I was free from the constraints of marriage, children, and a career in social work. Prior to our trip to Utah, Nora mastered walking without holding on to hands or objects. On our day trip to Canyonlands, enthralled with her new-found freedom, our daughter refused passage in the backpack. Advancing by inches as Nora stopped and dropped to explore the world at her feet, it was on this trip that wilderness travel took on a whole new dimension, one that left no illusion of being able to leave the public at the portals of the park, something I had been privileged to do in prior years travelling alone or with clients into backcountry regions where each day, as we absorbed through every ounce of our being the sights, sounds, and scents of the Red Rock Canyon country, we felt a change come over us. Encounters by day with rattlesnakes and canyon wrens, cacti and bighorn sheep made us alert and humble. At night, sleeping under the stars, the calls of coyotes and owls were the wild sirens resonating in our dreams. By the time we returned, realigned to a higher order, our bodies awakened and primed by constant use, we became reluctant migrants crossing the border back into our lives, clinging to the animal, vegetable, and mineral parts of ourselves now revitalized.

Although hiking became a kind of slow crawl during that time, and then again when our son, David, came along two-and-a-half years later, thankfully it would be awhile before the novelty of paddling faded for Nora. Still content to sit between my legs, Nora loved to race the water striders and look for box turtles that we could surprise in our quiet craft as they lounged on logs at the edge of rivers and ponds. Or, from our house in Maine, scout the coastline at low tide, seeking out the colony of starfish shimmering beneath the green-grey water, a marine galaxy on the hidden granite shelf that becomes visible only at new and full moons when the tides are at their lowest.

In the moments spent gazing at the picture of Nora standing beside the kayak on her dimpled two-year-old legs with white knee socks and red KEDS sneakers, I felt uplifted by memories of numerous trips alone with my daughter during the window of time I still entertained the illusion that my wild adventures would continue uninterrupted into the future, my children at my side. Sadly, instead, as Nora and David grew and their social needs changed, so too did the venues for playdates. Over time, instead of building forts and climbing trees in the woods near our house, my kids began to insist we meet friends at the local playground. Instead of swimming along the shores of Walden Pond, the new state-of-the-art indoor town pool became the chosen destination.

Looking out again at the trailer listing to one side in the now-denuded margin between our yard and that of the neighbours, the trailer looked remarkably like an abandoned ship. But rather than wreckage, I saw resurrection. An application of oil here, Rust-Oleum paint there, a few new boards, re-rigging, and re-wiring could provide the restoration needed to get it up and running again. In an instant, dreams of travelling further afield than the watered-down paddles on nearby shores that had come to fit my current lifestyle began to surface. Just the thought sent me into a reverie, back into the stern of an Old Town canoe, with one foot forward and the other tucked under the seat, paddling hard against the wind on one of the last trips I led.

* * *

“You are doing great, Gretchen. Keep it up!” I yelled from the stern, where I was giving my all trying to paddle forward hard whilst keeping a good angle so the canoe wouldn’t get swamped by the waves cresting in front of us on Lake Chesuncook. As soon as the words left my mouth, they were whisked away on 15–20 knot winds that had come up that afternoon, their telltale, meringue-style white caps indicating their force.

Gretchen, encased in a bright red life vest, sat unnaturally erect in the bow. The tails of the black webbing straps that I'd cinched tight to insure a snug fit before we set out flapped hard in the wind at her sides. A khaki-coloured, wide-brimmed hat that had been perched on the top of her head before we rounded the lee of the last island hung askew on her back, dangling from the drawstring around her neck. Without her hat, Gretchen's reddish-brown, closely cropped hair with a patch of tight curls on top, gave her an androgynous look.

After lunch I'd cajoled Gretchen, who didn't know how to swim and had a lifelong fear of drowning, to try floating in the shallow water with the aid of her life jacket. At first, she insisted on being held close like a child. But once she got the hang of it, she became an ecstatic swimmer, paddling on her front and her back, the jacket tipping her slight frame like a red nun buoy in a tidal current.

"Fuck you, fuck you, *fuck you* for taking me on this Goddamn trip!" Gretchen wailed back to me whilst maintaining the rhythm of her paddling. Inwardly, I couldn't help but smile. I liked Gretchen's chutzpah. She was a crass, 20-something, straight-shooting lesbian who had come into my life through AA. She was thin to the point of looking malnourished. She had a gap between her two front teeth that caused her to whistle slightly when she spoke and an endearing South Boston accent. Earlier in the day, she'd flashed her breasts at the group, showing off her newly pierced nipple.

All the bravado she demonstrated on land didn't fool me. I knew how scared Gretchen was. She was a prime candidate for the trip. It was the reason I had bartered with her and yes, challenged her to come along. If all went well, she would come back feeling bolstered by a new set of skills and memories. She would also, I hoped, forge new relationships with other women on the trip, many of whom lived in close proximity to her in Midcoast Maine.

In Gretchen, I also saw myself, someone who held onto a way of life with a fierceness that suggested that there was more to the story. Perhaps what I wanted for Gretchen was what I wanted for myself: a more rooted existence. For years I had vacillated between putting down roots and uprooting constantly, but it was a lifestyle that didn't provide constancy and it was consistency I wanted and needed as I reached my mid-30s, my biological clock sending out hints that the window of opportunity for having children was beginning a rapid decline. Gretchen had similarly been a drifter of a different sort, moving from one relationship and community to the next any time the emotional stakes got too high. At this juncture, both of us were on a trajectory that I hoped would lead to greater stability—mine into marriage, a relationship in the works, Gretchen's into allowing herself to be open to rather than fight the bonds developing on the trip.

During the days before the excursion, Gretchen had helped with preparations, carefully labelling and packing equipment, measuring food, making lists with handwriting so perfect that I wondered where in this woman's past her perfectionism had arisen. It was a facet of her that flew in the face of the tough, break-all-the rules persona Gretchen liked to project. And, now, I was seeing her in yet another environment that was drawing out new aspects of her complex personality. These trips always brought out different facets of each individual, both strengths and weaknesses. For the trip to be successful, it was incumbent upon the group members to work as a team. The group was coalescing nicely, but this day's high winds would offer yet another test of our collective strength.

Before we set off, my last words of instruction had been to keep paddling forward no matter what in order to keep the boats under control. Gretchen had listened well and was putting her all into her strokes, the small biceps on her wiry pockmarked arms bulging. I was glad she was feeling anger instead of terror because it would help to power us to safety.

There were six boats on the trip, with ten participants, my coleader Barbara, and me. Before we'd set off for our destination down the lake, we'd talked strategy and picked a point to head towards marked by a singularly tall, white pine. Barbara's boat would lead, and I would take the rear serving as *sweep*, the last boat prepared to move in to assist in case anyone capsized or if other difficulties arose. Each boat would keep one other boat close by as a buddy system. As much as possible, our small fleet would make its way across as a group, keeping in close proximity to one another.

From my place in the stern of the 17-foot, red Old Town canoe, I could survey the group in front of me whilst keeping an eye on my bow mate, who continued to spout obscenities. In the centre of the canoe, a mound of equipment, food, and clothing was lashed down beneath a rain fly, aluminium side up to keep the sun from penetrating the surface and heating up the fresh food that needed to last us a week. Dingy yellow and pea-green parachute cord crossed back and forth across the fly in a neat cat's cradle pattern that Gretchen had carefully created to secure the cargo before we launched. Although the weight lowered the canoe in the water, it also served as much-needed ballast, keeping the boat less vulnerable to *weathercocking*, a term used to describe the effect of wind on the raised surface of a boat, the lowering of the hull decreasing the likelihood of being spun like a top at the mercy of the wind.

Learning how to negotiate wind paddling on a lake was part of the rite of passage of becoming a good canoeist. Knowing when to wait it out and when to push ahead was the question that needed to be revisited each time we set back out on the lake. It was a determination my coleader and I made jointly, assessing the skills and abilities of both individuals and pairs of paddlers. Both of us had faith in the growing skills demonstrated so far on the trip. And I had faith, too, in my canoe partner Gretchen, in spite of her protestations.

That afternoon, it took us three hours to safely make the five-mile passage to our next camping spot. The wind cut our progress in half, but the women never let up. They held their positions and kept moving forward one stroke at a time whilst occasional waves broke over their bows. After each pair made it to shore, they waited with open arms to receive the next twosome. One by one, they pulled the boats as high as possible up the driftwood-strewn beach, steadying each other's hulls before helping the paddlers disembark. By the time Gretchen and I arrived, ten women waited to catch our boat. Four of the women scooped Gretchen up out of her seat and carried her like royalty up to safety, whilst the others helped secure our canoe.

During the evening, seated around a bonfire made of driftwood, each person told her day's tale. Gretchen, seated beside me, pressed her body into mine as she spoke.

"I can't believe I did that. There isn't a person in my past who would believe it." Tears ran down both our faces whilst in our midst, the wood that had been sculpted by water and deposited on the beach in shapes resembling amorphous creatures, part human, part animal, part fish, formed a great candelabra of gyrating limbs.

* * *

A sudden gust of wind tossing the limbs of trees above the trailer jolted me out of my reverie and back into the present. The gardeners, observing me standing at the window, motioned me outside. As they led me through their day's work, pointing out all the places where they had successfully weeded and pruned back the ever-encroaching wild, a mixture of shame, gratitude, and ambivalence rose. Shame at the way life has kept me indoors, gratitude for providing us access once again to the trailer that had launched me back into memories of the past, and ambivalence about the elimination of the wild border between our yard and the neighbour's, a border that had provided food and shelter for the birds, squirrels, and chipmunks that grace our yard.

As the men led me across the yard, they pointed out a path they had made to the weary-looking fleet of sea kayaks and white-water canoes perched on a wooden rack behind the garage. *Thank you*, I said sheepishly, knowing how rare it is that we put our boats to use, now that Nora and David, aged 15 and 13, are old enough to choose friends over family, indoor over outdoor activities, screen time over nature viewing. Over the years, outings with our family had been whittled down to an hour tops, usually in close proximity to town centres where stores and restaurants are within easy access. Gone were the days of packing up picnics, spreading a blanket down on the forest floor after a hike or paddle, and finding pleasure and entertainment in our wild surroundings. Gone, too, were the days of creating creatures out of found objects in nature that we would bring home to play with and later display on the mantle above the fireplace alongside the growing collection of heart rocks found in our travels.

"Your husband sure does have a lot of boats," one of the men commented as he pivoted on his heels and set about collecting his tools. I decided not to correct him and instead silently admonished myself for another paddle season lost. Where had the gutsy outdoorswoman gone, I wondered. The adventurous spirit I cherished had turned soft, traded pine-laden forests for wooden floors, bare-footed calluses for shoe-born bunions. Energy accrued through a long day of paddling or hiking was instead now boosted by cappuccinos and lattes concocted by a barista at the local coffee shop.

Looking at the men's work, I was reminded of a time I visited an ancient Hindu temple in Indonesia that had fallen into ruin (a trip taken during an interim period between trip leading and marriage when I contemplated adding international trips to my business). There, in the midst of the jungle, carved stone sculptures of Gods were being reclaimed by vines. The elephant trunk of Ganesh lay on the jungle floor wrapped in wild tendrils; close by, one of Vishnu's ears was partially entombed by earth. Thinking about the tenacity of the wild as it reclaims its territory became a story I wished to graft onto my own life—a magical thought that the same tenacious vines extracted from the trailer and boats could be cleaved onto me, the vines wrapping me in their tensile grip, providing me with an infusion of the wild elements needed to break the hold of the entropy and complacency that had ground me to a halt here on the edge of our suburban yard.

Caught up in a wave of nostalgia mixed with regret, I thought about one of the gifts my husband had given me for my 60th birthday, a diorama created out of a shoe box. In the background, a mountain range and a constellation of stars was lit up from behind by a pen flashlight. In the middle ground, my husband had propped up the outlines of horses cut from the pages of a magazine grazing among evergreen trees borrowed from his beloved train track display. In the foreground, a dolphin leapt and four miniature plastic figures representing our family stood beside a small lightweight pull-along camper, something that in real life my husband and I have been investigating for our retirement years.

I don't think my husband knew when he made this gift how significant a role dioramas had played in my life early on. It was, I imagine, a gift inspired by the kind of nostalgia that turning the corner on one's sixth decade naturally brings about. When he uncovered this treasure at the dinner table, surrounded by a host of contemporaries along with our children, each of the adults recalled making dioramas during childhood, using shoe and match boxes to house the miniature creations of their own once-upon-a-time imaginary worlds.

* * *

The first time I saw a professional diorama was at our local natural history museum. I was four or five at the time. Inside the museum was a series of rooms displaying mounts of both living and extinct animals, and aquariums containing live species of rodents and reptiles whose captive presence left me feeling an overwhelming sense of sadness that I had no way of explaining. Situated in dark interior rooms, away from any external light, the dioramas were backlit by a mysterious source. Inside the frames, whole landscapes unfolded filled with animals, birds, and plants. The scenes were snapshots in time, but unlike the mounts and the captive animals frozen in poses of fight or flight, these worlds seemed a peaceable kingdom ready to resume their dynamic, interconnected existence the minute I turned away.

Like most kids who grew up in the suburbs during the 1950s and 1960s, my siblings and I were expected to spend most of our free time outside. For us, that meant wandering the trails through acres of woods that surrounded our house and making excursions to the nearby reservoir where skinny-dipping became a sibling rite of passage. Over time, I acquired not just a casual interest in being outside but an abiding need. Like the dioramas where I saw my first ecosystems displayed, things made sense in the outdoors—patterns and relationships, cause and effect were the text that I read with all my senses. Even death had its notation—the tracks of a predator or wing marks in the snow were the telltale signs that completed the story.

The world inside my house growing up was another matter. With seven children and a rotating host of both domestic and wild animals, including monkeys, my parents ran a kind of zoo. We were an eccentric family that delighted some and irked others, inviting, on occasion, irate neighbours to appear on our doorstep complaining about monkeys swinging on the branches of their prized trees or ponies trampling across newly seeded lawns. When I was young, I took pride in our eccentricities, but as I grew older and became more aware of the family dynamics, I came to see that in fact my parents didn't have the vaguest idea of how to do this thing called raising children.

Other people raised us really, other people hired to babysit for hours, then weekends, then weeks as the family coffer grew and my parents felt freer to travel, leaving behind the messy nest they had created. Throughout that time, the one stabilizing factor was my connection to the outdoors where, thanks to my early introduction to the natural world displayed in the dioramas, I felt entirely safe to spend my days alone exploring.

Back inside the house after my tour outside, I looked again at the diorama created by my husband for my 60th birthday. Where before I saw dynamism, now I saw the potential of stasis, wildness displaced by stagnation. Was I on the verge of becoming the little plastic figure of a woman I saw glued inside the shoebox, ready to trade the dream of returning to the backcountry for retirement in an RV community? When I had been standing with the gardeners looking at the foundering boats with lose wires and broken seats dangling from their overturned hulls, it dawned on me that I no longer have the luxury of time, nor the surety of health and longevity. Now that I have turned 60, I have reached a fork in the road that demands I plan how I want to spend the next decade. On the one hand, I could sell off all the equipment, call it quits, take down the boat rack, empty out sections of closets and the garage where plastic bins are stacked on swaybacked shelves. Making no decision, holding onto everything as I had done all these years was a choice that had resulted in feeling burdened rather than inspired to get back out. For years I had known, but not allowed myself to admit, that leading trips was a thing of the past. Just the thought of doing what it would take to lead a group—renew old licences, get recertified, become insured, compete in a market altogether different from the one I entered in the mid-1980s exhausted me. The fact I had allowed myself to entertain this delusion for so long (my husband and children clearly humouring me all this time), was a testament to the mercurial nature of time. In the blink of an eye I had turned 60, my body ageing whilst the dream of guiding quietly persisted.

Admitting this to myself, at long last, brought a sense of relief and opened up new possibilities. Rather than get rid of everything, I would whittle down the fleet, using whatever money I made to purchase a lightweight craft that would be easier to handle alone or when travelling with others.

“Do it in parts,” my husband suggests when I tell him I want to do a trip I’ve talked about doing for years but have yet to find a way to carve out the time and energy to execute. The trip idea is this—travel from our home in Concord to our summer house in Maine following the bodies of water that connect the two, a water trail that I have mapped out in my mind a thousand times following the rivers to the sea then paddling Downeast along the coasts of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine to our summer home in the Midcoast.

In the dictionary, there are two definitions for the word “abandon”—“to give up completely, hand over control,” or, “to yield to natural impulses or instincts.” In the coming decade, it is the second definition I want to embrace. Next summer I envision this—walking out the front door carrying only the items I need; following the boardwalk that leads through the cattails down to the neighbourhood launch on the Sudbury River; packing the kayak and with the assistance of my husband and children, launching onto the waters of my past for the journey north accompanied by a renewed sensibility of wild abandon.

Part IV

Leadership, Learning, Transformations, and Identity

Tiffany Wynn

Identity transformation may call to the table alteration of perceptions and constructs, as well as releasing strongly held structures, which may lead to disorientation. Authentic transformation is the exploration of the internal self that is then expressed outwardly. It often occurs through critical reflection related to long-held beliefs as well as integrating the unconscious aspects of the human psyche. Intrapersonal attunement and journalling are two proposed ways of working with the unconscious. This kind of transformation often includes a sense of necessity, the importance of relationship, and personal commitment. Women are often in a bind between emerging into their next self and transforming or choosing to navigate the cultural expectations of outdoor learning environments (OLEs). Navigating well is seductive because the illusion of inclusion is almost guaranteed. However, we run the risk of losing ourselves as a result of this chameleon behaviour. This is where critical self-reflection is imperative; it can be a lonely process to engage our unconscious, thereby unveiling our spiritual and emotional selves.

The herstory included in this part yields depth in the complex discussion about assimilation versus transformation, which can mimic inclusion, albeit false. We see this in the Cox chapter where she, in her crone evolution, has been able to reflect upon the power of inclusion as a result of re-visioning the utilitarian systems that influenced her view on participating in OLEs. Other authors in Part 4 explore their participation in social constructs and gender role orientations, revealing vulnerability whilst simultaneously extending an

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T. Wynn
Blackheath, NSW, Australia

invitation for all in the field to take ownership of individual participation in harmful systems and procedures.

We are then invited to lean into complacency and compliance with antiquated and no longer useful practices in OLEs. For example, in the Boilen chapter, we see the familiar zone (in contrast with the more common term comfort zone); a person's circumstances may not be kind, gentle, or comfortable, but it reflects daily life for many, hence familiar. In fact, our habits are a product of our neurobiology. Over time, our neuropathways become deeper and stronger with repetitive experience; this leads to a familiar feeling and our continuing patterns even when these patterns are unhealthy, unsafe, or uncomfortable to us. When we overlay this with the term comfort, as in telling people to get out of their comfort zone, we may be passing judgment or inflicting shame upon a being who is fundamentally controlled by their neurobiology and the social systems in which they live. The term comfort zone is rooted in power and privilege, as it assumes that people might have one (e.g., are comfortable with their current mental, emotional, and spiritual state and their behaviours).

Argus, Smith, Birrell, Cox, and Graham and Lusty show us that authentic leadership, learning, and transformation are more possible when *brave and courageous space* is held and an invitation to arrive in fullness extended. These terms draw from social justice literature, intending to help facilitate the creation of spaces that acknowledge and attend to the inherent challenges with power, privilege, and oppression (Arao & Clemens, 2013). The authors in Part 4 have experienced the power of denying utilitarian processes embedded in OLE programmes through intentional relationships with the natural world, which inherently model coexistence and collaboration even in challenging weather and ecological conditions.

The richness of uncovering the multifaceted self and how one experiences and feels in OLEs can lead to intentional intersectional leadership, learning, and transformation. Developing conscientious intersectional outdoor learning leaders is one of the most important next steps for fields that use OLEs.

Arao, B., & Clemens, K. (2013). From safe spaces to brave spaces: A new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice. In L. Landreman (Ed.), *The art of effective facilitation: Reflections from social justice educators* (pp. 135–150). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

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Becoming a Woods Woman

Christy Smith and Denise Mitten

Christy's Story

Clouds hang darkly over the choppy flint gray river and the wind is growing stronger minute by minute. Crouching low in the canoe, the heck with finesse and "C" and "J" strokes, from the front I'm digging my paddle in for all I'm worth. The guides had carefully arranged us in the canoes, the heaviest in front for ballast. Waves crash over the bow and smack my face. Teeth clenched, we have to make it back! All we have to do now is cross from the mouth of this river over a gaping expanse of jumbled waters to the island, but with these building waves against us it is slow going and scary. My mantra—just head directly into the wave, don't let the canoe go sideways, don't tip. Out of the corner of my eye I see some woman in the river and think "what a strange time for a swim!" It doesn't square with this battle for my life. Then I see a box bobbing by and think "oh wow, garbage even here in the Boundary Waters." A voice garbled by the wind shouts up from the back of the canoe "keep going, the guide's got 'em." "Ohhhhh, that was one of our people, they tipped!" Thank heavens we don't have to turn and maneuver to help, I have

C. Smith (✉)
Fort Wayne, IN, USA

D. Mitten
Adventure Education & Sustainability Education, Prescott College,
Prescott, AZ, USA

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no courage to spare. Why on earth did I ever sign up for this Woodswomen trip?! With each wave face-smack comes a snapshot of my life.

I was born in the land of corn and soybean fields, just outside of Fort Wayne, Indiana, not exactly an outdoors Mecca. Until the age of eight or so, I was not allowed to leave the backyard. Later I was allowed to go to neighborhood friends' houses as long as I stayed outside and within earshot. Eventually I figured out that as long as I didn't stay too long, I could go exploring in the nearby little patch of woods. When you are only about four feet high, it's easy to get lost in a quarter mile square woods. Becoming lost was scary. Cheating death and getting back before your parents discovered you had been farther afield and out of earshot was exhilarating!

My family was middle class. We always had enough to eat, shoes on our feet and lived in a 1956 ranch-style house built by my father and relatives on an acre of land in the country. I went to a Catholic parochial grade school where it was always the same 32 kids in class year after year. Occasionally, like maybe three times over eight years, a new kid would be added. Always tall for my age and painfully shy, I didn't fit into any group and that's where I stayed for eight years, an outsider. Seldom meeting anyone new and not being naturally loquacious, I developed practically zero social skills. From that time on, I wandered through life as basically an amorphous observer.

My parents, strict Catholics with a good old-fashioned German work ethic, taught me that there are no do-overs; "You made your bed, now lie in it." This did not exactly nurture an adventurous spirit. Through it all, I developed an overly righteous sense of right and wrong, a rigid sense of rules for behavior, rebelliousness against perceived hypocrisies, and great anxiety when new situations arose where outcomes seemed unpredictable.

Both of my parents worked outside of the home. We didn't go on family vacations per se, but our almost-every-weekend jaunts beginning from just before Memorial Day until just after Labor Day to my grandparents' creaky old cottage on Pretty Lake in northeast Indiana was like going on vacation every week. There was a white wooden rowboat there with a red strip running around the top. Although I had the same "stay in the yard" restrictions as at home and I could swim just off the pier, eventually around age 12 I was allowed to take the rowboat out by myself. This sturdy heavy rowboat had a broad flat bottom; it was not tip-able even in the biggest waves. I loved rowing! I loved the sound of the waves lapping against the wooden boards. I loved the freedom of being out in the middle of that small lake, gazing at the various lives surrounding its shores.

There was a small wooded swamp, maybe a half mile or so square, near the cottage at a bend in the lake. My sister, three years younger but ironically able to leave the various yards at an earlier age than me, and I were regularly cautioned to stay out of the swamp because "there's snakes and quicksand back there." We of course sporadically went exploring there. It was another world, magical and dark and a bit scary, and sometimes we'd get temporarily lost. It was always a grand accomplishment to find our way back out having not been bitten by a snake or swallowed by quicksand.

Twelve going on thirteen, my parents took my sister and me on a trip to Mexico. Not only was this my first trip out of the country, it was my first exposure to another culture. I sucked it all in like a sponge and for sure this is when and where I caught the wanderlust bug. We not only visited the Teotihuacán pyramids outside of Mexico City, but we also visited small and at that time undeveloped historic towns like Taxco. Eventually we made our way to Acapulco where we were met by my mom's brother and his Mexican girlfriend, Gloria. Gloria lived with her large family on a steep hillside in the non-tourist part of Acapulco. Her family home looked like a bunch of children's building blocks stacked catty-whampus one upon another up the steep hillside. We ate Christmas dinner at a table on the top cubicle. Gloria, her parents and older siblings, my uncle, and my family all ate while Gloria's younger siblings played on the floor. I remember thinking that these people seemed much poorer than us but so happy and close, there was so much laughter! After the adults and we guests finished eating, the smaller children ate while the older brothers played guitars and sang. There was dancing and more laughter. I couldn't really talk with Gloria's family since they mostly only spoke Spanish and I English, but laughing and dancing and pantomimes became our common language. Around midnight under the brilliantly lit sky, Gloria motioned us to the edge of the rooftop. A large candlelit procession was solemnly singing and making its way down the narrow cobbled street. A litter containing the manger and baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph was reverently carried. Large statues of the Wise Men bobbed and followed behind. We all fell silent witnessing this holy rite.

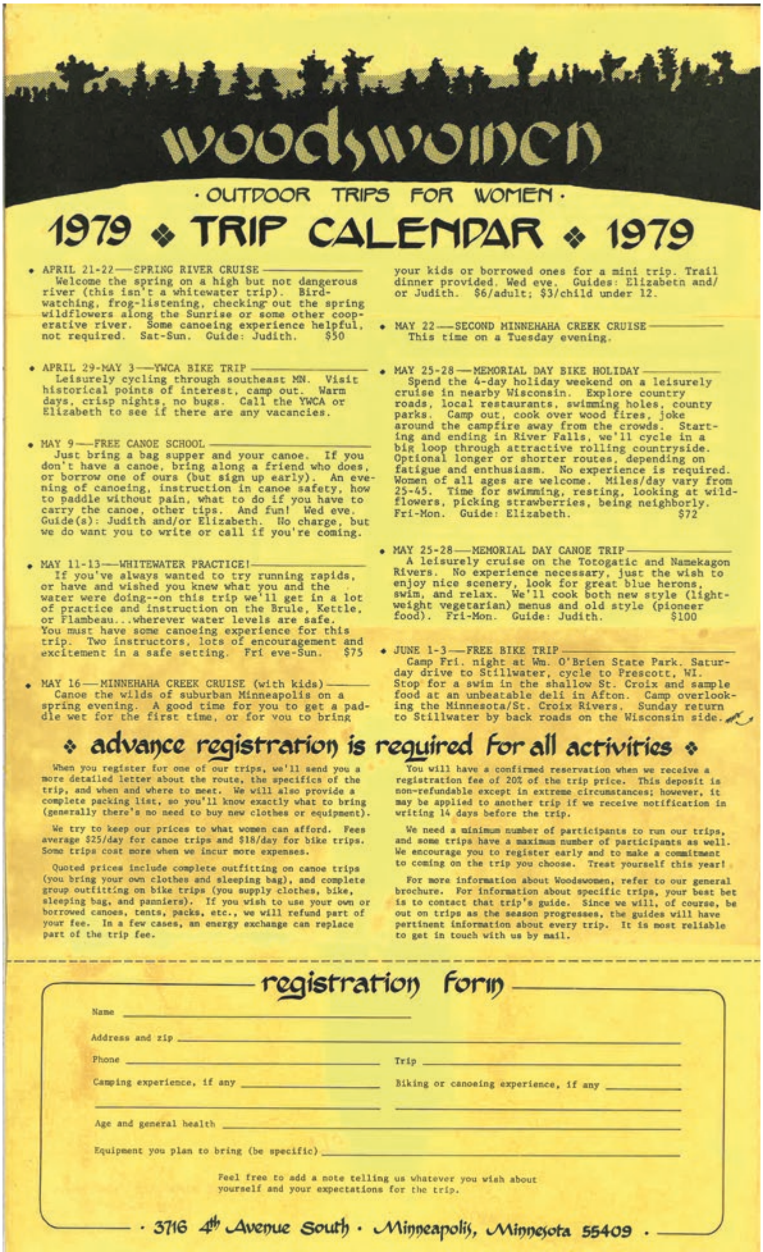
After Mexico, my teenage years began. I was a rather sullen, studious teenager, still not many social skills but at least now in a public high school where new peers appeared and disappeared. I could leave the backyard, but I definitely had curfews and rules. For the next few years relatives constantly asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up: a nun, a teacher, a nurse? Those seemed to be the only three options in the early 1970s for a Catholic girl in Fort Wayne, Indiana. None of those sounded like a good option, so I chose the least offensive. At age 18, I left home to attend a local nursing school and lived in the dorm. Ahhhhh, freedom. I didn't do very well in nursing. I barfed and gagged my way through about a year and a half of it, but when I passed out during a surgical rotation, I knew I absolutely did not want to do any of this for the rest of my life. That's kind of the way my life has been, a process of elimination. And of course "you made your bed, now lie in it," so no more parental-supported post-secondary education for me. I had chosen wrong, I blew it.

So I moved back home, got a job and once again had curfews. At 19, I was an hour or so late one night in meeting my curfew and got a very harsh "if you're going to live in my house, you live by my rules" speech from dad. I left home in a righteous spate of anger the next day and began to figure out life on my own. Years of wandering from major to major in a local university and working part-time followed. I had fallen from middle-class grace and for the next two decades lived in a poverty-stricken, culturally diverse part of Fort Wayne (still it was Indiana, so not too diverse). During this era, I began to participate in the annual August migration to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival and incidentally discovered that I loved camping! I bought a $30 two-person tent from J.C. Penny's and an Eastman daypack, both surprisingly durable and bombproof, and both of which I would actually use over the next two decades.

Finally, I quit school to work full time. Ahhhh, security! I still was not very socially adept, but had a few friends. I met my life partner and she introduced me to her circle of friends. We joined those friends twice a year over the next half decade for annual pre-Memorial Day and post-Labor Day weekend canoe trips. We dubbed ourselves the "Can U Canoe Group." In my case the answer was somewhat, sort of. Those were not particularly successful trips. A group of 20-somethings, there was a lot of drinking and partying extending into the wee hours of the night. My partner was always cranky and hung over the morning we'd hit the water. I would always be assigned the front of the canoe and my duty was to paddle and watch out for boulders and snags while my partner steered and drank more beer. I paddled well enough but was not so good at reading the water, especially where those underwater hazards like boulders and deadheads lie. Pretty much, at some point, every trip we'd end up in the cold and sometimes dangerously fast and deep water and it of course was always my fault, even when it wasn't. Although those experiences had not been all that successful, I was still exhilarated each time we arrived alive at our take-out point. And I loved camping!

A few years later, in 1979, at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, I picked up a brochure for Woodswomen, a Minnesota-based company offering a variety of canoe and bike trips for women only. Some of the canoe trips were for experienced paddlers (which I certainly still could not call myself!) but some provided instruction. Some trips were single-day clinics, some were multiday adventures. All of their trips looked like fun! I wanted to try it, but did not own a reliable car and it was a long drive to Minnesota from Indiana. Then too, money was tight. Years passed, more Can U Canoe trips, more college classes leading to a rather useless degree. Finding a somewhat professional job, finances stabilized and I bought a brand new car. Then I happened upon an advertisement in Lesbian Connection for Woodswomen and sent for their current brochure. The company had grown and the variety of trips offered, both in the US and internationally, made me drool and dream (Fig. 28.1).

I spent the following years with a new life partner, Katie, traveling and car camping around Lake Superior and the Canadian Maritimes. Car camping, our form of economic travel, allowed us to continually wander further afield, all the way to Newfoundland. I continued to drool for several more years over each new annual Woodswomen brochure. Finally, we took the plunge, my life partner and I signed up for Woodswomen's Rainbow Island Retreat canoe trip. By now just shy of age 40, this was a compromise trip. Ever since those Can U Canoe trips of the previous decade, I had wanted to try a weeklong camp-to-camp kind of canoe trip. Katie, who had never canoed before, thought a base camp "learn to canoe" adventure was more up her alley. In any case, this Woodswomen trip would be a new chapter in my canoeing repertoire! At first, it was a bit daunting; this was my first group trip ever. Meeting a group of ten other participants plus two guides was scary in and of itself (remember, pretty much zero social skills and still shy). What if I was the biggest, fattest, oldest? What if I had to spend a week on an island with people who from day one didn't like me? Soon, however, we were all sharing stories and laughing a lot. The women on this trip came from a variety of backgrounds; a couple were well-to-do professionals, a few were middle of the middle class, a couple more were lower middle class like Katie and myself, and at least one was utter poverty level. One woman was a pregnant, recovering drug addict who had been incarcerated and had received a Woodswomen scholarship for this trip. Somehow, right from the get-go, everyone was so accepting, encouraging, and friendly, we were all equals in this adventure regardless of where we came from and previous experience. I don't really know how the two guides facilitated that level of cohesiveness so quickly, but it was wonderfully nourishing and quite a new experience for me! We learned how to get in and out of a canoe without tipping, practiced "C" and "J" strokes and how to go where we wanted, took turns in the front and back of the canoe learning how to steer, how to read the "V" in the water, avoid underwater obstacles and choose a safe course. I could feel myself gaining confidence, relaxing and enjoying the wilderness, and actually enjoying the company of others.



woodswomen

· OUTDOOR TRIPS FOR WOMEN ·

1979 ◆ TRIP CALENDAR ◆ 1979

- APRIL 21-22—SPRING RIVER CRUISE
  Welcome the spring on a high but not dangerous river (this isn't a whitewater trip). Bird-watching, frog-listening, checking out the spring wildflowers along the Sunrise or some other cooperative river. Some canoeing experience helpful, not required. Sat-Sun. Guide: Judith. $50

- APRIL 29-MAY 3—YWCA BIKE TRIP
  Leisurely cycling through southeast MN. Visit historical points of interest, camp out. Warm days, crisp nights, no bugs. Call the YWCA or Elizabeth to see if there are any vacancies.

- MAY 9—FREE CANOE SCHOOL
  Just bring a bag supper and your canoe. If you don't have a canoe, bring along a friend who does, or borrow one of ours (but sign up early). An evening of canoeing, instruction in canoe safety, how to paddle without pain, what to do if you have to carry the canoe, other tips. And fun! Wed eve. Guide(s): Judith and/or Elizabeth. No charge, but we do want you to write or call if you're coming.

- MAY 11-13—WHITEWATER PRACTICE!
  If you've always wanted to try running rapids, or have and wished you knew what you and the water were doing--on this trip we'll get in a lot of practice and instruction on the Brule, Kettle, or Flambeau...wherever water levels are safe. You must have some canoeing experience for this trip. Two instructors, lots of encouragement and excitement in a safe setting. Fri eve-Sun. $75

- MAY 16—MINNEHAHA CREEK CRUISE (with kids)
  Canoe the wilds of suburban Minneapolis on a spring evening. A good time for you to get a paddle wet for the first time, or for you to bring your kids or borrowed ones for a mini trip. Trail dinner provided. Wed eve. Guides: Elizabetn and/or Judith. $6/adult; $3/child under 12.

- MAY 22—SECOND MINNEHAHA CREEK CRUISE
  This time on a Tuesday evening.

- MAY 25-28—MEMORIAL DAY BIKE HOLIDAY
  Spend the 4-day holiday weekend on a leisurely cruise in nearby Wisconsin. Explore country roads, local restaurants, swimming holes, county parks. Camp out, cook over wood fires, joke around the campfire away from the crowds. Starting and ending in River Falls, we'll cycle in a big loop through attractive rolling countryside. Optional longer or shorter routes, depending on fatigue and enthusiasm. No experience is required. Women of all ages are welcome. Miles/day vary from 25-45. Time for swimming, resting, looking at wildflowers, picking strawberries, being neighborly. Fri-Mon. Guide: Elizabeth. $72

- MAY 25-28—MEMORIAL DAY CANOE TRIP
  A leisurely cruise on the Totogatic and Namekagon Rivers. No experience necessary, just the wish to enjoy nice scenery, look for great blue herons, swim, and relax. We'll cook both new style (lightweight vegetarian) menus and old style (pioneer food). Fri-Mon. Guide: Judith. $100

- JUNE 1-3—FREE BIKE TRIP
  Camp Fri. night at Wm. O'Brien State Park. Saturday drive to Stillwater, cycle to Prescott, WI. Stop for a swim in the shallow St. Croix and sample food at an unbeatable deli in Afton. Camp overlooking the Minnesota/St. Croix Rivers. Sunday return to Stillwater by back roads on the Wisconsin side.

❖ advance registration is required for all activities ❖

When you register for one of our trips, we'll send you a more detailed letter about the route, the specifics of the trip, and when and where to meet. We will also provide a complete packing list, so you'll know exactly what to bring (generally there's no need to buy new clothes or equipment).

We try to keep our prices to what women can afford. Fees average $25/day for canoe trips and $18/day for bike trips. Some trips cost more when we incur more expenses.

Quoted prices include complete outfitting on canoe trips (you bring your own clothes and sleeping bag), and complete group outfitting on bike trips (you supply clothes, bike, sleeping bag, and panniers). If you wish to use your own or borrowed canoes, tents, packs, etc., we will refund part of your fee. In a few cases, an energy exchange can replace part of the trip fee.

You will have a confirmed reservation when we receive a registration fee of 20% of the trip price. This deposit is non-refundable except in extreme circumstances; however, it may be applied to another trip if we receive notification in writing 14 days before the trip.

We need a minimum number of participants to run our trips, and some trips have a maximum number of participants as well. We encourage you to register early and to make a commitment to coming on the trip you choose. Treat yourself this year!

For more information about Woodswomen, refer to our general brochure. For information about specific trips, your best bet is to contact that trip's guide. Since we will, of course, be out on trips as the season progresses, the guides will have pertinent information about every trip. It is most reliable to get in touch with us by mail.

registration form

Name ____________________

Address and zip ____________________

Phone ____________________ Trip ____________________

Camping experience, if any ____________________ Biking or canoeing experience, if any ____________________

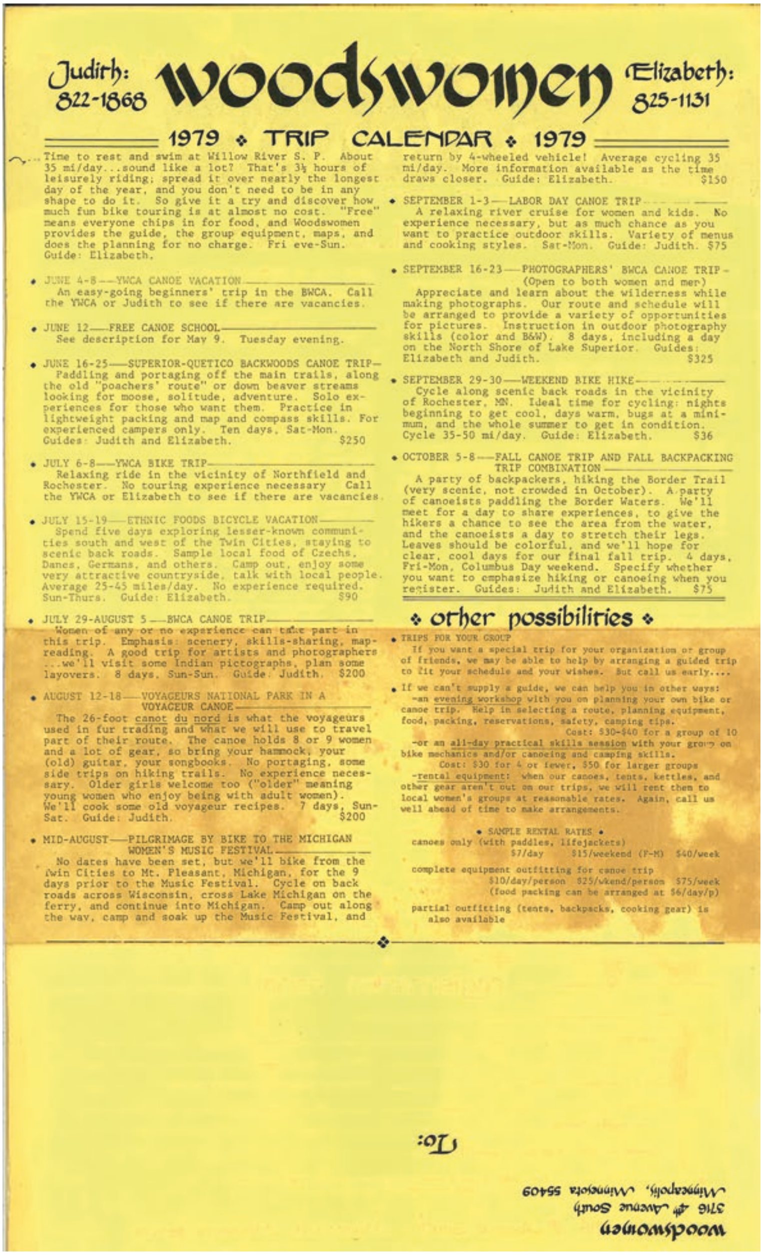
Age and general health ____________________

Equipment you plan to bring (be specific) ____________________

Feel free to add a note telling us whatever you wish about yourself and your expectations for the trip.

· 3716 4th Avenue South · Minneapolis, Minnesota 55409 ·

Fig. 28.1 The Woodswomen trip calendar from 1979



Judith:
822-1868

woodswomen

Elizabeth:
825-1131

1979 ◆ TRIP CALENDAR ◆ 1979

...Time to rest and swim at Willow River S. P. About 35 mi/day...sound like a lot? That's 3½ hours of leisurely riding; spread it over nearly the longest day of the year, and you don't need to be in any shape to do it. So give it a try and discover how much fun bike touring is at almost no cost. "Free" means everyone chips in for food, and Woodswomen provides the guide, the group equipment, maps, and does the planning for no charge. Fri eve-Sun. Guide: Elizabeth.

- JUNE 4-8—YWCA CANOE VACATION

An easy-going beginners' trip in the BWCA. Call the YWCA or Judith to see if there are vacancies.

- JUNE 12—FREE CANOE SCHOOL

See description for May 9. Tuesday evening.

- JUNE 16-25—SUPERIOR-QUETICO BACKWOODS CANOE TRIP—

Paddling and portaging off the main trails, along the old "poachers' route" or down beaver streams looking for moose, solitude, adventure. Solo experiences for those who want them. Practice in lightweight packing and map and compass skills. For experienced campers only. Ten days, Sat-Mon. Guides: Judith and Elizabeth. $250

- JULY 6-8—YWCA BIKE TRIP

Relaxing ride in the vicinity of Northfield and Rochester. No touring experience necessary Call the YWCA or Elizabeth to see if there are vacancies.

- JULY 15-19—ETHNIC FOODS BICYCLE VACATION

Spend five days exploring lesser-known communities south and west of the Twin Cities, staying to scenic back roads. Sample local food of Czechs, Danes, Germans, and others. Camp out, enjoy some very attractive countryside, talk with local people. Average 25-45 miles/day. No experience required. Sun-Thurs. Guide: Elizabeth. $90

- JULY 29-AUGUST 5—BWCA CANOE TRIP

Women of any or no experience can take part in this trip. Emphasis: scenery, skills-sharing, map-reading. A good trip for artists and photographers ...we'll visit some Indian pictographs, plan some layovers. 8 days, Sun-Sun. Guide: Judith. $200

- AUGUST 12-18—VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK IN A VOYAGEUR CANOE

The 26-foot canot du nord is what the voyageurs used in fur trading and what we will use to travel part of their route. The canoe holds 8 or 9 women and a lot of gear, so bring your hammock, your (old) guitar, your songbooks. No portaging, some side trips on hiking trails. No experience necessary. Older girls welcome too ("older" meaning young women who enjoy being with adult women). We'll cook some old voyageur recipes. 7 days, Sun-Sat. Guide: Judith. $200

- MID-AUGUST—PILGRIMAGE BY BIKE TO THE MICHIGAN WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

No dates have been set, but we'll bike from the Twin Cities to Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, for the 9 days prior to the Music Festival. Cycle on back roads across Wisconsin, cross Lake Michigan on the ferry, and continue into Michigan. Camp out along the way, camp and soak up the Music Festival, and return by 4-wheeled vehicle! Average cycling 35 mi/day. More information available as the time draws closer. Guide: Elizabeth. $150

- SEPTEMBER 1-3—LABOR DAY CANOE TRIP

A relaxing river cruise for women and kids. No experience necessary, but as much chance as you want to practice outdoor skills. Variety of menus and cooking styles. Sat-Mon. Guide: Judith. $75

- SEPTEMBER 16-23—PHOTOGRAPHERS' BWCA CANOE TRIP—(Open to both women and men)

Appreciate and learn about the wilderness while making photographs. Our route and schedule will be arranged to provide a variety of opportunities for pictures. Instruction in outdoor photography skills (color and B&W). 8 days, including a day on the North Shore of Lake Superior. Guides: Elizabeth and Judith. $325

- SEPTEMBER 29-30—WEEKEND BIKE HIKE

Cycle along scenic back roads in the vicinity of Rochester, MN. Ideal time for cycling: nights beginning to get cool, days warm, bugs at a minimum, and the whole summer to get in condition. Cycle 35-50 mi/day. Guide: Elizabeth. $36

- OCTOBER 5-8—FALL CANOE TRIP AND FALL BACKPACKING TRIP COMBINATION

A party of backpackers, hiking the Border Trail (very scenic, not crowded in October). A party of canoeists paddling the Border Waters. We'll meet for a day to share experiences, to give the hikers a chance to see the area from the water, and the canoeists a day to stretch their legs. Leaves should be colorful, and we'll hope for clear, cool days for our final fall trip. 4 days, Fri-Mon, Columbus Day weekend. Specify whether you want to emphasize hiking or canoeing when you register. Guides: Judith and Elizabeth. $75

◆ other possibilities ◆

- TRIPS FOR YOUR GROUP

If you want a special trip for your organization or group of friends, we may be able to help by arranging a guided trip to fit your schedule and your wishes. But call us early....

- If we can't supply a guide, we can help you in other ways:

-an evening workshop with you on planning your own bike or canoe trip. Help in selecting a route, planning equipment, food, packing, reservations, safety, camping tips.

Cost: $30-$40 for a group of 10

-or an all-day practical skills session with your group on bike mechanics and/or canoeing and camping skills.

Cost: $30 for 4 or fewer, $50 for larger groups

-rental equipment: when our canoes, tents, kettles, and other gear aren't out on our trips, we will rent them to local women's groups at reasonable rates. Again, call us well ahead of time to make arrangements.

◆ SAMPLE RENTAL RATES ◆

canoes only (with paddles, lifejackets)
$7/day $15/weekend (F-M) $40/week

complete equipment outfitting for canoe trip
$10/day/person $25/wkend/person $75/week
(food packing can be arranged at $6/day/p)

partial outfitting (tents, backpacks, cooking gear) is
also available

woodswomen
3716 4th Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55409

To:

Fig. 28.1 (continued)

Early on we learned to read a compass and to use a topographic map. The compass thing seemed easy, the map was a bit more challenging though, with all those squiggly lines indicating ridges. As a lifelong flatlander, I could not tell the difference between a 40-foot ridge and an 80-foot ridge. A ridge is a ridge. I can't really say I ever overcame my flatlander orientation. One disconcerting experience was an exercise where each of us sitting in a circle used our own map and compass to figure out a direction of travel toward a particular destination. Once we figured it out, we were to stand and face the direction we should head. As one by one we stood, we were all facing different directions! We all laughed, but it was still definitely a caution. Note to self—no matter what, do not lose sight of the guide during our forays.

Near the end of the trip, as a group we were offered the option of going on an overnight canoe trip into the Boundary Waters, up the Kawishiwi River. I was so excited! At last, I was going to try overnight canoe camping! The guides included all of us in planning and strategizing that overnight trip. It gave us such a sense of ownership! In the morning we loaded up our canoes, bade the island farewell and set off. It was quiet, misty, magical. We paddled for hours, then portaged our equipment and canoes. That portage thing, up and over a ridge was tough going. Being an overly large and strong woman, I volunteered to take a little extra gear in my pack. Note to self— don't do that again. A heavy pack on a slippery steepish rocky hill was tough going for a flatlander! Eventually we arrived at camp, set up our tents, learned how to safely hang our food and be bear aware. I was loving it!

Gobsmacked! The biggest wave yet shut down my interior slideshow. Panic rising, the drone of my mantra "just head directly into the wave, don't let the canoe go sideways, don't tip" became louder, all consuming. A second drone rivaled the first, "I am not a good swimmer, if we tip I will drown." As eternity drummed on, our home shore came into view. We may just make it! Dig deep. At last, after a lifetime, we pulled onto our home shore. I was safe. I had not drowned. I kissed the ground, tasted dirt. Rolling over onto my back, I just soaked up the sky. It was good to be alive!

In hindsight, I was never probably going to die. There were two trained guides and we all wore personal flotation devices (PFDs). Even if we had tipped, unless hit in the head by the canoe or I cracked my head on a rock, I most likely would have been just fine, eventually. The best thing I learned, though, was that it's not always about right or wrong choices, sometimes it's just about living the moment, heading directly into each wave. By the end of the week, I had made new friends, pretty good for a shy girl. I learned to canoe with some confidence and got a taste of my long dreamed of canoe camping. Both Katie and I would need a lot more practice to develop map

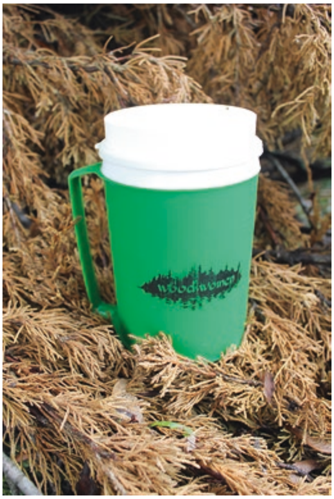


Fig. 28.2 A Woodswomen mug used on trips and taken home by participants

and compass skills. I was so sure that sometime we would come back to the Boundary Waters for a week-long canoe journey into the wilderness with Woodswomen (Fig. 28.2).

Several years passed before Katie and I looked once again for another Woodswomen Boundary Waters trip. Unfortunately, by that time the company had closed. I was so sad; a missed opportunity. Although I did find other women's adventure travel companies, including one that was owned and operated by a previous Woodswomen guide, it was not the same. Never again have I come across another company that so strongly focused on outdoor education, developing Leave No Trace ethics, and one that made it possible for women from all economic strata to participate, thus promoting a greater diversity that enriches the experience for all. It has been kind of like the difference between Dave's 21 Whole Grains and Seed Top Killer Bread and Wonder Bread.

I worry. A decade ago, a male backpacking friend (who was a certified genius, a linguist and an anthropologist) said matter-of-factly that women do not go backpacking either singly or in small groups of women only. He continued "you might see a woman backpacking with a boyfriend or husband, but that's about it." He actually had this peculiar idea that it was somehow an instinctual leftover from the days when men ranged far afield to hunt while women by biological necessity stayed home to tend the children and forage nearby. I raged, surely he was wrong! Over the next decade however, from 1995 to 2005, I never did come across a solo woman backpacking, nor did I see duos or small groups of women. Why is that? Perhaps it's because we are just not exposed to the possibilities and so don't even think about doing it. Or perhaps solo women or small groups of women use different trails, trails less remote and with more foot traffic. I actually knew even then that there were at least two women's adventure travel companies offering all-women hiking, trekking, climbing, and canoeing trips at that time. Not too many years later, I also read the blogs of several women who either solo or in groups of two completed the Appalachian Trail. In any case, I worry that there seems to be a disproportionality in trail use by gender.

I worry. I worry about the women stuck in fairly circumscribed existences. I worry they may never have the opportunity to experience wilderness and get that added value-growth experience either because of inadequate economic resources, family circumstances or just because they never thought or heard of it. Back in the day, Woodswomen, a non-profit organization, offered an avenue to those experiences with scholarships for economically disadvantaged women, programs designed specifically for women and their children, and a Wilderness Experiences for Women Offenders program. As far as I know, there has been nothing like that existing before or since. Today there are some for-profit women's adventure travel companies. The most economical one I've found offers trips with a cost average of $300 per day. Not exactly something a woman of less than middle-class income can afford. Also, more often than not, these "new" for-profit companies seem to offer softer adventures that are more sight-seeing tours than opportunities for hard-core wilderness adventure and learning.

I worry and I wonder. Through the years, whether car camping, backpacking, or trekking internationally, the few times I've come across solo or groups of females, I very seldom see any women of color. Why is that? Is it something in their individual cultures that precludes participation or makes it an undesirable experience? Is it a lack of opportunity or lack of exposure to the idea?

I worry. When I have seen women on the trails backpacking or trekking, I don't remember seeing elderly folks. Now that I'm in my sixth decade, retired and have more time for adventures, I worry that it will become harder and harder to find co-adventurers. I think it is usually safer for any gender to travel trails in groups of two or more. Where I'm from, to say that there is not a lot of interest in outdoor adventure travel is a bit of an understatement. I have traveled with one particular women's adventure company on seven trips over the last decade and have been lucky to have made several lasting friendships on those journeys. With one of those friends, I organized an independent adventure journey to Mongolia a few years ago. Two others and I organized an independent trek in the Himalayas last fall. I worry though that as I age, I may run out of co-conspirators for these independent forays and face the choice of traveling trails solo and limiting the types of trails I go on, or being forced to join an adventure travel company's trip for that "safety in numbers" thing. Being rather adamant about "Leave No Trace (LNT)" and sustainable travel principles, I have usually found that adventure travel companies do not really walk the talk of LNT and sustainable travel. For example, LNT principles have never been discussed or taught at the beginning of the commercial treks in which I've participated resulting in toilet paper being left at various points because it never dawned on some participants not to leave it. Also, trip packing lists do not include items like a plastic baggie with a touch of baking powder for toilet paper and other hygienic wastes. In particularly fragile environments, I have not heard any education regarding the types of surfaces to walk upon or avoid. It also concerns me that group sizes for companies' hiking trips far exceed the LNT guidelines of six. I do understand however that it would be hard, if not impossible, for a company to limit participants to six, and that if they did so, the cost of the trip would have to be extraordinarily expensive. What's an adventure travel company to do? Well, they can at least walk the talk as best they can.

My own story is nothing too unusual in my neck of the woods for the decades I lived it. I was fortunate that my meandering path eventually brought me to Woodswomen and into the wilderness. For me there was intrinsic value in stepping outside of my everyday pavement life and into the wilderness, developing new outdoor skills beyond car camping with the safe guidance of instructors, making new friends who embraced exploration and the newfound joy of being in the wilderness. Somehow it all expanded my horizons, increased my sense of possibilities, of daring and well being, and through it all I came to know myself as stronger, more capable, more independent. These perceptions and skills translated back into other aspects of my life, both work and daily living. Best of all, it encouraged me to look beyond what had been my "normal" expectations of life. After my Woodswomen canoeing experience, I tried backpacking. Loved it! I continued to backpack in National Parks and public wildernesses over the following decade, and then took a chance and jumped into international travel with another women's group, climbing (walking up) Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. A decade of annual international travel focusing on trekking followed. Though still plagued by the lessons of my early life and the anxiety those create, and because I also have the little flame of that Woodswomen experience, I have more often been able to push through the fear and try new experiences that expand my world. I hope that all women regardless of age, cultural identity, and economic circumstance will somehow have the opportunity to find their inner woods woman.

Woodswomen's Story

Each woman has her own story about how she started, continued, and sometimes left outdoor learning environments (OLEs). When asked how and when Woodswomen, Inc. started, the three usually credited with its founding—Judith Neimi, Elizabeth Barnard, and Denise Mitten—often dodge the question. Woodswomen was a process and started at different times for each woman involved. Each woman has her story about how she got to that point where an organization was collectively called Woodswomen (Wikipedia, 2017). Each participant has her story, too; all told, maybe about 10,000 stories from 10,000 participants. Christy's story, while uniquely her own, echoes other women who sought to learn skills or find traveling companions.

The office staff knew that many women loved getting the brochure and reading about the trips—a joy in itself. Some women would read and wait as long as ten years before coming on a trip, others learned about the program and signed up immediately. Pre-2000 many companies culled their mailing list, to save postage costs, if people didn't come on a trip within a few years. However, Woodswomen staff knew that for some women reading the annual trip calendar was their adventure. The staff never gave up thinking that a woman might choose this year for an adventure and were comfortable knowing that each woman participated as she was able from brochure reading to a day trip or a three-week excursion.

Vernita, having never spent a night outdoors, came on a Boundary Waters Woodswomen canoe trip in 1980 because she was directed by her Floridian friends to "learn how to camp and learn how to lead them" so they could all go to the Michigan Women's Music Festival—where everything was outside and food was cooked over fires for 5000 women. Sandy came on a Woodswomen trip as a break from her music teaching; she went home and decided to *take* piano lessons, an instrument she had always wanted to play more. Carol came on a leadership course because she wanted to lead trips and said:

> The training did, in fact give me the boost I had been craving. We looked at women as participants, as guides, in all-women's groups, mixed groups, and young people's groups. We weren't just given hints and generic group process. Woodswomen has a well-thought out philosophy based on a belief in the strength and wisdom of women and honouring each woman's individual style. (Holmes, 1986, p. 10)

Woodswomen (1977–1999) was set up with feminist and environmentalist ideals in mind working consciously and conscientiously with women in the outdoors. Its purpose was to teach outdoor living and traveling skills to women and children. In all of their literature, the line of "Trips are open to all women" was included because it is easy for some women to think that it does not include them—it is for a different kind of woman.

Woodswomen staff pioneered several important programmatical aspects of adventure therapy and adventure education; this was done because of the overarching values guiding the organization and staff including:

- valuing emotional and spiritual safety as well as physical safety, thus attending to emotional and spiritual safety;
- valuing personal choice and individual goals, thus understanding the necessity of personal choice in participation and providing a wide platform of choice;
- valuing healthy relationships with people and the environment, thus hiring and training staff who could exemplify healthy bonding both with group members and with nature and not using the wilderness as a place to prove competency over the environment; and
- valuing women and women's ways of knowing, thus hiring and training staff who could model that women's strengths are an asset to outdoor living and traveling (e.g., women do not need to be changed to fit into adventure programs or "taught" in order to be good enough).

Woodswomen trip activities included biking, rock climbing, backpacking, cross-country skiing, kayaking, canoeing, whitewater canoeing and rafting, winter camping, sea kayaking, snorkeling, SCUBA diving, mountaineering, horse packing, llama packing, wild ricing, and dogsledding (Kloppenburg, 1984). Trips were geared to serve women with no outdoor experience to women with extensive outdoor experience, and a range of women participated in the trips from professionals to homemakers (Woodswomen had a scholarship fund, sponsored by former trip participants and others, to defray the cost of trips so that low-income women could also attend) (Niemi, 1982). Common in the outdoor industry is accepting tips from customers. Woodswomen staff believed that practice is a relic from colonization. If participants were grateful, and wanted to offer money, they were encouraged to donate it to the scholarship fund in order to pay it forward.

Woodswomen guides completed an extensive guide-training program, focusing on leadership styles, group dynamics. Hollis Giammatteo (1993), writing for *Ms.* magazine, took a leadership course that included climbing Mount Adams (3743 meters or 12,280 feet) in Washington state (called Pahto or Klickitat by some Native Americans). According to Giammatteo, Mitten refined Woodswomen's acclaimed leadership program, creating a style emphasizing ethical and inclusive leadership. For Woodswomen guides, leadership was viewed as a role that encourages appropriate participation for each woman. The rigid idea of goal-setting and the language of right and wrong were removed. Woodswomen guides also avoided words that connote domination, such as "'attack the trail,' 'summit assault,' 'conquer the mountain.'" Rather, they would say things like "'run the rapids,' 'climb the mountain,' or 'let's start hiking'" Giammatteo (1993, p. 44).

Woodswomen ran special programs along with the adventure travel trips. One program, called Minnesota Youth Outdoors, served gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth and allies. Minnesota Youth Outdoors ran one- and two-day trips to various locations in Southern Minnesota, giving participants opportunities to go rock climbing, canoeing, skiing, and hiking. Trips were designed to expose LGBTQA+ youth to the outdoors and to provide them with positive interactions with adults, potentially leading to higher self-esteem, a greater affinity for nature, and hope for the future (Dochterman, 1992).

Wilderness Experiences for Women Offenders, another of Woodswomen's programs, offered women felons opportunities go on three-day outdoors trips, gaining confidence and trust in themselves and other participants. After completing one three-day trip, they were welcome to use scholarship money for a Woodswomen trip of their choice each year.

Their Women and Children Bonding in the Outdoors launched in the 1980s, for residents of the Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan area, provided opportunities for low-income women and their children to engage in outdoor activities in the metropolitan area and to develop the skills to do so. Most activities were in nearby nature so that families could return to the areas on their own. The popular educational programs filled almost immediately. In order to provide ongoing benefits, the women and children needed to be able to replicate their activities outdoors after attending the program. To that end, the gear was simple and serviceable, and the program emphasized activities such as fishing, canoeing, hiking, and camping in city and county parks. The program helped women and children expand their outdoor skills, increase their sense of place, and develop appreciation and care for the natural world, and gave them a safe place to bond as a family, with other participants, and with the natural environment. They learned about local parks within walking distance or accessible via bus and gained knowledge and skills about using time outdoors for stress management and restoration for themselves and their family.

Woodswomen's motto: "adventure is the best souvenir."

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The Backcountry of the Female Mind: Young Women's Voices from the Wilderness

Sara Boilen

The Trip

Glacier National Park, consisting of over one million acres spanning two countries and two mountain ranges, is known for its grand glaciated valleys, steep, sedimentary rock faces, and wildlife. In the summer of 2013, seven young women aged 14–18 residing at a therapeutic boarding school joined three female trip leaders on a five-day backpacking journey beginning in Canada's portion of the Park, travelling over two mountain passes and up to an alpine hanging valley known as Hole-in-the-Wall. The final night was spent at Bowman Lake, a pristine and expansive lake nestled in the northwest corner of the Park's boundary.

Not to be confused for willing participants, most of the young women had been plucked from their self-described unhealthy, often socioeconomically privileged lives. Some had abused alcohol and other substances and others had acted inwardly, including cutting, binging, purging, or inflicting mental wounds through intensive self-criticism and judgement. All would later describe having been *gooned*—the process by which one is awoken in the night to find two *transporters* (one frequently small and fast—able to chase, and one frequently large and strong—able to tackle) who would escort said teenager to some outdoor *camp* where they would ostensibly be detoxified, stripped of their defences, and taught to talk about feelings. Montana

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S. Boilen (✉)
Whitefish, MT, USA

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Academy, a therapeutic boarding school, was the next step on a journey that some would describe as a bad dream, whilst others expressed gratitude and relief in whispers to their parents.

Now, as they sat on logs disguised as benches, the young women scratched at mosquito bites as we discussed the next day's plan. The hike encompassed 2000 feet of elevation gain in just over seven miles of trail. Camp that night would be at Browns Pass, the first of two mountain passes the group members would trudge over during their journey.

The Rationale

The trip, dubbed the "challenge trip" by Montana Academy, was designed for two primary purposes: one an external process and the other an internal process. The external process served to bring the group members—who function as a family-like unit whilst on campus—together in a way that allowed them to feel supported, connected, and nourished by and with each other. Montana Academy works from a relational-developmental model which relies on the power of connection to bring out an individual's optimal self rather than a series of consequences and rewards, which may only address the behaviours themselves. Additionally, within the context of a healing relationship, individuals are able to work through unresolved shame (Brown, 2007) and even heal from addiction (Flores, 2004). Of the young women gathered around that log circle, all had experienced one or both.

The second rationale for these trips is to provide an experience in which individuals can experience exhilaration, competency, and satisfaction as they push their physical limits and challenge their minds. Camping has been demonstrated to boost self-esteem, self-concept, and confidence (Levitt, 1994). Physical and psychological challenges can be used as metaphorical experiences that can help individuals increase their ability to cope with and overcome obstacles in their daily lives (Levine, 1994). Research has also suggested that physical engagement whilst in the natural world can yield an increased sense of embodiment, whilst the natural environment provides women with distance from the sociocultural pressures, which often contribute to negative body image (Hennigan, 2010; West-Smith, 1997). Whilst the students of Montana Academy generally dislike the challenge trips, they often find them to be as advertised—very challenging. In addition to crossing two mountain passes, the participants would travel over 30 miles with 40- to 50-pound packs. The intention was to create a novel, holding environment that would simultaneously allow for vulnerability and openness, as well as competency and strength, in the spirit of fostering deep and authentic connections with each other, to themselves, and to the land.

The Participants

Day one complete. Day two commencing.
(Melissa, age 15)

Each morning began with Melissa's mental inventory of our progress. There was no illusion of enjoyment or pleasure in her tone. She was clear—she did not wish to be here and could not wait to be finished. "Here" was a 12-person campsite surrounded by thick forest and the faint sound of a creek in the distance where water was fetched and faces were washed. The first night had the group members sleeping just south of the Canadian border in Glacier National Park. She was a slight young woman with an extensive mental health chart noting a familial history of bipolar disorder and an eating disorder from which she was not particularly interested in parting ways. She was 16 and from suburban North Carolina and her dry sense of humour, tendency to sing, and the image of her tiny frame hoisting what she would describe as "the world's largest backpack" provided levity to our situation.

At least I don't have to climb that!
(Ashley, age 15)

In a green tent with a rain fly that looked like it had been haphazardly tossed on its metal frame, more likely to avoid a scolding rather than a soaking, lay Ashley. She was easily the tallest of the bunch, though the youngest. From New Jersey, Ashley had developed an appreciation for the outdoors in the Adirondacks with her brother and father. The trio often went hiking up mountains whilst her mother remained at home, disinterested in such pursuits. She approached our trek with a reluctant enthusiasm as her tendency towards laziness and relaxation often trumped her motivation and engagement. She was particularly good at hoisting bear bag hangs and talking whilst walking.

There's no way…
(Carolyn, age 17)

The cuffs of Carolyn's boots flopped with each step, despite the double knots secured around the tongue. As we moved down the trail along the lake's edge, she shuffled her feet and adjusted her pack regularly, her discomfort evident. Carolyn was the trip's designated student leader, and she had sorted gear and shopped for food in the weeks leading up to our departure. Prior to coming to Montana, Carolyn had frequently avoided school for days or even weeks due to the physical manifestations of her psychological pain. Crippled by migraines and self-doubt, Carolyn had never before walked as far as we would be travelling. Whatever confidence she had managed to muster prior to the first few miles of our journey quickly yielded to insecurity and apathy as she lagged behind and struggled under the weight of her pack.

How did that get in there?
(Beth, age 17)

Fresh from wilderness therapy and Houston, Texas, before that, Beth was enamoured by the natural world and aching for connection. She held within her both a reservoir of strength and a capacity for love that she was not yet privy to. For now, she appeared lazy and looking to cut corners. On the third morning, sitting just beyond the log circle comprising the camp kitchen, Beth was seen putting her personal trail mix in the group trash—something one of her teammates would wind up carrying that day. The denial and explanations came rapidly and intensely as she refused to name her discomfort, incapable feelings, and strain. Beth would later say that in those days she suffered in silence, longing to connect and receive support and care but too shameful of her weaknesses to ask for help.

On Venturing Together

> *I felt insecure—I did not like to be in the back, I did not like how it was hard for me. In short, I was physically and emotionally bashing my body. I was judging myself for not being able to do what my mind expected me to do … I felt down and disappointed.* (Beth, personal communication, July 14)

The group members moved slowly, working their way amongst the Lodgepole pines and the Douglas fir trees. As the young women began to move out of the forest and towards the ridge that would take them to their home for the evening, the sky began to darken and the winds picked up. They heard it before they saw it, but quickly they were inundated with first marble-sized and later ping-pong ball-sized hail pellets. The shrieks, triggered by the sharp pricks of the icy precipitation, gave way to giggles, which eventually gave way to uproarious laughter as the young women futilely sought shelter under the trees. Some hoisted their packs overhead as impromptu umbrellas, whilst others lowered their heads in resignation, unwilling to exert energy to take shelter from the forces of nature.

The storm passed nearly as quickly as it came, and the young women worked to rid themselves of the extra water weight sitting in every crevasse of their gear. The ridge ahead rose up from an alpine basin filled with blooms of fireweed and Indian paintbrush. The young women, donned in brightly coloured rain gear, moved along the hillside, creeping their way towards the pass.

The young women had encouraged Carolyn to take the position at the front of the pack, an effort to have her set the pace and not fall too far behind. Ashley's long legs afforded her a stride that allowed her to easily keep up, chatting with her panting peers all the while. Beth and another teammate Monica, the two newest of the bunch, quickly began to lag, their psyches seeming to hold them back just as much as their lungs. Monica wore her sunglasses despite the overcast skies: a successful attempt to hide her tears as she silently mourned her old life and dreaded the hill climb that she did not believe herself capable of managing. Beth fought hard to maintain her façade. Insecurities gnawed at her enthusiasm and abandonment crept in with each (slower) step that crystallized her role as the slowest hiker. As Beth's pace pushed her further and further from the peers who might afford her some empathy, she found herself swimming in shame that grew with each step.

When we are alone, we are vulnerable. We are vulnerable to addiction, to shame, to despair, and to injury. When we are together, a new sort of vulnerability arises—the vulnerability of showing up, as we are, and not being (or feeling like) enough. It is a risk, certainly, to be alone. It is an even greater (perceived) risk, for some, to be with others (Brown, 2015). As the young women hiked, the staff members observed their movements and dynamics. Beth's mood was clearly faltering and, it seemed the further she lagged behind, the slower she moved. The trip leaders elected to find a way for Beth to not be isolated whilst in her pain, in an effort to mitigate shame and increase the odds of connection and healing. Research has demonstrated that it is not merely our physical or emotional limitations that keep us from persevering but the shame that accompanies those feelings and experiences (Brown, 2015). The young women were divided into two groups. The first, led by Carolyn, including one of the adults, continued onwards as the second group took a break to allow one of the staff members to attend to her blisters. In this moment, the staff member—often viewed as infallible by the students—revealed her own vulnerabilities in an effort to provide Beth with permission to struggle. Monica and Beth both took the opportunity, with a third student present, to take off their boots and rub at their sore heels, asking for moleskin and sipping their water, their smiles slowly, cautiously returning.

> *Seeing Sara and Margaret have certain struggles, like blisters or moving slower, helped me realize that even though they are adults and had more 'power' than I did, they still had to overcome certain struggles in Glacier. Part of me expected that Sara and Margaret would easily traverse through the mountains with no problem while us students had a harder time. Also, right around that time was when I began to stop seeing Sara and Margaret as people that I had to impress in order to make advances for myself in the program. With all of us struggling in different ways together it made it easier to allow myself to relate to the adults and see them both as human and not just adults with power and authority.* (Ashley, personal communication, July 14)

For many of the young women, seeing adults in a state of humility allows them to find greater peace with their own perceived shortcomings. In those moments, the adults shift from the lovingly nonattached caregivers to totally human individuals with strengths and struggles. Developmental psychologists have long theorized that as babies, we need idealized adult figures to care for us and help us feel loved and protected. The role of the idealized other is to aid us during this vulnerable time (Lessem, 2005). Much as our idols and heroes implore us to try our own hand at that black diamond ski run or 5.11c climb, our idealized parents provide us with a sense that the impossible may be achieved. In healthy maturation, the need for an idealized other eventually gives way to a need for a desire to find the strength that lies within us. We no longer wish to watch another climb the mountain—we wish to do it ourselves. Most of us will come to realize that our idols are not perfect, and we are actually not as vulnerable and dependent as we once believed. This process may go awry in families in a variety of ways. For the families of these young women in particular, their parents were never able to yield the role of idealized caregiver, and the child never relinquished the role of vulnerable dependent. This strategy had the benefit of protecting the parents from not having to watch their children suffer and the children from not having to experience uncertainty, discomfort, or true vulnerability. On the other hand, it also had the side effect of perpetuating a dependency in which the child was never fully able to realize or actualize their potential. Their internal resilience and strength lay dormant and instead, they relied on the strength of their parents (Lessem, 2005).

In the first days of the trip, some of the young women demonstrated a sort of dependency on staff that revealed an internal sense of themselves as highly incapable. They placed the trip leaders in the familiar role of the idealized caregiver. To the young women, the adults were all knowing and invincible, and the young women viewed themselves as rather incapable. A gap began to form between participants and staff. Staff could hike up the mountain because they were thought to be superhuman and the young women carried a sense of despondency resulting from their perceived inability. In their experience, their successes came as a result of a dependency on a strong and sturdy adult, not due to their own efforts and abilities. Here, they had to carry their own packs, cook their own meals, and even navigate their own path. Dependency did not fit within this paradigm and for several of the young women, it was highly disorienting.

Again, vulnerable youngsters tend to find their own courage and resilience when the adults in their lives step off the idealized pedestals upon which their children have placed them and stand alongside, or even behind (metaphorically) as the child explores the world—triumphs, failures, and all. On that day, the trip leader sat beside Beth and removed her shoes to reveal blisters that ached and throbbed. In that moment, Beth's vision of her trip leader—her idealized adult—shifted into something far less mythical and something far more human. In the moment, much like Ashley would later share in her reflections, Beth's self-appraisal began to approximate that of her sense of her trip leaders and the other adults in her life.

In addition to the interplay between visibly vulnerable adults and the increasingly confident young women, the trip's all-female design afforded participants different ways to grow. Surrounded by women, female participants are in a better position to find their competency and enjoyment in tasks otherwise constricted by societal norms and expectations (Mitten, 1992; Mitten & Woodruff, 2010).

On the Female Mind, the Female Body

> *My relationship with my body is one of my most, if not the most, complicated relationships I have. I find struggle in consistently defining beauty on my own terms; a battle that many women tend to face. When I feel shame, I clam up; I turn all of my negative feelings inward and direct them at myself. My body tends to be a scapegoat for this suffocating, dense feeling.* (Beth, personal communication, July 14)

Her body was speckled with freckles and birthmarks. Interspersed, contrasting the random pattern of the little brown marks, were uniform, perfect lines, scars healed from wounds inflicted by her own hands. Her clothes draped from her torso, which resembled that of a prepubescent boy much more than a teenage girl. Her collarbones were bruised by the third day for the lack of padding her slender frame offered against the weight of her pack's straps. Her hair, a classic colour of fine texture, lay across her forehead at an angle that one eye seemed forever hidden from the world. She appeared to be both hiding and yearning to be noticed. She hid with her hair, with her clothes, with her violent purges following meals, which kept her small, perhaps easily overlooked. At school, on campus, she hid behind paintings and poems and being the quirky girl whose older brother everyone adored.

From a very young age, perhaps even from the womb, young girls are socialized to be nurturing, obedient, and responsible. Males, on the other hand, are socialized to be self-reliant, independent, and achievement oriented (Pipher, 1994). Though these socially constructed moulds are frequently referred to as *comfort zones,* it is perhaps more accurate to think of them as *familiar zones.* That is, whilst the roles, positions in society, and ascribed ways of being are frequently familiar and even may provide a sense of security, they commonly do not offer the individual with a true sense of comfort (D. Mitten, personal communication, June 16). Often, adventure, particularly therapeutic adventure, is predicated on the notion that individuals will be afforded an opportunity to step beyond these socially contrived expectations and beyond the familiar to find personal growth, authenticity, and increased self-confidence (Hennigan, 2010). According to the research, stereotypical gender roles in Western society socialize women to embody identities that are emotional, helpful, kind, gentle, supportive, beautiful, sexy, and dainty (Kite, 2001). It doesn't take many miles with a pack on one's back to no longer fit most of that particular constructed reality. Frequently, the abilities to be physically able, athletic, muscular, superior, and rugged are characteristics assigned to males in Western society. Glacier National Park demanded these young women leave behind the confines of their *familiar zones*, which were really only comfortable when they used all of the unhealthy coping strategies that allowed them to remain within.

For those young women hiking through Glacier, the thought of not shaving their legs or going without makeup was unfamiliar, if not unbelievable. So many times, they had used their bodies to get the validation that would temporarily relieve the desperate feelings of self-loathing. The familiarity and ease of falling into a socially constructed gender role served to provide a fleeting and false sense of security used to ward off internal feelings of doubt and shame. Out amongst the mountain goats and bear grass, the young women were without the shields and strategies that kept them safely within their familiar zones. Their daintiness wore off and ruggedness developed. As they rounded corners to breathtaking vistas or crested mountain passes, they were sturdy and strong, invigorated and raw. In a video taken by one of the trip leaders as they rested on a particularly scenic hillside, the young women can be heard expressing gratitude for their bodies nearly as much as for the landscape. Their broad shoulders were a more desired feature than long eyelashes. Their previously believed to be stocky legs were understood to be valuable assets. Indeed, research supports the young women's reported experiences that time in the outdoors promotes an increased sense of positive body image (Johnsson, Hoppe, Mitten, & D'Amore, 2013).

> *My shoulders that I've always thought were too broad carried my pack and had a purpose. I also found a tranquillity in the mountains that I've never felt. I often feel overwhelmed with racing thoughts and mundane anxieties but somehow my head was clear out there. That feeling of clarity is something I've never felt anywhere else.* (Ashley, personal communication, July 14)

Though the roles into which we have been socialized are often familiar, they frequently do not serve us. For Ashley, to be dainty and feminine—to reside in *that* comfort zone—she had to disown the parts of her body that did not fit the criteria. As a young woman standing at five feet and ten inches, there were few parts of her body that she could describe as dainty. The rupture between herself and her body grew with every inch and pound she gained. Her body shape and size would not fit neatly into the identity prescribed by society. She played lacrosse in middle school, and on the field, she cherished her strength and stride. Moments after stepping into the locker room, the anxieties and doubt returned. She eventually took to cutting herself. To change, we must leave the confines of our familiar moulds and surroundings and move into the world of unknowns and likely insecurity. Thus, for a woman to change her relationship to her body or her socialized identity, she must first step over the line between familiar and growth. Some say that taking the first step is the hardest but those young women would argue that steps 56,927 through 72,401 were pretty challenging as well.

At nearly every age, females tend to be more dissatisfied with their bodies than their male counterparts. Body image concerns, particularly related to weight, typically begin at a young age and increase during adolescence. Cultural influences are believed to be at least partially responsible for the disparity and directionality of the concerns. Whilst males worry about being too small or thin, females almost invariably are concerned with being too large. More often than not, the female body is viewed as an object, commonly for sex or pleasure, not for activity or achievement. Thinness is the singular goal. Parents and peers, through expressions of their own dissatisfaction and focus on body size and shape, frequently reinforce cultural messages around body image (Woolf, 2014).

> *The mountains have taught me to honor my body. I have spent much of my life criticizing and shaming my body for not conforming to what I envision as perfect. The challenges of backpacking have helped cultivate an awe and appreciation for my body's natural abilities. The concept of me carrying a backpack the size of a small child up miles of rocky terrain is at times unfathomable to me. But my body has proved faithful, and I was able to do it. I have been shocked with my body in such amazing ways, feeling proud and honored by my strength, my flesh, my soma.* (Melissa, personal communication, July 14)

According to shame resilience theory, connection is the antidote to shame (Brown, 2007). When we find nonjudgemental love in the eyes of another, shame begins to melt away for the narratives that perpetuate shame (you are not good enough, you are unlovable) cannot exist in the context of a loving relationship. The mountains are as stoic and uncaring a friend as any, and yet they offer an acceptance to anyone who enters their valleys and rises up on their ridges. The mountains offer a challenge in their steep flanks and respite in their cooling waters. They do not judge or play favourites; they equally welcome and provide a challenge for all who visit.

> *The mountains know femininity. They are true women. They do not apologize for their shape, their deep contours, and the angles of themselves. Rather, they invite you to honor their beauty, their profile, and their form. They are jagged and smooth, vast and experienced, wide and open. They are made vulnerable and soft by their experiences, but still know how to defend their heart. They are both compassionate and challenging, providing shelter and miraculous views, while still never surrendering to their inescapable incline, their steep paths, and their wild topography. They are mysterious and enticing, never allowing themselves to be belittled or made small by those who desire to speak for them. The mountains are strong, glorious, wild, steadfast and ever changing. They are a connecting force with womankind.* (Melissa, personal communication, July 14)

The landscape of the northwest corner of Glacier National Park is rugged and breathtaking. Hole-in-the-Wall campground is a coveted oasis, fought for by permit requesters across the country. Set high in the subalpine region, the hanging valley is home to flowers such as prairie smoke and false hellebore, cascading waterfalls and steep, rocky terrain. As Melissa reflected, there was nothing about the landscape that apologized for what it was. The water was brutally cold and yet the young women delighted in its freshness as they washed their hair and soaked their toes. The young women sat, alternating between quiet moments of awe and still moments of take-your-breath-away water play. They sat for hours, nestled in the belly of the valley giving acceptance and gratitude for the landscape as much as their legs that had carried them to it.

Into the Woods and Back Again
Survival of the fittest, elimination of the weakest
Yet this place is where I find solitude
Death and struggle pervade it
Yet peace and beauty are found within it
Nature is a place of rebirth and revival
A place to heal and struggle
A place to fall and tumble
Nothing is ever permanent
And change is constant
While nature changes
I change with it
Evolving with each exploration
Falling and picking myself up
For each time I become a new person
A stronger person
And like the woods I will continue to rejuvenate.
(Carolyn, personal communication, July 14)

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Outdoor Education Entanglements: A Crone's Epiphany

Noël Cox Caniglia

When I think back on the years I spent in the field as an outdoor educator in informal teaching contexts, I re-vision mountains draped with blue-white snow, spire-like trees, mixed podocarps, and the sweet smell of decay and rebirth in the heart of rhododendron forests. I can see cold slabs of rock that disappear into the mist, I hear the call of loons in the Quetico twilight, and can feel the heat off the hot springs on the Gila River. In the distance are the blue-upon-blue silhouettes of endless horizons and the vast emptiness of viewsheds. I know that I am constantly rebuilding memories, as memories are an abstract product of the imagination and my new consciousness is now reproducing and reconsuming an entirely new diffractive memory. Not surprisingly, as my memories of events change, the entangled juxtaposition of the observer (me) and that which I observed/experienced has seared new images of the more-than-human natural environment in my memory.

The (older) sharp edges, unpleasant odours, and unsettling complexities of my actual experience have for decades been hidden from my view. The people I worked with as an outdoor adventure educator also have been glamorized, generalized, and reduced to a shopping list of abstracted personality stereotypes and behaviours. Certainly, it was easier that way: the world divided into subject/object, cause/effect, and characterized by human domination and comforting predictability.

N. C. Caniglia (✉)
Prescott College, Prescott, AZ, USA

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Oblivious to my anthropocentric, narcissistic ontology, I originally built an epistemology—my belief in what teaching and learning was all about—in a similar universalist and dualistic way. I taught and others learnt, or perhaps I learnt and others taught, but these roles were partitioned in a hierarchal relationship, rather than a lateral and inseparable exchange of hundreds of "agential cuts" (Mamic, 2016, p. 178). The fact that the roles of teaching and learning were entangled in such a way as to only exist in relationship to each other was lost to me. I unconsciously designated anything nonhuman as inert matter, except for the extent to which it formed a tabula rasa for human intervention and utility. I saw beautiful and wild landscapes that were pleasing to me, but I did not or could not see the shared space/system of our entangled agency. After all, I had traditional science to back me up. With this state of mind, everything I saw or did could be interpreted in relation to the human subject as the foundation of agency. Every step I took was mine. *I* climbed mountains. *I* white-water kayaked and canoed. *I* canyoneered. *I* hiked hundreds and hundreds of miles. All that I did and led students in doing was based on moving through, manipulating, and enjoying the backdrop of nature. In other words, I (or another human) was the subject and the environment (Nature) was the object. My sense of efficacy and agency originated in the belief that my sense of self (my egocentric perspective) was the first lens of my knowing, even though I may have displayed clear biophilic attachments. Nature existed to enjoy, to be learnt from, and ultimately to be bled as a resource for human consumption. In short, I *othered* Nature without acknowledging my diffractive entanglement and relationality (see Barad, 2010; Lancan, 1985; Mallory, 2009; Plumwood, 2002; Said, 2005).

In a parallel way, it seemed like common sense that *leadership* was a uniquely human capacity. I never considered that leadership could co-constitutively emerge from an inherent entanglement[1] of living and non-living systems. I equated effective leadership behaviour with human benevolence and anthropocentric (top-down) decision-making. I assumed that only humans had agency, and I never considered what leadership really meant as an embodied, intra-active, multispecies collaboration.

Now, as a proud crone, I sense a new awakening. I question my previous assumptions on all fronts and invite readers to ponder other ways of knowing in relation to Earth (in general) and the field of outdoor education/adventure education in particular. After many years of research in the field of sustainability[2] and rediscovering myself within the context of new material feminism (Foucault & Kitzman, 1988; van der Tuin, 2016) and posthumanism (Braidotti, 2013; Grebowicz, 2013; Haraway, 1997, 2007), I have realized how my earlier years as an outdoor educator were fed by my unquestioned reductionist and anthropocentric paradigm. When I looked at the mountains that I loved, I saw unparalleled beauty; however, it was a beauty that was meaningful because *I* experienced it as such, not because it had an agency in and of itself. Nor was I aware (at that time) that the mountains and I co-created agency. As Barad (2010) pointed out:

> The line between subject and object is not fixed and it does not pre-exist particular practices of their engagement, but neither is it arbitrary. Rather, object and subject emerge through and as part of the specific nature of the material practices that are enacted. (p. 359)

I had been trained in reductionist ideology—an implicit base for all of my high school science classes in school. Grounded in my oblivious human hubris, I assumed what I experienced was all about me (first) and *other*—well, clearly second at best, identifiable only through my personal lens and most definitely separate from me. What I intend to introduce in this chapter is a call to reframe our ways of knowing, to move beyond what Hauk (2014, p. 386) has decried as current "Earth system decoherence," to a way of framing a world view that honours the complex entanglement and agency of all living and non-living beings and systems. One way of unpacking how to re-vision my world view is to consider *where we are going in outdoor learning* from this complex system and agential realism[3] perspective.

Rather than identifying individual leaders as a measure of what has been accomplished as outdoor experiential learning, it might be more effective to pro-actively evaluate the dynamic and entangled ways in which the field is co-evolving with all living and non-living beings in millions and millions of agential cuts. It is a matter of considering who and what is participating in the complex and entangled context of the field. In a similar fashion, highlighting the crucial roles that resiliency and regenerativity play in allowing the complex system (of which the field is a part) to be autopoietic and sustainable is desirable and certainly would more closely resemble what a complex adaptive system looks like. In awakening to these new horizons, those who affiliate with outdoor experiential education may be compelled to problematize the reductionist illusion that the world (and the field) is directed and shaped by individual leaders. Rather, it may revitalize the field to realize that leadership itself exists only in relationship to countless other moving, interactive parts, both organic and inorganic.

I contend that leadership exists as a synergistic relationship within a larger complex system. The old rubrics, delineating what it means to be a leader, just do not make much sense any longer in light of what can be observed in the complex adaptive system of our world. The idea of framing leadership in relation to a single individual or to a single set of pivotal events (e.g., examining world history in terms of violent aggressions—from war to war to war) relies on an inaccurate clockwork framework for knowing. This classical structure of thinking (i.e., Cartesian dualism), defined leaders as humans who stood out from other humans in a hierarchal relationship. This concept was embedded in speciesism (in particular, the privileging of the human species as the gold standard of evolution); it was also imbued with a patriarchal assumption of linearity and dominance (Norwood, 1997; Plumwood, 1994; Warren, 2000).

What historically may be found in the literature about the idea of leadership as a concept and those who are traditionally considered leaders is stifled by Cartesian thinking. Both *what* is leadership and *who* is a leader refer to humans and their endeavours. I have come to believe that such a human-centric lens has throttled my thinking. The old ideas of leadership are too limiting for the complexities that are inherent in the outdoor experiential education field. Much like the premise underlying Gaia theory[4] (Lovelock, 2009, 2014; Lovelock & Margulis, 1974; Margulis 1998)—that the Earth system itself has agency, is autopoietic, and inexorably entangled—the complex idea of leadership cannot be defined and reduced to a combination of its individual parts. Rather, I consider leadership and leaders to exist only within "the nexus of relations that gives them context" (Systems Thinking, 2015).

Similar to how Dorothy Smith's germinal work in institutional ethnography (1989, 1991, 2006) was grounded in the everyday lives of women, so too looking at how ordinary women in the field practice mindfulness and participate in collaborative agency in outdoor education contexts may reflect a more realistic assessment of leadership in the field. Examining the field from this quotidian perspective opens the door to consider ecological leadership from human and more-than-human perspectives. For example, leadership acknowledged from the perspective of the complex entangled agency of the field of outdoor and adventure education would include multispecies and systems engagement, as well as human involvement.

However, it is important to go further than toying with these intellectual constructs. I challenge myself (and you, the reader) to evaluate the field of outdoor experiential education and the idea of leadership within the field through the underpinnings of complexity theory, new materialism, and posthumanism.

> When one experiences many challenges to one's worldview, it often cracks this fixed reality, allowing one to open up one's awareness to larger perspectives. When our lenses of seeing are cracked, we have the opportunity to expand. A broken worldview fosters a more awakened and resilient reality. (Canty, 2016, p. 23)

The initial steps of this paradigmatic shift can highlight the probabilities and power of diffraction[5] within the everyday. This suggests that the neologism of *intra-activity* is observable in the most mundane human and more-than-human phenomena. As Greeson (2016) has observed, "people, animals, plants, and inanimate objects do not exist in isolation, with each independently operating within the environment. Instead, they act, react, and become with one another" (p. 6). In a similar way, this would suggest that the practice of leadership in symbiotic context, much like the practice of leadership within self, exists only in relationship to the sinuous reality of the more-than-human natural environment. Indeed, distinctions between an individual self and other become as fluid as the nature of the complex system itself.

Based on previous research (Caniglia, 2010; Hintz, 2015), these complex adaptive properties are recognizable amongst many land-based women. For example, my own experience in outdoor experiential education was admittedly grounded in the dominant attitudes of the time. This paradigm viewed Nature and the environment largely from an anthropocentric perspective.

One of the underlying assumptions in describing humans as engaged with Nature is that humans and their environment (although relating to each other) were separate entities. Another underlying assumption was that Nature (the environment) could and should be framed in terms of how it could be commoditized for human use. However, in my emic research with cattle ranchers,[6] I discovered different, more embedded and entangled awareness and behaviour.

> In contrast, ranchers … viewed themselves as an integral part of the ecosystem with inherent respect for, allegiance to, and responsibility for the system of which they were a part. They tied their health, well-being, and success as ranchers to the vibrant health of the ecosystem. (Caniglia, 2010, pp. 287–288)

In a similar way, Hintz (2015) discovered that "the farmers talked about themselves as a part of their agroecosystem, and for them this led to a certain humility approaching their work with their land" (p. 159). Hintz explored how "regenerative agriculture can play a reconciliatory role in the separation between people and place" (p. 27).

In tangentially relating principles of quantum physics to this discovery process, we may explore current and future trends in outdoor education from a more expansive and diffractive perspective. As Donna Haraway (1992) pointed out, "a diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the effects of differences appear" (p. 300). Therefore, in terms of outdoor education, what may be important to consider is not a critical analysis of the field, but an exploration of its many and ever-changing entanglements. To do this, we might consider *network mapping* the living systems of which outdoor experiential educators are a part—rather than just focusing on the human element of that system. Parallel to this idea, Karen Barad (2007, 2012) has helped to dismiss the (negative) role of critique in contemporary cultural analysis. She has recognized that the idea of postmodern critique often contains an analysis of discrete objects and their interactions (Kleinman, 2012) as another subterranean form of dualism. Again, in parallel, critiquing the field of outdoor experiential education from the standpoint of *leaders in the field* reflects the same post-positivist world view and ontology that reinforces the meme of dualism. In contrast to this oppositional way of knowing, the narratives of *land-based* women[7] are representational diffractions and real-world examples of agential realism (see Vint, 2008). For example, research that has explored women in ranching (Caniglia, 2010) and in farming (Hintz, 2015) reported, via the voices of the women participants, that their interconnectedness (entanglement) with the more-than-human natural environment was inseparable from their sense of self.

New materialism (Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012) has problematized the distinction between outdoors (other) and indoors (self). Whilst others have explored an ecocentric perspective in outdoor and adventure education (Gray & Birrell, 2015; Humberstone, 2012, 2015), the embedded ecocentricism of land-based women is also well documented. For example, for ranchers (Caniglia, 2010), the arbitrary difference between self and the more-than-human natural environment was blurred to the point that, at least at times, their primary identity and sense of self was first and foremost entangled in the complex interrelationships of the environmental system.

> The data in this study pointed to an ontological shift in which the ranchers were less likely to build upon an egocentric paradigm. Rather, their primal identity was evolving toward a sense of ecosystem interrelationship. Their secondary identity was that of an individual (human) self. This slow shift from an egocentric or anthropocentric lens to one that was more *ecocentric* in nature may signify an important evolutionary step toward sustainability within an ecosystem and represent one possible template for building sustainability on a larger scale. (Emphasis added; Caniglia, 2010, p. 288)

Not surprisingly, women who are viscerally connected to the more-than-human natural environment (land-based women) may represent unacknowledged vanguards of this new materialism and foreshadow a perspective based on post-humanistic assumptions (Braidotti, 2013; Tsing, 2015). With or without full consciousness of their intersectionality within the complex adaptive system of Gaia, land-based women are, arguably, a fertile seedbed for our arising Earth-based consciousness. Grounded in an informal outdoor teaching-learning context (a more comprehensive representation of what has traditionally been considered outdoor education), the lived experiences of land-based women afford outdoor education researchers, scholars, and deep-thinking practitioners a new way to understand what is happening in the larger world of informal outdoor education. The land-based women (ranchers) have shared stories that revealed their ecocentric identities.

The ranchers' deep awareness of their entanglement with Nature is a reminder for those in the outdoor and adventure education field: rather than focusing on the singularity of people (leaders in the field) or distinct patterns of behaviour or processes within the field, another approach might be to consider the field of outdoor education in light of diffraction, new materialism, and agential realism. In this light, although I apparently experience the out of doors in similar visceral ways—at least on a superficial level—as I did as a young woman, my framework for knowing has shifted and become entangled with other living beings and systems. I find myself bound in the relationship of *timespacematterings*[8] (Kleinman, 2012), and I am humbled by this new awareness. Belatedly, I have discovered what the cattle ranchers experienced on a visceral level:

> Who or what does the teaching was often neither a human nor an [other-than-human] animal, but rather a series of events and experiences based on the complex interrelationships within the ecosystem. As was often the case for these ranchers, separating who or what taught from the content of what was taught bordered on impossible. (Caniglia, 2010, p. 214)

Now, when I put on a backpack, it is much lighter than I ever thought possible, and I use walking sticks to protect knees. My eyes are not as bright, nor as determined; nor are they as focused on me. Whilst I do not meet Nature as *other* in such a blind, anthropocentric way, I am nonetheless drawn to and entangled with all living beings that are consciously a part of me.

Recently, I hiked down to Beaver Falls in Havasupai Canyon (near the Grand Canyon, in Arizona) for a few days—something I have not done for many years. The aquamarine waters of Havasupai Creek and the cascades of Navajo, Havasu, Mooney, and Beaver Falls are still as powerful and awe inspiring to me as they have ever been. However, my backpack (though I tried my best to be a model *ultralight* hiker) was almost more than I could carry. Ironically, the challenges I experienced reminded me of my frailty as a human in her sweet years of empowered crone-ship. My pace slowed to a focused slog and I shuffled down the silted, over-used trails, crunched through the seemingly endless dry riverbed, and down (and up) the limestone canyon walls in a waking dream of agential realism. In this heightened state of awareness, I was thankful that I now had time to sense my relationship with place—in a way that I had not experienced in a very long time or perhaps in a way I never had. At that plodding pace, where breath matched footfall, I lost my sense of self and became aware that I, as a being existing only in relationship with other beings, lived in one heartbeat of geologic time.

Notes

1. "Entanglements are not a name for the interconnectedness of all being as one, but rather specific material relations of the ongoing differentiating of the world. Entanglements are relations of obligation—being bound to the other—enfolded traces of othering. Othering, the constitution of an 'Other,' entails an indebtedness to the 'Other,' who is irreducibly and materially bound to, threaded through, the 'self'—a diffraction/dispersion of identity. 'Otherness' is an entangled relation of difference (différance)" (Barad, 2010, p. 265).
2. "From a human species standpoint, sustainability is the capacity to maintain and continue to enhance the systems that nourish us. However, from a larger perspective, sustainability must presume that human and ecosystem well-being are inexorably interdependent [entangled]; in order to meet current human needs, they must be maintained without compromising ecosystems or future generations. This concept of survival has environmental, social, political, economic, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. Sustainability, as applied to the larger field of education, alludes to a holistic, eco-judicial, and culturally relevant approach to teaching and learning that is intergenerational, self-renewing, and built on a model of healthy interrelationships amongst the community of all beings" (Caniglia, 2010, pp. 10–11).
3. The concept of *agential realism*, coined by Karen Barad (2007), entertains ideas about the very units of reality that we inhabit. It "alludes to as a sensitivity to what is being engaged *as well as* to what this engagement elicits" (Sellberg & Hinton, 2016, para. 6).
4. *Gaia theory* is "a scientific hypothesis regarding the geophysiological self-regulation of planetary systems as evidenced by the planet Earth. Evidencing an emergent level of complexity greater than the sum of its constituent parts, which many theorists describe as having the emergent properties of life (related to complexity modeling), the Gaia Hypothesis has kinship with many ancient cultural and scientific insights regarding planetary ecology" (Gaian Methodologies, 2010).

5. The metaphor of *diffraction* (Barad, 2007) uses the scientific principles (and physical phenomena) of wave interactions to explain how complex adaptive systems engage. "Diffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference. Diffraction is about history, not about originals. Unlike reflections, diffractions do not displace the same elsewhere, in more or less distorted form, thereby giving rise to industries of metaphysics" (Haraway, 1997, p. 268).
6. The term *ranchers* in this research referred to women who ranch. If references to male ranchers were made, the gender is noted. The term was chosen intentionally to avoid otherwise pejorative assumptions that men are ranchers and women can only be termed ranch wives. Such a patriarchal assumption, that a rancher is male, tends to covertly relegate a woman's role in ranching to a footnote in the description of this way of life.
7. The term *land based* refers to people who live on and earn their livings in direct engagement to and entanglement with the land. These will include ranchers and farmers born on a ranch or farm, those that have moved there, or those who have married into ranching or farming families.
8. "Phenomena are differential patterns of 'mattering'—diffraction patterns dispersed across differently entangled spaces and times, or rather spacetimemat-terings" (Barad, 2012, p. 77).

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31

Eyes Wide Shut: A History of Blindness Towards the Feminine in Outdoor Education in Australia

Carol Lee Birrell

Story 1: Wearing a Blindfold

A few years back, I was sitting on a rocky headland on the south coast of New South Wales (NSW), one of my favourite places, a truly stunning National Park that attracts thousands of yearly visitors. What normally draws me is the beach itself, the myriad stones being moved by the waves up and down the beach in a symphony of song. It is a high-pitched sound, almost like shells being struck together. There is nothing quite like it. I can sit for hours, mesmerized. This day, the clifftop had some activity going on in the water below. It turned out to be four or five dolphins circling another dolphin. I had absolutely no idea what was going on—could one be injured, or had this small pod "ganged up" against the weakest one? Are they protecting the one in the middle? I just had to sit there in the blankness of not knowing.

Shortly, along the beach came a troop of young backpackers drawn out in a long train. I suspect who they are immediately: a class of high school students either on a camp or doing an outdoor education subject. Boys are all in the front section of the line, girls lag behind. All heads are down, looking at the ground. Their backs are bent over, such is the weight of their overfull backpacks. All are straining except the vigorous young male outdoor leader of the pack. He bounces along jauntily. The compulsory schoolteacher, I surmise, is the one dragging up the rear, forever pushing the slower ones, mostly

C. L. Birrell (✉)
Coogee, NSW, Australia

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girls. I keep glancing at these students, very little animation amongst them, very little joy, and definitely no awareness of their surroundings. It reminded me of myself, years before, in training to become an outdoor leader, the woman at the rear, always trailing behind the males. A quote from an Australian novel called "Oscar and Lucinda" came to mind in this moment:

> He [Oscar] drifted up the Bellingen River like a blind man up the central aisle of Notre Dame. He saw nothing. The country was filled with stories more ancient than the ones he held in his sweat-slipping leather Bible. He did not even imagine their presence. (Carey, 1998, p. 492)

Similar to Oscar, a blind man who saw none of the old stories in his new country, Australia, these students are oblivious to the rich body of stories that animate this particular place.

Just as I am ruminating on my sadness that perhaps the field of pedagogy, outdoor education, once passionately my own, has changed little in my absence, something happens in the ocean below me. The dolphin in the middle of the circle gives birth to a baby dolphin. Who knows how long this labour has been going on, perhaps hours before I came. I see a small spout very distinguishable from the larger adult ones, a shiny new small body and, after some time, they all swim off, away from the shore, unseen, unnoticed by that group of students.

My grief in this moment concerned what these students had missed in the here and now, how this experience seemed to encapsulate something about the field of outdoor education that I could not come to terms with, best described as a type of blindness or an "eyes wide shut" approach. And with it came a flood of memories of what I loved, railed against, and attempted to change from within the field. When you have been out of an educational area for a time, 30 years or more, you hope it has changed. You left it because of what it was or was not.

Story 2: The Underlying Terrain

Australian identity has been predicated on a male heroic concept, a "conquer or be conquered" mythology, where man is pitted against the natural elements and thence becomes the hero who endures all manners of physical trials and emerges triumphant (Campbell, 1968). Contemporary Australian politics still draws upon this central narrative to define a nation as one forged through war, in our case World War I, as the template of our identity (Johnson, 2007)—no room for Indigenous dismembered survival in this narrative, multicultural Australia, nor women, let alone the integrity of a natural world. The Australia first encountered by Whites was a harsh foreign landscape unlike anything known in the "softer," more domesticated landscapes of England and Europe. Victoria Brady (1996) wrote of the earliest non-Indigenous Australians bringing with them an imagination so far removed from the romanticism of "Mother" England that it resulted in an imposition of the habituated vision onto the new country. The Australian landscape had to be anglicized. Settler Australians became embattled, involved in a constant state of "fighting against": the natives, the land, the climate, each other, and other nations.

In a similar vein, the international field of outdoor education was founded on a male heroic notion, more specifically a survivalist narrative (Hahn, 2016) that delineated a curriculum, producing individuals who could survive in the battle against Nature: Drop them in the Arctic Ocean, parachute them into jungles, kayak them through infested croc waters. This amounted to perfect war fodder and perfect explorer material! Nature was seen as the enemy that had to be defeated. Survival schools of exploration dominated mainstream Western culture in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Within such a paradigm arose the proliferation of the sport of mountain climbing, especially in places like the highest mountain in the world, Everest, and exploration in some of the remotest places in the world such as Antarctica by myriad convertees to such a philosophy, further inflating the male heroic myth. These were products of an ideology that still concerned the conquering of new lands and peoples and Nature itself in a battle that smacked uncomfortably of mankind defeating "Mother Earth," often designated as feminine (Dworkin, 1974).

Not long after its initial articulation, Kurt Hahn's outdoor education model was disseminated through highly specialized, elite schools throughout the world, notably Gordonstoun (1938) in Scotland and, closer to home, Geelong Grammar in Australia (1953). The movement also spawned the formation of a worldwide outdoor education group called Outward Bound (OB) (1941) and The Duke of Edinburgh Award comprising intense programmes and competitive attitudes where individuals were put under duress in the bush, subjected to many collective and individual trials which ended up shaping a resilient, capable, and strong person (mostly male) who would develop into an excellent leader. Kurt Hahn stated:

> I regard it as the foremost task of education to insure the survival of these qualities: an enterprising curiosity, an undefeatable spirit, tenacity in pursuit, readiness for sensible self denial, and above all, compassion. (Hahn, 2016)

The words that jumped out to me in this quote, as applied to outdoors curriculum, were "enterprising," "undefeatable," "tenacity," and "self-denial." You do not have to look far to see the extreme product of this macho "frontiersman" persona exemplified through Australians Crocodile Dundee and Steve Irwin and, more recently, Englishman Bear Grylls, who have all continued the lineage of White Anglo masculinity defined as "man pitted against nature." Such a model dominated other ways of knowing and being in the natural world. Recall again the story of Oscar, sailing down the Bellingen River in northern NSW, clinging to his Bible and the stories contained therein, into a state of "terra nullius" or nonoccupation (Ogleby, n.d.) in ignorance of the ancient Aboriginal stories that had resided on this land for 50,000 years or more (Migration Heritage Centre, 2016).

When applied to educational settings, the fledgling field of outdoor education naturally bore the hallmark of OB values. In Australia, elite private schools, most especially the male schools (decades later followed by the private girls' schools), took up the mantle of a leadership model achieved via the outdoors.

Story 3: The Lie of the Land

Wilderness Studies at Chevalier College, a Catholic school in the Southern Highlands of NSW, tended to grow out of a different mindset aimed at getting young male boarders out on weekends into Nature, hence close to God (Chevalier College, 2016). The founding programme thus held values that purported to be more religious and less male heroic. In reality, the programme resorted to the extant model but managed to hold onto a slight religious predisposition. My own exposure to the programme came when I joined the school as a Social Science teacher in the mid-1980s.

Potential staff for Wilderness Studies at Chevalier College were pounced upon like bees to a flowering tree. If you had one ounce of physicality about you, one bulging calf muscle attesting to a whiff of fitness, you were "in." "In" meant a type of internship under an existing leader to not only learn the ropes of running a Wilderness class, along with the extensive skill set required (rock climbing, abseiling, caving, canoeing, kayaking, bush walking, map reading, etc.), but also develop first-hand knowledge of local Catholic land made available to the school by a devoted flock of landholders. Few female teachers opted for such a demanding role, so year after year the school Wilderness subjects were led by males (Gray, 2018). Naively, I joined up, few questions asked.

What did I observe about the programme in those first few years of being an intern?

First, the initial and ongoing training or mentoring of Wilderness staff by senior (male) staff created a wonderful sharing experience, serious in its intent to produce well-qualified, informed, and capable outdoor leaders. Those trainers had a love of the bush, were active in the bush, and a real commitment to enable students to develop their own love. They were extremely keen to welcome and train female leaders. It was co-educational learning with no barriers if you were able to step up to do exactly the same things as the men. My passion for this form of staff professional development was vexed and confusing at times. As a woman, I was unable to compete on the same level as men. No allowances were made for one being female. Good, in that I really appreciated the inclusiveness and modelling for wilderness leaders that eschewed innate differences between the sexes, since no one wanted to be treated differently as a "weaker sex". Bad, in that I was finding it hard going, really hard going as an intern.

Although in the prime of life and the fittest I had ever been, the physical demands of all-day treks and three-day camps, sometimes longer, and the 24 hours on-call duty, left me utterly exhausted, feeling a failure, and being gradually "turned off" by the outdoors experience. In some of the most beautiful landscapes, I had no capacity to take in my surroundings or appreciate the "wildness" of places. It was an "eyes wide shut" experience that reduced the outdoors to being competitive and physical. In other words, I felt diminished as a female and couldn't thrive under the male leadership or this type of model. All of that I had to keep hidden. I started to realize that different approaches needed to be put in place if more females were to be involved as leaders and to encourage increased female participation in elective Wilderness courses at school. Ideas of how I wanted to "be" in the bush were already emerging, leaning towards a more feminine approach.

Overall, very few girls were enrolled as students in the co-educational Wilderness Studies in Years 9–10. The gender imbalance was glaringly obvious. Of course, in some years, this varied according to the make-up of a particular year group. Out of 20 or so students, three or four would be female. The same was true for the senior-level course called Wilderness Leadership (Years 11–12). Also, there was a high dropout rate for girls. It was clear that if you were an atypical, self-assured female who was physically very competent and highly competitive, you were more likely to be part of this minority. The fact that leaders were all male could have played a part in excluding females from participating in the course. Research on this was very sparse but tended to support the importance for girls of having a female role model across a range of subject areas (Ransome & Moulton, 2001; Schaef, 1985). The year I started in the school, two female leaders (one, myself) were being trained, and other few female staff joined in the programme, not as leaders but as adjunct staff for certain camps or activities.

The programme across all years was physically arduous. It was set up to reward students who could move the fastest through areas in the minimum time, with heavy packs and a steel resolve to accomplish whatever the set task was. Achievement equalled results of individual endeavour and group competitive success. You can tell from this how the lineage of the "man pitted against nature" approach was influential in shaping the programme. Most boys who did the course absolutely thrived. So, too, did the girls who had the characteristics stated above. It was less macho than Army Cadets, also offered in the school, and developed a far broader range of skills underpinned by a completely different set of values.

I discovered that I was opposed to much of the emphasis on games, initiative tasks, and group collaborative challenges (Rohnke, 1984) in the Outdoor Education curriculum. I saw these to be not only coercive, competitive, and pursuing macho values of survival/leadership but also exploitative of the environment in the way of perceiving the natural world as merely another resource to be utilized. It seemed to me that the actual location of these types of activities became almost irrelevant since the natural world and the specifics of the place were inconsequential to the success of the activity. A group challenge task could be transposed onto any place. For example, a high and low ropes course had become almost de rigueur for any outdoor programmes. Schools were intent on pursuing a mini OB agenda. In its least harmful form, perhaps one of benign neglect, it relegated the natural world to a backdrop, not the central protagonist crucial to any engagement. At its most severe, I was horrified when trees were metal bolted as fixtures, limbs cut off and all manners of invasive actions conducted to serve the "higher" purpose of the adventure activity. I felt that the wrong message was being delivered to our students that concerned human hubris to enact whatever he/she wanted onto the natural world. I was ostracized by such attitudes that were deemed "female" and way over the top. It was many years later that I was to discover that Indigenous ways of respecting one's other living kin was similar to my original thinking (Harrison & McConchie, 2009).

Story 4: Setting Parameters for the Female Voice

Once I had passed my internship period, instead of taking up my own co-educational group as a wilderness leader for two years, I proposed a radical change to the Wilderness programme. I set up a 10-week course for Year 8 girls only, to prepare them for joining the co-ed group for Years 9–10. The classes were already co-ed for Wilderness Leadership in Years 11–12. Fortunately, there was enough grumbling in the national press at that time about the disadvantages girls were having academically in co-ed classes. Single-sex classes in mathematics and science were being experimented with and researched closely to see what differences might result. This context was favourable to change and, to its credit, the Chevalier school hierarchy and the wilderness leaders in particular were willing to take a risk on my suggestion.

The rationale for a wilderness girls-only group was clear. Adolescent girls not only had problems around body image and self-perception, a hypersensitive response to changing bodies at a most acute time in their lives, but in the presence of boys, these issues were exacerbated (Deem, 1984; Ditchburn & Martin, 1986). Girls would opt out rather than show up as more capable than boys across a whole raft of subjects (Vockell & Lobonc, 1981; Yates & Firkin, 1986). To isolate them from males of their age, we must immediately cut out of the equation gendered issues, hopefully making girls less self-conscious and more confident and capable.

First, however, I suggested a full Year 8 girls-only camp with female-only staff on board. You could almost feel the shock waves ricocheting through the male Catholic clergy, let alone the school as a whole, but again, the idea, preposterous as it may have seemed, was allowed. It was not very successful, as you might imagine, what with 75 students in the bush at one time and in one place, with a staff of 8 females, many of whom had never stepped into a tent before. Chaotic would be the best way to describe it. A nightmare is also close to the mark. I vowed never to do another on such a scale. Yet, it still provided an important model for girls' education, designed *for* females and led *by* females, being taken seriously. As a jumping-off point for my new girls-only classes, it gave a useful and defining context.

Although I initially had no clear enunciation of what a more "female"-oriented course would look like, I had to trust that in time it would develop and reveal itself as a coherent structure. My own experiences informed ways of *not* doing the programme. The existing Wilderness programme provided a base level from which to apply new initiatives. Many elements remained in the revised Girls' Wilderness curriculum. There was no need to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Research, admittedly sparse, informed the decisions made in planning the curriculum. The groups themselves provided an evaluative ready-made feedback loop, which was then carried into the next iteration of female students entering the programme. It was, therefore, a dynamic and evolving programme.

What Did Girls' Wilderness Look Like?

1. Building physical strength, capacity, and skills in a variety of outdoor contexts minus a competitive ethic with boys (and other girls) allowed scope to work on building self-esteem and self-concept for girls. The mantra "girls can do anything" underpinned the short course in every aspect. Through experiential exercises, this positive expression was brought to life rather than remaining as a hypothetical or abstract quality. The grounds of Chevalier College were huge, so there were plenty of outdoor activities that could be enacted on the school campus itself: setting up tents, fire making, cooking food, tree climbing, fencepost walking, group games, animal observations (Chevalier was an agricultural school, too). All this was supplemented by a three-day campout in the bush where canoeing, rock climbing, abseiling, white-water rafting, bush walking, and river swimming provided joyful yet meaningful learning. There were still challenges, hard days of solid body exercise, and plenty of skill-based activities that put the girls out of their comfort zone, but it was not to the exclusion of time spent in awareness of one's surroundings, of being still and silent and growing, if they did not already exist, emotions for the natural world and one's own place in it.
2. Collaborative ventures built a more female ethic of cooperation rather than competition. Groups had to plan at school what the food menus would be within a price budget, ensure a healthy, high-energy menu, and then shop together as a group (school minibus a bonus!) and distribute the weight equally amongst group members' backpacks. Experimental cooking before the camp often changed the ideas for each group's meals. Once on camp, a balance between individual and group tasks was established, not from an external source of control but from within the group itself. An alternative model from the usual "top-down" leadership models in outdoor education evolved through this work, also ensuring that a group was not totally dependent on the overall leader/teacher (me) for decision-making. At this time, new models for women in the outdoors throughout the world were beginning to emerge as more and more females found their voice to

express new radical options (Bartley & Williams, 1988; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Knapp, 1985).

3. A measured, attentive approach to one's surroundings was deliberately cultivated in the girls. Nowadays, this type of training is called "mindfulness" (Kabat-Zinn, 2012), in this case a type of acute sensing of what goes on both within one's own body and within the body of the earth and in relationship with other species. Such an approach to the natural world, of being embedded within it rather than dominating it, or setting oneself outside it, could be construed as a conceptual shift towards seeing humans as being an integral part of Nature. It was being framed at this time as a distinctive female or feminine approach through feminist scholars in outdoor education (Mitten, 1985; Warren, 1985). A stance such as this in the field would not translate to charging from A to B in minimum time under maximum duress but taking time out to observe, share, and be aware of one's surroundings. Of course, this had its natural drawbacks for a group leader trying to keep a group together within the limited time, yet meandering, being attentive, silent, and lingering created a new pedagogy. The teacher herself had to shed ideas from the "old" paradigm, too, such as keeping students busy all the time. Under such an approach, as you might imagine, there was a far greater potential for observing dolphins giving birth or time to pause and listen to the sounds of stones singing!
4. A deliberate personal time on one's own, or "solo," as it was termed in OB (no other person in sight), enhanced the awareness/mindfulness approach. Just pure watching, being silent, and pursuing art or poetry was encouraged in a chosen place that was really magnetic to each girl. The place itself mattered. A relationship with that place located the student in the actual surrounds and called forth a specific response. This was an early injection of place-based studies (Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). The exercise had to be introduced for very short times at school to begin with (10 minutes) to gradually accustom each person to being on their own without fear or total boredom, then incrementally lengthened to, finally, periods of one-hour solo on camp. Each day saw solo time incorporated spontaneously in other ways into the programme, whether that was on a mountain at dawn, swimming at dusk in a river with a platypus, or lounging under a eucalypt alongside kangaroos in the heat of noon. Although complaining bitterly at first, students eventually came to love these times as a space to relax, be oneself, and be creative. Silence in the bush was known as real time to figure out where one stood in the broader scheme of things. Time and space for stillness and silence were just as rare commodities then as they are today.

5. Deep sharing between females at night in a fire circle became a fixture. Perhaps this is where personal stories originated from our hunter/gatherer forbears, leaning in towards the flames as each person shared something of themselves. Is this why it had such potency? I have no doubt that part of it was because it was a female-only space. Girls were free to bring up anything at all they wanted to discuss in the fire circle. Often, it concerned something that had actually occurred earlier or some sighting from that day: a dispute with a close friend, an encounter with a rare animal, an artwork from solo. But most of all, it became an open-hearted exploration of feelings far wider than the actual camp happenings (Lewis & Williams, 1994). Sometimes the discussion would go on and on into the late evening, hours and hours at a time. It seemed to me that the girls had a hunger for these types of "real" sharing that were authentic and safe. Over the whole course, a lot of experiential time went into activities developing a culture in the group of trusting and trustworthiness. I often wondered how that would have translated once the girls joined a co-ed group.

   Strangely, or perhaps not so, male leaders of other wilderness groups took to jibing me for these long sharing sessions that they heard about second-hand. The sharing circles became notorious and a constant joke, causing me to deliberate on why, for what reason, they seemed to be so threatening to male leaders. Yes, it was different from what was being done in co-ed groups, but there seemed no rational reason for such criticism. Perhaps it was a precursor to the type of ridicule on a national level handed out much later to the notion of "women's business" derived from Aboriginal women's sacred knowledge. It reminded me also of the panning that OB women instructors received in their early women-only courses. Colorado Outward Bound (COB) was always derided as the "touchy-feely" centre, seen as the "lesser cousin" in many ways and distinct from the "normal" OB schools.
6. Awe and wonder were deemed important outcomes of the programme. Camps provided plenty of opportunities for moments such as seeing frosted spider webs on a barbed wire fence, a white-breasted sea eagle soaring overhead whilst all of us stood eye to eye with it on a cliff top, steam off a cow's breath in mid-winter, the sheer exhilaration of river rapids, sunset skies to die for, pure silence other than the crackling of firewood. More generally, place was deemed an important influencer on mood, cognition, serenity, and spirituality or religion. Students "got" this and could speak to it and the way it was changing their lives. Although the Girls' Wilderness programme was in a rural area, this did not translate for all girls as an ease of being in the bush or even an affiliation with the natural world.

Some had to be gently coaxed into feeling a connectedness with the outdoors from a position of no force but a willingness to open to what Nature had to offer: Awe and wonder were then natural outcomes.

It seemed to me that this is where the programme could have potentially made a lifelong change in girls' lives and attitudes to the environment. In the future, perhaps they could have become spokespersons for a particular environmental issue, activists to defend a forest, lawyers opposing a mining lease, or parents and grandparents encouraging kids to spend time in the bush. I will never know. In any case, the programme was unashamedly promoting conservation, the development of a critical consciousness as regards humans' use of the environment, and an ethic of custodianship. These aspects could have been addressed more deliberately, written into the programme with outcomes attached, but judging from what was written in student journals, it seemed to be a value absorbed automatically like osmosis by the students.

7. The use of journaling contributed to the development of a deeply reflective state of mind (O'Connell & Dyment, 2011). No group sharing of journal entries was compulsory, but sharing with me as the leader was an essential assessment component. I responded to each girl by writing and responding in her journal. It became a very personalized account of their learning journey through this course. The journal could contain drawings, pictures, songs, poems, and thoughts and feelings, alongside intelligent comments as to the purpose of certain activities. Self-reflexivity, considered a vitally important life skill, was being developed by young adolescent women, invaluable for their whole life. Students took great pride in their journals, in the privacy of them, and in the personal comments made by me and only to them. It enabled me to comment on their progress, inviting further self-challenge on an individual and group level and a further building of self-esteem and trust through strong affirmation and encouragement.
8. Identifying female role models played an important role in developing confidence around "girls can do anything." Girls needed to know what other women had done to break the stereotypes. Of course, there was a history of women adventurers—Alexandra David Neal, Amelia Earhart, Freda du Faur, to name a few, most of who stepped beyond the traditional roles for women—but their stories were not well known and hence, their achievements were neglected or underrated (Gray & Birrell, 2015). They had to be excavated like an archaeological dig. It was important to bring these stories to the attention of my female students as not only remote possibilities but also more as real achievements exemplifying how women had to fight courageously to do what they had to do in a time that allowed

> entry to males only. It seemed important to set out the lineage and explain why there was a need for female-only spaces or activities. Resources such as films on women-only mountain-climbing expeditions, where women expressed "being" with the mountain rather than "conquering" it, revealed a different way of inhabiting the world that reinforced messages from the rest of the Wilderness Girls' programme (Blum, 1980; Mitten, 1992).

Denise Mitten's work (1985, 1992) in the United States around a new model for women-only adventure travel, women's leadership training, and Woodswomen magazine began an international network of women working, thinking, and doing things differently. Many of these clients were drawn to the physical challenges provided in an all-female environment. OB began to address the need for female-only courses led by females, and a new area of therapeutic applications of outdoor education took off (Miner & Boldt, 2002). For example, I participated as an observer/participant in a COB course in the Rockies in the middle of winter to see how the outdoors was being used in working with girls/women. Sexual abuse survivors were encouraged, as an adjunct to their indoor therapy sessions, to participate in courses co-led by their own therapist and COB staff. It was a radical alternative that set heads shaking in opposition. The work was so impressive in terms of its results that it was adopted by many other OB centres. Although I had never experienced therapy myself before this, which was super confronting in its own right, this course was an eye opener on so many levels. I saw the actual potential being realized where trust and safety had to be rebuilt from lives shattered by abuse. I came home to my girls-only classes wildly enthusiastic with more knowledge, insight, and respect for the unique niche such work addressed.

Story 4: Having One's Female Eyes Opened

When people want to show if programmes have made a difference, they usually demand quantitative results. I do not mind quantitative research, but with my background, my preference is the depth of response one gets from qualitative research. That said, the increased numbers of females electing to join the co-educational Wilderness Studies programme in Years 9–10, after participating in a Girls' Wilderness Year 8 group, indicated the success of the programme. Half the co-ed classes consisted of girls. This was a dramatic change from two or three females in a group to at least ten. Others could use this as a gauge to measure the outcomes, as I did, very thrilled as I was to have such a tangible result. For the next two years that I was still part of the programme before leaving to take on a new career direction, those figures of increased female participation continued. It would have been significant to do qualitative research on how the co-ed groups were impacted with these number of girls involved as well as asking the questions: "What were the girls' experiences?" "How did they cope?" "What was the ongoing nature of the girls' relationship with the natural world?" "Were there any flow-on benefits to girls in other subjects or beyond the classroom?" I did none of this. Once I left, the single-sex groups struggled on for a year or so, then ceased, as is often the case when the initiator departs.

Of course, evaluations at the end of each programme revealed a lot more about outcomes than the pure figures and journals even more so. Girls were, in fact, finding their feet. The nurturing yet challenging single-sex approach appealed to girls, and their confidence, self-esteem, physical capabilities, and skills blossomed. I observed it; it was ratified by the girls themselves both in sharing circles and in journals, and parents commented on the changes. Of course, some students hated the short course and some hoped to take such a subject as a "bludge," as well. I do not want to gloss over the failures and show a sugary sweet, "airbrushed" model, but overall, it was quite surprising and immensely satisfying to see just what changes it produced in the girls in a short time. It changed me as well. I chose to educate my own daughters in a single-sex school based on my experience and knowledge through the Girls' Wilderness programme. My own confidence in my body in the outdoors had increased enormously. I was thriving.

Part of the COB course I did in the Rocky Mountains, Colorado, involved an option of doing the high ropes course blindfolded. Now, just to reiterate, participants were women who had a long and painful history of sexual abuse. They had been long term in therapy, had lost all trust in themselves, let alone anyone else, and especially men. The world itself was no safe place. We were at an altitude where breathing was difficult, below-freezing temperatures were present, and huge snowfall existed, making all aspects of the course perilous; we were clad in clunky winter snow boots and oversized gargantuan clothing that weighed us down and made it impossible to feel anything by touch: the most challenging of the challenging OB. To see the way those women who chose to do it blindfolded, me not amongst them, was astounding. Their eyes were wide shut, relying on their own body, the support and trust of other women, and the guidance and support of their therapist and COB leader, all working together to get each woman to achieve what she set herself to do on her own healing quest. This clearly demonstrated to me the power of females working together to achieve change.

My quest after this was to ensure that girls in Australia would have their eyes wide open to what they could do with their lives, what surrounded them in the everyday beauty of the natural world, and the wonder, grace, and potential of being female. My Girls' Wilderness experience was a microcosm of what was not happening throughout outdoor education in Australia at that time. It was an oasis for an alternative approach that would admit female ways of knowing and being in the outdoors, which provided its own store of transformative potential of what females could do unshackled from the demands of narrow "macho" curriculum imperatives.

Story 5: Coming Full Circle

It would be a happy ending if I could tell you that Girls' Wilderness went on to transform lives, that I went on taking up the mantle of girls-only education in the outdoors for many more years to come. There was no fairy-tale ending.

I poked my foot in the outdoor education water a few times in the following 20 years, hoping against hope for change in the field, for a transformation that admitted and acknowledged female approaches in the outdoors. I attended some outdoor education conferences, both nationally and internationally. Alas, I found the pre-existing masculine attitudes, values, and beliefs still so pervasive in the field. Sure, there were changes, new areas of content admitted, new conversations, but I saw eyes still blindfolded to the female experience, to the unique role that women in the field represented, a curriculum both in research and in practice dominated by males and a macho focus.

It was no place for me.

I wanted a place where students could stop and pause to listen to the sounds of rocks being tumbled together, where they could witness the extraordinary happenings of the natural world like dolphins giving birth. I did not want the place to reflect the hapless, oblivious Oscar "*who saw nothing*" still floating down the river, in *"country [that was] filled with stories more ancient than the ones he held in his sweat-slipping leather Bible. He did not even imagine their presence."*

Now fast-forward to a coming together of a group of outdoor education women in 2015, planning a book all about women in the outdoors, and all hell breaks loose! It was as if the dams were destroyed, voices held behind barriers for so long, finally released. Our eyes had been blinded, too, and as we removed our own shaky blindfolds by sharing the stories of our lives, in our own personal histories related to outdoor education, our struggles as females to have a voice, to be a voice for all women, young and old, something new was born.

It was hope.

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Three Women's Co-autoethnography of Lifelong Adventures in Nature

Di Collins, Heather Brown, and Barbara Humberstone

In writing the foreword to this book, I was prompted to offer a chapter which draws upon women's experiences of outdoor terrains originating in Europe and how we interrelate and connect with nature. Our editors generously agreed with the idea, so I contacted colleagues Di and Heather. We co-constructed self-narratives which express something of our early lives and "careers" in the outdoors. What emerged has been revealing and thought provoking for us, and we hope for you, too.—Barbara

The vastness of the sea and sand was breathtakingly beautiful
The pace was beautiful, the SPACE was beautiful and I felt beautiful!
An observation of wonder and joy
And an appreciation of my minuteness in the majesty of life
That you want to scoop up and never let go
That you should share and rejoice in others
Realising the importance of the contribution of each soul and its echo in others' lives

D. Collins (✉)
Outdoor, Youth and Community Education Consultant, Milton, Portsmouth, UK
H. Brown
Winchester, Hampshire, UK

B. Humberstone
Professor Sociology of Sport and Outdoor Education, Buckinghamshire New University, High Wycombe, UK

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To feel at one with all around you
Never to be forgotten
What a dream
How looking at something so natural that no man or woman can control—can make a person come alive. ("The Experience of Zennor")[1]

Let's take a close look at ourselves. We are three outdoor women. We have/had the gear. We have had the opportunity. We have the necessary knowledge and skills. We *usually* have the confidence. We are at home in nature. At various times in our lives, we are/were at home in the mountains, on the sea, on the rocks, on rivers, underground, in the many environments that constitute "our outdoors." And we are "baby boomers" born shortly after World War II.

As educators, we recognize and practise the significance of the outdoors for our and others' well-being and the need to value nature and engage with the nonhuman world. We celebrate the opportunities and experiences we have had in, through, and with nature. This chapter tells briefly something of our diverse journeys. Through each narrative, we express our engagements with and journeys through the outdoors over half a century and from childhood into the future.

Autoethnography, Life History, and Narrative

Many adventurers script autobiographies of those aspects of their lives that describe and highlight their adventures, taking the reader oft times into their exciting and fearful adventurous experiences and practices. Autoethnographies are autobiographies but with scholarly intent. A research genre which arguably has come of age, an autoethnography is a reflexive self-narrative that explores aspects of the researcher's life within particular social, cultural, situational (interactional and geographical), and ideological contexts (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). For us as women outdoor educators, place and nonhuman/elemental engagement is central and embodied (Humberstone, Fox, & Brown, 2017). Ecofeminist thinking challenges dualistic thinking and asserts that consciousness is not ontologically detached from the external physical material and elemental world (Haraway, 1995). Further, we argue following Humberstone (2015a, 2015b) that our outdoor experiences "cannot be divorced from our 'intuitiveness' built through our 'lived' sensuous encounters with our material environment…its permeable edges, liminal spaces" (p. 29).

Reflexive self-narratives can contribute to further developments of knowledge and greater understanding of specific topics or issues (Chang, 2008). In this chapter, we use co-autoethnography to narrate our lifelong engagements with nature and outdoor learning. Each narrator identifies her particular "career" in the outdoors.

Innocent Situational Engagements with the Nonhuman

Di

In my family, walking was a ritual, a part of our daily lives. Every Sunday afternoon we would head off onto Banstead Downs, or if joined by aunts, uncles, and cousins with vehicles, we would explore more inaccessible parts of the North Downs. Walking wasn't something that necessitated special footwear or clothing; it was a natural part of daily life.

By the time I was nine, family circumstances meant that I would often go home to an empty house. I preferred spending my time exploring the many routes between school and home. The woods and Downs were forbidden territories, but there were still plenty of other places to check out. I remember the heavy scent of cow parsley growing in the wild patch at the end of the road; grass darts that crept inside my socks; the excitement of breaking open a horse chestnut fruit to see the conker that had never before been viewed by human eyes, marvelling at the contour-like markings on the shell and the way its lustre faded rapidly with exposure to the elements. I didn't join the Guides, but went to a youth club run by an ex Scout where we went camping and orienteering and followed adventure trails.

Every year we would spend two weeks with relatives on the Isle of Wight. There were certain "must do" walks—the walk along the railway line to watch the miller before rowing as far along the shallow river as we could, surprising the ducks, and on to a lunch spot hidden in the undergrowth; climbing up over the cliffs to Culver to see whether the view from the top had changed; crawling over Tennyson Downs in the wind and feeling that we were level with the breaking waves. Even better than the family walks were expeditions with my brother as the sun sank below the horizon, over Mount Joy, where an aged relative had taken off down the hill in a bath chair; over Pan Down; and along the River Medina through the timber yards, where we wondered where the ships had come from.

Heather

We lived on a main road with a big garden, so we played inside it. It was big enough to have adventures in—tree climbing, exploring beyond the trees *at the bottom of the garden—but I remember that as a child I was much more interested in reading books. But I did enjoy being a Brownie and Guide, lighting fires with two matches and cooking sausages—and what I loved about doing that was the location—there was a big hill near where we lived, with fantastic views, and my memory of fire-lighting exercises is of being up high, looking out as though we were on/in a lighthouse—a feeling of space and limitlessness.*

And then we were initiated into the mystery of camps—well, that's how everyone talked about it, and they didn't disappoint—muddy fields, being in the fresh air in the night and in the morning; building the biggest gadget in the world—which promptly fell apart as soon as the inspection was finished. And part of the joy was about being in a group, being a patrol leader (and I have to say, having lots of badges!)

My first contact with the water was being a sea ranger (on a river 60 miles from the sea). I could have been any sort of ranger; perhaps it was the sea ranger uniform that attracted me, but the sea was appealing—something about wanting to be on the water. We built a canoe as a group but I don't think I ever paddled it, and I went on the ranger training ship at Dartmouth—again, it was about being on ships/boats, but it was also about being in a group—and I got made a leader again.

Barbara

I grew up in a terraced house in the middle of one of the main roads running through Portsmouth on Portsea Island, connected to mainland South of England by a 50-metre bridge. We had no garden but a small concrete backyard. There was a gnarly old tree across the road next to my primary school gate. I kept a lizard in an earth pot for a while but one day he/she vanished. My memories of the outdoors before adolescence are visits to the local park and learning to swim at the end of the school day off the local shore near where old military war vessels were being dismantled. A school visit to a farm over the hill can be happily viewed with black and white photos of a small bird and some sheep. Girl Guides gave me my real engagement with and love of the outdoors through camping in the countryside, building wooden apparatus from sticks which took up most of the tent. Then I progressed to sea rangers where I learnt to row, sail, and kayak. I spent much time in and near the sea, largely swimming at the mouth of Portsmouth harbour at a walled pebbly beach called Sallyport—a much healthier place than the shore where I initially learnt to swim. The importance of this place to me as an adolescent is highlighted by the "poem," "Sallyport Lamentation," *written by myself and five of my school friends and published in the Portsmouth Evening News in the 1960s. We were concerned about the Council pulling down the walls.*

Sallyport, Oh Sallyport
Oh how we do love thee
From your white walls and rounded stones
Down to the blue-green sea

The 'Bunny Pier' with fishermen
The pier which we jump from
The waves which lash upon the shore
In a place which we call home
"Sallyport Lamentation" (Humberstone, 2015a, p. 27)

Social Contexts: Topics of Time

The three of us started our professional lives in similar ways. None of us initially trained as specialist outdoor educators. All of us have degrees. Barbara's is in Physics. Heather's is in Languages and Di's is Geography and Education. We all became teachers. At first, Barbara and Heather started teaching their subject specialisms, whilst Di taught in a primary school (ages 7–12). Barbara became involved in a climbing club and service at the Longridge Scout Outdoor Centre on the Thames, whilst Di joined a caving and mountaineering group. Heather recalls:

> *The real life changer was that in my first year of teaching French at an FE college, the PE department bought 12 canoes and all the kit to go with them (this was in the days when colleges had money!), but they didn't have staff qualified to take the students out. So they booked 12 places on the Calshot summer half-term teachers' course. I was a newbie and had nothing to do during half term, so when someone said, "There's one place left, do you want to come?" I said, "OK, then," and it changed my life.*

Involved in youth work, Di found that caving was an ideal group activity. After retraining, Barbara taught Physical Education, which also involved some outdoor learning. Then came the need for practical qualifications. This is where our paths crossed, although at the time we did not know each other. We were all in Hampshire, in the south of England, and undertook courses offered by Hampshire County Council (HCC), the local education authority. Many of these courses were based at Calshot Activities Centre. We took on board the values of HCC. As representatives of HCC, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, we were to strive to maintain the highest standards of leadership in terms of the delivery of the chosen activity for a particular group. We were also sensitive to the needs of preserving the environment for future users.

Our practice evolved as characteristics of outdoor learning developed. We became enthusiasts at a time when such organizations as Outward Bound, the Brathay Trust, and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award were being established, with foci on confidence building, gaining self-respect, and comradeship, or being an effective team member. By the time we had started to be outdoor educators, National Governing Bodies (NGB) had begun to develop training schemes, prompted by fatalities in the Scottish Cairngorms in 1973. These schemes tended to address the needs of a particular activity. Outdoor learning was often targeted at addressing social issues and developing skills that might be transferred to employment, such as team building and problem-solving. It was generally physical and activity oriented and distinct from environmental education, which focused on field studies (see Ogilvie, 2013). They remained as very separate ways of being in the outdoors, so courses tended to lack a more holistic view.

By the 1980s, thoughts were beginning to turn to climate change and sustainability. This was a time for exploring a number of approaches to outdoor learning. For example, Di was involved in a lot of work with young women and women youth workers. Heather got involved in using the outdoors for leadership development. Barbara was gaining various NGB qualifications, initiating a module in outdoor education in the Postgraduate Certificate in Education course at Southampton University whilst completing a PhD in teaching and learning in outdoor education. Her dissertation was an ethnography of an outdoor education centre. This research, for Barbara, illuminated the importance of gender in education, in the outdoors, and in society more broadly. In 1984, the British Activity Holiday Association (BAHA), a group of independent operators, had been established. This prompted greater emphasis on outdoor learning as an educational process rather than merely fun activities. Drasdo (1972, p. 33) had already pointed to the significance of outdoor activities such as mountaineering as more than "sport."

Formally Meeting Through Voluntary Work in Voluntary Organizations

From the late 1980s and early 1990s, all three of us became involved at various times and for various reasons, taking on different roles in the National Association for Outdoor Education, now the Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL). Each of us still maintains a commitment, Di and Heather in practitioner development through the IOL accredited practitioner scheme (see Brown, Harris, & Porter, 2016) and Barbara in developing one of the leading outdoor academic journals, the *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*.

By the 1990s, a different awareness was beginning to impact on our practice. The 1992 Rio Earth Summit put climate change on our agenda. However, this was overshadowed by qualifications in outdoor practices and activities becoming an unavoidable aspect of being an outdoor educator. This was as a response to the culture of fear and risk awareness in response to canoeing fatalities in Lyme Bay, the UK, in 1993. It was easy to become introspective. In 1996, we all attended the first meeting of the European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (EOE) in Spital, Austria. Heather brought her specialisms in management and team development and Barbara and Di their passion for greater equality (see Collins & Anantharaman, 2016). Di reflects on the effect this broader engagement with continental Europe has had on her practice. She observes:

> *In Scandinavia, it seems that people are a part of their landscapes. This is represented through stories, art, and knowledge of the flora and fauna. This has boosted my enthusiasm for encouraging participants to create poetry and their own stories of how the landscape came to be.*

Outdoor learning continues to evolve. There is a backlash against the culture of fear and an understanding that it is through being exposed to risks that people learn how to manage them. National organizations such as the National Trust and the Royal Horticultural Society cooperate with outdoor educators to encourage people to experience nonhuman environments with the hope that they will take care of these environments. There are discussions about the economic impacts of an obese and unhealthy population. This has stimulated the encouragement of all ages to become more active. So what are our legacies?

Legacy

Di

I define myself as an outdoor woman and a photographer. I'm developing personal collections of photographs which I hope capture the essence of the places that I have visited. For me, it is important that my photographs tell a story.

I am an outdoor educator. My dream has been to influence people who have initially said that they are not interested in or have no connections with the outdoors to experience the nonhuman world, developing connections that have changed their lives in a positive way. This has meant developing a curriculum that is wider than the traditional physical activities associated with outdoor pursuits. My hope is that access to the outdoor world becomes more equitable.

My most fulfilling role has been to introduce women who have regarded themselves as alienated from the outdoors into a relationship with the nonhuman world. One woman said that being outdoors had never been a part of her life until she had come to know me. Wow. She now pesters me, in the nicest possible way, to join her on photography trips to capture the characters of the elements. This gives me such a buzz. Through working with another woman, creating a photographic record of the story of her garden, she has come to love her own space in nature.

Heather

I think what I have probably communicated is my enthusiasm for being out there, for learning the skills which make it possible to venture into environments that can kill you, and learning the respect which makes it okay to walk away and come back another day—there's something about an environment that's bigger than me, which has probably communicated itself to others, because it emanates from me unconsciously.

My concrete legacy to the outdoor sector is mostly indoors—I ended up doing a lot of work for the Institute for Outdoor Learning and played a major role in developing professional accreditation and reflective practice for the Institute's members, but the real satisfaction in that was in developing a process that enabled people to draw out their values and reflect on why they do what they do—and how they want to do it better. The reflective process and accreditation has helped to change society's view of the value of outdoor learning and of a career as an instructor/facilitator/manager in the outdoors—these days working in the outdoor sector is at last seen as a "proper job." I got a great deal of satisfaction from that and from people's feedback about the value of the accreditation process to them as personal and professional development.

Barbara

For me, it has been about engaging the outdoor field and scholarly critical thinking with other disciplines and promoting research of the outdoors onto the broader academic radar; initiating the international outdoor education conference designed to promote dialogue across the Northern and Southern Hemisphere; seeing our students from an Adventure Education and Outdoor Recreation degree become reflective practitioners and critical thinkers in the outdoors.

Perhaps I can look to future research and practice that integrates social and environmental awareness/justice, outdoor learning, and nature-based physical activity through critical reflection and "seeking the senses." I offer these writings:

> The turn to the affective in physical culture and the connection with ecologies of place suggest an acknowledgement of the significance of movement in nature and the possibilities for seeing and acting within the world differently. Thorpe and Rinehart (2010) and Humberstone (2011) argued that the interconnectedness of

senses, embodiment and social action through nature-based 'practices' become reality through a variety of social and environmental actions. Thorpe and Rinehart (2010, p. 1277) surmised regarding nature-based physical activity, 'Could the unique movements of alternative sports prompt some participants to experience "kinetic empathy"—a "kinesthetic awareness."' Kinetic empathy is a speculative concept proposed by Thrift (2008, p. 237) to be 'both the means by which the body experiences itself kinaesthetically and also the means by which it apprehends other bodies.'

I emphasise Humberstone (2011, p. 507), whilst not suggesting a simple causal link between movement in nature and 'social and environmental justice,' for 'the significance of embodiment and senses in and through physical practices in nature' to be taken seriously by researchers as, 'there is potential in exploring how the body comes to "know" through such practices and how these embodied experiences give expression at the personal, social and "political" levels.' (Humberstone, 2015b, pp. 68–69)

Cyclical Reflections: Individual Engagement with Nature Again

Heather

And what's my wish list for the future? I keep telling people Patagonia and Mongolia—so why there? It's about wide, open spaces, landscapes that look as though someone has only just finished carving them, pointy, snowy, cold, and empty: wide open and quiet. But I realize that I can find these qualities here in the UK—even in the woods at the back of my house—so I'm not sure that I really need to travel so much again, or at least not blindly, not just to say that I've been there. I realize that it's much more about silence, about stopping, about challenging the speed at which we all live these days, and coming to know that there may be a deeper truth to be found in the connectedness and harmony of the nonhuman world, which lives at its own rhythm.

Di

As I reflect, I am struck by how important the ritual or habit of being in the outdoors and in nature has been in my life and that of other "outdoor" friends. Many people I have nagged, cajoled, and supported to join me have incorporated being outdoors into their life habits. My intention has been to encourage people to find their special ways of connecting with the nonhuman, rather than me acting as a leader, suggesting they follow me. This action can disempower, so that the person feels unable to take responsibility for themselves. It may devalue the form of connection that they might choose to make.

Through experiences in my outdoor life, I have become increasingly concerned about the loss of knowledge about our natural world. Ultimately, this knowledge might be crucial to our survival on this planet. When chatting with my friends in Tamil Nadu, I am reminded that an agricultural policy that is not sensitive to a dynamic ecosystem can be harmful to the balances within that environment.

I have become aware of the importance of "growing" stories as I relate to the nonhuman world. These are not stories of conquest but stories of the imagination, of discovery, of a different understanding of living in humility of being part of the nonhuman world.

Barbara

My own reflections are bound up in and presented here through my writings.

The first is from a piece of research, "a collaborative ethnographic moment," on surfing in Raglan, New Zealand in 2015. I was invited to take part with six other academic women, our ages ranging from late 20s to 60s. Being the only nonsurfer was interesting but also the significance that such a group of women were practicing and at the same time researching this male-dominated nature-based sport:

For Barbara, not going surfing incited feelings relating to being a part of the day:

> ***Barbara**: After watching at the edge of the sea, I really wanted to get into the water and noticed Rebecca exiting round the corner in a launch area. So went round and went for a swim. Felt much more part of the group when Belinda and Holly turned up to get out and had a conversation about concepts and apparent age gendering of surfers whilst swimming around. Nice place to talk concepts!* (Olive et al., 2016, p. 61)

Next, I offer my narrative text as an older woman windsurfing expressing my sentient experiences of "learning to be in the body in nature." It constitutes reflections of past, present, and future embodiment and may be taken as "more-than-representational":

At most states of the tide, except for a few hours around low water, there is a small lagoon (the pond) with usually flat water. The spit looks to the Solent waters and Isle of Wight (the UK) on one side and a massive chimney and oil refinery on the other. I sail there regularly during the summer months and have spent much time there on and off the water over the last 30 years:

> I feel the water rushing past my feet and legs. The wind in my hair.
>
> I sense the wind shifts in strength and direction and move my body in anticipation to the wind and the waves. I feel the power of the wind and the ability of

> my body to work with the wind and the waves. The delight and sensation when surfing down a small wave with the sail beautifully balanced by the wind. Seeing the sea birds and the fish jump, delight further.
>
> The smell of salt and mud. The small seal that made its home on the tiny pebble spit.
>
> These are some of the beauties of windsurfing in this liminal space even with a monstrous power station chimney hovering in the distance and the occasional smell of sulphur from the large oil refinery when the wind blows from the north-east. (Humberstone, 2011, p. 164)

This above text takes us back to the place, Calshot Activity Centre, where all three of us have practiced and taught various aspects of outdoor learning.

Conclusion

When reflecting on our experiences, we started by pondering a number of possibilities. What do we have in common? What has influenced the diversity in our journeys? We recognize that this chapter does not engage directly with issues around power but rather highlights something of the serendipitous nature of three women's engagement with and love of outdoor terrains. As we reviewed our journeys, we were faced with questions about the time frame and settings in which events occurred, differing personal circumstances, and the characteristics of our relationships with nature. We believe that telling our stories of the past can speak to the present and future. We recognize that this is "work in progress." We are also aware that we chose to examine our lives through a specific lens, that of our engagement with nature/the nonhuman world, rather than other lenses we could have chosen, such as our experiences of being women in a male-dominated field. Had we focused through the latter lens, the narratives here would have been very different. We are now even more aware of the richness of perspectives that autoethnography brings to us all and invite readers to likewise explore their lives and the lenses through which they experience and make sense of the world. We hope our stories may stimulate readers not only to pursue and further their practice in outdoor learning but also to take journeys into the burgeoning research in the outdoors informed through social science, ecofeminism, mobile geographies, narratives, and more. We therefore invite you to conduct your own research and to explore the issues that arise.

Notes

1. "The Experience of Zennor" is the title of a collective poem written by women play and community workers in Cornwall mentored by Di Collins (February 2001).

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Women, Physicality and the Outdoors: A Story of Strength and Fragility in a Kayaking Identity

Linda Allin

Introduction

The relationship between the body and identity is something that sociologists have increasingly grappled with over the last 20 years, following the claim of a historical "absent presence" surrounding the body in social theory (Shilling, 1993, p. 9). Increasingly, too, this relationship has been expressed through narratives or stories, showing how embodied identities are created, recreated and indeed shared through this medium (Sparkes, 1996; Sparkes & Smith, 2002). Within this literature, stories focusing on women's body-self relationships over time remain few, though there are some (Rice, 2009). There is certainly evidence that many women find strength and pleasure in the physicality of their bodies through their lives in sport and/or outdoor activities (Allin, 2003; McDermott, 2000). But women's lived experiences of their bodies, including feelings of unrestricted movement and bodily confidence, are not always straightforward and can be easily undermined (Allin, 2000; Young, 1990, 2005). Risks or disruptions to the physical body such as injury also threaten embodied identities.

The interconnections between my body and my sense of self have been heightened through my life experiences in the outdoors, particularly as someone who has developed and at times struggled to maintain a strong identity as a competent kayaker. In extracts from my own story, I reflect on experiences

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L. Allin (✉)
Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

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of starting kayaking as a young student and how kayaking provided me with a positive sense of self and direction. I focus on key experiences and critical moments over the course of my life which have threatened or disturbed my bodily confidence, my sense of kayaking identity and the way I present myself to others. Whilst my story was not consciously gendered, on initial writing, it also became clear to me that gender was inextricably intertwined in the narrative of my body-self relationship.

Developing Physicality and a Kayaking Body

As with many women I have spoken to who went on to work in the outdoors (see Allin, 2003), I was a physically active child. At home in Scotland, I played on the rocks outside my parent's house by the sea. In school, I played for netball and hockey teams and competed at cross-country and judo. I had three older sisters so no male sibling for comparison of what a young girl should or should not do in terms of physical activities—though the school physical education (PE) curriculum was traditionally gendered. I had a generally positive sense of my bodily competence and physical abilities. I remember my decision to study psychology and PE at university—I knew nothing about outdoor education as a possibility and had no formal experience of outdoor pursuits, so there was no thought in that direction. I had no real idea of what I wanted to do. But the course combined my enjoyment of being fit with my interest in understanding people. There was just one weakness that I kept hidden and that nagged at my decision. That was, *I threw like a girl!* (Young, 1990). I could play hockey. I did judo. I could run. I loved being active, but *I couldn't throw a ball!*

My hockey teacher could throw that small, solid, hard ball from one end of the field to the other. She was definitely seen as *butch* and *lesbian* by both the boys and the girls. Yet, she was my PE teacher, and so for me, being able to throw a ball was what a PE teacher had to be able to do. No one ever talked to me about it—I don't think anyone would even have known that I thought it was an issue at all. I certainly didn't say. Even after going to university, I didn't utter to anyone that even though I was studying PE, I couldn't be a female PE teacher because I *couldn't throw a ball*. So at university I felt out of place—a fraud in the PE department. That was until I chose kayaking in my second year as one of my practical options. Here was an activity that didn't require me to throw—or indeed to catch. I had always been at home around water so loved the feeling of being able to move through it. On a week away back to Scotland as part of the kayaking course, I was hooked. We kayaked on a flowing river, with dark water and sparkling white crests on waves where the sun filtered through the trees. I remember paddling down a rapid on this wide river, waves flapping against the bow, splashes every now and again on my face. I was looking intently at the instructor already in the eddy downstream. He was smiling at me. I recall him shouting "NOW!" and without hesitation, I increased my stroke, paddled hard, edged, and felt the boat carve and smoothly land in the top of the eddy. I was elated. *I love this. I can do this. This is me*.

That week was the start of my indulgence in kayaking and my identity as a kayaker. I joined the canoe club. I spent hours paddling up and down the canal. I met fantastic people who were happy to take me out to rivers and pluck me out of the water when I swam and watch me do it all again. When I left university a year and a half later, I had no idea what I wanted to do beyond wanting to kayak and to work in the outdoors. Though I heard the voice of my parents saying, *"You can't paddle all your life dear,"* I knew that you could, and people did, because by then I had seen them.

Healthy Body, Physicality and Risk

I found ways to immerse myself in the outdoors, on the rivers, and in the hills. I paddled with people far better than I did—mainly men—and put myself in situations I should probably never have been in. I paddled mainly in a group of two—aware of but choosing not to adhere to the "less than three there should never be." I gained bruises and experiences and enjoyed the physical challenge and risk, unconsciously perhaps challenging the "myth of female frailty" (Theberge, 1997, p. 70). I found people, including women, who thought as I did. I saw the world from different angles and places. I met my husband paddling abroad, having responded to an advert at a canoeing show in 1992, which invited the "first British descent of the Baghirathi river in India—we need more women!" The next extract, however, is less about the smoother journeys but more on the disruptions. As Wainwright and Turner (2006) point out, when the body is functioning well, it almost disappears from consciousness. It is only when the sensations of the body are heightened or the body is not functioning as it should that we become conscious of its presence.

> I remember the anticipation we all felt in the cars on the way up that river—leaning out to see what we could see of the rapids from the height of the road. I remember getting on the water—it was swirling well beyond its usual level,

> definitely in spate. The white tinged with brown. The flow was so fast. As I felt the nerves I knew this one was at the edge of my ability and wondered if others felt the same. I ignored the feeling and got on anyway. But there was no time to get used to the water—it was not waiting for me to settle myself. I saw the tight bend, not much wider than my kayak and almost right angled, almost to the brim with the water. Thought I might get round. Felt the boat catch the corner, stop and flip. I waited for my kayak to free itself. Surely the water would dislodge it. I was waiting, waiting; realising after quite a while that the boat was not going to come free. I went through a calm thought process that I needed to take physical action. I pushed out. Then I looked around, seeing only a steep gradient of white, realising again that no one was going to be able to get to me. I would really have to do this myself if I was going to get to the side before tumbling down that cascade. I trusted my body and went on instinct, front crawl, hard. I reached the side. I saw the others running down the bank. I smiled. I think I will walk the rest. They looked relieved. Only then did my body begin to shake.

Until this point, whilst I recognized the relationship between kayaking and risk and voluntarily engaged in that (Lupton & Tulloch, 2002), I had a sense of faith in my healthy body and a "vibrant physicality" (Monaghan, 2001). I had considered, *yes I might get hurt. I might break a leg*, but I had also thought *I wouldn't die*. That day, I realized that actually, yes, I could die doing this. And whilst I maintained my identity as a kayaker, I had more care for my body-self and became perhaps a more responsible kayaker. Despite this, the realities of the material body and the nature of my participation in the outdoors were such that a further, more critical disruption to my kayaking identity was to come.

Physicality and Injury

As Wainwright and Turner (2006) and Thing (2006) acknowledge, injuries are *unintended consequences* of participation in sport but can have significant impact on a person's sporting identity (Sparkes, 1996). For me, ironically, it was not participating in kayaking that caused this critical incident but a holiday trip to the Austrian Alps. In 2010, I took to skiing in the Alps with my son, then 11. On the last day, I was persuaded to go snowboarding, something different from the activity we had done all week. It was an adventure, a new challenge.

> It wasn't steep. It wasn't high. I wasn't going fast. I had been falling forwards all day. If I carry on like this I am going to break my wrists. So stand upright, watch those edges. A small bump on that hard ice, a jerk: I felt my weight fall

> backwards and my feet, still attached to my board, slip away from me. It was only a few moments. I felt the crack on my helmet as my head bounced on the ice. After catching my breath, I got up, went to meet my son in the cafe. My head began to hurt. Are you ok? Yes, just cracked my head on that last run. Wow, that was sore.
>
> It was only later in the middle of the night that it began. I woke in the chalet bed, feeling nauseated, head whining, throbbing, spinning, feeling dizzy. This isn't good. Calmly and slowly I edged off the bed, trying to ensure I didn't topple. I made my way to the mirror. Can I walk in a straight line? What do my eyes look like? I will have to go to hospital. They will probably want to keep me in—such rationality! I slowly lay back on the bed, fearing to go to sleep, consciously making an effort to keep my head perfectly aligned, perfectly still on the pillow.

They did keep me in hospital when I went the next day—as I knew I would need to. But the CT scan revealed nothing. As it was just the two of us, my son came too. He tried hard not to jolt the bed when he brought me food, but even when being careful very tiny movements jarred and went through my body. I felt bad for being so twitchy. Nerves and my nervous system were alert and I had a headache with throbbing and pounding in the back of my head. Perhaps if I had rested more at that time, things might have been different. I remember the doctor saying, *"It is not now. It is later"* but I pushed that to the back of my mind. We were due to fly back the next day, and as a worker, a mother, and a wife, I wanted to get home. The headache on the flight was indescribable. The next day I went back to work. I tried to be *normal* but I struggled to make it through the day. I felt a funny kind of sickness in the stomach. *I'm just not right*. I visited our local GP. I tried to explain. *"You've had a bit of a bump,"* she said. I sat there knowing it wasn't right but not confident enough to shout out, *"It's more than a little bump: I can't sit. I can't read. My head pounds. My neck hurts and is so hot. I get pains down my arm. I feel sick. My body looks normal but it isn't right. There is something desperately wrong!"*

It took a year for an MRI when back home, but it still revealed nothing and no diagnosis beyond whiplash and delayed concussion, and it was never really explained. I managed to get some physiotherapy from a specialist in neck injuries having contacted the head injury clinic out of desperation one afternoon. For that year, I could do no real activity at all. From being so active with swimming, cycling, paddling, and outdoor walking, I went to nothing. I was going to work but not really able to function. I was not able to last to the end of each day, experiencing daily headaches, tinnitus and a burning heat around my neck and shoulders. Gradually, with advice from the physiotherapist, I started with walking a length of the swimming pool, then two. In a boat, I tried five minutes, then ten—no, too much, back to five minutes. It was two steps forward, one step back. My confidence in my body was lost. I struggled on, month after month, not just on the water. My son, now a highly competent kayaker, was in the premier division of canoe slalom and the junior team. He needed taxi-driving up and down the country. Yet I could not drive for more than an hour before the whining started in my head. I would stop several times just on a three-and-a-half-hour journey. I would get there, but I would be able to do nothing. By the next day, it would subside a little and I could perhaps venture to go on the water for a few minutes. Even there, I felt like a beginner and *paddled like a girl* (Young, 1990, 2005) all over again. I was unsure, cautious, and so aware of the consequences, not knowing what might happen if I capsized and not prepared to find out.

> Are you ok? If you want to cross that wave, you just need to get a bit higher, see that piece of water, you need to get higher. Yes, I know what to do. I can read the water. See the actions I need to do. It isn't the knowledge or the physical capability, I know I can do it; I have done it many times before. I just need to go just below for a few times, build up my confidence to be able to make the move, in case my body doesn't do what I want it to, in case the water is more powerful than I anticipated. I am just testing my body out by getting nearer each time. It looks like I am failing to you, but actually I am just working up to it more slowly. I am still a kayaker.

Physicality and Acceptance

In November 2015, I completed a week's kayaking for the first time since my accident—paddling within my abilities, but even so, all day, each day, on the water. By then a prolapsed disc in my neck had also been diagnosed, and though I was mainly able to manage this, my head still whined and my muscles protested when I tried too much. The river was high and the weather was warm for November. We came to a rapid, which at this level was perhaps just Grade 3+. I watched as a group of young male kayakers looked at the rapid and then bungled their way down it—not great style but safe and happy and cheering at the bottom. I watched from the side as others in our group made their decisions to paddle it or not. I could see the line, could see where I needed to be, where I would go. It was not difficult. But something was missing. *I wasn't sure I wanted to*. There was no pressure from the group, just waiting for me to make my decision. It was almost too easy to not do it. I was almost expected not to. I knew it was well within my ability. In the end, I ran the rapid—but halfway down, due to nerves or perhaps lack of commitment, I found myself unexpectedly caught, side-surfing a stopper. At that moment, my body responded. I kept the boat edged, weight over the boat, paddle reaching forward, deep into the pile to move me to the end. I felt the boat turn, switched my blades and my edging. Almost a back loop, but keeping control and keeping the nose down, I was out and moving down the rapid. At the bottom I laughed, relaxed. I reflected on my enjoyment of that moment of again being on the *edge* (Lyng, 1990), of being *out of control* and regaining control. I was still a kayaker and I still enjoyed the physicality and the risk.

In many ways, I reflect that nothing has changed in my relationship with the outdoors, except the level at which I perform. Each time I go out, it is me and the water. The choices I make change each time—sometimes I get on the water and I know I am not going to be able to function. Other times I feel I can experiment, can achieve just a little bit more. Each time there is a sense of accomplishment when I progress just a little, but I am losing that sense of disappointment and of feeling disheartened when I do not progress. I have reached the physical acceptance of my body. Perhaps it is as much about ageing as it is about injury. Having reached 50, I know that even if I were physically fit, it would be difficult for me to be paddling the type of water that I used to. But I can still feel my body through the water. I can still feel the wind on my face and I can still edge my boat and carve it into the eddy. I can still be out in nature and view the world from a different perspective. I am still a kayaker.

Conclusion

The qualitative examination of women's lived body experiences of their physicalities through active engagement in the outdoors is still little explored, despite recent writings and the rise of autoethnography (Humberstone, 2011). When I re-read my piece, I hope it is not just a piece of self-indulgent writing but that others may connect in some ways with some elements of my story. I feel that the story is not just about the body-self-kayaker relationship but it is indeed also about gender—although I did not necessarily see that as I wrote it and deliberately omitted stories of motherhood as I felt these tensions and contradictions are very well articulated elsewhere (see Kiewa, 2018). Yet my experiences of gendered physicality, expectations, reactions, the lack of confidence, the need to *prove* I could still function, the desire to protect my family, be a superwoman and to carry on *as normal* are all part of the struggles many women face in their lives and careers. My story is therefore also about passion for kayaking, the strength to be gained as a woman from feeling and coming to “know” one’s physicality and the “conditions that have produced it” (see Bell, 2004, p. 155). It is about learning to be one’s own embodied *self* in the outdoors.

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34

Once a Guide, Always a Guide: A Way of Being

Carroll Graham and Ruth Lusty

Introduction

Girl Guides started in Australia over 100 years ago, very shortly after Girl Guides started in Britain as an offshoot of the Scout Movement. It was the girls themselves who initiated their involvement in this Movement (de Beaumont, 1944; Girl Guides of Canada, n.d.). From the earliest days, Guiding encouraged and facilitated the empowerment of girls and women. For example, girls first joined Scouts using their initiative by registering with Scout Headquarters with only initials and not their first names (Girl Guides of Canada, n.d.), to disguise their gender. By the time of the Crystal Palace Scout Rally in 1909, which several girls attended surreptitiously (Summerskill, 2000), the number of girls registered as Scouts had grown to 6000 (Girl Guides of Canada, n.d.). Like the Boy Scout programme, the first Girl Guide programme included a strong emphasis on development of "good citizens" (p. 6) through outdoor activities (Smith, 2011). Fast forward to the twenty-first century, and the Girl Guide programme has been updated for current conditions; yet it still provides a values-based, nonformal, educational programme that has a participatory approach (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, n.d.-a).

C. Graham (✉)
Sydney, NSW, Australia

R. Lusty
School of Education, Western Sydney University, Sydney, NSW, Australia

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In this chapter, we reflect on our experiences as adult members of Girl Guides Australia, particularly in relation to our way of being, mediated through outdoor activities. We are both Girl Guide Leaders in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, and our current appointments, as an Outdoors Leader and a Unit Leader, reflect our expertise in outdoor and leadership skills, and our desire to promote and facilitate outdoor activities and the Australian Guide Program (AGP) for youth members in local, state, national, and international settings. We were both youth members of Girl Guides, and our identities were formed through our engagement with Guiding activities. Circumstances brought us together as adults and, through our collaboration, international networks have been formed and international outdoor activities have been enjoyed. Most recently, we were invited to run a low ropes activity at the Canadian jamboree, Guiding Mosaic 2016.

The Australian Guide Program

Girl Guides Australia is one of 146 member countries of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) (WAGGGS, n.d.-a). WAGGGS claims to be the largest voluntary movement in the world that is dedicated to the development of girls and young women, with ten million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. Through these member countries, WAGGGS delivers an educational development programme that is values-based, nonformal, intergenerational, and cross-cultural (WAGGGS, n.d.-a). In Australia, Girl Guides provides leadership and personal skills development to its 30,000 members, of whom 22,000 are girls aged 5–17 (Girl Guides Australia, 2014a, 2014b). Consistent with the requirements of WAGGGS, the AGP is a nonformal educational programme based on shared leadership and decision-making across youth and adult members (Girl Guides Australia, 2014a) that is tailored to five developmental stages based on the girls' emotional development, capacity to work, and their ability to think (Girl Guides Victoria, n.d.). Outdoors activities and development of environmental awareness are important parts of the AGP and are explicitly embedded across the programme (Girl Guides Australia, 2016b).

Identity Formation

Although identity formation is a life-long process (Waterman & Archer, 1990), it is perhaps at its most intense during adolescence when individuals start to make decisions about their futures (Sharp, Coatsworth, Darling, Cumsille, & Ranieri, 2007). Over the last two decades, research on identity development has used participation in activities as a lens through which to view identity work (Sharp et al., 2007). It has been suggested that organized youth activities may be especially suitable for promoting identity formation (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003). This is especially so for voluntary activities, which allow individuals to have "autonomy, to exert control, and to become active agents in their own development" (Sharp et al., 2007, p. 252).

Individual development is closely connected to "matters of identity and situation" (Bloomer & Hodkinson, 2000, p. 595). In particular, the importance of the natural environment to identity formation has now been formally recognized (Clayton & Opotow, 2003; Wright & Gray, 2013). From the earliest days of the Girl Guide Movement, outdoor activities were an important means for girls to develop themselves and to reach their full potential (Baden-Powell & Baden-Powell, 1912; Low, Baden-Powell, & Baden-Powell, 1917). Despite this history, it has been argued, somewhat derisively, that the main focus of the organization prior to World War I was "caring for others, childcare, and moral responsibility and guidance" (Smith, 2011, p. 3). Later, Baden-Powell commented that World War I had one great redeeming feature: "it gave women their opportunity for showing their pluck and intelligence and their capability for taking on tasks which so far had been considered beyond their powers" (1931, p. 7). Hence, although Guiding was founded during the Edwardian era, and as an organization of its time it reflected the Edwardian importance of "the status of wife and (preferably) mother" (Bush, 2000, p. 32), Guiding adapted its programme and approach to be congruent with, and often in the vanguard of, changes in society.

Guiding continues to be an organization for its time. Whilst Guiding influences the development of identity in its youth members, youth members have also reshaped Guiding to fit its needs (Girl Guides Australia, 2016a; Watehpaugh cited in Proctor, 2009). For example, within the first decade of its existence, British Girl Guides were adapting the uniform to suit their own needs (Proctor, 2009). Such flexibility allowed the Movement to move into and to thrive in other cultures, adapting to local requirements. In fact, the tension between developing initiative and independence in its youth members, while at the same time expecting regulation and self-discipline, is central to the success of the programme (MacDonald cited in Proctor, 2009). Whilst there may be national differences, the concept of being and becoming a *good citizen* is common to Guides throughout the world, and is reflected in the current WAGGGS mission, "To enable girls and young women to develop their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world" (WAGGGS, n.d.-b). This mission is based on the fundamental values espoused in the Promise and Law. These values embodied in the Promise and Law distinguish Guiding from other youth organizations (Proctor, 2009) and are central to identity formation and the way of being for members of the Girl Guide Movement.

Experiential learning, as practised by the Guide programme, has been shown to help develop positive self-image, enhanced decision-making and problem-solving skills, and improved communication skills (Gubitz & Kutcher, 1999). Importantly, team-based experiential activities, as delivered by the Patrol System within Guides, allow girls and adolescent girls to use relationships in their problem-solving (Gubitz & Kutcher, 1999). This aligns with the inherent importance of relationships in women's development (Miller & Stiver, 1993). The question of whether single-sex or integrated organizations are better for youth is complex, with some suggesting that integrated organizations are better for boys while single-sex organizations may be better for girls (Messner, 2011). Baden-Powell believed there was a need for separate organizations for boys and girls (Gardner, 2012), and as early as 1908 Baden-Powell had written that "girls can get just as much healthy fun and value out of scouting as boys can" (Baden-Powell cited in Gardner, 2012, pp. Part II, The Guiding Years, p. 9). More recently, it has been observed that identity formation can be enhanced for girls "within all-girl groups … through true experience without feeling the need to hide authentic feelings and thoughts from male peers" (Gubitz & Kutcher, 1999, p. 35).

Ruth's Story

I grew up in country NSW, Australia, during the 1950s. My father was a civil engineer, who constructed and maintained dams for the government water authority. As a result, I led a peripatetic childhood, as dams were located across country NSW. As a child, I led a "free range" life, roaming around the countryside with my older brother and our friends, on our bikes and horses. We would pack our lunch and explore the nearby bush tracks, returning home only at sunset. I first encountered Girl Guides (Brownies) as a ten-year-old, when I was living at Burrendong Dam, near Mumbil. However, I was considered too old for Brownies, and so I had to wait a whole year until I was old enough to join the Guide Company. I was keen to join Girl Guides because it was another out-of-doors activity, where I could be involved with my Guiding friends.

In those days, camping with Guides was authentic. There were no "approved" camping sites—we had the freedom to choose a suitable location and pitch our tents. I remember one camp we set up on a farming property, close to a river. Another camp was held in a shearing shed—this was considered an "indoor camp"! The thing that I remember most was learning camping skills, such as making a tripod stand and other camp gadgets. The formidable Commissioner tested our skills by sitting on the tripod—if it could accommodate the Commissioner, it would be good enough for washing up dishes. These days such skills might seem superfluous, but such outdoor activities, with the supervision of a supportive adult, have been shown to enhance learning opportunities (Dowdell, Gray, & Malone, 2011), and many of those skills have been transferrable to my adult pursuits such as abseiling and other outdoor activities.

During my years in Guiding, firstly as a Girl Guide, then a Sea Ranger (once we had moved to Sydney), and later as a Guide Leader, I seamlessly developed a wide range of skills and a firm sense of personal responsibility. Looking back, I can't actually remember "learning" the underpinning values that now shape my life and decision-making. As with the earliest Guide programmes, in which learning was delivered though activities (Baden-Powell cited in Proctor, 2009), these shared values, based on the principles of the Promise and Law,[1] were embedded in all our interactions and activities and developed over time. Although I attended weekly Guide meetings during these years of development, the highlights of my memories are the outdoor activities that we shared. Of Girl Guides in Mumbil, I recall the outdoor camps and learning the associated camping skills. After we moved to Sydney, I continued with Guiding at Taren Point where I achieved the Queen's Guide Award.[2]

This was a personal challenge, requiring determination, motivation, and focused learning, all traits that continue to influence my life.

My memories as a Sea Ranger are of halcyon days sailing our Enterprise-class, two-Guide sailing dinghy. Not only did we sail on the Georges River into Woolooware Bay, but we also participated in Ranger Regattas, testing our skills in friendly rivalry with other Sea Rangers. My clearest memory is spending weeks of our summer holidays camping in the vicinity of our Ranger Leader and her family at Budgiewoi Lake, while remaining independent. I spent my days sailing on the lake, returning to catch crabs at dusk, and enjoying the warm companionship of my fellow Sea Rangers. It was during this period that I developed a strong sense of independence and responsibility, both for myself and for my companions.

After completing high school, I went to Teacher's College in Armidale, in northern NSW. I kept in touch with my Guiding friends, now members of the Sea Eagle Ranger Unit (for young women aged 18–25), and I attended meetings and events when I returned home during college holidays. The values and habits I had developed as a Guide stood me in good stead at college.

I found that, unlike many other students, I was able to be an independently motivated and organized student, with a strong set of principles that steered my path through social situations.

Following my graduation, I took up a teaching appointment at Bundeena, a small community on the outskirts of Sydney that is surrounded by the Royal National Park. This location allowed my love of the outdoors to be indulged in, and I took up rock fishing and hiking in the park. At this time, I was motivated to become a Brownie Guide Leader, enabling me to continue my outdoor pursuits as well as providing similar opportunities for development for the next generation of girls (Karr & Meijs, 2006). I remained a Guide Leader, taking on a variety of leadership roles over several years, until in 2000 I became Region Leader for Sutherland Shire Girl Guides. I knew this would be a demanding role, particularly as I had just assumed an executive role in my professional career. So I looked for some capable assistants. I invited three leaders to work with me as Assistant Region Leaders, one of whom was Carroll.

Carroll's Story

> As a coastal child, the beach is an endless playground at the mercy of the elements, where storm fronts pass overhead, birds circle, mermaids visit and waves crash. It is here that children not only creatively play but also build a relationship with the natural world, finding moments of awe and stillness. (Artwork description, Grono, 2015)

I grew up in Western Australia (WA) during the 1960s, about five kilometres from a small seaside community and with no near neighbours. Like other children growing up at that time, the outdoors was an important part of my life and I ranged widely (Hillman, Adams, & Whitelegg, 1991). I rode my bike to and from school each day, climbed our six metre tank stand to take in the view (there were no large trees around our windswept area for me to climb), and enjoyed playing in the bush at the back of our property. Perhaps not surprisingly, as my home was situated less than 50 metres from the nearest sand dunes, I particularly enjoyed the beach, the sea, and swimming. I attended swimming lessons, conducted by the WA Department of Education each summer, and by the time I was 11, I had earned my first life-saving qualification—an award that bestowed on me the dubious honour of being allowed to supervise my two younger sisters at the beach. I recall growing up at an idyllic time; perhaps my close engagement with the outdoors shielded me from some life stresses (Wells & Evans, 2003).

My involvement with Girl Guides began at the age of nine as a Brownie. My weekly Brownie meetings in the nearby township gave me a way of staying regularly in touch with my school friends, as well as means of developing new skills. As someone who liked to challenge herself, even at that age, I loved the Brownie programme of activities and challenges, the latter being rewarded by various badges. By age 11, I had earned both the most challenging Brownie badge, the *Golden Hand*, and my *Wings* to "fly" from Brownies up to Guides.

Being a Guide, I was now able to be a Guide Helper with my former Brownie Pack. This entailed attending the Brownie meetings and helping Brown Owl and Tawny Owl run games and activities for the Brownies. I was still at primary school, where school uniform was not worn, as high school did not start until Grade 8 at that time in WA. Logistically, it wasn't possible to return home between school and the Brownie meeting; hence, I wore my Guide uniform to school. Any thought that the Guide uniform was "uncool" was quickly dispelled by being allowed to carry a pocketknife all day, hanging off my Guide belt!

My teenage years were ones of change on many levels. First, I changed Guide Companies to one that was starting up nearer to home. Another key event that soon followed was my parents spending six months overseas due to work commitments. As a consequence, my sisters and I were cared for by our aunt, just nine years older than me, who had a young toddler of her own. At the time, I found the Captain in my new company less than inspiring, and without the guidance and support of my mother I soon left Guides. Nevertheless, I remained a Guide at heart, still firmly believing in and endeavouring to enact the Promise and Law. After my parents returned from overseas, we moved towns. By this time, I was 15 and I knew that I was too old to join the Guide Company in my new location. Little did I know that there was a Ranger Guide Company that I could have joined, and three years later, when I did learn about this Company, I was most disappointed to know that I had missed out on three years of Guiding experience.

Possibly as the firstborn in my family, I was particularly receptive to the values of Guiding. The promise "to do my best" resonated strongly, as did the values of responsibility and consideration of others, self-reliance, honesty, and trustworthiness. Such traits, commonly found in firstborns (Sulloway, 1999), were values expressed in the Guide Law at the time (Smith, 2012). Perhaps unsurprisingly, these values were embedded into my identity formation and remain part of my behaviours to this day.

Coming Together

Even though we grew up on opposite sides of the country, 5000 km apart, being country kids who loved Girl Guides and the outdoors, our experiences underpinned our identity formation (Gubitz & Kutcher, 1999) and hence, we had a common bond. This common bond engendered trust between us, which grew when we shared leadership and outdoor experiences as adults (Coleman, 2011). Our five years as Region Leaders for Sutherland Shire Girl Guides, from 2000 to the end of 2004, was a period of change, innovation, challenge, and growth, on which we both thrived. Our leadership development during this period of both personal and organizational transformation was based on shared values and heightened trust, which are of central importance for sustaining effective teamwork (Gillespie & Mann, 2004).

Sutherland Shire Region was at that time one of the largest Girl Guide regions in the state of NSW, with over 600 youth members and more than 75 adult leaders. Although the region covered a large metropolitan area in southern Sydney, it was fortunate to own its own secluded campsite, Noorumba, in the bush near Woronora, as well as its own Water Activities Centre, Bindaree, on the nearby Woronora River. These cherished properties attest to the pivotal role that outdoor activities play in the AGP. As region assets, the management of these properties was the responsibility of the region. It didn't take long to realize that this involved both the management of the buildings and their surroundings, and the management of activities undertaken on these sites. A well-established subcommittee of appropriately qualified Water Activities Leaders managed Bindaree. This committee and its dedicated team of qualified leaders maintained the Centre and all related equipment, including canoes and other watercraft. It also provided a range of water activity programmes catering for the Guides in the region, ensuring all relevant regulations were met. We soon turned our attention to the campsite, Noorumba.

Noorumba, nestled in a pocket of natural bushland, is a beautiful site. Its unique feature is its cliffs, ranging from big boulders to 18-metre drops. This was a perfect setting for the region's regular Rock School, a combined Guide/Scout abseiling development activity. Rock School, still a successful joint venture, grew from collaboration with local Scouts groups, which needed an accessible abseiling site and were able to provide qualified leaders to help run the joint activity. As Region Leaders, Carroll and Ruth visited Rock School to see it in action. It was wonderful to see Guides and Scouts participating in outdoor, adventurous activities, specifically designed to suit varying levels of skill and ability. The underpinning philosophy was *challenge by choice*, allowing participants to take on new challenges as they felt ready, and opening them to a more meaningful experience (Lisson, 2000). However, as educational leaders and managers in our professional lives, we were able to identify hazards at Rock School that could have been managed better. In our role as Region Leaders, it became apparent that we needed to know more about abseiling in particular, and associated risks. By virtue of our positions, we became ex-officio members of the Noorumba management committee and were able to contribute to the management of the property and upgrade the region's abseiling equipment. Without abseiling qualifications, however, it was difficult to establish credibility and to contribute to processes directly related to the implementation of the abseiling activity itself. Existing abseiling leaders resisted change because they believed that, without abseiling experience, we could not contribute to discussions related to the review of processes and procedures in place at the time (Woollven, Allison, & Higgins, 2007). However, with risk management, our prime concern, the solution was clear: become qualified ourselves. We threw ourselves into abseiling.

At first, we attended Rock School to gain basic skills. We then decided to gain nationally recognized qualifications through the Australian Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system, to ensure we were operating in line with principles of best practice. Attaining these qualifications involved enormous personal commitment, considering our existing family, work, and volunteer responsibilities. Ruth was 48 years old when we started abseiling, which proves that it's never too late to get involved in new outdoor activities. Training over the next two-and-a-half years was a time that was exciting, enjoyable, and exhausting. Most weekends involved travelling to the greater Blue Mountains area (NSW), a picturesque and spectacular natural location. Our TAFE instructors were highly qualified, with one having been an Alpine Guide in Austria in his earlier life. Apparently becoming a "Guide" there at that time (Società Guide Alpine, 2010) involved an eight-year apprenticeship! This training exposed us to a variety of people (other than Guides and Scouts) either working in the industry or training to become qualified. Meeting trainers and classmates for the first time was interesting, as it was evident that we were old enough to be their mothers. This didn't mean that any concessions were given; in fact, we had to work harder than others to prove that we were fully capable in every way. To ensure that we were ready both physically and mentally to pass practical assessments, we added our own extra practice sessions in between training weekends (Fig. 34.1).

During this period, we had become friends with Helen Boerlage. Helen had a professional background over two decades as a purchasing officer for the New Zealand Antarctic programme. She had refined her abseiling skills on glaciers in Antarctica during the 19 tours she had made there. As a result, she had

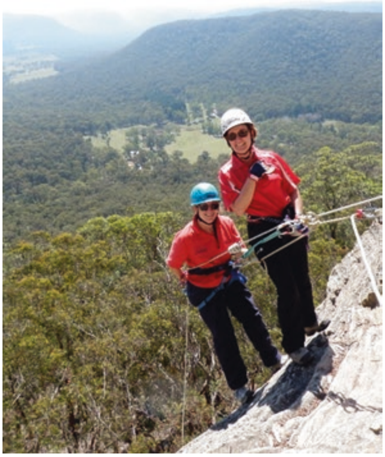

Fig. 34.1 Ruth and Carroll practising abseiling skills at Mount York in the Blue Mountains, NSW, Australia

regularly assisted Girl Guides in New Zealand with their abseiling activities. Helen joined us on our practice weekends, offering advice, expertise, and encouragement. We practised prussicking—a required skill and the most physically challenging for Ruth—several times during our weekend practice sessions. This practice allowed us to perfect the task of prussicking down to the bottom of the rope, over a knot in the rope, and back up and over the knot again to the cliff top, in a specified time frame. We practised setting up pulley systems, used for recovery, until any scenario could be achieved. Carroll's engineering background was very useful for this. By the time we were assessed, we had mastered all key skills, much to the surprise of our instructors. Little did they know of the time and effort we had invested in ensuring we could pass. Along the way, the three of us became firm friends, enjoying the common interests of abseiling and Girl Guides (Fig. 34.2). Armed with newly achieved qualifications, Carroll and Ruth were able to constructively contribute to policy development for adventurous activities in the region, ensuring industry best practice was maintained.

Our engagement with outdoor activities quickly expanded, allowing us to contribute to the development of girls through these adventurous activities, and thus enacting Baden-Powell's early vision of women and girls developing skills and independence through outdoor activities (Baden-Powell, cited in The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association, 2016). We attended several Girl Guide jamborees, facilitating abseiling activities for our youth members over the next few years at local, state, and national levels, as well as joining our Scouting friends at Dragonskin events and at two Australian Scout jamborees.

Fig. 34.2 The three *amigas* (left to right Helen, Ruth, and Carroll) at Fitzroy Falls, Morton National Park, NSW, Australia

Fig. 34.3 Ruth and Carroll canoeing at Canoe Lake, Algonquin Park, Ontario, Canada

In addition to these organized activities, we also had fun on abseiling weekends with Helen, taking two Canadian Guide leaders abseiling in the Blue Mountains (one for her first abseiling experience), and also providing abseiling experiences for several of Carroll's women colleagues. Through these activities, we developed networks that crossed organizational and international borders, which remain firm more than a decade later (Fig. 34.3).

As older women, established in our professional careers, we were financially able to support our abseiling activities, and were perhaps less time-constrained than our younger selves who had more dependent families. By taking up abseiling in our 40s, we were able to challenge both age and gender stereotypes, acting as role models for others and agents for change (McHugh, 2012). Of course, this is not new: a survey in 2007 found that two-thirds of Britain's most prominent women had been Guides (Hampton, 2010). In fact, Guides played an important part in the history of the twentieth century, including feminism and the women's equality movement; yet, their achievements and influence have largely remained invisible (Hampton, 2010).

Conclusion

> Scouting and Guiding are pre-eminently 'movements,' not simply organizations or constituted associations. While many children and adult leaders or supporters might be involved for a few years, there are also many hundreds of thousands of men and women world-wide at any one time, whose participation is life-long. They may have joined once, they may renew their Promises annually, but fundamentally they 'belong,' locally, nationally and internationally. (Warren, 2009, p. xii)

Once a Guide, Always a Guide: A Way of Being is enacted on a daily basis across Australia and around the world. The Girl Guide Movement enables girls and women to develop individual skills and abilities through the programme in a safe and supportive environment. The power of the group is also demonstrated in their ability to mobilize their actions for service and change. Fundamental to the success of the programme are the underpinning principles encapsulated in the Promise and Law. Invisible to an observer, these principles are played out in a range of activities that are place-based with a particular focus on enjoyment in outdoor settings. This nonformal education programme is life-long. Whether or not girls and women stay in the movement for a short period, come and go over time, or stay in Guiding on a long-term basis, the building blocks for identity development (and values development) have been established, becoming the foundation for ongoing development over time and providing the basis for women as agents of change. The programme has always been flexible and responsive to social change in society, allowing it to flourish in different times and different cultural settings. Our collective experiences as both youth and adult members of the Girl Guide Movement for more than half our lives attest to the influence of the fundamental principles, which were long ago embedded in our consciousness. *Once a Guide, always a Guide* is truly a way of living, *a way of being* we both embrace.

Notes

1. The Promise and Law provides a fundamental set of principles to encourage the development of the whole person, including their attitudes, behaviours, and physical being. The Promise and Law that I first made had changed little from the original Promise and Law (WAGGGS, n.d.-c) developed in 1910. Although the Australian Promise and Law has been updated for the twenty-first century, the underpinning values remain consistent with the original intent (Girl Guides Australia, 2016c).
2. This was and remains the highest award attainable in Girl Guides, and is comparable to the Queen's Scout Award or the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

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35

LGBTQ Girl Scouts Reflect on Their Outdoor Experiences

Stefanie M. Argus

I went to Girl Scout camp for the first time the summer after fourth grade, at age ten. The weeklong programme may have had a basic ecology focus, but what I remember most vividly was feeling wild, joyous, and free in the outdoors. I do not ever recall experiencing homesickness. Camp was a comfortable, buoying, and affirming place. There was palpable magic.

Although my younger brother and I often played in the woods surrounding our New Jersey home as children, my parents were quite sedentary. At camp, I slept in a tent. I explored hollows for thickets of blueberry bushes and allowed the smoky smell of the campfire to soak into my clothes and pores. I began to know the special twists of certain paths and especially sought out the Wishing Stone along the Rhododendron Trail, where the branches above parted to let in dappled, spellbinding sunlight. Over the course of five summers at overnight Girl Scout camp, I learned to canoe, kayak, and sail. I rock climbed, white-water rafted, and backpacked. I used a handsaw to make wood cookies and cooked meals over a fire. Best of all, my mentors were impossibly cool and fierce female counsellors. There was something unique about being taught so many technical skills by a cast of young women. I began working at Girl Scout summer camp the summer I turned 18, and soon I was leading backpacking trips on the Appalachian Trail, sailing trips on Lake George in the Adirondacks, and canoeing and kayaking trips down the Connecticut River in Massachusetts.

S.M. Argus (✉)
Girl Experience, Girl Scouts, Providence, RI, USA

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When I was maybe 12 years old, I told my mom that I did not think it would be that bad to love a woman. Her response? “Stefanie, I thought you’d say that one day. You enjoy hugging me for too long.” Whilst my mother’s understanding of sexual orientation has thankfully shifted, growing up in a home where the notions of incest and being queer were erroneously conflated did not allow for many opportunities to talk about and process my sexuality.

From the ages of 14–18, I had a debilitating crush on a girl from my high school. I did not know a single “out” person at my high school, and I consequently felt isolated, angry, and helpless in trying to navigate my feelings. The summer after high school, I worked at a Girl Scout summer camp in Pennsylvania. It was at camp that I first met proudly out, queer adult Girl Scouts who loved the outdoors. It was refreshing and cathartic for me—after four years of masking and not even acknowledging my sexual orientation—to be in a community where not being straight was clearly okay.

In the fall, I moved to Massachusetts and began studying at a liberal arts women’s college. Despite the prevalence of queer and same-sex relationships on campus, I did not date any women or queer classmates. I did not really feel “gay enough” in comparison to my peers, which was difficult to reconcile since this doubt was compounded by femme invisibility. However, the summer after my first year of college, I returned to Girl Scout camp and something important happened: I kissed a girl for the first time.

Several years later, Girl Scout camp was again the setting for another important milestone: at the age of 22, I met my current partner. We fell in love while leading a two-week canoe-tripping programme, and have since codirected Girl Scout summer camps in New Hampshire and California.

Amplifying Underrepresented Voices

Outdoor activities and outdoor recreation have been traditionally viewed as male-dominated domains (Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008; Boniface, 2006; Henderson, 1996; Humberstone, 2000; Jordan, 1991; Loeffler, 1997; McNeil, Harris, & Fondren, 2012; Warren, 1985, 2016). Further, outdoor settings are seen as spaces in which males may affirm hegemonic masculinities that operate within a strict heteronormative gender binary (Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008; McNeil et al., 2012; Mitten & Woodruff, 2010).

Warren (2016) and Barnfield and Humberstone (2008) described the prevailing nature of outdoor education as heterosexist and homophobic, noting the invisibility and erasure of queer outdoor participants and adventurers. If outdoor adventure/education may serve as a counterculture site of alternative femininities and masculinities (Humberstone, 2000; Mitten & Woodruff, 2010; Whittington, 2006), perhaps single-gender outdoor experiences for youth—such as through Girl Scouts—can allow girls and young women to challenge Western patriarchal, essentialist, and dualistic social constructs of gender. Whittington's study (2006) found that challenging and exploring androcentric notions (about the outdoors, whilst in the outdoors) can promote a more diverse gender identity development. Loeffler's (1996) and Mitten's (1992) research suggested that programmes specifically for girls and women may promote equity in outdoor leadership, and there is indeed still a modern benefit to all-girls programming in adventure education (McKenney, 2018; Whittington, Mack, Budbill, & McKenney, 2011). Girl Scouts' outdoor programming may then contribute to transforming the broader adventure education culture.

In this chapter, I discuss the background and structure of Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) and examine the organization's historical and present stances on inclusiveness. I also share several themes that emerged in individual and informal open-ended interviews with LGBTQ Girl Scouts regarding their outdoor experiences and the relevance of their gender identities and/or sexual orientations. Interviews were completed via either email or phone call. My positionality as a queer feminist, a certified educator, and a Girl Scout camp professional informs this writing. Feminist methods and heuristics allowed me to begin with a topic of personal connection and salience, and utilizing narratives privileged the lived experiences of participants.

Girl Scouts of the United States of America

Background Information and Structure

GSUSA, founded in 1912 by Juliette Gordon Low, is headquartered in New York City, United States. The organization serves girls in kindergarten through 12th grade, and its mission is to "build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place" (GSUSA, 2016b). GSUSA's current membership of 2.7 million Girl Scouts includes 1.9 million girl members and 800,000 adult members.

Across the United States, there are over 110 Girl Scout regional 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations called Councils. The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) is the global parent organization for GSUSA.

Inclusiveness

GSUSA (2016a) currently has national and regional policies that value inclusiveness with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity. LGBTQ individuals have participated in Girl Scouts for a long time (Manahan, 1998), yet despite LGBTQ Girl Scouts' historical involvement with the organization, it is unclear precisely when Girl Scouts adapted its nondiscriminatory stances. As recently as the 1990s and early 2000s, GSUSA permitted regional Councils to autonomously determine issues pertaining to queer Girl Scout members (Schwartz, 1998; Tyre, 2001) and shared mixed messages on the topic of sexual orientation (Raab, 2000).

Raab's (2000) interviews with national Girl Scout spokespersons reflected a range of tolerance, cautiousness, and bias on sexual orientation. One staffer asserted, "It's a non-issue for us…. The Boy Scouts believes that to be gay is somehow immoral. That is not our feeling" (para. 8). This comment suggests a clean, socially just stance, yet Marsha Johnson Evans, then Chief Executive Officer of GSUSA, expressly commented on how nondiscrimination is not an endorsement:

> We do not recruit lesbians as a group. We have firm standards relating to appropriate conduct. We do not permit sexual display of any sort by our members…. We do not permit the advocacy or promotion of a personal lifestyle or sexual orientation. (Raab, 2000, para. 9, p. 11)

These latter remarks seem to give credence to the notion of a homosexual agenda rather than outright dispelling such possibilities or allegations. Another interviewee similarly suggested this antiqueer bias, remarking that a Girl Scout troop leader who mentioned having a female partner might be engaging in "inappropriate advocacy" (Raab, 2000, para. 13).

In mid-2001, GSUSA had more than 300 local councils. Approximately only two dozen councils had adopted guidelines that protected Girl Scout members against discrimination based on sexual orientation. Girl Scouts' millennium-era policies could be described as a version of "don't ask, don't tell," and regional councils were "not automatically dechartered" if their organizations did not prohibit discrimination (Tyre, 2001, para. 2).

Within the past several years, Girl Scouts' trans inclusiveness has been highlighted by the media. In 2011, Girl Scouts of Colorado made headlines by supporting a seven-year-old trans child wishing to join a local Girl Scout troop (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, 2011). More recently in 2015, Seattle-based Girl Scouts of Western Washington returned a gift of US$100,000 to a donor who stipulated that the funds not be used for trans girls (Girl Scouts of Western Washington, 2015).

The national organization's position on serving trans youth states, "If the child is recognized by the family and school/community as a girl and lives culturally as a girl, then Girl Scouts is an organization that can serve her in a setting that is both emotionally and physically safe" (GSUSA, 2016c). The policy also explicitly addresses trans youth issues involving camping, an integral part of leadership experiences for girls in Girl Scouting. Girl Scouts advises that a trans member will ideally have access to the same bathrooms, showers, and tents as other girls. Separate camp accommodations should be made available if requested by the girl and her family.

Emphasis on Camp and Outdoors

GSUSA (2016a) identifies the outdoors as one of the primary ways to participate in Girl Scouting. In addition to outdoor events and programmes, GSUSA advertises camp options including day camp, weekend camp, travel camping, and resident (overnight) camp. Girl members may also join the Girl Scout Ranger Program, a joint venture between GSUSA and the National Park Service that connects girls with opportunities to explore the outdoors and visit national park sites.

Girl Scouts of the USA (2016a, 2016b, 2016c) further emphasizes the importance of outdoor programming by including a host of outdoor-related badges at each Girl Scout age level, and using an eight-tier outdoor progression chart that underscores GSUSA programme development at both the national and local levels. Skill acquisition or mastery and competency in trip planning and organization are key identified aims. GSUSA's outdoor progression model begins with encouraging Girl Scouts to share past personal experiences in the outdoors followed by introducing short contact experiences and brief outdoor trips, such as a nature walk or hike. Later stages of the model integrate cookouts, sleep outs, and camp outs, ultimately followed by multiday adventures. This framework also prioritizes Leave No Trace Principles (Girl Scouts of the USA, 2017).

Participants

Including the author, 16 LGBTQ Girl Scouts participated in this project. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 57 years; the average age was 28 years. Respondents had been involved with Girl Scouting between 5 and 52 years; the average length of involvement with Girl Scouts was 19.6 years.

Additional participant demographics are represented in Figs. 35.1–35.3, including reported information such as participant roles within Girl Scouting, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Respondents had a variety of diverse roles within Girl Scouts (or their equivalent national organization) and nearly all participants reported having multiple roles. The author distilled seven primary role categories. Almost all respondents reported being youth members (93.8%) and most reported being

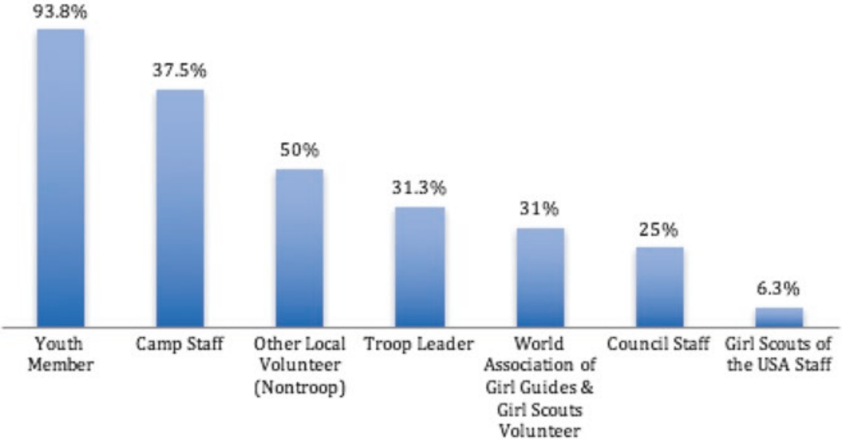

Fig. 35.1 LGBTQ respondents' reported roles within Girl Guides/Girl Scouts

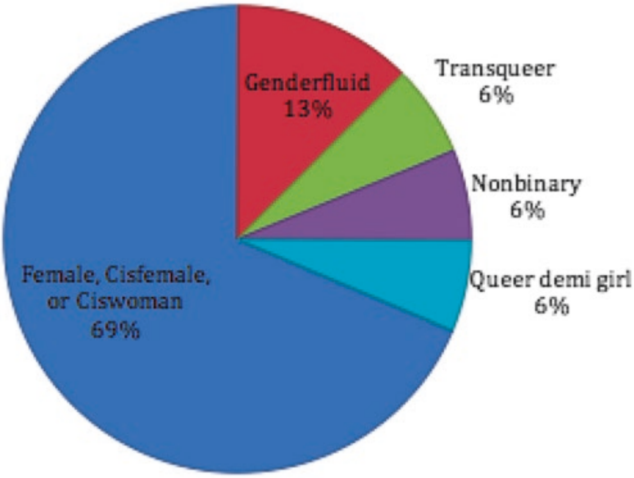

Fig. 35.2 LGBTQ respondents' reported gender identities

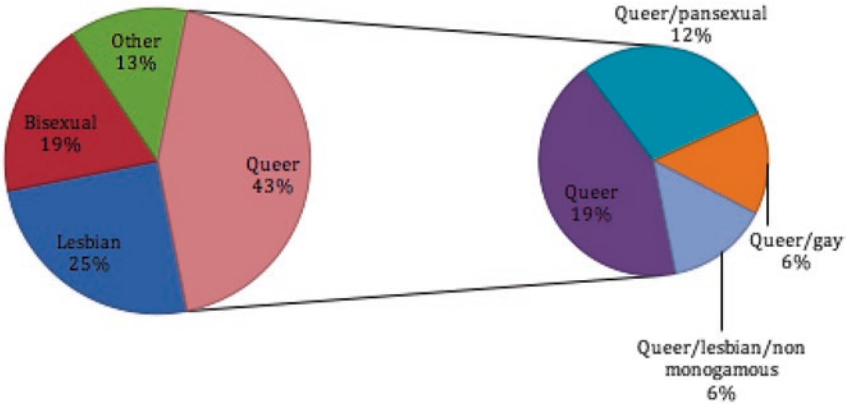

Fig. 35.3 LGBTQ respondents' reported sexual orientation

camp staff and seemed to draw on those experiences to continue involvement in Girl Guides/Girl Scouts.

The author asked each participant to identify in terms of gender identity, providing the specific follow-up prompting language of (cis)male, (cis)female, agender, genderqueer, queer, trans, Two-Spirit, and so on. Most participants identified as female, cisfemale, or ciswoman (69%) and 31% offered four additional identities: genderfluid (13%), transqueer (6%), nonbinary (6%), queer demigirl (6%).

The author invited each interviewee to share their self-identified sexual orientation, providing the follow-up prompting language of "gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, queer, et cetera." Two interviewees opted to provide a more descriptive explanation of their identities in terms of sexual orientation. Kinzie replied, "I don't really identify in terms of sexual orientation, though happily married to my wife for five years and together for 16." Lissa acknowledged that despite previously identifying as a lesbian, they now felt that "bi or pan" might be a more accurate fit. Lissa added, "I also recently learned the term 'abrosexual/romantic,' which might fit, but I'm in a limbo at the moment. I also identify as demisexual."

Relevance of Gender Identity and/or Sexual Orientation to Girl Scouts in the Outdoors

I asked each participant the question, "How has your gender identity and/or sexual orientation been relevant (to you and/or others) in Girl Scouting contexts in the outdoors?" Respondents provided a variety of rich answers, describing a sense of safety, acceptance, nonjudgement, bolstered confidence, first crushes or partners, coming out, received peer support, visibility of other LGTBQ Girl Scouts, and providing support to other LGBTQ Girl Scouts. Some participants also reported LGBTQ stereotypes related to Girl Scouting. I have collapsed several of the aforementioned themes into three primary categories that attempt to encompass the major affordances of Girl Scout outdoor experiences for LGBTQ members: a nonjudgemental atmosphere (including sense of safety, acceptance, and supportive environment), new self (including newfound confidence, first crushes or partners, and coming out), and community (including visibility of other LGBTQ Girl Scouts and receiving support from/providing support to other LGBTQ Girl Scouts). Many of the following responses have links across these three thematic areas as well.

Nonjudgemental Atmosphere

Several interviewees acknowledged that their Girl Scout outdoor experiences provided a uniquely accepting environment with the outdoors serving as an equalizer. Dandy remarked, “No one judged me. The outdoors is for everybody. Everyone could have the same exact experience. I felt at home there. There was safeness in experience.”

Julia similarly identified the equalizing power of Girl Scout outdoor programmes:

> There was a great respect for all these nuanced identities, while at the same time, in a way, they didn’t really matter in the wilderness. Most of the time it was more important to make sure we packed the right gear to make it through our four-day hiking trip than it was to worry about who someone wanted to kiss.

Sarah specifically addressed recent negative rumours surrounding a staff “homosexual agenda” at her Girl Scout camp. She commented, “Yes, many of us are not straight, heterosexual people, but we do not push our views on others. Girl Scouts is based on making young girls into strong, independent women—that is what we focus on, not whether or not someone is straight or gay.” The last line of Sarah’s comment parallels Dandy and Julia’s remarks on the equalizing impact of the camp experience.

Lauren especially felt clear acceptance and support from Girl Scout colleagues with regard to their gender identity. Within the past year, Lauren has come out as nonbinary and has found the support of a Girl Scout coworker who also identifies as nonbinary. Lauren remarked:

> Just being able to know that I'm not alone and that somebody else that I work with has a similar experience has been helpful. My coworker went to Girl Scout camp, thought of himself as a woman, and has since come out as nonbinary. I don't know if I would have been so forthcoming about being out if I didn't have the connections that I did from [Girl Scout] camp.

New Self

Multiple participants shared anecdotes of self-discovery that related to identity formation and first crushes or partners. Kinzie found incredible confidence through Girl Scouting, recognizing that, "It has helped me to believe in myself, to problem solve and feel free to explore my future goals in a supportive environment."

Lynn believed that it was always her path to be a lesbian and confided that she met her first girlfriend at Girl Scout camp. Erin, too, met her first girlfriend working at Girl Scout camp. She had identified as straight prior to that summer. Erin reflected:

> What I loved about Girl Scouts and the outdoor situation I was in was that it was totally organic. I was surrounded by nature, I didn't care how I looked or acted, because there were no boys around and I didn't feel conscious about how I looked or if I impressed them. I think this feeling of freedom helped me to love myself, and opened my mind to the possibility of falling in love with something/someone outside my comfort zone.

For Jennifer, Girl Scout camp was her "primary (and for a long time, exclusive) portal" into the queer world. She attributes discovering her queer identity in seventh grade to recognizing her attachment to a female Girl Scout camp counsellor as a crush. Jennifer added, "Camp was the one place I knew I didn't have to be afraid of [my queer identity]. The more and more I learned about the women I looked up to as a camper, the safer I felt at camp."

LGBTQ Community

Through connecting with other LGBTQ Girl Scouts, many participants felt encircled by a safe community. Receiving support from peers and providing support or mentorship to others were important common threads in this thematic area.

Lissa recalled participating in a Girl Scout leadership course with two other attendees at a camp. All three campers openly shared stories of queerness with one another as if a "safety net" was in place to support such discussion.

Sara spoke of the visibility and clear acceptance of LGBTQ staff. She recalled, "As a counselor at [Girl Scout] camp, I was exposed to all types of relationships and a fluid sexuality, all without labels." From her camp experiences, Sara specifically learnt that "views and feelings can change with time and experience," and she later became more "open to being able to talk about sexuality and gender identity in circles outside of Girl Scouting."

Due to a lack of "diverse role models in terms of gender and sexuality," Agnes particularly admired the nonheteronormative, nonconforming Girl Scout leaders she met. Being outdoors and learning to use tools through both Girl Scouting and volunteering at an open-air heritage site was crucial for Agnes as she navigated being "a leader, a creator, being a girl and not being a girl at the same time, finding the fine line between friends and girlfriends with another girl about my age."

Lorraine, Fin, Amanda, and Arianne all identified the importance of serving as a resource for other LGBTQ Girl Scouts due to their respective sexual orientations. Lorraine observed, "My sexual orientation is very clear and I am very open about it. This means that young, questioning girls are often drawn to me. I will often have Girl Scouts come out to me or confide in me about their sexuality."

Reflecting on her own position as the Counsellor-in-Training Director at a Girl Scout camp for two summers, Fin mused, "I think that being a strong and humble (cis) woman role model was important in order to guide [campers'] self empowerment and ascent into camp leadership roles." Analogously, Amanda stated, "The older I get the more I feel it's necessary to be as true to myself as possible, as to set a path for younger queer/questioning/gender fluid Girl Scouts."

Arianne was a closeted lesbian working at Girl Scout camp but eventually became more comfortable with her identity over the course of several summers. Upon coming out, Arianne invited other LGBTQ camp members to chat with her: "I had younger staff asking me questions and campers, too. When we would go on hikes, people become very open." Arianne added, "You can really find out a lot about yourself when you are with women in the outdoors. You feel more like who you are and can fully express yourself, especially when you are pushed to your limits when doing something new."

Meaningful Outdoor Experiences

The final prompt for each participant interview was to describe a specific, meaningful, outdoor, or nature-based experience. Anecdotes encompassed settings from mountain peaks to waterways, and stories ranged in featured characters: participants' most salient experiences variably involved solo ventures, ventures with a significant other, or group ventures. The narratives touch on several common themes, including connectedness with nature, connectedness with others, sense of accomplishment, deep-rootedness, and awe. The following brief selection of stories furthers queers' existing narratives about the outdoors and outdoor adventurers.

While serving as a summer volunteer at Our Chalet, the Girl Scout World Center located in Switzerland, Lissa completed a training hike up a mountain called Bunderspitz. Lissa remembered, "We reached the summit in the middle of the afternoon. We were all sweaty and exhausted and probably the proudest we had been of ourselves in our entire lives." Lissa linked this particular day with establishing a sense of home and permanent connection with Our Chalet.

Fin, too, had transformative experiences in Switzerland while solo-climbing mountains. Reflecting on a favourite moment, Fin said, "[I was] drinking tea and admiring the monumental blue lake with idyllic chalets crested by mountains. In this moment I felt at peace and alive. And I felt that I had truly embarked on a real adventure."

Although Girl Scouting allowed Agnes to develop a love of the outdoors, the ocean had namely remained a place of fear. With Agnes' wife's support, Agnes eventually came to love swimming in the ocean, too. At three o'clock in the morning on a mild September night, Agnes went skinny-dipping in the North Shore of Massachusetts. Agnes said, "I took the plunge after some encouragement from my partner and her friends … the phosphorescence glowed about me with every movement. It was magical."

Sara's Girl Scout background emboldened her to plan a canoeing trip for herself and her partner. Despite a misadventure down the wrong branch of the river and wading through freezing water, Sara fondly remembers the memories of the venture. She added, "I never would have planned a trip like this without my experience and knowledge from Girl Scouts."

One of Lauren's most significant experiences in the outdoors was their first backpacking trip in West Virginia. Lauren shared, "I remember wandering along, feeling like everything was right in the world…. I was able to let everything else go and completely take in the lovely West Virginia countryside." Lauren also used the words *magic* and *zen* to describe the nature of their experience.

Girl Scout summer camps were a significant outdoor place for several participants. Erin relished her camp's Northern California landscape and especially loved looking at the stars. Erin commented, "Every night while walking back to my tent, I can't help but stop and stare at [the stars] for a while. They remind me of both how big and small the world is, and how beautiful it can be."

Arianne recalled working with a group of Girl Scout campers at the zip line platform on a high ropes course. She talked with and encouraged girls as they navigated elements, and despite being the group's facilitator just for the day, Arianne keenly felt she "made a difference in their lives." Many girls in the group had initially reported that they did not think they could complete the high ropes course, and being part of so many girls' journeys was impactful for Arianne.

For Sarah, an experience at an overnight Girl Scout summer camp prompted an important life change. During Sarah's first summer as a camp staff member, they became dangerously dehydrated. A close friend on staff helped during Sarah's painful weeks of recovery and consistently asked what Sarah needed. Sarah credits these events with learning to prioritize self-care.

Julia's evocative and vivid vignette describing time spent at Camp Robbinswold, a Girl Scout camp in the state of Washington, seems to be a poignant concluding narrative:

> The wild nature at Robbinswold creates a space to discover all the messy and valuable facets of being alive. The fire pit in the Enchanted Forest unit is where I learned to light a one-match fire. The beach is covered in barnacles that will, if you're not careful, mercilessly slice your soles open as you peek under rocks for sea stars and clams. I once got stung by a vicious red jellyfish as I was trying to help my friend escape from its tentacles. On many nights, I've unrolled my sleeping bag on a grassy knoll and stared up through the fir boughs to watch the meteor showers. There's a pull to stay awake as you ask your companions to tell another secret about life and adventure.
>
> We shouted our songs loud enough to hear echoes coming back to us from the depths of the forest. We got sap stuck in our hair as we built fairy homes in the root crevasses.
>
> Sometimes the clouds bring three inches of rain in one weekend and you work with your friends to brainstorm creative ways to dry 32 soaking wet socks while the rain keeps falling. The magic of Robbinswold is not that it is all sunshine and roses—the magic is that even during the storms everyone and everything at camp is alive. And inquiring. And reaching out for something bigger, deeper, truer, more just. The connectedness and sacredness of all life is inescapable at camp.

> Once I was kayaking through the gentle waves of the Hood Canal when my friend first told me she was gay. Surrounded by an expanse of water, we looked back towards the shore and the people and buildings looked like a miniature play set. It was like this vastness called forth authenticity and honesty. The ocean and the mountains and the sky don't apologize for being exactly the way they are.

Conclusion

This chapter opened with sharing some of the author's personal experiences as a queer Girl Scout and outdoor practitioner. The text then introduced background information about GSUSA, its inclusiveness pertaining to sexual orientation and gender identity, and its emphasis on camping and outdoor programming. A review of participant demographics then preceded an examination of the relevance of gender identity and/or sexual orientation to Girl Scouts in outdoor contexts, followed by a selection of outdoor stories.

For many of the 16 LGBTQ Girl Scouts interviewed, their sense of gender identity and/or sexual orientation in outdoor Girl Scouting contexts was positively tied to the themes of a nonjudgemental atmosphere, a new self, and/or LGBTQ community. As LGBTQ-centred mini-narratives of outdoor experiences, these contributions importantly challenge prevailing heterosexist, male-dominated stories and notions about outdoor adventure/education.

Future projects examining inclusiveness within Girl Scouts should endeavour to include LGBTQ people of colour and more participants aged 30 and over. The participants' accounts represented in this chapter are nearly all positive, and it is important to identify and include voices of LGBTQ Girl Scouts who did not feel supported or affirmed by the organization. Given that GSUSA only declared sexual orientation a protected category in more recent years, it is possible that older generations of LGBTQ Girl Scouts' experiences do not mirror the evidenced project themes.

While GSUSA has a national nondiscrimination policy and convened a Transgender Issues Task Group in 2013 to better address the needs of trans Girl Scouts, continued vocal, "open and proud" affirmations of LGBTQ members will surely allow for the creation of more welcoming (and celebratory) LGBTQ spaces. The Girl Scout movement seems well situated to expand on prior supportive stances and offer a radical alternative to dominant conceptions and practices that disadvantage women, trans, and nonbinary individuals.

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Adventures Beyond Cookies: A Girl Scout Journey into Crumbling the Stereotype

Priscilla McKenney

In the late 1960s, as a school-age girl and tomboy, my experience with Girl Scouts was short lived. My troop leader was interested in teaching us crochet and macaroni art when I wanted to get outdoors, camp, hike, and do what the boys were doing. I was seeking "something with a little swagger in it." I crossed the bridge from Brownies to Cadets to never return until surprisingly, decades later, after having pursued a long career in outdoor adventure education. In 2011, I arrived at Girl Scouts of Northern California (GSNorCal), looking through the lens of an outdoor professional with a broad scope of leadership and extensive outdoor programme experience. With me, I also brought my own stereotype of Girls Scouts that soon would require me to pay closer attention to what this meant and re-examine my own biases.

Like the history of women and girls in the outdoors, we know little of our adventurous lives and stories. Since this is a journey, one must begin with snippets of personal stories that lead to this rediscovery of Girl Scouts. Though scouting reaches girls around the globe through the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), the story in this chapter is based in Northern California with references to Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA), headquarters for all of the Girl Scouts councils in the United States.

P. McKenney (✉)
San Francisco, CA, USA

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Background

Early into my outdoor career, in the 1980s, I had definitely found my swagger through the pursuits of developing technical skills such as mountaineering, backcountry skiing, and rock climbing and working as an Outward Bound instructor in the Pacific Northwest. Forging along in this male-dominated field, I had concurrently been involved with empowering women by teaching those same technical skills for Woodswomen, Inc., where my world opened up to a new leadership style and feminist-based programme philosophy. Established in Minnesota in 1977, Woodswomen led the way in developing a framework for an outdoor programme that recognized, celebrated, and honoured women for their unique strengths and goals. Coming from an Outward Bound indoctrination, this was revolutionary for me! A few years later, in 1987, Woodswomen provided my first opportunity to guide in the Himalayas, a dream come true.

After several years of guiding treks in the Nepalese Himalayas with Women Trek, REI Adventures, and Woodswomen, I wanted to offer opportunities for women to climb some of the smaller and more accessible peaks in the Mt. Everest area. With this goal in mind, I cofounded Lois Lane Expeditions (LLE). In 1992, our Lois Lane had discovered a life of adventure after finally getting over Superman. Lois Lane was spunky, brave, and curious, always taking notes and the first to try new things. She inspired other women to do the same. LLE put women on top of 6000 + metre peaks in the Everest Region during her five-year tenure and, simultaneously, I attended graduate school.

Up to this point, I had worked with all age groups, adults, teenagers, and college students with a particular interest in women's outdoor programmes. In graduate school, I perused literature written about the benefits of outdoor programmes for women, but found very little published on girls' outdoor programmes. I knew that if there had been an outdoor programme for girls when I was young, especially at the edge of adolescence, I would have significantly benefited from such an experience. In the 1990s, girls were in the media spotlight after the American Association of University Women released a pivotal report, *Shortchanging Girls, Shortchanging America* (Greenberg-Lake: The Analysis Group, 1994). The report focused on gender inequity in education and showed girls' self-esteem to be decreasing along with their academic achievements, especially in mathematics and science. Also, contributing to this body of work, research studies released by Carol Gilligan and Lyn Mikel Brown (1992), for example, found that the edge of adolescence was a time when many girls experienced a drop in self-esteem. That is, girls disconnected from what they felt inside and what they showed to their world, losing their true selves and their true voices. These studies and reports, along with others, sounded a call to action for all those who worked with and cared about girls in any capacity.

Although there had been a long history of girls' organizations providing outdoor experiences, such as Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, and the girls' camping movement, outdoor programme development for girls was just unfolding in the 1990s. Three guiding factors justified developing a programme model for girls: (a) the proven value of adventure education programmes, (b) a developing body of research on girls' development, and (c) the demonstrated effectiveness of single-gender educational programmes (e.g., McKenney, Budbill, & Roberts, 2008).

Having survived my own tumultuous adolescence, I launched an inquiry into girls' outdoor adventure programmes and found Connecting With Courage (CWC), an Outward Bound-inspired programme established in 1992 which, at the time, was celebrating its fourth year. Whilst I was pleasantly surprised with this discovery, I was also a bit sceptical after working for Outward Bound for the previous 15 years. I worried that the programme model was a "one size fits all" approach that did not consider the unique needs of adolescent girls. I went deeper into my investigation to find the contrary. CWC had integrated girls' psychological development theory into their programme design and practice. I decided my master's thesis would be a programme evaluation of CWC, specifically designed for 12- to 13-year-old girls. Although one goal of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of CWC, its importance went beyond the need for assessing the programme's impact. The choice of this research project reflected my professional and educational commitment to women and girls to be heard and seen in the outdoor adventure education community.

Graduate work set me up for the next phase of my career. In 2002, I stepped into the role of programme director for GirlVentures, an outdoor adventure programme with a mission to empower adolescent girls through outdoor adventure, group experience, and creative expression in the San Francisco Bay Area. After several years of learning and giving presentations, it was obvious that girls' outdoor programmes needed further visibility and validity in the field of adventure education. It was time to define and give voice to the history, theory, and practice of this innovative programme model. In 2007, whilst reviewing the literature for a chapter entitled "Girls outdoor adventure programs: History, theory and practice," I discovered the important role of Girl Scouts in the girls' camping movement. Consequently, I never imagined working for Girl Scouts after my eight-year tenure at GirlVentures.

Re-entry into Girl Scouts

When I started working at Girl Scouts in 2011, I felt like a bit of an "outsider." Though familiar with working with girls and women in the outdoors, the Girl Scout culture and its brand of the "girl experience" was new to me. Most of my new colleagues and the volunteers who worked at Girl Scouts were women who had extensive experience as Girl Scouts. Some were women who had dedicated their entire career to Girl Scouts, whilst others came from families with a long tradition of Girl Scout involvement and multigenerational activity. I was impressed to discover that the heart of Girl Scouts, and the movement, was alive and well. I knew that ahead of me I had a lot to learn about Girl Scouts beyond my own stereotype that was limited to cookies, crafts, and s'mores.

Girl Scouts, founded in 1912, has a long tradition of getting women and girls outdoors (Girl Scouts Research Institute, 2014). With over 100 years of programme experience, Girl Scouts are known best for their summer camp programmes and their famous cookies. Knowing that Girl Scouts has this rich history and tradition, and now considering myself a Girl Scout, I was in search for the outdoor culture, the backpackers, and outdoor adventurers.

Camp Two Sentinels

Within a few months at Girl Scouts, I happily discovered Camp Two Sentinels, a volunteer-run backpacking camp that was founded in 1936 and celebrated over 75 years. Two Sentinels is the oldest Girl Scout residential camp west of the Mississippi, and the fourth oldest Girl Scout camp in the United States (Two Sentinels, 2016). Renowned for its graduated backpacking programme, Two Sentinels is situated at almost 2500-metre elevation in the Western Sierra of California. It is considered one of the longest standing volunteer-run residential camps in the country and is currently accredited by the American Camp Association (D. Storm, personal communication, February 4, 2016). The founding intention of the camp was to provide a High Sierra, "pioneer" outdoor living experience as well as a backpacking programme for Girl Scouts who lived in lower elevations. According to two campers' memories that attended camp in 1936, the drive took long hours of travelling by dirt road coupled by regular stops for herds of sheep blocking their passage. The same Girl Scout alumnae said they enjoyed learning to be "reliant," and they "got to do everything yourself," experiencing a sense of liberation. Since its inception, the camp has served an estimated 18,000 Girl Scouts at their nine-acre wilderness camp setting on US Forest Service land (D. Storm, personal communication, February 4, 2016).

As soon as the camp began, I wanted to meet and learn more from the volunteer women who managed the camp. Access to Camp Two Sentinels requires a short hike that sets a tone of adventure and remoteness as there is no road leading up to the property. The rustic camp is located next to a beautiful alpine lake so all provisions are transported by rowboat. There is neither mobile phone signal nor Internet service. Camp is an opportunity to unplug and live off the grid, keeping with the original pioneer spirit. The camp kitchen and outdoor dining hall is the hub, running on propane and a generator when electricity is needed. Campers prefer to sleep under the stars, yet will sleep in tents during inclement weather. Outhouses are the only option for relief. The warm welcome I received the first time I visited, and ever since, has been overwhelmingly delightful. Instant family. I found my place at Girl Scouts. For campers and staff alike, it was home away from home and I could claim that, too.

Outdoor Cooking

At camp, the girls learn outdoor cooking skills that are considered a Girl Scout outdoor tradition. They learn the finer art of cooking over the fire using foil, a Dutch oven, or just the good ol' hot dog on a stick. Part of the experience is learning low-tech and *old-school* ways of living outdoors, without the high-tech gear youth are so accustomed to today. The overall impact is that girls become comfortable living in the outdoors, being in nature, problem solving and working together, living in community, in the magic of the High Sierras, just as their predecessors did.

Backpacking Culture

Generations of girls have grown up at Two Sentinels and many later become counsellors and directors. As school-aged campers, they begin with day hikes and then progress into backpacking experiences that are age-appropriate, ranging from 3 to 11 days. The younger girls witness the older girls coming and going from their backpacking adventures off-site, providing a powerful image of girls being strong, capable, and self-reliant. Though backpacking is not required, 75% of the girls chose backpacking as part of their camp activities in 2015. This camp fills a wait-list every year and serves over 300 campers per summer (D. Storm, personal communication, February 4, 2016).

As I learnt about their backpacking programme, I was impressed with their thoughtful progression that combined learning some of the *old-school* ways of backcountry cooking and the use of a variety of shelters. For beginner backpacking, to keep the weight down, the groups carry pup tents as emergency shelters and (as mentioned) prefer to sleep under the stars. Later, as they progress to longer backpacking trips, girls learn to set up state-of-the-art tents. Their backcountry cook-stove choices also have a progression from older style, bulky propane stoves to lightweight backpacking stoves. They even use a large tin can as their cooking pot for the beginner trips and later graduate to lightweight cook sets. Ground sheets are made from pieces of Tyvek®, a house wrap material from a construction company owned by one of the fathers: lightweight, creative, and thrifty. The choice of lightweight gear demonstrates an understanding of the importance of body weight to backpack weight ratio, key to making backpacking more accessible to all shapes, sizes, and abilities and ensure a positive experience.

Affordability

One of the many benefits of a camp operated by volunteers is its general affordability. Salaries and workers' compensation are the leading expense at camps as with most businesses, including nonprofit organizations. By having volunteer staff, the cost of managing camp is reduced significantly. Thus, camp is accessible to families across a broad range of socioeconomic status.

Quality of Leadership

It is no secret that the leadership of a camp is key for a positive camp experience. Camp staff at Two Sentinels have professional lives, and they take two weeks or more from their home life and work to volunteer at camp. Girls from all backgrounds experience being around and mentored by women they may not otherwise encounter. When the staff are not working at camp, they are talented doctors, professors, scientists, artists, comedians, computer engineers, psychologists, physicists, and CEOs, to name a few. Over 90% of the staff have a minimum of a bachelor's degree, or higher (D. Storm, personal communication, February 4, 2016). The result is a more mature and experienced team of camp staff that radiates confidence. At other Girl Scout camps where there is paid staff, most staff are college students.

Women as Leaders

At Two Sentinels, women perform all of the primary camp leadership roles. Girls witness this practice as a norm. Broadly, these women represent what I have gleaned informally as Girl Scout common traits amongst adult leaders. They are outspoken, problem solvers, and resourceful. Many times, I have heard when challenged, "We are Girl Scouts, we can figure it out." They exemplify a willingness to try new things and are active in community service. Their leadership is heart-based and compassionate. These exemplary qualities are clearly practised at Two Sentinels. Girls are so lucky to be surrounded by these positive role models. I could have used a Girl Scout experience like this when I was young. If more girls could experience this utopia, the world would be a better place.

Volunteer Commitment

The dedication of the Two Sentinel staff touches my heart. There are volunteers who have served from 20 years to nearly 40 years and work tirelessly year-round to keep the camp running smoothly. Most volunteers have been involved for an average of 15 years (D. Storm, personal communication, February 4, 2016). The endless hours and energy invested in site maintenance, operations, and programming is impressive. Trip leaders are required to obtain their Wilderness First Aid certification, use their own funds to pay for their training, and attend a four-day staff training. The result of this commitment is a high level of investment in the actual camp experience itself, and is obvious to the girls.

Since I have been a paid outdoor programme staff member, "a professional," I was intrigued by the volunteer element of this model: both its benefits and challenges. I felt a little guilty that I was visiting as a salaried Girl Scouts staff member. Yet, I felt compelled to contribute and support their programme in any way possible and within the scope of my role. For instance, I made myself available to drive backpackers to and from the trailhead, help the girls pack their backpacks, and teach a few fine-tuning tricks of the trade before they set out on their expedition. I have even served as a trip leader when they have been short on certified backpacking staff.

Relational Approach

Whilst the volunteer staff aspect of Two Sentinels is unique, so are the generations of families who have been involved in making this camp happen every year. The benefits are that family members, particularly mothers and daughters, attend the camp together. Fathers can also volunteer, and younger male siblings can attend as campers, extending opportunities to all family members, adding a value of inclusivity. For the younger, school-age campers, kindergarten to third grade, the family aspect is a huge benefit for them to get an early start at camp. As girls get older, mothers and daughters may see each other at meals but are in different camper groups. Off-season, many volunteers stay connected and attend each other's children's graduations, concerts, and performances. They provide an enormous web of contacts and references for so many of their young staff. Within a structure like this, people feel safe and wanted, and this gives them the opportunity to become more vulnerable and to give more of themselves to the campers and the camp experience (D. Storm, personal communication, February 4, 2016). That said, in 2016, 95% of camp staff were female and 6% were male campers (C. Miller, personal communication, July 11, 2016).

Every summer, since 2011, I make an effort to reconnect with the incredible women and girls at Two Sentinels. Stepping into the bubble of these adventurous, fun, playful, competent, strong women and girls nourishes my soul. Decades of Girl Scouts have immersed themselves in the magic of place and have been surrounded, inspired, and guided by an amazing group of women leaders. From my vantage point, Two Sentinels represents one example of best practice of Girl Scouts offering affordable, quality outdoor experiences for girls.

Backpack Interest Group

My next outdoor programme discovery at Girl Scouts came a year later, in 2012. My role at Girl Scouts had expanded to overseeing the Backpack Interest Group (BIG), a volunteer-led backpacking programme. BIG grew out of a troop that was very active with backpacking and had organized annual summer wilderness trips. After the girls graduated from their troop in 2001, these same troop leaders decided to continue to provide a backpacking programme for Girl Scouts, 11–18 years old, thereby starting "BIG" (C. Faucett, personal communication, 2016). As a year-round, girl-led, and adult-supported backpacking programme, the Girl Scouts of BIG plan and go on monthly backpack trips throughout the school year as training for their High Sierra expedition "The Miler" in the summer. These monthly backpacking trips are also a venue for new Girl Scouts to explore their interest and decide whether backpacking is for them. To prepare for their summer expedition, the girls who are going on the summer expedition attend training day hikes of 10–12 kilometres. Many of the Girl Scouts are affiliated with troops and make the choice to be involved with BIG for the additional outdoor scouting experience. In 2016, 25 girls were consistent participants, and approximately 40 girls had attended meetings and occasional backpack trips.

I joined BIG on two of their annual Miler expeditions, an eight-day summer backpacking trip in the High Sierra. I was very impressed by the girls' skills with expedition planning, navigation, camp craft, and general trail leadership. With the guidance and teaching from their volunteer adult mentors, the girls learn all aspects of expedition planning and are involved with decision making. Two of the older and most experienced Girl Scouts lead the group in choosing the itinerary and menu. The girls have a team who order, pack, and organize the food, whilst others are involved with group gear preparation. They are hypervigilant with weight and choose lightweight gear as well as freeze-dried meals. To help with keeping the weight down, they use tarps and are very skilled with using them as shelters. BIG is committed to making sure the Girl Scouts, especially the younger ones and the beginners, are carrying only 30% of their body weight. For the prep day before leaving town, they weigh each backpack. By the time the girls start their trip, they are invested and excited about their excursion.

For me, all I had to do was show up! What a role reversal that the girls had done all of the logistics. I was also impressed with the level of challenge the girls chose. After all, they had been backpacking all year and training for their summer expedition. The first year, we went to the Mt. Whitney area to climb two peaks. The highlight was to climb Mt Langley, one of California's "fourteeners." Up to this point, BIG had attempted other peak climbs without success. The Girl Scouts and their leaders were happy to have me along, given my years of guiding in the Himalayas and teaching mountaineering courses. We summited both peaks, explored the nearby alpine basins, and backpacked significant mileage. The girls were enthusiastic, inspired, and led the way. The next year, the girls chose another challenging trip that covered 100 kilometres and over 4000 metres in elevation gain and loss during their eight-day expedition in Yosemite; a very ambitious route. I was delighted and excited to discover such a competent, skilled, and adventurous group of Girl Scouts.

Like Camp Two Sentinels, BIG depends on adult volunteer leaders who bring both personal and professional outdoor skills, as well as scouting experience from being a troop leader, to share their passion for hiking, camping, and the wilderness with the girls. The trip leaders are also busy professionals and most often mothers. Unlike Two Sentinels, BIG has only a half-dozen dedicated women who have been managing the programme for the past 14 years. They have a solid infrastructure in terms of equipment, resources, website, and packing lists. BIG serves a limited number of girls who live within the geography of their meeting location. Girl Scouts would like to expand and duplicate this programme, but it has been challenging to find new volunteers to commit the time needed to start a new chapter and seek specific wilderness training. The women leaders of BIG are amazing role models and make backpacking accessible to girls from a vast array of backgrounds. At the national level, BIG is unique and perhaps a one-of-a-kind programme at Girl Scouts (K. Carpenter, personal communication, 2012).

Future of Girl Scouts and Outdoor Experiences

In 2014, the Girl Scout Research Institute released a research report about Girl Scouts and the outdoors. Two fundamental questions were investigated. Are Girl Scouts still getting outdoors, and what difference does it make if they do? The findings confirmed that Girl Scouts continue to help get girls outdoors through summer camp, year-round programmes, and troop involvement. More than 90% of Girl Scouts reported having done at least one outdoor activity with Girl Scouts during the previous year, and nearly 40% had participated in outdoor activities on a monthly basis with Girl Scouts (Girl Scouts Research Institute, 2014).

The research data supported four reasons to get girls outdoors: (a) girls really enjoy outdoor activities in Girl Scouts, (b) monthly outdoor exposure contributes to challenge seeking and problem solving, (c) Girl Scouts who get outdoors are twice as likely to connect with and care for the environment than non-Girl Scouts, and (d) girls of colour and girls in lower socioeconomic backgrounds report even stronger benefits from outdoor experiences (Girl Scouts Research Institute, 2014). A key takeaway from this report is the important role of volunteer adults in getting girls out on a monthly basis through their troop involvement.

In response to this important study, in 2015, GSUSA launched an outdoor initiative, a strategy to guide local councils towards the common goal of getting more girls outdoors and on a regular basis. Since then, the focus has been on increasing outdoor training for adult volunteers who are troop leaders. Referring to the volunteers, Vicky Wright, the Outdoor Initiative Lead, stated in an interview that, "We hear from them that they don't have the time or the expertise to get girls outside" (Zurer, 2015, para. 5). As these troop leaders become more confident and competent in the outdoors, they will feel more prepared to take their girls camping and on outdoor excursions. In 2015, GSNorCal expanded "year-round programs that encourage and inspire girls to get outdoors. These programs give girls an opportunity to develop outdoor skills, discover an affinity for nature, and seek out new challenges" (GSNorCal, 2016). Finally, Girl Scouts has added outdoor badge themes as an incentive for girls to explore the outdoors.

In 2015, GSUSA partnered with the National Park Service to offer a Girl Scout Ranger Program with the intention to connect girls to national parks through service work or action projects and to be exposed to possible careers in the outdoors.

With this broad-reaching outdoor trend, there is a bright future for Girl Scouts seeking outdoor experiences, developing outdoor skills, and feeding their adventurous spirit. There is a re-claiming of the scouting in Girl Scouts. They are making the world a better place by cultivating the value of the outdoors and environmental stewardship in girls. Indeed, the outdoors remains relevant in supporting the mission: "Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place."

Conclusion

By rediscovering Girl Scouts, I had to face my own biases and stereotypes. Still, some girls and adults alike believe Girl Scouts has nothing to offer them as outdoor enthusiasts. For instance, last November 2015, a group of girls in Northern California were insistent to join the Boy Scouts because they "wanted to spend their time tying knots and camping rather than selling cookies" (Turkewitz, 2015, para. 3).

In the five years since I have been working at Girl Scouts, our public relations department has been sending staff regular media postings to keep us informed. Most articles have focused on the politics and business of Girl Scouts such as cookie sales, membership trends, and erroneous accusations of supporting Planned Parenthood. Meanwhile, the stories of adventurous Girl Scouts often go unnoticed by mainstream media.

My intention has been to dispel these myths and shed light on the key role that the outdoors continues to play in the Girl Scout experience, as it has for over 100 years. Girl Scouts continue to venture outdoors, seek challenges while developing their leadership skills, and serving their community.

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Reflections of an Educator on the Impact of the Outdoors on Body Positivity

Joelle Breault-Hood

On the cusp of adolescence, my summer holidays changed forever. I spent a week diligently packing a borrowed backpack with required items from the equipment and clothing list: brand new hiking boots, khaki carpenter pants, long-sleeved collared shirts, big thick woollen socks, and rain gear. The summer camp clothing list said not to buy expensive new items, so I borrowed a backpack, a sleeping bag, and other items on the list.

Excited and slightly nervous, we drove north following the Thompson River, veering west past fishing lakes and onwards towards the Southern Cariboo. I was certain we had taken the wrong dusty gravel road on the way to nowhere until eventually, a sign hung between two trees pointed us in the right direction. As we pulled into the driveway, we were greeted by overexcited, broadly smiling faces ushering us onto the property. Grabbing my pack out of the trunk, I waved goodbye to dad as he drove off, leaving me in the hands of some unconventional-looking individuals.

After settling into our cabins, we feasted on wholesome, freshly prepared food in the rustic dining hall filled with photographs of stunning local scenery and groups of young people standing on mountain peaks, paddling canoes, and hanging from ropes on sheer cliffs. Shivers went up and down my spine in anticipation of what was to come. I was with a group of girls who had travelled from all over the country. We were like sponges, soaking up the energy and the atmosphere of this new place.

J. Breault-Hood (✉)
Centre for Educational Research, Western Sydney University,
Sydney, NSW, Australia

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That first evening, we met Karen, one of our leaders. As a highly impressionable 11 year old, I was captivated by her appearance. She seemed comfortable in her own skin and ready for adventure—wearing a red checked long-sleeved flannel shirt, dark blue cargo pants with deep pockets hiding all kinds of mysterious gadgets, and brown, worn-in leather hiking boots. Her hair was wild and curly and her face fresh and vibrant. She spoke clearly and calmly giving us instructions for an evening of exploration. She sent us off to dress appropriately for the evening adventure, and I returned dressed head to toe in my new outdoor gear: a shirt borrowed from dad, an old pair of rugby pants, my new hiking boots, and my favourite toque. I headed out the cabin door with the other ten girls in my group to experience our first taste of adventure.

As we walked through the clumpy, uneven, ankle-biting marshes towards our night-time canoe put-in, Karen walked next to me and suggested I close my eyes and trust my footing. I remember feeling ridiculous as I closed my eyes and braced myself for falling. Yet, I also remember that although I had a history of defying authority, I trusted this woman instinctively and believed she should be listened to. I walked like this for a few moments, feeling the ground beneath me, trusting that my feet would land in the right spot to carry my weight and stop me from falling. Karen had ignited, either unintentionally or perhaps very deliberately, a little spark of confidence in me.

Not long after, I was sitting in a canoe in the dark wondering where to go and how on earth I would get there with my canoe partner. Karen quietly proposed we focus on the lantern glowing in the distance and aim towards it. She suggested that sometimes it takes a little focus to get to where we need to go. Following this advice, it didn't take us much longer to reach our destination. Again, this sense of burgeoning confidence fired up inside me.

Over the following ten days, this woman and several more formed my impression of strong, competent outdoorswomen. My trust in their skills and knowledge increased day by day through their demonstrations of how to pack a backpack, how to tie into a high ropes course, how to breathe through the anxiety of a first rock climb, and how to clear your mind of negative, unhelpful thoughts. I remember that one of my leaders said that it is more important to feel strong than to be strong, and this summer was my first lesson in this.

In the late 1980s, it was okay to have young people and adults skinny-dipping. Our morning ritual began with a run around the base camp at Little Magic Lake, the sun salutation, and a brisk cleanse in the dark waters. I was full of trepidation at first—jumping naked into a lake with girls who were practically strangers. I wasn't comfortable with my less-than-feminine skinny, flat-chested body. However, with no hot showers, it was our only option for staying clean. Our evenings at camp ended in a similar vein: a jump in the lake and a hot sauna before snuggling into our sleeping bags. I wasn't yet aware that this simple activity was influencing my body confidence.

With curiosity, I started observing my leaders more carefully. I began to tune into how they looked, how they carried themselves, and how they acted. Karen was tall, slender, and toned. Some people might say tomboyish. She was self-assured and spoke with confidence. Judith was short, plump, and matronly. Her demeanour was quiet and soft-spoken. Donna was blond, busty, round in the belly, and had a t-shirt tan. She oozed softness on the outside but was tough on the inside, displayed when we needed to listen carefully. Wendy sported dreadlocks, exhibited a contagious smile, and displayed muscular legs and arms. She was cool, calm, tough, and absolutely how I wanted to be. Each was a strong outdoorswoman, confident and proud of their bodies and their experiences. They had strong personalities and brought different elements to the experience. Karen was skilled in canoeing, leading a group, and anticipating our apprehension. Judith brought a sense of fun and light-heartedness, particularly when she woke the group members with her flute playing in the early mornings. Wendy was not afraid of anything—she could chop firewood, walk up to her knees in muck, run five kilometres without breaking a sweat, and was the epitome of resilience. Thirty years later, I remember these women clearly. I spent seven consecutive summers at adventure school learning outdoor skills from them. I learned to tie knots, light fires, cook meals, tape blisters, paddle a canoe, and how to love myself and stretch and expand in all different directions.

Although I am a healthy, fit, and confident woman, there is no doubt at times I grapple with my body image—how I feel my body looks. My wardrobe changes as I fluctuate between pant sizes depending on the time I have available to dedicate to fitness and whether it's summer or winter. I am guilty of staring into my closet and declaring that nothing fits. I wear yoga pants when I'm feeling frumpy. Some days I yearn for more defined triceps, bulging calf muscles, and a smooth stomach. I often worry that the skin bunches up under my bra and can be seen through my t-shirts. I consider myself an attractive, appealing woman, yet at times I feel a little squishy and undesirable. This, in turn, makes me feel unhappy with myself. This is my own personal body scrimmage, the tussle I have between my inner knowing and the cultural influences I deal with daily.

I have only recently discovered the term *body scrimmage*. Savigny (2006) defined the term "body scrimmage" as "the scrum-like thoughts and feelings we often have about our own bodies" (p. 7). She believed the term is more useful than "body image," because many people take that term literally and think it's simply about what you look like or our body parts, when the real issues are often related to negative thoughts and feelings we associate our bodies with. Scrimmage is a perfect term to use when discussing the internal struggles that many Western women have when we think negatively and obsessively about our own bodies.

In the moments of my own body scrimmaging, my thoughts turn to where and when I feel most beautiful, strongest, and attractive. Typically, this takes me to the third or fourth day of a bushwalk, where my hair is greasy, my fingernails are filled with dirt, my feet are sore, and I haven't looked in a mirror for a few days. Or I recall a moment when I felt strong in the outdoors, such as the time I guided people away from a grizzly bear on a nature hike in the Purcell Mountains or the winters of graceful, free-heel turns skiing down the fall line of Kicking Horse Mountain. Sometimes these moments take me to the middle of a 20-kilometre run where my body is aching and my mind is soaring. I feel attractive *and* strong in the outdoors. My confidence soars. I recognize that my body is much greater than "image"—rather, it is connected to my self-worth. None of these moments are about how I look—they are how I feel about and what I can do with my body.

It's important for me to understand this connection between the outdoors and the body. My daughters are growing up and will soon experience the teenage angst of body image and self-esteem. They will soon be inundated by what Bordo (2003) described as the "powerful, ubiquitous and invasive demands of culture on our bodies and souls" (p. xix). Based on my observations at school, this cultural normalcy is already apparent in the primary years. Young girls already worry about how they look. I want my daughters to experience what I learned at a young age—a positive sense of self-worth and acceptance.

I attended outdoor school in an era when women started to investigate the benefits of outdoor programmes for themselves. In particular, women started to consider the potential of programmes run by women for women (Henderson, 1996; Loeffler, 1997; Mitten, 1985, 1986, 1992). Only a few studies during this time were focused specifically on programmes for girls (Henderson & Grant, 1998; Henderson & King, 1998) and even less girls' experiences in the outdoors (Culp, 1998; Porter, 1996). On participating in outdoor programmes run by women for women, Mitten proposed in her germinal research: "Women often discover their own power and expand their self-images" (1992, p. 57). She argued, "Women can often go past self and society imposed ideas of what is possible, both as individuals and as women" (p. 57) and feel empowered doing so. Her work has been instrumental in bringing forth beliefs about the immense opportunity outdoor programmes offer to women at a transformational level in terms of self-image and self-belief. Corroborating Mitten's early explorations, Sara Arnold wrote in 1994, "It is my belief that the combination of wilderness experience, the therapeutic effect of an all women's group process, and challenging physical activities such as hiking and rock-climbing, offer an opportunity for women to reevaluate and reformulate their own norms for the female body" (p. 44).

These early researchers in the field inspired an interest on researching the positive outcomes of the outdoors on the body image of women (D'Amore & Mitten, 2014; Mitten & Woodruff, 2010; West-Smith 2000; Woodruff 2009). Woodruff's study demonstrated, "As the value on the significance of the body's capabilities develop, consciousness and appreciation of the body amplifies, and self-perceptions of physical attractiveness increase" (2009, p. 2). West-Smith's (2000) collection of women's body image research findings and personal stories illustrates how a woman's sense of being physically effective contributes positively to a sense of being physically attractive. Researchers have found that active outdoorswomen are able to reject cultural and stereotypical definitions of beauty and, as a result, maintain a more positive body image.

There are limited studies that have determined a change in the body image of adolescent girls after participating in an outdoor programme (Barr-Wilson, 2012; Budbill, 2008; DeBate & Thompson, 2005; Edwards-Leeper, 2004; Galeotti, 2015; Massa, 2015; Parsons, 2010; Whittington, 2006; Whittington & Budbill, 2013; Whittington, Mack, Budbill, & McKenney, 2011). Qualitative evidence gathered shows that outdoor experiences impact girls' notions of femininity and question body image yet quantitative evidence is not as significant. Collectively, researchers have determined a positive correlation between an outdoor experience and an increase in acceptance of the body or a positive change in body image. Researchers propose that intentionally designed outdoor programmes can provide a variety of valuable and empowering experiences for girls and suggest further research in the area.

In 2004 and 2005, I spent 66 days in the bush with 24 teenage girls. We trekked, rafted, and cycled from the Australian Alps to the ocean. It was a privilege to live so closely with these young women. Although trying to keep my pack to a 15-kg minimum, I carried a book weighing over a kilo. It became like a member of our group. It was read, browsed through, laughed over, pondered about, and led to many lively discussions around our campfire, in our tents, and during our walks. *Girlosophy: A Soul Survival Kit* compiled by Anthea Paul in 2000 claims to be a blueprint for all young women. It urges each to find her own individual truth. Paul promotes the concept of girlosophy, a new way of thinking about life that captures the spirit of being a girl in the twenty-first century. She wrote real beauty is "a life force, an energy, which radiates from within and transcends the physical" (p. 105). She emphasized that "real beauty may not always be visible at first glance, but it lasts forever" (p. 104).

Questions that touched on this notion of real beauty emerged every day during our trek. Girls asked each other: "How do you feel about your body?" "When did you last feel beautiful?" "Would you change the way you do things to please someone else?" "Do you try to look happy on the outside when you are feeling unhappy on the inside?" The girls believed beauty is defined by models and actresses. Some girls felt they were too fat, too short, too tall, or not very pretty. One girl inflicted self-harm because she thought she was ugly. "There's too much emphasis on the perfect body and the perfect person, and what is normal," Kate believed.[1] Sandy pointed out that "everybody wants to look better than they are, have a boyfriend, a better body." And Maeve disclosed, "Eating disorders are common, but you get used to [it]—everyone binges." At the end of this month-long experience, the girls in the group were physically stronger and had new-found capabilities. Ten years later, I wonder what has become of these young women. Are they strong, confident, and proud of themselves and how they look and feel? Did the month they spent trekking in the Australian wilderness make a difference to how they felt then and how they feel about themselves now?

People who accept the way they look and who feel good about their bodies most of the time have a positive body image. Their appearance may not match their family's ideals or those perpetrated by media, but they have learned to be proud of the way they look. You do not have to be thin or tall or have any other specific physical traits to have a positive body image. It does not matter what you look like on the outside. Part of having a positive body image is thinking about the way you physically feel and what your body can do—not just the way you look (D'Amore & Mitten, 2014; Mitten & Woodruff, 2010; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015; West-Smith, 1997). I am reminded of a song we used to sing at outdoor school. It was a catchy tune that I still remember:

Where you're from, it doesn't matter
What you wear, it doesn't matter
The way you move, it doesn't matter
It doesn't matter how you cut your hair
It's what's inside that counts
It's what's inside that counts.
—Doug Wilde (n.d.)

Having a positive body image also means that you see yourself as you really are. Nonetheless, a negative body image is prevalent in Australian culture. We are constantly exposed to airbrushed, polished models in magazines, on television, and in the movies. When many (Western) women look in the mirror, we seem to see ourselves differently to the way others see us. We are quick to criticize ourselves; we tend to focus on the negatives and fail, or refuse, to observe the positives. We spend so much time being envious of other people that we overlook our own good qualities. If we can remove ourselves from the bombardment of media images depicting the thin ideal of the female body or the assault on our bodies stemming from a barrage of cultural influences and find ourselves in an outdoor setting where we need to focus on what our bodies' capabilities are, can we develop a sense of pride in what our bodies can do, rather than how they look?

Mitten spoke early on of the potential for what happens in an outdoor programme to be transferrable to day-to-day living:

> In a supportive environment, people more easily choose to challenge themselves and take risks. Women take their accomplishments with them through increased self-esteem and pride, often realizing that an outdoor trip need not be an isolated event in their lives. (1992, p. 57)

This transfer of what occurs in the outdoors is the delicious part of it all. What I do with myself in the outdoors, what I do with my students in the outdoors, and how that transfers to day-to-day living are the reasons I work in the outdoors. This is the magic I love to watch happen on an outdoor programme. The transformative powers of this type of education may be one of the solutions to increased body positivity in the teenage girl population. Whittington (2006) discovered in her research that adolescent girls who participated in an extensive wilderness programme challenged conventional notions of femininity including challenging assumptions of girls' abilities and questioning ideal images of beauty. She found they gained feelings of strength and determination, an increased ability to speak out, leadership skills, and a sense of accomplishment and pride through their participation (2006). More recently, Whittington et al. (2011) combined the data from three organizations—GirlVentures, Passages Northwest, and Girls Move Mountains—to examine how girls perceive their experiences in an all-girl setting. The results from this study confirm that all-girls programmes reduce competition, self-consciousness, and concerns about appearance (2011, p. 11).

When I reflect on my own experience in the outdoors, I come to realize that my body deserves respect in the form of healthy nutritious food, care to avoid injury, and maintenance to keep it strong and long-lasting so I can continue to run, to paddle, to hike, and to ride. I keep my body healthy and fit for myself and not for the acceptance of others. This self-awareness and acceptance began the day I met Karen and she asked me to trust my footing in the marshes of Little Holden Lake and again the following day when I jumped stark naked into the chilly water. The outdoor experiences I have had shaped the way in which I think of myself with confidence, competence, and self-reliance. It makes sense to me that all teenage girls should have access to these types of experiences to develop their own self-worth and to rebuff cultural stereotypes, as Whittington and colleagues suggested.

In my day-to-day life of being a mother to daughters, I embrace the social media on body positivity and body activism, and I look to alternative pop culture to help my daughters define their femininity. Our bookshelves are full of book titles such as *Do Princesses Wear Hiking Boots?* (Coyle, Gordon, & Gordon, 2003) and *Do Princesses Scrape Their Knees?* (Coyle, Gordon, & Gordon, 2006). My home is proud to house the Lottie Doll and the Lammily Doll. Lottie Dolls are based on the average-sized nine-year-old girl. The Lottie Doll's motto is "Be bold, be brave, be you," and according to the Lottie founder, she is "a feisty character; she can stand on her own two feet and whilst she occasionally makes mistakes, she learns from them. She is not perfect. Lottie loves adventure and the outdoors and uses her imagination" (www.lottie.com). The Lammily Doll has realistic 18-year-old body proportions. The motto for the Lammily Doll is "Average is beautiful," and she comes with scar, cellulite, tattoo, and bruise stickers, as well as a collection of both outdoorsy and high-fashion dress-up clothes (www.lammily.com). We also have access to the website *A Mighty Girl*, which claims to have the world's largest collection of books, toys, and movies for smart, confident, and courageous girls (www.amightygirl.com). *A Mighty Girl's* Facebook feed is a wealth of information and knowledge showcasing women. It is a positive resource supplying my family with inspirational quotes, stories, and memes to share not only with my own family but also within my own social media network.

My daughters have recently become *sisu* (see soo) girls. *Sisu* is a Finnish term meaning strength of will, determination, and perseverance. SisuGirls, the organization, was created by Australian expatriate Chloe Chick whose aim is "to send girls off into this amazing world as determined, brave and resilient young women, who are confident in who they are, where their passions lie and what they want to achieve" (www.sisugirls.org). These choices we make in our home are focused on choosing influences that support the notion that girls are strong and capable and can grow up learning that what their bodies can do is more important than how they look. Even with these choices, we are not immune to strong cultural influences.

American photojournalist and visual anthropologist Lauren Greenfield is the director behind the latest advertising campaign for the Always feminine hygiene company—a commercial that gained distinction and notoriety when it aired during the American Super Bowl football game in early 2015. Greenfield asks people to run, fight, and throw "like a girl." Most of them—a boy, and women who appear to be in their early 20s, and a man about the same age—use limp, flailing arms, and exaggerated, uncoordinated leg movements. When Greenfield asks young girls to demonstrate the same movements, they simply do their best—run fast, throw hard, fight tough. Presumably, societal constructs of what it means to be a girl haven't yet tainted the girls featured in the commercial. The ad is a powerful social experiment; it validates what happens at puberty when a girl's confidence plummets. But it then challenges the societal pressure placed on a girl—that cultural stripping of her courage and confidence and attempts to reassert her power by reclaiming the phrase "like a girl." Always is hitting the nail on the head with this ad campaign by rewriting the rules of the societal constructs of femininity.

As a mother of two young girls, I choose messages, products, and clothing challenging the social constructs of femininity. Unashamedly, I do this with purpose. This does not imply that my daughters are immune to the pervasiveness of cultural norms. I am thankful for new initiatives that are shaping a new direction. Experience has taught me that the outdoors is a place where important learning about the self can happen, and it's a place I'd like to see my own girls thrive. The opportunities are less in Australia than those I had growing up. There are few programmes like Dirt Divas, GirlVentures, or SisuGirls. There isn't a culture of summer camps. Facilitated outdoor education programmes exist primarily in the private school setting, reaching a small percentage of the female population.

As I embark on a journey to demonstrate that outdoor education programmes can shape a girls' sense of self and body positivity, I embrace the lineage of outdoorswomen working to redefine the societal construct of femininity. My mind ticks over as I begin to see the potential and the possibilities for young women learning to define themselves from within, rather from the way society tells them to. It really is a body scrimmage, isn't it? That inner tussle about how we look, how we feel, how we define ourselves, and how others define us.

Notes

1. All names are pseudonyms.

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38

(Re)turning to the Sacred Trails: (Re)storying Connections to More-than-Human Worlds in Outdoor Education

Kathryn Riley

See the glow of the night's stars shining from afar?
They are my Ancestors watching and guiding my path.
Feel with your hand's palm the Earth on which we walk.
Underneath are the Old People's stories that instinctively talk.
Hear the Willy Wagtail clicking in his dance seeking attention?
He is the messenger bird to bring news for those who listen.
Taste the sky's fresh raindrops fall onto your tongue.
They tell us that new life and seasonal bush tucker are to come.
Smell the smoky fire and Eucalyptus bursting from the leaves?
Significant for communication, light, heat, repel and ceremony.
Sense the powerful energy of this Ancient and Sacred Land.
It will flow through my blood, beat in my heart and strengthen my spirit.
As long as I stand.
Kylie J Clarke (2016)
Descendant of the Gunditjmara, Wotjobaluk & Ngarrindjeri Peoples, Australia

The Purpose of Outdoor Education

To start, I ask the question: what is the purpose of outdoor education? The classic definition of outdoor education in Australia is *education in, about, and for the outdoors*, occurring in natural settings in an experiential manner, to

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K. Riley (✉)
Deakin University Australia, Burwood, VIC, Australia

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explore the three-dimensional relationships between self, others, and the environment (Ford, 1981). With evidence of a burgeoning global environmental catastrophe in the late twentieth century (Clayton & Meyers, 2009; Orr, 2004; Winter & Koger, 2004), outdoor education has been eclipsed by an environmental focus, signifying education's response to society's grave acknowledgement of the techno-industrial progression and subsequent negative impacts on the health of human and non-human communities. Within an age of industrialisation and commercialisation, the central ethos of outdoor education shifted to draw on the eco-pedagogy movement, seeking to reconstruct critical pedagogy in the light of disastrous ecological conditions (Martin & McCullagh, 2011; Powch, 1994).

In pursuit of an environmentally sustainable future, outdoor education worked to combine a recreation focus with a reflective practice, as Martin (2010) writes, "outdoor adventure activities continued as the primary vehicle by which students engaged with the outdoors, but the educational intent had shifted to a more socially critical environmental agenda" (p. 71). Yet, despite good intentions, outdoor education is not distanced from capitalist and neoliberal regimes of the *market economy* (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), with systemic frameworks, enmeshed in political agendas towards pre-prescribed goals, objectives, and outcomes. The homogenising effects of these technicist, reductionist, mechanistic, and rational practices in outdoor education, entangled in adventure-based hegemony, can subsequently work to arrest, distort, and dilute environmental ethics (Blenkinsop & Egan, 2009; Bowers, 2004; Gruenewald, 2004, 2008; Gray & Martin, 2012; Jickling & Wals, 2008; Martin, 2007, 2010; Martin & McCullagh, 2011; McInerney, Smyth, & Down 2011; Orr, 2004; Payne & Wattchow, 2009; Vance, 2001). The procuring result is *shallow* environmentalism, counterproductively exhorting destructive thrusts on the environment (Benton, 1996; Eder & Ritter, 1996).

In response, this chapter offers an ecological epistemology, or worldview, to explore the possibility for decolonising practices of outdoor education to more rigorously question discursive and disciplining narratives. I integrate discussion from the environmental education field, to articulate how outdoor education can (re)story relationships with the environment, identified by Ford (1981) as an integral constituent in the outdoor education triad. My intentions in this chapter are to draw upon a political ecology in education approach, incorporating posthumanist and ecofeminist perspectives (Lloro-Bidart, 2015) as useful strategies to problematise ideologies that support the utilisation and domination of more-than-human worlds for consumptive-based practices (Bowers, 2004; Gray & Martin, 2012; Gruenewald, 2004, 2008; Martin, 2007, 2010, Martin & McCullagh, 2011; McInerney et al., 2011;

Payne & Wattchow, 2009). To critically scrutinise colonial pioneering tactics, which tend to idealise the path less travelled in individualistic ideas of conquering (Cronon, 1995), I ask how outdoor education practice can (re)turn to the *sacred trails*. First, I offer a personal narrative, foregrounding my snowboarder subjectivity within recreation pursuits in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. I reflect how these evolving experiences transformed my relationship with more-than-human worlds, through an emotional and spiritual reckoning with my ego. I then delve into a theoretical analysis of political ecology in education, and posthumanism and ecofeminism perspectives, drawing upon key literature to emphasise how, and why, these perspectives are useful to attend to decolonisation practices in outdoor education. To conclude, in (re)turning to the *sacred trails*, I highlight that (re)storying our place with more-than-human worlds is not only a cognitive event but a profoundly emotional and/or spiritual event.

Sierra Slumbers and an Awakening

I lived in California for numerous winters, as an avid snowboarder seeking the thrill of mountain adventures and powder trails of pure delight. The moments of weaving in and out of densely clustered silent wooded forests of Jeffrey Pine, Black Oak, Sugar Pine, and White Fir, the nose of my snowboard tilting to 45 degrees, adrenaline pumping my weight to shift heavily onto my back foot, a split-second decision to swiftly change direction as I brushed branches spilling freshly fallen snow, sailing through feet upon feet of powder—these were the most exhilarating moments I can recall. And some of the most confusing and confronting. I say this because I became acutely aware of the vast amount of time spent attempting to integrate into the snowboarding *clan*. At times, I felt my own sense of self moved so far from centre, that I had no idea what was burbling beneath the surface of my exterior, hell bent on proving my ability on, and more increasingly, off the snow. Working to purchase all the trendy gear and clothing brands seemed to help my cause. Looking like a snowboarder helped me feel like one, despite never feeling less sure of myself. I continued upon this charade for many years, immersed in my image as a snowboarder, speaking the *shred*, *bluebird*, *jib* lingo in every possible conversation. As my athletic capacity improved, so did an increasing sense of arrogance and assault on the mountain terrain in which I was exploring to consume. With every new trick, with every triumph over a powder trail through the trees, with every ounce of courage to throw myself off the rocks, traverse seemingly vertical terrains, plough my way through the thick of a mid-January snowstorm, and with every ounce of stamina to climb peaks upon peaks, reassured on the other side by an untouched mountain bowl, and with every feeling of exhilaration to steamroll in excessive speed along tightly packed groomed corduroy, I was escaping further and further into my image, into my *performance* as a snowboarder. This physical assault was impetuous, reckless, and set to fuel an ever-present ego that would yield no regard for the fainthearted or passive explorers ambling down the *bunny* slopes and *green* trails of lesser prestige.

In each of these moments of conquest, I was embroiled in the snowboarder *identity*. And with this fragile sense of belonging, I would do everything possible to maintain such rigid individuality amongst *my people*. Yes, my ego was alive and well. My ego needed constant reminding and reassurance that, yes, I was a *snowboarder*. I was blissfully unaware of such implications of this ego. Or so I told myself. Because in the quiet moments of solitude I began to notice a deep, agitated gnawing—a deeper knowing, which could not be quelled through raising the consumptive and athletic bar higher. I chose to ignore a very confronting truth, which by this stage was no longer hovering in the shadows, but tapping urgently, and aggressively, on both shoulders. I was surely experiencing a type of cognitive dissonance. For the sake of belonging, I was longing for myself. I was alienating the largest part of me. Wisdom told me that there was something more, a deeper awareness of self and *place*. Yet, I also understood that if I had owned up to my 'truth', this could have separated me from the social world in which I had found my belonging, however superficial this sense of belonging was. My whole sense of self seemed to be at stake. And this awareness hurt. I was searching for solace in anything and everything outside of myself. Subsequently, the connections *to* everything outside of myself became confused threads of static. I was perpetually distracted, and infinitely numbed.

As the fissures deepened, I found myself in the midst of a personal reckoning with ego. My frustrations were becoming increasingly evident in everyday interactions with people. I was becoming bitterly resentful towards my fellow snowboarders and fiercely competitive. I was becoming spiteful at their lustful ventures towards further domination of the mountain landscape we called home. But, more shockingly, I became increasingly aware that such acts of domination were severely evident within the general social sphere. There was a pecking order and a particular hierarchy dictating social behaviour. Every person within this group had a clearly defined role to play, a superior and an inferior series of networks intersecting with corrupt undercurrents. There was no forthright, honest conversation, nor conviction. The structure seemed to be based on deceit, pretence, and façade.

Eventually, the fissures finally fractured. I felt incredibly alone, lost, and on the other side of the world from all I'd ever known—physically and metaphorically. It was a messy time, and it went very dark. In fact, I didn't step foot on my snowboard for a long while. It felt toxic to busy myself with such consumptive practice, yet I equally longed to feel the rush of riding. I could not find consolation, nor solace in any place, nor in any person. I updated my snowboard wardrobe and equipment—again. And still, the joy derived from such purchases lasted about as long as it took for me to get from the store to my house. Exhausted from trying too hard, I don't know at what stage I really started to let go, but in journeying through this breakdown, a breakthrough eventually appeared. I find it ironic that I didn't do a lot to save nature; yet in this moment, it seemed to do a lot to *save me*. The following excerpt, adapted from Riley (2014), attempts to narrate an experience of feelings that cannot really be conveyed in words, but sometimes words, and stories, are all we have.

> *I was traversing the mountain range blanketed with pure white, an alpine enthusiast's delight. The jagged crests of gun metal grey and pine needle green were instantly transformed into a snowy paradise. My jacket zipped tight, the only skin in sight, a rosy blustered cheek, with smiles ear to ear. Descending the powdery trail fastened securely to my ride of choice, being the snowboard, I stopped short next to a rocky outcrop. Placing my goggles firmly on my head, my smile softened as I squinted against the violet blue that seemed illuminated by the fluorescent white enshrouding me. To the south, there was a small break in the clouds, revealing the Owens Valley stretching out through the Californian interior, humbly submitting to the majestic mountain range holding fortress. Whispers of descending snowflakes drifted and danced to meet the white carpeted earth in the shadowy silences. In the distance, an occasional crash would resound from the woods as the tree limbs shook free from the oppressing snow. The only other sound was a single blue-jay calling to its mate in this late winter hour. The air was still; without even the softest flutter of breeze drawing the night close. I was alone on this mountain ridge and time had simply disappeared.*
>
> *What propelled me to stop quite literally in my tracks was a silent knowing, ever so softly cautioning me to slow down, to recognise the truly magnificent landscape around me as a living, breathing entity. It was almost like a seamless blurring, a melting between myself and the place that I had recklessly, only moments previously, assaulted with my yearning for stimulation and adrenalin. Something greater than me had beckoned my standstill, and it was within this moment that my mind stopped racing a relentless stream of thoughts. It was in this moment that I finally stood still, long enough to truly reflect on the space, on the magnificence of the place around me.*
>
> *I listened to the spaciousness of silence, of nature working beside me, gently and effortlessly. I listened to my breath merge with the descending snowflakes. I listened to the distant call of mountain blue jays. I listened to my heart slow in my chest, a*

> *peaceful, resounding beat. This mountain ridge that knew no time was no longer mine to conquer, no longer an entity outside of me, and merely something to be reckoned with. Unfurling was a deep connection, a resonance with place of blinding affinity. I sat in the stillness upon the mountain line for a long time, until the shades of white turned to violet dusk and night finally settled. I had never encountered such phenomenon before, where an invisible witness laid testament to my thoughts and ideas, to my dreams and fears. What followed from this moment of stillness was contemplation so wild and deep that a new chasm of inquiry burst open within me. I simply could not turn away. Even if I tried, the relentless silent voice would caution my heady spin of activity to slow down. This shift in worldview threw my world into the never ending quest for emotional wholeness. For an honest (re)connection.*

I am humbled by this epiphany, jolting me from a depressed slumber of consumptive and mindless pursuits to an awareness that ushered a deep recognition and acceptance of an ecocentric worldview, in active citizenship, in careful and ethical regard for more-than-human worlds. To pause in stillness; to listen in silence; to observe; and to reimagine and reconstitute knowledge about environments, and for environments (Gough, 2013), to a relational knowing *with* environments—this is what I am envisioning as a (re)turning to the *sacred trails*. As White (2013) suggests, "change comes with education, mandate, or crisis" (p. 191), and my call to change had certainly come through a personal crisis of sorts. In entering the world of athletic competition, within a socially structured and negotiated performance, reflecting a technicist, reductionist, mechanistic, and rational practice of domination, nature had become a mere backdrop in my life (Vance, 2001). In this performance of consumptive practice, nature was something *out there*, something that I would escape to and subsequently consume, rather than something that sustained me and that already lived within me (Kirby & Wilson, 2011). I approached more-than-human worlds in a manner that provided me with adequate social capital (Sundberg, 2014), building armour for defence, cloaking burbling insecurities, diluting emotions, which, not always silently, beckoned to be heard.

It was through these mountain encounters that I became concerned with the decolonising of political, philosophical, and ethical positions (Sundberg, 2014), in how we, as human beings, interact with more-than-human worlds. Although I realised a deep sense of moral accountability and ethical obligation to address human dominations of more-than-human worlds, writing from subjective performances as a female, I equally acknowledge the tensions associated with how I can act in care (Martin, 2007), without affirming *care* to be an affirmation of gender roles (MacGregor, 2004). To trouble these tensions, I highlight how a theoretical position of political ecology in education, with posthumanist and ecofeminist perspectives, can work to question and overcome dualistic thinking, that has historically been a constitutive part of Euro-American modernity (Braidotti, 2013; Chagani, 2014).

Political Ecology in Education and Posthuman/Ecofeminist Intersections Towards a Politicised Ethic of Care

Political ecology, concerned with dynamic relations between human beings and the biophysical world, focuses on the reciprocal implications of nature and culture (Anderson & Perrin, 2015; Chagani, 2014; Lloro-Bidart, 2015; Snaza et al., 2014; Snaza & Weaver, 2014, Sonu & Snaza, 2015). Moreover, political ecology incorporating posthumanist and ecofeminist perspectives offers ways of thinking differently about the relationship between humans and more-than-human worlds, challenging the ways humanism has restricted politics in education, and simultaneously critiquing the subjugation and marginalisation of the voice of 'Others' (Braidotti, 2013).

The posthumanist agenda questions the humanist idea that people occupy a separate and privileged place among more-than-human worlds (Anderson & Perrin, 2015; Snaza et al., 2014; Snaza & Weaver, 2014, Sonu & Snaza, 2015). Problematising educational humanism (Braidotti, 2013; Lloro-Bidart, 2015), posthumanism works, "by showing how a multiplicity of beings cast as human and nonhuman—people, plants, animals, energies…participate in the coproduction of socio-political collectives" (Sundberg, 2014, p. 33).[1] Put differently, Braidotti (2013) wrote, "This new knowing subject is a complex assemblage of human and non-human, planetary and cosmic, given and manufactured, which requires major re-adjustments in our ways of thinking" (p. 158). Such re-adjustments depart from the individual as a point of reference, assuming multi-layered forms of relationality, in understanding how individuals can affect and, in turn, be affected in mutually dependent co-realities (Braidotti, 2010).

Towards re-adjusting our ways of thinking, ecofeminism is a useful strategy in its call "for new intellectual frames of reference that integrate the false dualisms that function divisively to separate male and female, privileged persons from 'Others' and humanity from environment" (Howell, 1997, p. 234). It is not only a critique of hierarchies, dichotomies, and domination, but is active in its call for dualistic thinking to be replaced with a both/and logic (Braidotti, 2013; McKenzie, 2005). This work is an interrogation of the essentialist self, which stands in contrast to its 'Other', for the purposes of liberation and a reorientation of the either/or hierarchy. McKenzie (2005) named this polyvocality as the "development of a mutual, dialogic production of a multi-voice, multi-centred discourse" (p. 401).

Destabilising socially constructed and historically situated dualistic thinking, enmeshed within power differentials, is not slipping into essentialism, in that ecofeminism equates *all* women with nature, and that female ways of knowing, thinking, being, and doing is the *only* remedy for healing the human-nature divide (Gaard, 2011). Alternatively, drawing attention to the lack of *feminine* voice and social mobility in outdoor education, ecofeminism acknowledges not the gendered attributes of males and females, but their positions in the socio-cultural milieu, emergent from historical perspectives (Alcoff, 1995). Rejecting the idea that care ethics are purely a female concern, a *politicised ethic of care* (Russell & Bell, 1996) suggested, "women's care-related perspectives on human-nature relations should be adopted as a generalised normative stance, a form of ecological civic virtue" (MacGregor, 2004, p. 57). Further, a *politicised ethic of care* is drawing "a distinction between caring as a set of material practices (e.g., to take care of something or someone as form of labor) and caring as a disposition (values or ethics)" (MacGregor, 2004, p. 58).

In fostering an active engagement of citizenship, it is important to recognise that this is not instilling an instrumental focus on the individual, which fails to consider the contested nature of practice towards *good* citizenship, particularly in light of the value-laden and political nature of environmentalism (Sund & Öhman, 2014; Van Poeck & Vandenabeele, 2013). Rather, it is emphasising the importance to adopt pluralistic approaches, which are context specific and responsive, working to create a rich and fluid dialogue between diverse epistemic worlds, with different epistemic, ethical, and political approaches (Sundberg, 2014).

Such citizenship is accounting for "non-human *'Other'* as political actors in geo-political processes" (Sundberg, 2014, p. 35). It is critically highlighting the pursuit of a *politicised ethic of care* to be grounded in the *rights* of the oppressed, which assimilates a performative affinity from care to activism (MacGregor, 2004). Moreover, it is considering care as *relational*, differentiated from care as *virtue*. Such relation-centred care, rather than agent-centred (Bergman, 2004), calls for deep inquiry into the moral inter-dependency between self and more-than-human worlds. As such, I question how outdoor education research and practice can work to produce the conditions of possibility that values more-than-human worlds, not as a mere backdrop, or reduced to a neutral physical landscape, but as alongside, and within, critiques of social practices, in how it influences and is influenced by social life (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015).

Acknowledging a horizontal vulnerability with more-than-human worlds, as opposed to a vertical relation of hierarchy (Sonu & Snaza, 2015), draws upon the 'practice turn' in social science research and the idea that "what lies at the heart of knowledge production are not individuals or communities, but *practices*" (Calvert-Minor, 2013). Appreciating that knowledge is produced through discursive *practices* (Lloro-Bidart, 2015)—in that knowing has to "come from somewhere, and, therefore, is bound up in power relations of cultural protocol" (Sundberg, 2014, p. 36), it becomes imperative to scrutinise disciplining narratives, that shape the *naturalisation* (Zink, 2004) of outdoor education practice, and how these work to produce a *desirable* subject, constructed and governed within the discursive order (Ideland & Malmberg, 2015; McLaren, 2009). I do not propose that we can transcend discourse. Yet, in recognising their disciplining narratives, we can call attention to the problematic constraining hierarchies that they create (Barrett, 2005; St Pierre, 2000).

(Re)turning to the Sacred Trails

Suggesting that triumph and victory lies within individualist progress along new and untrodden pathways of discovery is starkly illuminated in the appropriation of Robert Frost's (1916), *A Road Less Traveled*:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

We are never actually told whether the chosen path enriched the teller's life or made it more miserable (Ammary, 2008). However, despite the ambiguity in these words, contemporary pop culture, enmeshed within consumptive neoliberal discourse, has captured this famous poem as a unique selling proposition (Fellner, Hamscha, Heissenberger, & Moos, 2014). In (re)storying this idea, how can ecological epistemologies shift outdoor education practices to bestow our embedded role with the larger ecosphere, problematising the worldview that nature is something *out there*, as something we can retreat to and subsequently consume? Acknowledging that nature is not outside of us (Kirby & Wilson, 2011), or as Barad (2007) wrote, "The universe is agential intra-activity in its becoming" (p. 141), is to recognise the entanglement of life on the planet (Barrett, 2009; Diehm, 2002; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015), and that we are all in this together.

Perceptual shifts in worldviews that actualise the moral inter-dependency between self and more-than-human worlds, in experiencing ourselves as wider and deeper ecological selves, “is more than a cognitive event—it is also a profoundly emotional and/or spiritual event” (Winter & Koger, 2004, p. 207). Discovering the chiasmic relationship between the embodied and integrated *sense of self* and more-than-human worlds is calling upon different forms of pedagogical practices. Such practices within teaching and learning work to engage all senses in processes of critical thinking alongside conscious awareness of somatic, emotional, aesthetic, intuitive, and spiritual knowing (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2010; Roszak, 2001).

In revisiting the purpose of outdoor education, there is a critical importance to interrogate and destabilise the disciplining and constraining effects of discourse, informing and influencing the type, depth, and quality of relationships *with* more-than-human worlds. Particularly considering outdoor education’s position in conventional curriculum, as fundamentally oriented for experiential learning *in, about, and for the outdoors*, I suggest that this discipline has an ethical obligation to attend to, and address, environmental disarray, exacerbated through socio-ecological inequalities (White, 2013). It might then be about re(storying) theoretical and practical conceptions of outdoor education as *education with the outdoors*—a (re)storying, in which the exploration of the relationships between self, others, and the environment becomes more about an exploration of relationships *with* self, others, and the environment.

Tensions certainly lie within our capacity to reflexively scrutinise dominant discourse and how this works to shape the ideologies of practice in outdoor education, considering our embedded nature within the constraining frameworks of discourse. Yet, as Karpiak (2010) argued, “the challenge with experiential learning comes not in our ability to pull back the blinds and take a look, it is in our ability to look within ourselves and engage in active and critical reflection on our own and others’ experiences” (p. 224). As Orr (2004) wrote:

> For those presuming to wear the robes of objectivity, [it] is often, ‘a defence against being flooded by the emotions of humility, reverence, mystery, wonder and awe’. Life ought to excite our passion, not our indifference. Life in jeopardy ought to cause us to take a stand, not retreat into spurious neutrality. (p. 137)

Taking a stand in socio-ecological activism within care ethics is not only the work of females but the democratic work of global citizens (MacGregor, 2004). That is, asking ourselves, and our students, how, together as a community, we can make intentional decisions every day, critically considering the nature of consumption and the consumption of nature. It is asking what we are each able to contribute and offer, including the capacity to give away the best of ourselves. And, it is stepping beyond our capacity to find virtues of courage, patience, and grace to connect *to* the world, critically asking how we can move gently *with* the world. Healing broken bonds between humans and nature *and* humans and humans is not only in the society's anthropological self-interest—justice demands this, but ultimately our well-being depends on it (Roszak, 2001).

Notes

1. I acknowledge the critique of posthumanism, in that it could just be another anthropocentric tactic, producing the same structures of domination within humanist conceptions of responsibility in that we explicitly know what is best for the environment (Calvert-Minor, 2013; Chagani, 2014). However, I counter this argument with the idea that this critique is equally enmeshed within anthropocentric rationalisation, suggesting a human domination over more-than-human worlds, in itself.

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39

The Soloist's Journey as a Window to Wisdom

Bridget Jackson

You can spend your whole life living in the past
No amount of wallowing will change what is set in stone
We all have regrets, we all have disappointments, things don't always turn out the way we hoped
Instead, they turn out the only way they can which is the way they always will be
So don't let yesterday take up too much of today
Inhale the future and exhale the past
Let every bruise make you stronger, every tear make you braver, and every heartbreak make you wiser
Because the only moment that truly matters is this one, right now.
Don't waste too much time on thinking about yesterday
(Brown, Armstrong & Coombs & Jones, 2016)

The air in the carriage was intense and lingering, stifled by the hordes clamouring for a seat. It is rare for Indian families to travel lightly, or alone, and so generations squeezed into every nook for their much-anticipated journey north. Sitting on a wooden bench, my knees almost touching those of the men facing, there was little room to re-organize myself or settle in comfortably—something I had grown accustomed to over the months I'd been in India. As their eyes noted my every move—the reading of a book, the crossing of my legs—nothing went unnoticed; yet, it was with an air of curiosity rather

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B. Jackson (✉)
Blackheath, NSW, Australia

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than intimidation—their piercing stares giving voice to their silent questioning.

Now quite adept at intermingling and familiar with the culture, I dressed modestly in local garb, wearing toe rings, a sign of marriage, to avert the gaze and naturally deflect some of the more prying questions. A young white woman, yes, but travelling alone was perhaps questionable, not generally accepted, and so inclined to draw interest.

As the train trundled north across the parched, barren landscape and the day gradually gave way to dusk, attentions turned inward with my fellow passengers becoming increasingly animated. I was weary though, and with 20 hours to go, I wasn't too sure about my lolling head coming to a rest on a neighbouring shoulder—so took refuge and stretched out in the vacant luggage rack above.

I had been in India for the best part of a year. As part of my design degree (specializing in metal), I was keen to extend my capabilities beyond the studio and experience the challenges of industry, so had sought a work placement with a Mumbai jewellery manufacturer.

Little did I know of what lay ahead, yet my implicit trust coupled with an enthusiasm for mystical lands propelled me. Having passionately island-hopped in the Far East four years earlier as a 19-year-old, it was with great exuberance, less apprehension, that I gathered my belongings for the impending journey—into a world and culture truly alien to my own.

As a woman choosing to travel alone, words of warning arose from friends, subtly trying to permeate my decision-making. It seems not unusual for a woman to face such resistance with social and cultural beliefs being expressed by others, quietly infusing self-doubt and fear (Wilson & Little, 2005). But any false barriers fell away as I prepared to embrace the challenge and seeming freedom of the unknown.

With unconcluded expectations, a country of immense extremes was to push me to limits previously unencountered. Nothing could have possibly prepared me for the harsh realities with which I was now to be faced and visions previously unimaginable. This was living India—exposing its cuts and grazes beyond the cosmetics of the tourist façade. The immense heat, initially claustrophobic, swamped immediate thoughts whilst enticing aromas from roadside stalls woke dormant senses, and the incessant pestering of shopkeepers and street children left little room for refuge.

Here humanity existed at the greatest extremes—the conceited decadence of the rising middle class living beside, yet seemingly oblivious to the poor—those on the streets owning little, bar the blankets in which they slept, a cooking pot, and their unparalleled commitment to the Hindu deities. Seemingly propelled by the malignant influences of the West, that has made exponential progress from agriculture to the digital age, India could be seen jumping rather than creeping into this new world and widening the divide, which is so prevalent in its great cities.

However worldly I may have thought myself, the transition to life in Mumbai was not plain sailing. That which had been taken for granted was confronted at every turn—the intensity of existence antagonizing and confronting every cell in my being. Food and sanitation aside, actions as simple as catching the daily bus to work were a feat of athleticism, as orderliness gave way to mayhem in a bid to board first. Initially unaware of my own embedded conditioning, it was only as my perceptions were continually challenged that I realized that in order to gain a real understanding and truly connect with my new surrounds, I had to let go. Let go to allow this new world in on its terms.

Intrigued by all facets of this culture, I soon gravitated towards the local ashram and took up yoga. Having not practised before, I was delighted to be welcomed to an early morning women's class. And what a welcome start to the day it was…a nurturing sanctuary amidst the intensity and chaos that existed beyond its gardens. Here began, quite unexpectedly, an inner journey towards a deeper comprehension of myself. It wasn't just the yogic postures that provided much-needed restoration, but the breathing exercises and chanting that helped me attune to the subtleties within myself, quickly becoming tools for my own self-preservation as I adjusted to this new life.

In time, I found myself dropping expectations and gradually opening more to my surrounds—realizing the restraints that my culture and preconceptions, however subconscious, brought.

Working with women of a similar age, I was surprised by the considerable curiosity my presence sparked. It emerged that I was the first white woman they'd come into contact with, let alone spent each day with. This, combined with the lack of husband or chaperone and freedom by which I lived, was quite incomprehensible to them. As remarkable as I may have seemed to them, so too were they to me.

The local dialect continued to be a challenge but as my Hindi improved, I was able to converse more openly, fluidly, and intimately. Slowly, as our relationships grew and deepened so too did my respect and understanding of the culture. Gradually, the doors opened to quietly reveal glimpses of their family lives, societal beliefs, and indications of the future awaiting them. Generations would welcome me, with warmth and generosity, into tiny one-roomed dwellings to share afternoon tea, the joy and laughter making it hard to comprehend just how little choice or freedom these young women had and the expectations being carried. In stark contrast to my ability to travel freely around Mumbai, many of these young women knew only the necessary routes between home and work and even then were always accompanied by a family member for a multitude of frequently unfounded fears. For those living a stone's throw away, in the nearby slum, the journey between home and work represented their whole understanding of the world, distance, and the existence of others. It was through these growing relationships, a deepening understanding, and my becoming a more open recipient rather than through work per se, that this mesmerizing culture with its heart still beating to a deep mythological pulse, was being exposed.

Now as I journeyed north, having sadly farewelled the comforting familiarity of my corner of Mumbai, I was exposed to the quizzical eyes and the incessant questioning of the curious. With a knowingness and deep assurance, I was now carrying or perhaps embodying more of the subtle intricacies of this intoxicating land. Time and such wholly immersive experiences had imbued a peaceful confidence and quiet trust. Working in Mumbai, as I had done, there had been very little Western interaction, which had only served to my advantage—encouraging and facilitating a presence and embodiment of my surroundings. Being a sole Western woman was exposing; there was nowhere to hide, no one to lean on, but equally it allowed me to meet the country as I found it, shake hands with the people and culture myself, and dance with that which sang to me.

"It's coming soon ma'am," came the stationmaster's earnest assurances, leaving me smiling as I waited patiently on the platform. I knew it was coming; it was just a matter of when. But the "when" really didn't seem to matter as time escaped me whilst the quiet comings and goings of the station held my attention. As night drew in, the few men loitering nearby and gazing hopefully down the line wrapped themselves in shawls and settled down to rest. Out of the corner of my eye, a movement, something stirred. I turned and saw nothing but the sleeping bundles and a pile of rubbish behind them. Again, I was sure and on closer inspection realized the heap, just feet away, was home to hundreds of scavenging rodents, almost breathing in sync with me. All life, as ever, co-existing, with few dividing barriers.

Little entered my mind of the impending journey, yet a quiet presence settled…no planning or daydreaming to fill the time, no thoughts or distractions or novels to take me away—just a sense of contentedness and heightened awareness of my surroundings. Solitude, as Krishnamurti (1963) intimated, was enabling my mind to free itself from the shackles of life and my conditioning and begin to view the world with multiple perspectives.

Eleven hours passed before the telltale vibrations of the rails gave way to the next leg of my journey. The carriages were full and although I'd paid for a berth on a sleeper, none was to be found. The night instead was spent dozing sporadically slumped on my pack in the alleyway, as cockroaches scampered around me, before alighting at daybreak at the little border town where I could begin my journey upward into the Nepalese foothills.

This journeying was not unfounded, though—the seeds perhaps having been sown many years earlier (Cobb, 1977). Growing up on the edge of the beautiful Lake District, in England's rural north, murmurs of mountaineering achievements, tales of exploration, and whispers of Africa and the mystical East permeated my world. Endless summers were spent exploring by bike, building dens in the woods, traipsing miles across fields and wild, rugged hills, hiding in bracken or lying staring up at the billowing white clouds above. With no technology but only atlases by which to map the world, endless space and freedom to roam, my young imagination knew no bounds and the quest for adventure took hold.

As a ten-year-old, I found myself bivvi-ing in a bin liner in a hidden valley of the Lake District. As a small group of youngsters on an outward-bound course, we embraced the elements and sense of independence, forsaking canvas to sleep under the stars whilst washing in chilly streams and carrying all that was needed to survive. Life was exhilarating and our vigour impenetrable, as we climbed, canoed, sailed, and explored the mountains. A year later, on a school trip, my imagination was again captivated, this time by walkers in a Scottish youth hostel and the freedom they represented. Rugged, strong, windswept and having no transport, they walked mountain to mountain and hostel to hostel. An enthusiasm for total self-reliance by the most natural mode of travel, on foot, stuck a chord.

Now, heading up towards Kathmandu, these past memories sat in the far-flung recesses of my mind, their impact though increasingly prevalent. With recollections of Milton Hayes' one-eyed yellow idol, and the mystical world he painted, a sense of elation and excitement began to build as I journeyed upward, by bus, into this magical mountain kingdom. A further day's travel along treacherously winding roads, high above unforgiving ravines and cascading torrents, brought me to the trailhead. It was here that I donned my boots, shouldered my pack, and, quite unbeknown to me at the time, walked off into a new chapter of life.

The peaceful farmed valleys of the foothills, fresh air, and quiet solitude of the villages came as a welcome retreat after the chaotic months in India. Here time stood still, donkeys and feet being the only forms of transportation along the small narrow dusty paths that clung to the hillsides and skirted the valleys. Foreigners were a regular sight in these parts; so much of the villagers' curiosity had been satiated, allowing for a real sense of refuge from the mayhem on the plains to the south. The gentle rhythm of walking, by its very nature, brought a grounded-ness to the journey, the slow pace intensifying my observation of the surrounds, connecting me to the land and this powerful landscape, allowing the detail to be realized and bringing with it an enhanced presence.

After a couple of weeks spent steadily traversing valleys, rather than following them, and quietly gaining altitude, did the terraced foothills begin to give way to a more rugged, exposed, and barren landscape. The magnificence of the Himalayas slowly began to reveal itself, with its stunning peaks towering up in the distance. Dictated by the thinning air, the pace began to slow further, with more time spent enjoying the Sherpa hospitality, as acclimatization became an imperative.

Leaving the remote settlement of Gorak Shep, higher still, the cloud hung low over the parched grey moraine of the Khumbu Glacier. Little life existed in these parts—even the sky was almost devoid of birds. Aside from the stunning mountains, much resembled a moonscape, where widespread vegetation had long given way to the harsh, rocky, and in parts dusty, landscape. Too high and too barren for year-round living, only the seasonal exploits of mountaineers heading to Everest and nearby peaks, or a passing caravan of yaks brought life to the area.

The summit of *Kala Patthar* had provided a view that morning of this last leg of the journey and, with sustenance in hand, I felt ready to tackle the labyrinthine ice towers leading towards the roof of the world. Words of wisdom were heard a day earlier—"just follow the yak shit." It sounded easy…the challenge being that it was the end of the climbing season; there was little traffic to trample a path and possibly too few yaks. Unperturbed I left. Time and light were an issue but determination was on hand and the return route relatively logical. Aside from a few cairns, there was little to provide bearings other than the flanking mountains, whose presence was beginning to wane in the poor light. Suddenly a tremendous roar broke the stillness and my meditative pace as an avalanche thundered down Pumori. A cloud of powder—then deathly silence. Stunned, deep groans from the glacier and creaking ice brought me back to myself. A loud jingling of cowbells helped regain focus as a small group of yaks with their herder bustled past, keen to get back to a more hospitable altitude. Again, silence. Ever attuned to my place on the glacier, distance was hard to judge under such immense mountains, their vast white flanks playing havoc with my bearings but steadily and quietly I wove my way through the sharp, rocky, and unforgiving moraine, under creaking towers and over frozen ponds towards the base camp of Everest…and a warm Sherpa welcome with a much appreciated cup of tea. Blessed to precede commercialization, here, high in the cold still silence at the foot of Everest, sat a few small tents from New Zealand and the United States as the only indicators of committed activity high above.

That night, outside the lodge in the crisp, clear air, a small group of yaks munched slowly on their fodder in the dark. Quietly reflecting on the days' journey, I sat mesmerized by the sight that beheld me—the moon, in the clear, star-filled sky lit up the summit of Everest above me. For days, there had been an incredible sense of anticipation and reverence building as I neared the roof of the world. Now, there was no doubting the sanctity of so many of these peaks—this was no ordinary place. This was the meeting of heaven and Earth.

Looking back, as a journey, little could ever hope to compare or rival that year on the Indian subcontinent, so rich, diverse, multifaceted, and significant—exposing elements of the deeply woven mythological fabric of a complex culture. As a personal pilgrimage, it provided an immense, almost incomparable opportunity for emotional growth and self-understanding.

Perhaps though, the most remarkable and profound aspect was the fact that it was a solo journey. So little of what I was exposed to, or allowed myself to open to, could have occurred if there had been a companion.

In a world so plagued by fear and ideas of safety it is often thought surprising that one would choose to "go it alone," especially a woman. A friend could share the experience, the joys and agonies, keep me safe…maybe even protect me from myself. Precisely the reason to be unaccompanied! As I discovered, it is only through trips alone that I begin to see my true essence, how I operate, relate, and begin to understand the mindset this comes from. During the planning there had never been any consideration given to an accompanying friend—previous exploits had always been undertaken alone allowing me to be free and uncompromised in decision-making. Flying solo leaves me exposed with nowhere to retreat to, yet it allows me to embrace an opportunity or experience wholly, without any distractions, input, or interpretation from another.

Having allowed myself to become quite absorbed, if not intoxicated, by this rich and magical culture, exploring its deep spiritual side from the depths of the slum communities to religions and the glorious massifs of the Himalayas, I feel great parallels can be drawn between such journeys and solo adventures in the wilderness.

Facing a new culture, especially one as intense as India, is really not that different to surviving in the wilds. To thrive in a new or challenging environment takes a great state of awareness and presence—a heightened sensitivity. Our survival techniques rely on us being able to park any preconceived ideas and expectations, open ourselves up to exactly what is in front of us, and deeply observe it, learning to communicate with it, whilst understanding our place in relation to it. By doing this we remain present and alert, fully aware, without any judgement—just trust.

Through this releasing of conditioned preconceptions comes not just an ignorant openness and acceptance, but a deep immersive understanding, a fluidity with the natural rhythms and absorption with place. Essentially, it's as if I am giving up that firm, solid sense of the self that I've come to relate to. By being fully aware and alert there are no comparisons being made—just an incredible sense of presence and oneness.

Journeys or remote adventures often bring forth the most unusual and challenging situations. Invariably there are incredibly fulfilling and joyous moments but equally likely are agonizing times too, whilst being pushed to the limits and challenged at every turn. Often these moments are the ones that can bring about significant growth in facing fears and exposing vulnerabilities (Cope, 2014). For many people, it is not until they have left, or returned from journeys, that they realize and truly value what has been experienced—and the wisdom or enhanced trust in intuition that they can now draw upon. As Hesse noted (1995, p. 8), he [*sic*] who travels far will often see things far removed from what he [*sic*] believed was truth. When he [*sic*] talks about it in the fields at home he [*sic*] is often accused of lying, for the obdurate people will not believe what they do not see and distinctly feel. Inexperience, I believe, will give little credence to my song.

Today, as I juggle life as a working mother, solo time is no longer a given. Days are invariably spent meeting the needs of others and, if not careful, the intricacies, wonder, and detail of life passes by in the humdrum of routine. The time to recollect oneself on a regular basis is minimal and, if not carefully managed and valued, too easily eroded. Aware of this, a personal commitment was made a year ago, one that would help nourish not just myself but the whole family. The commitment being for solo time.

With several months' notice I announced I was "taking a week off." A week in the wilds alone; a week in the tent; a week to embrace the calming rhythm of walking; a week of waking and sleeping with the birds; a week of being fully absorbed in the present; present with myself, with my needs, and with my surroundings; and a week's personal pilgrimage. Lost to present society, such journeys hark back to those of ancient cultures, who revered nature and the seasons, truly valuing the importance that such intimacy allows and the peace that comes from it (Graham-Brown, 2008). This immersive journey would provide that much-needed time to quietly open the doors to reconnect with my inner self whilst being ever -present and responsive to the challenge of the elements. The heightened awareness that journeying alone brings would allow a dedicated "space" for regeneration.

No better place presented itself than Tasmania in the winter. Just as immersion in India can slam every ounce of ones body, so too can the invigorating challenge of a winter's journey through the highlands of Tasmania. There would be wild and unpredictable weather to contend with, empty trails, snow- and gale-force winds, but stunning country. There would be no help on hand but an abundance of tranquil camp spots, if the weather permitted. It was time for a real uninterrupted reconnection to the language and patterns of nature.

That solo trip marked a turning point and a real understanding of the necessity of going alone.

A true lover of the wilderness, those childhood years imbued an innate connection to the natural world that remains ever-present. With the challenges that everyday living brings and its persistent determination to remove us from ourselves, never have I felt it more necessary to make such personal commitments to myself as to dedicate solo time for restoration and nourishment. So it is with great joy that every month or so, I grab a pack and tent and head off to dance with the rhythms of nature for a night, alone in the woods.

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Part V

Case Studies of Women in Action

Bridget Jackson

Since time immemorial we have explored ways of relating to and connecting with the natural world. Ancient cultures have traditionally used artistic means as a way of sharing stories and understanding their surrounding environment. More recently, during the late twentieth century, we saw the emergence of land art, where immersive exploration and deeper ideas and observation and ideas about our relationship with the land begun to be investigated creatively.

The inspiring accounts that follow illustrate the myriad ways that women are celebrating our relationship with the natural world. Primarily initiated and facilitated by women, the range and diversity of programmes in this part draw on both ancient and more contemporary means in approaching and relating to the natural world. Several authors focus on art in the physical medium and through narratives as art-based programmes help to facilitate immersion and encourage greater observation of the outdoor world. Many authors highlight child-led learning that supports and nurtures creative innovation: Loose Parts Play looks to combine art and problem solving. In some instances, all-girl programs provide a nurturing and supportive basis for learning. Authors describe how growing, gardening, and exposure to the rhythms of life through farming enhance profounder relationships and emotional engagement with life.

B. Jackson
Blackheath, NSW, Australia

Providing an insight into a dramatic shift that may be underway, Women in Action marks the advent of a newly creative, innovative, and inclusive era of embracing outdoor education and nature connection. Weaving together women and children, families and schools, teachers and communities these exciting interpretations of how nature can be incorporated into the learning experience is profound—bringing participants, and facilitators alike, a sense of well-being and emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual growth.

Whether supporting teachers to gain confidence with the outdoor space, integrating place-based learning to cultivate belonging, or providing open-ended play with found objects, the resounding commonalities echoed throughout are inclusivity and the sense of belonging that these programme facilitators create for their participants. Inspiring, courageous, and dynamic in their approach, could it be that these programmes herald the beginning of a much-needed shift in consciousness towards a more inclusive, sensitive, and gender-informed approach to outdoor learning and our relationship to the natural world?

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Women's Leadership of Family Nature Clubs: Furthering the Movement to Reconnect People with Nature

Chiara D'Amore

Introducing Family Nature Clubs

Family nature clubs (FNCs) are community-based organisations that regularly bring families together to enjoy the benefits of time spent in nature. FNCs come in many shapes and sizes depending on their context: Some are small whilst others are quite large, some meet at the same place each week whilst others make a point of going to a new place for each gathering, some are focused on education whilst others are focused on free play, and some are run by a parent volunteer whilst others are part of a larger organisation's mission. FNCs can essentially be created by anyone in any community. What FNCs have in common in their structure is that the events occur outdoors, are geared towards full-family participation, and are designed to develop positive connections with nature through direct experience and informal learning opportunities. FNCs are an important part of the growing movement to reconnect people and the natural world. The Children & Nature Network (C&NN), a leader in this movement, promotes FNCs as a form of self-replicating social change that can help to rapidly scale-up family and community engagement with the natural environment. At this time, there are over 270 FNCs registered with C&NN (C&NN, 2017).

For example, I founded Columbia Families in Nature (CFIN) in 2014 to provide our community in central Maryland with free, fun opportunities for

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C. D'Amore (✉)
Community Ecology Institute, Columbia, MD, USA

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families to spend time together in nature. On two or three Sunday afternoons a month, and occasionally on other days of the week, CFIN outings take place at nearby natural areas. The primary goals of CFIN are to foster greater connection with nature and the community, increase environmental awareness and action, support the well-being of participants, and help strengthen family relationships. As of the end of 2017, we have offered over 170 events held at a variety of natural areas including public parks, farms, gardens, wildlife sanctuaries, and community open-space trails. The foci of each two-hour outing have been diverse, ranging from free exploration and play to active hikes and structured, conservation-focused events such as tree planting and garden creation.

Most FNCs can be divided into two categories with regard to organisational structure: those that are a part of a larger organisation and those that are set up independently. A wide variety of organisations have created an FNC, including schools, conservation organisations, libraries, scouts, churches, agricultural centres, nature centres, experiential education centres, parks, and wildlife refuges, to help further the mission of the organisation. For example, FNCs have been created to engage the broader community in which the organisation is situated, add an experiential component to educational programmes, and offer an activity that would engage the entire family. Many FNCs have been created independently of a larger organisation, primarily by a parent or group of parents who have a personal motivation for creating an FNC. For example, FNCs were created by parents with preschool-aged children, who were looking for a way to help their family engage with other families and the natural environment simultaneously, by home-schooling parents interested in the learning opportunities afforded by FNCs and by groups of parents seeking to create a strong sense of community around shared values. Whether an FNC is part of an organisation or is independent, some FNC leaders volunteer their services and some earn an income for their work. Within an organisation, at times, FNC leadership is part of a larger job and in other cases, leading the FNC is part of a broader commitment to volunteering within the organisation. For independent FNCs, most leaders are volunteers; however, some have created companies or non-profit organisations in association with the clubs and/or charge membership fees or receive grants, which allows them to earn some income from their efforts.

This chapter reports and reflects on my recently completed study on FNCs (D'Amore, 2015), to frame them as a noteworthy outdoor learning environment and to explore the experiences of the women who lead them. Conducted in 2014–2015, the study was both exploratory and descriptive in purpose and design, bringing the methodologies of ethnography and case study together to develop an understanding of FNCs, their leaders and participants, and their social and ecological effects. The population for this research was the leaders in and participants of FNCs registered with C&NN, including CFIN, which was launched in part to serve as a case study for the research. With the CFIN population, direct observation, pre- and post-surveys, and interviews were conducted. FNC leaders that completed the study survey were also invited to be interviewed. Working with the leaders, FNC participants were invited to complete a study survey. To create a comparison population, individuals who were known to have an interest in CFIN but who had not participated in an outing were invited to complete a modified survey.

In total, the results of this study weave together insights from: 47 FNCs, 348 people that completed in-depth surveys, 48 in-depth interviews, direct observations of 133 families that participated in 31 CFIN outings in 2014, and my experience of designing, launching, and leading a new FNC. FNC leaders comprised 52 of the survey respondents, 87% of whom were female, and 20 of the in-depth interview participants, 80% of whom were female.

Family Nature Clubs as an Outdoor Learning Environment

Bringing together all the quantitative and qualitative data on the effects of FNC participation, 20 distinct effects were identified and presented to all study participants in a final validation survey, which received 190 responses. When combining the "strongly agree" and "agree" survey responses, the following is the ranking of FNC-specific participation effects:

1. Learning about places to go in nature (97%)
2. Experiencing an enhanced sense of well-being (95%)
3. Quality time together as a family (94%)
4. Fun, memorable experiences (94%)
5. Child(ren) enjoying free play/playing with other kids (94%)
6. Learning about the natural world (92%)
7. Learning from leaders and/or other families (92%)
8. A stronger overall sense of connection to the area (92%)
9. More time spent in nature (90%)
10. A greater sense of connection with nature (87%)
11. Meeting new families/getting to know new people (87%)
12. Having experiences that are positive for child(ren)'s behaviour (87%)
13. A greater commitment to spending time in nature (87%)

14. Experiencing a sense of accomplishment and/or expansion of comfort zone (85%)
15. Being more physically active as a family (84%)
16. Developing a greater sense of connection as a family (84%)
17. Developing a sense of social community (83%)
18. Having fewer barriers to getting out in nature (82%)
19. An increase in environmental awareness and/or behaviour (81%)
20. Having experiences that foster our sense of connection to something bigger (67%)

Many of these effects related to learning: about how to explore nature, about elements of the natural environment and our impact on it, and about one's own abilities and the abilities and interests of family members and of leaders and peers. For example, female FNC participants shared:

- My children and I are gaining so much by being so involved in our natural world. We have grown emotionally, socially, spiritually, intellectually and I have watched my children's self-confidence and focus increase and anxiety and stress decrease. (P#130)
- It is awesome to learn from our leaders all about the birds and plants of our natural area. We are learning so much about the environment around us and able to identify the animals we see on a weekly or seasonal basis. (P#20)
- My youngest son has autism and he seems to do better on days that we are outside exploring nature. He becomes focused, he listens and has less meltdowns. Also I love how excited both children get to explore and find treasures in nature. There is so much to learn out there and to do it in a natural play environment. They don't even realise they are learning. (P#114)
- I love how excited about nature my child gets. Before we meet [with our FNC] she is counting down the days until the next get together. Afterwards she talks for days about what she has learned. To see her eyes light up when she talks about everything is the best thing in the world. (P#122)
- We have all learned incredible amounts of information about our local ecology and have made many connections within the community who share our same conservation goals. It is empowering and inspiring for everyone in our family but especially for our children. It gives them hope and to change the world instead of the hopelessness that comes with watching news and nature shows reporting only doomsday predictions. (P#156)
- Having the opportunities to go out as a family (vs being split up as would happen in scouts, say) and enjoy the company of other like-minded families and to learn about nature. The boys learn so much from other children and engage in activities that they wouldn't if it was just our family. (P#158)

- The learning and retention of information has been neat to see. When we go for walks the kids point out things they recognise from what they've learned from their group leaders. Also, the longevity of connections with other families, and the time getting to know each other at camp has been great. The group leaders are wonderful and a big part of why we keep going. (P#169)

The women who lead FNCs also consistently talked about learning as a meaningful effect of FNC participation during their interviews. For example:

- It is so enriching to let kids lead their own learning, which is always interdisciplinary when exploring nature. Kids develop an amazing, creative, capacity for inquiry given the opportunity to explore nature without fear and in a social setting. (LASN)
- I truly believe in child-led experiences, where the child is motivated to learn based on exposure and experience. When you experience things with your whole body it is deep learning. It is like riding a bike. I think it is going to stick with them for their lifetime. Once they have gone off the trail there is no going back. (LASF)
- Adults learning from adults and kids learning from kids has been huge. Everyone comes into it with their own level of knowledge and comfort and supports one another. (LMKA)
- The leader I inherited the club from, was very calm and was a true leader in giving children lots of room to swing out and have a good radius and be safe at the same time. By doing it herself she showed all the other families how to do that too. I learned how to give my children room to explore from the previous leader and it has become part of my leadership style now as well as my broader parenting style. I see how letting children have freedom and make mistakes allows for more and deeper learning. (LDMC)

Both participants in and leaders of FNCs were consistent in their emphasis on the significant benefits of the learning that occurs for family members of all ages in the diverse outdoor environments offered by FNCs.

Women's Motivation for Leading FNCs

Overall, the 52 FNC leaders who participated in this study were primarily parents in their 30s–mid-40s, Caucasian, educated, and relatively well-off economically, which aligns with the results of C&NN's 2013 survey of FNC leaders (Swaisgood, 2013). A total of 87% of the leaders in this study were female.

Table 40.1 FNC leaders' factors for leading an FNC (*n* = 52)

Answer choices	Responses %	Responses *n*
To be a part of the movement to reconnect children and nature	88	46
To have fun	73	38
Filling a need in the community	65	34
The health and well-being of my child(ren)	60	31
To meet new families	50	26
To learn more about nature	50	26
To further the mission of an organisation I am part of	38	20
For motivation to stay active as a family	37	19
To get quality time with my child(ren)	35	18
To learn about places to take my child(ren) in nature	33	17
The security of going out in nature with other people	27	14
As part of my job	19	10
Others (describe below)	13	7

The FNC leaders were asked to identify the major factors that motivated them to start and/or take a leadership role in their FNC, with the ability to select all factors that applied as shown in Table 40.1. The most frequently selected motivator for this group of FNC leaders was to be a part of the movement to reconnect children and nature (88%). Other motivating factors identified by the majority of the FNC leaders were: to have fun (73%), filling a need in the community (65%), the health and well-being of my child(ren) (60%), to meet new families (50%), and to learn more about nature (50%).

The following quotes from the narrative responses to this question were selected for their ability to illustrate how some of these factors manifested for female FNC leaders:

- *To be part of the movement:* "To motivate and inspire other families to make nature a priority." (L#23)
- *To have fun*: "A need to share my joy in nature." (L#15)
- *Filling a need in the community*: "I am a certified science teacher and my passion has always been outdoor, hands-on science education. I combined that with filling the need for an activity that the whole family could go to. This combination led me to our mission of scheduled family time outside to learn, play and volunteer together." (L#7)
- *The health and well-being of child(ren):* "I wanted my children to become stewards of the Earth and to find value and love and solace in one, single location they could call their own. We meet weekly at the same location. In addition, I wanted a core group of families and adults that my children would come to know as extended family and learn to see and hear and respect all voices." (L#44)

- *To meet new families:* "To connect with neighbours in our shared ecosystem." (L#10)
- *To learn more about nature:* "We tend to share our knowledge with other families, but also have a great group of nature oriented friends that share knowledge with us too." (L#2)
- *To further an organisational mission*: "We wanted to extend our library activities to include some outdoor involvement. We found this nightly program allowed working families to spend time with their children doing quality activities that are nature related." (L#38)
- *The security of a group:* "I knew there were families that needed the security of going with other families so we wanted to be part of encouraging our friends to get out in nature with us." (L#2)
- *As part of my job*: "I am a wildlife biologist and environmental educator. Most wildlife issues are really people issues. This realisation during my master's work motivated me to make a career out of building environmental literacy by connecting children and families with nature." (L#52)

During the leader interviews, one woman recalled her motivation for starting an FNC, which had similar themes to many other leader stories, including my own. She shared:

> When I was little, my family spent a lot of time outdoors. I have many wonderful memories of discovering the world around me with deep imagination as a child. Then when I became a teenager I went off and started doing the normal suburban social life thing and I lost touch with nature. When I got married and had my first child seven years ago, all the memories of my childhood in nature came flooding back to me. I also went from being a career woman to a full time mom and had something of an identity crisis. I needed something to help me recreate myself. I also wanted to find ways to spend time in nature with my kid, but all the outdoor groups around me were for adults and serious hikers. I came across a family nature club that was 45 minutes away, which was too far to go with a young kid for short events. The leaders recommended that I start my own sub-club and offered me with support to do that. I have been leading this club since 2008 and now I also have a new baby too. Both of my children have multiple special needs, so this group is especially important for my family because it gives us a way to get the time outside that they so need in a setting where they are comfortable and it creates a sense of community for us that would be hard to get elsewhere—I see that it does that for other families as well. This is really my way of making a contribution to the community without taking time away from my family. It is a benefit for my family.

Another leader shared a different trajectory for her motivation to start an FNC, which also has a unique structure:

> I had worked as an early childhood nature-based educator since my own children were very young. Now they are in their late teens and as they grew up and we entered the recession of 2008 I was looking for a new way to use my knowledge to make a living. I began a social enterprise designed to connect families and nature, primarily through *flash-mob field trips* to interesting nature places in the area. I consider my group to be a *family adventure school* or a loose learning community with a focus on all things green. I have found that by specialising in unique green adventures such as milking goats, picking strawberries, and looking for snakes and toads in public parks I can fill a niche need in the community.

Effects for Women Leading FNCs

In their survey, FNC leaders were asked to provide a narrative response about how leading an FNC has affected them. A total of 45 leaders responded to this question. Each response was closely reviewed and coded for emerging categories of effects, with most responses indicating multiple effects. Table 40.2 presents the 14 primary effects identified from these leader responses in order of greatest frequency.

The following are select illustrative quotes from female FNC leaders' survey responses regarding the effects of leading an FNC:

- The most important aspect for me has been seeing children and their families taking part in activities that they would have never done without the support and encouragement of the group. There are many members of our group who find spending time in nature to be normal and part of their

Table 40.2 Summary of effects of FNC leadership

	Effect description
1.	Enhanced social relationships (e.g., meeting new families, making friends)
2.	Emotional well-being (e.g., joy, confidence, peace of mind, inspiration)
3.	Gratitude for being a part of and/or witnessing the positive participant effects
4.	Increased time spent outdoors, including visiting new natural areas
5.	A sense of personal accomplishment and purpose around being an FNC leader
6.	Personal learning about nature and opportunities to share this knowledge
7.	Increased leadership experience and opportunities
8.	An increased sense of connection to nature
9.	Increased time with family and/or quality of family time
10.	Opportunities for children to learn and/or have leadership opportunities
11.	Change in personal behaviour (e.g., more creative, adventurous, socially active)
12.	Physical well-being benefits (e.g., feel better, less sick, more energy)
13.	Enhanced community visibility for the FNC, a cause, and/or the leader
14.	Enhancement of work mission and/or career

typical routine, but there are just as many families who are unsure and unfamiliar with how to introduce nature to their children and are uncomfortable exploring nature themselves. The club has allowed those families to find comfort in friendships formed through the club and has allowed them to have experiences which have enriched their lives and enhanced their relationships. (L#4)

- Leading a family nature club enhances: my work, my organisation's mission, my positive contribution to the community, and my personal relationships! (L#37)
- This has become the most important activity I have done for my family and myself in the last four years. It brings me great joy organising and getting families out into nature. I tell my kids all the time that being out in nature is good for your soul, your physical health, your mental health, your spiritual health and your overall happiness in life. It is the most important thing we do. (L#35)
- I love doing this program. The children and parents who attend are so much more interested in their environment. Children notice weekly changes, track climate and seasonal changes, and benefit by what they are exploring with their adults. (L#38)
- This work has given me a huge sense of purpose and a firmly grounded motivation to get more families outside more of the time. What was a small weekend volunteer project for me has become a full time job (though I am still a volunteer). My whole family has been involved in forming [this FNC] for the past six years, and my children have been given an enormous amount of leadership skill and opportunity as they have helped me lead this program. My oldest who is 13 has actually started leading activities for the club. (L#7)
- It has become a part of my identity as a person. I love that I know the names of most of the native plants on my hikes and can share that knowledge with others on the hike. (L#25)

Sixteen female FNC leaders participated in interviews that provided deeper insight into the personal, familial (if applicable), and participant effects reported in the surveys. During each of these interviews, the leaders talked about the benefits they received from leading their FNC. Several leaders that do not have children participating in their FNC specifically mentioned the personal impact of working with children. A leader that has been running a monthly FNC for the past two years shared that:

> Facilitating the group strengthens me too and creates ripples that affect me personally and professionally. Kids help me to see things differently. I get to have my eyes opened through theirs and the more educators that are able to do that, the stronger our whole system becomes. (LASN)

Leaders with young children often cited their child or children as a primary motivator for starting the FNC and emphasised the positive impact for their children of being a part of the FNC leader family. A leader with a five year old shared that:

> My son needs to be outside, he needs to explore. And the imagination that comes from being in nature is incredible. It's awesome and if we didn't provide that outlet for him I'm not sure where he would get it. He just loves it, and I just thrive off of what he loves. During our events my son really takes on that leader role. In fact he asks all the time, 'Are we going hiking this weekend?' So it has been really great for him. (LADM)

Leaders whose children participated in their FNC also frequently talked about the positive impact of leading an FNC for their family as a whole. A leader with a one- and a seven- year-old shared that:

> It is very important for my children to have a sense of community that isn't a part of team sports. I use the family nature club as a way of creating community for my family and I see that it does that for other families as well. (LABC)

When I think about my journey with CFIN, there is so much to share. For me, the experience of leading CFIN has been immeasurably rewarding. Perhaps most significantly, it is helping me to create the life I envisioned for my family—one in which we have a close relationship with both the natural world and our social community. Prior to CFIN, we would spend a good amount of time outdoors because that is important for our individual and familial well-being, but it was in the same handful of places. Now we know about and go to so many different natural areas in our community and experience them with a much deeper level of awareness than we would have if we were not actively seeking to gather information to share during CFIN outings. We are asking questions that we may not have asked before and, in the process of sharing the answers, the information has become part of our retained knowledge.

- What is in bloom?
- What is that sound?
- What kind of tracks are those?
- Is this edible?

Where we previously had a few families with whom we would get together in the area, our social network has grown tremendously. There are dozens of families that have come to enough CFIN outings that our families recognise each other readily, at outings and in the community, and we have a rich set of shared experiences from which we develop broader friendships. Being the leader of CFIN has also given me a unique foundation for broader community engagement. I have been asked to talk to a number of groups about the work I am doing with CFIN, and I am now known as someone who can consistently deliver large groups of people to natural areas, something that is challenging for many organisations in the conservation field. Leading CFIN has been a tremendous personal and professional growth opportunity and I hope to sustain and build upon it for years to come.

Conclusion

FNCs offer a way for organisations and individuals to foster significant positive personal, familial, and community outcomes. Many families have made FNC participation a regular part of their schedule because it offers a rare opportunity for the entire family to regularly spend time engaged in a fun, healthy experience together—one that is no to low cost, yields numerous benefits, is gender and age inclusive, unplugged from media, is both educational and social, offers both children and adults opportunities to be active participants, and provides a sense of community.

The 47 FNCs represented in this study were led almost entirely by women. Many of these women were the primary caregivers for their children and found FNC leadership to be a way to use their personal passions and professional skills to make a contribution to their community that was inclusive of their children and supportive of their motherhood. Others lead their FNC as a part of their paid work as employees in organisations with conservation and/or environmental education missions. In both cases, the women leading FNCs found the effects of their leadership to be significant: for themselves both personally and professionally, when applicable, for their families, when applicable, and in every instance, for the families in their communities that participated in the events that they led. The women who lead FNCs work in a unique outdoor learning environment and are making an important contribution to the movement to help people connect with and take better care of the natural world.

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Singing in the Forest: Outdoor Education as Early Childhood Curriculum

Kumara Ward

Introduction

It is now well known that nature and being outdoors is good for children: physically (White, 2004), for aerobic health, flexibility, and strength (Dowdell, Gray, & Malone, 2011; Wyver et al., 2010); psychologically, including feelings of happiness, well-being, and peace of mind (Capaldi, Raelyne, Zelenski, & Zelenski, 2014; Gray & Birrell, 2015; Kellert, 2012; Kenney, 2011; Truong, Gray, & Ward, 2016); socially and educationally (Chawla, Keena, Pevec, & Stanley, 2014; Cohen, 2000; Gambino, Davis, & Rowntree, 2009; Louv, 2006; Plotkin, 2008; Sobel, 2005; Suzuki, 1997; Tarr, 2008; Torquati, Gabriel, Jones-Brand, & Leeper-Miller, 2010; Ward, 2013a, 2013b, 2016a, 2016b) and for improved environmental awareness (Davis, 2010; Davis & Elliott, 2003; Elliot & Davis, 2009; Gambino et al., 2009). What is less frequently articulated in the literature is the value of outdoor experience as the basis for learning across the curriculum and for establishing fundamental knowledge and schemas about the world and the child's place in it (Buchan, 2015; Cutter-Mackenzie & Edwards, 2013; Elliot, 2003; Kozak & Elliot, 2014; Pyle, 2002, 2007; Rogers, 2008; Ward, 2016). Indeed, feeling a connection to or sense of belonging in *place* is a key element in engaging with the natural world (Morgan, 1987; Orr, 2005; Sobel, 2005; Somerville,

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K. Ward (✉)
Centre for Educational Research, Western Sydney University,
Penrith, NSW, Australia

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2013; Suzuki, 1997; Tooth & Renshaw, 2009) and fulfilling the broad objectives of outdoor education (OE).

The place discussed in this chapter is the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales (NSW) bounded by Kyogle, Lismore, Tweed Heads, and Byron Bay, and the mountain at its centre called Wollumbin (by the local Indigenous people) or Mount Warning (by James Cook). Traditionally cared for by the people of the Bundjalung Nation, this region has a rich Aboriginal history and Wollumbin at its centre has particular spiritual significance for the Indigenous people. The Rainbow Serpent is a prevalent Aboriginal Dreamtime icon that is often expressed through the visual arts, becoming synonymous with the nearby settlement of Nimbin where the arts flourished as the town was transformed from a farming village to a hub of alternative lifestyle activity. Settler artists flock to Nimbin and the surrounding areas, and one organization, Caldera Arts (Caldera Regional Arts Inc., 2015), refers to the region as the *green cauldron* of Australia, and promotes knowledge of the region and its biodiversity through the arts. As an educator of young children in this green cauldron, often working in the outdoors and using arts-based pedagogies, the Indigenous people's veneration for this place and the richness of the biodiversity were underpinning influences on mine, and the children's learning about place.

This chapter follows my journey as a kindergarten and primary school teacher teaching in two small semirural schools (in the Wollumbin area) based on Rudolf Steiner's "Anthroposophy." Both schools are situated on the edge of the rainforest, providing numerous opportunities for outdoor exploration and learning. Given the emphasis on holistic and creative teaching in these schools, engaging in content through the arts was a key pedagogical approach (Steiner, 1965). The content of the curriculum, although directly linked to the required syllabus, was taught through the experience of place because it simply could not be ignored. The lushness of the local environment was so powerful, and experienced through all the senses, that our experience in it was a constant visceral "embodiment of the place" (Somerville, 2011) and we explored far and wide. From, through, and in our place, we discovered Dreamtime and creation stories, the secret lives of animals, insects, and habitats, learned about geology, water cycles, and life cycles, learned about growth patterns, photosynthesis, and metamorphosis, heard the melodies of birdsong and water trickling (Ward, 2015) and felt the breeze on our cheeks. We also explored the forms, movement, colours, textures, and scents of the forest, and with these sensibilities explored the properties of earth, metal, fire, and air; this knowledge became the basis for shared knowledge building, inspiration, and creativity.

Whilst I position this teaching practice as OE, it is not the typical male-dominated, physically oriented model of OE but a radical and feminized version of experiential nature education based on building relationships between self, other, and the natural world (Gray, Allen-Craig, & Carpenter, 2016) as part of an ongoing emergent style of curriculum. This chapter shares some seminal stories of OE practice with young children and each story is followed by a theoretical rationale that connects the work with contemporary paradigms of the human/nature connection. It also highlights the possibilities for an alternative, nature-based curriculum and concludes with a discussion of how this work is positioned in the field of OE.

Mapping the Local Natural Environment Through Story

Every morning began with a story in our kindergarten. These stories were place stories, developed and told daily, inspired by the land, animals, insects, and weather phenomena around our kindi and the areas in which the children lived. Sometimes the stories were developed from what the children had seen and at other times, they reflected their interests in the characters of the stories told previously. The children's interests in the story characters were, about the characteristics and qualities of the animals, insects, and weather phenomena predominant during the season and the time of the story's telling. The protagonist in a story could be an animal such as "Little Lightfoot Lilly Trotter" (a great egret), "Wilma Wombat" (a common wombat), an insect "Flicker Flutter" (a monarch butterfly), "Papilio" (caterpillar of the orchard swallowtail butterfly), an element such as "Merle Swirl Mist Dancer" (morning mist rising), or the "Sundancers" (sparkles on water when the sun strikes).

One day, after researching habitats, life cycles, and behaviours, I told a story about a family of pretty-faced wallabies as there seemed to be many small groups of them around. The story centred on "Bounder," a juvenile wallaby that was learning about where he could and could not go without his mother. His adventures became legendary as he got into one scrape after another but each time managed to extricate himself with the assistance of his mother or another older wallaby from the group. Along the way, he learned a great deal about the grasses, tree species, waterways, and other animals, and his learning became our learning as we explored the local forest, paddocks, and creeks, encountering lizards, snakes, goannas, birds, bush turkeys, bandicoots, and other local insects. The children regarded these stories as true—and even though they knew that wallabies can't talk, they were willing to engage in the pretence (Ward, 2016*) that they could, not only because the stories were plausible but because much of the content could be verified through their own experience. This is exemplified by Holly who having seen some pretty-faced wallabies on her way to school, came running into kindi saying, "Kumara, Kumara, it's true—pretty-faced wallabies do have a white stripe running up their cheek under the eye!"*

Postmodern Emergence and the Other-than-Human World

The situated story as pedagogy is increasingly relevant as a vehicle for investigating place (Somerville, 2013; Tooth & Renshaw, 2009; Ward, 2013b, 2016a). A good story contains settings, time frames, characters, plot, dynamics, a challenge of some kind, and a conclusion or resolution. Stories also put out tendrils that weave their way into other modalities such as visual arts, movement and dance, music, song dance, and drama. Key elements or characters of stories have properties that can be interpreted through these modalities with great effect and *affect*. To sing about the mist rising, the lyre bird's mimicry, or the water bubbling in a creek (Ward, 2015), to draw the nests of kookaburras in gum trees or sundancers on a lake (Tarr, 1999b), and to move the wind or the dynamic onset of a bushfire are visceral, affective, and deeply instructive experiences. This creative embodiment of the natural world is conceptualized by Somerville as postmodern emergence (Somerville, 2011) and recognizes the creative/artistic ways of knowing the natural world through the body and the senses. The nexus between place, intra-action (Barad, 2003) with place through understanding its properties, as interpreted by the senses, and the natural inclination for expressive artefacts to grow out of reflections on experiences in the natural world combined, are what I call *eco*nnection. Form, colour, movement, smell, texture, sound, awe, and wonder are all lenses through which we experience nature (White, 2004; White & Stoecklin, 2008; Wilson, 2010), and through them we form our attitudes and dispositions towards it (Ward, 2011).

The other sense in which this embodied experience becomes significant is though post-humanist perspectives (Taylor, 2011; Ward, 2017) and relational materialism (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010). Latour's (2005) actor-network theory, where human and non-human objects can participate in social networks and give rise to material-semiotic relationships, provides an entry point into posthumanism and a useful lens for interpretation here. The children out in boats on Byron Bay (see story below) recognize configurations of rocks, reefs, trees, or variations in the colour of the sea—signifying depth or the presence of seaweeds—and know what is likely to live there. They can also imagine how it feels to do so as a result of their creative exploration of the different species and habitats. This affective empathy for *place objects* and knowledge of other-than-human species intersects with the children's concepts of home, habitat, and social dynamics which are transposed to the environments of the whale, jellyfish, dolphin, and so on. Similarly, relational materialist theories (Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012; Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010), where humans and non-humans interact, have become a lens for investigations into human (culture)/non-human (nature) and position humans as part of nature where the non-human has agency and where cause and effect may flow from the non-human to the human. This was certainly evident in our explorations into the bay, into the forest, and around our school.

The children's relationships with their environment, when in the forest, saw them responding to conditions and to other-than-human beings with a genuine empathy and respect. This included walking silently along paths out of deference to sleeping nocturnal marsupials, stepping carefully around lines of caterpillars crossing the path, or moving slowly through fields of long grass to watch for snakes. Where trees had fallen and were asking to be climbed on, or stones across the creek beckoned the children to jump between them, they obliged in a way they could not have, had these particular environments and configurations of space not existed. These intra-actions and responses whilst in the forest or fields beyond became part of the children's enculturation or habitus (Bourdieu, 1990), exemplified their frequent engagement in these environments and formed the basis of their arts-oriented expression of these experiences.

Singing with Sea Creatures: A Journey to See the Humpback Whales

One Monday morning in kindergarten, we were all gathered on our chairs in a circle sharing our weekend stories. One child had been to the beach the previous day and brought in a stick of driftwood. This episode of a child telling a "memory in place" story triggered many memories from the other children and soon we had stories of wonderful artefacts of nature including shells, cuttlefish, and seaweeds, and sightings of jellyfish, manta rays, dolphins, and whales. One child told a story of a humpback whale sighting which seemed to excite the children's imaginations and became the topic of discussion for the day. That night I went home and researched all I could about the habitats, lifecycles, social dynamics, and migration of humpbacks (before Google). I came in the following morning and told an adventure story of the whales setting out from the land of ice and snow, which was in fact, at the time, occurring in Antarctica.

This new story fanned the flames of interest, and the migratory journey of our family of humpbacks was chronicled through daily stories prepared by me but in response to the children's questions, interests, and participation in the story-creation process. We still maintained our daily walks and our focus on our local place but the whale stories were, in spite of being a fictional narrative, the major content of our programme which was also explored through content-inspired original songs, *verses, visual arts experiences, movement, and dance. Not only were we covering curriculum through natural sciences, literacy, numeracy, and the arts, we were also following what was happening on the east coast of Australia with the migration of the humpbacks to Hervey Bay in Queensland where they would have their calves.*

These story-threads (Tooth, 2006; Tooth & Renshaw, 2009) wove complex webs to include many factors related to the whale migration including the environments they passed through, the species with which they interacted, and the habitats and characteristics of these species. By the time the whales reached Hervey Bay, calved, and set out on the return journey (both in the stories and in the real world) the children knew a great deal about the Australian Eastern seaboard, the geography, animals, and plants of the various environments and the interspecies dynamics of this other-than-human watery world. Over a period of four months, they had dramatized, sung songs about jellyfish, sea turtles, dolphins, and seagulls, spoken verses about and moved/danced whales, giant kelp forests, groper, and deep-sea lobster. They had drawn coral castles, hermit crabs, and anemone, and knew why suckerfish (wrasse) were so important to dolphins, sharks, and whales. The only thing left to do was to go into their environment, to experience it, in the flesh.

There were many parents, a teaching assistant, three dive-boat drivers, 30 5-year-old children, and me, on a choppy Byron Bay one September morning. The three dive boats were in constant radio contact, and for an hour-and-a-half, shared over the airwaves and above the water waves, the wonders the children saw in different areas of the bay. The children spontaneously broke into song whenever they saw a dolphin, manta ray, jellyfish, or turtle (and other creatures too numerous and too long ago to remember). The adults were amazed at what the children could tell them about the species they were seeing. Finally, Boat 1 radioed the others—"We have a mother and her baby in front of us." Boats 2 and 3 sped to the location and for 30 minutes a mother humpback and her baby danced and breached and played in front of our boats. The children laughed, clapped, sang for the whales, and cheered. The adults cried with the beauty of what they were witnessing: 30 young children singing and performing for the whales and these extraordinary creatures, so close to our boats, who seemed to be performing for us.

Pedagogy and the Teachable Moments in the Outdoors with Young Children

The story above is an example of building on the children's primary experiences in the natural world—in this case, their experiences of family trips to the beach. However, it is more than this. The pedagogy of teachable moments or emergent curriculum and of project learning is also evident here. The fundamental inquiry questions (Hill, Stremmel, & Fu, 2005; Moran, 2007) of *who, when, where, why and how,* and the richness of the project approach (Helm & Katz, 2010) where the children's agency, curiosity, imagination, and creative interpretation of the content are paramount, render this process as metacognitive, affective, kinaesthetic, and intra-active. This is *eco*nnection. The children who participated in this experience are now adults with young families of their own and I now see them on social media sharing their experiences of telling their own children stories or singing them songs they learned in kindergarten about the whales, the surrounding creatures, and the sea.

Chawla and Flanders Cushing (2007) remind us that children who spend time in the natural world with adults who show genuine appreciation of it are more inclined to develop dispositions towards environmental stewardship as adults. The experiences of these children were such that the natural world became part of our world and they became part of it as we explored and then relived these experiences back in the classroom through empirical investigation, and through visual arts, movement, song, and verse. This "surrender to the land" (Birrell, 2011, p. 221) is also consistent with the emerging focus on affective connection to the natural world expressed by White (2004) when he talks about nurturing children's love for the natural world before we ask them to save it. Gray and Birrell (2015) echo this sentiment in their recent study that shows that children develop a love for the earth when the arts and outdoor experiences are combined.

These outdoor experiences, when rendered creatively back in the classroom, were just as real and entailed a detailed reflection on their particular qualities through movement, drama, and visual arts. This revision of experience through the arts is a process that engages numerous senses and faculties and concurrently enlivens and embeds the experience into memory (Eisner, 2002; Judson & Egan, 2012). Attempting to enact through drama, movement, and music, the process of ducks building a nest by the riverbank or wombats searching for tasty roots at night requires a temporary surrendering of the human and a genuine willingness to feel what it is to move, sound, act, and feel like the animal in focus. This voluntary decentring of the human is a recognition that we inhabit common worlds and that the other-than-human inhabitants are complex, interactional beings that should be respected.

Imagining the Sky Thermals

"Sunsoarer was an eagle, and higher did he fly, higher and higher up in the sky" (Tarr, 1990). Sunsoarer was a favourite song, as per the opening line above, and

story in kindergarten. Both song and story were based on a couple of pairs of wedge-tailed eagles that roamed our area for hunting and were so popular that they became the subject of one of my children's books (Tarr, 1999a). For Class 1 and 2 children, this story formed the basis of investigation into air currents and thermals and generated much looking up whilst out on walks! It began as an integrated natural sciences and geography lesson based on factual information, narratively rendered into story, and filled with detail about the characteristics and habits of the wedge-tailed eagle. At the beginning of these lessons, one of the most popular activities with the children was to wear a light silk veil that caught the breeze and to move around the room as if soaring like an eagle whilst the rest of the class sang the song. Thankfully, there were a number of verses and the chorus was inserted between each of them so multiple children could engage in this experience during one singing episode. This movement generated more exploration and questions about warm air currents and their propensity to rise, and this led to a trip to the local airfield for flights in small aircraft to feel the air currents in a way that the eagles would.

Tyagarah airfield is a small airport just north of Byron Bay that is used primarily for ultralight aircraft, parachuting, and small planes conducting tourist trips. We visited with 28 6- and 7-year-old children on a warm, spring day and the same small aircraft and pilot took up small groups of children—four at a time—with myself or another responsible adult for 15-minute flights that roamed from the mountains at the edge of the caldera to the sea. This route provided much variation in air currents and gave the children a firsthand experience of the way in which the air currents moved the plane and the way in which the pilot took advantage of the air movement for flying. The pilot was able to fly in a manner that emulated the soaring of an eagle and their "steering" through the feathers on the tips of their wings. Like the eagle, the aeroplane's wings did not move but the flaps at the ends of the wings acted like the wing tips of an eagle, sending the plane in broad arcs through the sky and allowing it to rise and fall depending on the temperature in the air. This was a powerful experience for the children, one that was consolidated by reliving it through the arts, and recounted again and again throughout their schooling.

Arts and Science: Curriculum Built on Outdoor Experiences and Phenomena

As the stories above indicate, the opportunities for integrated curriculum are many when using the natural world as a content focus. The arts have been discussed above but other areas of curriculum are able to be the focus of the study with a little imagination (Judson & Egan, 2012). I once taught a *parts of speech* lesson over a two-week period with the content based on the earthquake in Newcastle, Australia in 1989 (indeed, there are elements of the natural world that are frightening). It was May of 1990, and everyone in the class knew someone who was affected by this event, and the stories developed for introducing it were used with great caution. Sam Storyline, Ace Reporter interviewed eight different people about their experiences of the earthquake and each day their respective responses highlighted the part of speech that their character exemplified. For example, Namen Noun's response emphasized the people he knew and named all the things that shook: houses, walls, roads, shelves, and the ornaments on them. Vitalie Verb emphasized what people did: they ran, called out, cried, and beckoned. Proxy Pronoun provided a broader view highlighting the individual and groups of people she observed in the aftermath of the quake. The story went on over subsequent days until all the parts of speech had been covered, Sam Storyline won a fictitious *Walkley* award for excellent reporting, and the children had a hero who understood the English language and the potential causes of earthquakes.

Whilst the story above led into our own exploration of geological phenomena in the Northern Rivers region, closer investigation of the plant and animal life formed the basis for mathematics and geometry. Consider the Fibonacci series of unfolding numbers represented in the growth of new leaf, the golden mean inherent in the nautilus shell, or the proportions of bones in the human hand. Consider the spirals inherent in the movement of water or the variations in air patterns produced by notes voiced on a flute (Schwenk, 1965). These examples of "bioinspiration" (San Diego Zoo Global, 2012) are fascinating to children and can be applied to a number of key content areas in elementary schooling. Whilst investigating these phenomena is exciting in its own right, going outside and discovering them in context and marvelling at the complexity and interrelatedness of the natural world makes them even more wonderful and has the added benefit of connecting children to place.

Women in Outdoor Education

OE comes in many forms: wilderness treks, adventure therapy, survival courses, challenge events, environmental education, and nature immersion are some of the many iterations of education in the outdoors. Women make up half of all OE practitioners but are under-represented in leadership roles in these practices (Gray et al., 2016). This chapter adds another category that is distinctly feminized, relational, and inclusive: experiential OE and arts-based pedagogies as curriculum for *eco*nnection. My approach to working with place and with young children in education was inspired by many before me, particularly in the realm of Steiner education, the field in which my teaching experience was conducted. My educator mentors who sang about place, included place-based stories in their curriculum, and took the children outdoors, were mostly women. Both male and female educators took children camping and hiking regularly and for some of the schools I was involved with, the whole school was taken camping on the longest night or winter solstice and each class performed a short play or sang about the experience of being outside on the longest night of the year. The experience of being around a campfire with large groups of children singing, dramatizing, and speaking with veneration about the ultimate outbreathing of the planet as the season turned was deeply moving and inspired many songs that became part of the children's top 10! The following verse is the chorus of one such song written for a mid-winter camp under the caldera escarpment at Tyalgum (Tarr, 1993):

Hidden in the shade in the darkest of caves
Where breath nor footfall sound
You find in your heart, a new sun spark
Where light and laughter abound. (Tarr, 1993)

Whilst there are many women currently working in education who focus on nature as a key element of their curriculum in early childhood, primary school (including forest or nature schools), and in higher pre-service teacher education (Birrell, 2011; Buchan, 2015; Chawla, 2007; Chawla et al., 2014; Davis & Elliott, 2003; Dowdell et al., 2011; Elliot, Edwards, Davis, & Cutter-Mackenzie, 2013; Gray & Birrell, 2015; Inwood & Jagger, 2014; Kiewra, Reeble, & Rosenow, 2011; Warden, 2012), they are not often included in the pantheon of outdoor educators or reflected at leadership levels in OE (Gray et al., 2016) and this begs the question: Why? Are we still viewing OE through the more masculine lens of high risk, adventure, or survival paradigms where the human is pitted against nature? If so, we have fallen into the gendered bifurcated classification of outdoor activity in much the same way that agriculture, eco-development, and environmental education did (Gomes & Kanner, 1995; Shiva, 2005). Can we now consider a programme whereby children spend time outdoors pursuing curriculum content and engaging in activity that is supporting their development as *eco*nnected citizens, as valid OE? This requires a rethinking of the aims of OE that is inclusive of feminized ways of thinking and doing OE. According to Gray et al. (2016), this means a focus on collaboration, relationships, and inclusion.

Conclusion

This book is filled with examples of women in the outdoors who engage with nature in extraordinary ways. The practice discussed above provides scope for thinking about OE and connection with place as an underpinning feature of educational curriculum, rather than a specialized form of it, particularly for young children. Broadening the more traditional definitions of OE to emphasize feminized modes of human relationships with place, flora, and fauna through experiential nature education and arts-based pedagogies has significant potential. Arts pedagogies are familiar curriculum practices for many teachers. Integrating the arts with understandings of place and outdoor experience may assist educators to engage with and interpret OE experiences with the children they teach and to generate interest and enthusiasm for care of the local natural environment. In addition, the appreciation and reliving of outdoor experiences through the arts extends the impact of OE, bringing it back into the classroom. This multimodal and meta-environmental focus can deepen connection to place, connect the natural world to all areas of the educational curriculum, and render the human/nature connection as a basis for understanding our world and living sustainably in it.

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42

Loose Parts Play Creating Opportunities for Outdoor Education and Sustainability in Early Childhood

Jackie Neill

Introduction

> Hands up who wants to play?
> Do you remember what it feels like to play: to have the opportunity to freely create in an open-ended, unstructured, and unhindered manner?
> Hands up who wants to play with junk?

This chapter outlines a school-based outdoor education and sustainability programme that is play based and includes regular sessions of gardening, bushwalking, and loose parts play. In particular, this chapter aims to share the story of our loose parts play sessions, highlight the dynamics (delights and challenges) of being outdoors and teaching risk management with groups of young children, and invite readers to jump out of the box of what is and isn't outdoor instructing and environmental learning.

How Did It Happen?

First, a note about the author. A woman, an adventurer, a traveller, a mother, a teacher and an eco-warrior in my own little lunchbox. My life has unfolded in roughly two parts, but I am just now realizing there is a bridge joining the

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J. Neill (✉)
Canberra, ACT, Australia

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two. Life before having children involved me working in a variety of outdoor education instructor positions across the globe, pursuing many personal outdoor adventures such as bicycle touring and mountain climbing, including a passion for connecting to and protecting these environments. Life with my babies and as little children was all about play, a lot of it outdoors in the bush and with loose parts. Now I find myself, 12 years down the track, returning to work outside the home as an early childhood teacher, bringing together teaching, play, junk, the outdoors, and caring for the environment in a deeply connected and explicit way.

What Is Loose Parts Play?

Loose parts play involves providing opportunities for children of all ages to engage with discarded and reclaimed everyday materials that can be moved, carried, combined, repurposed, redesigned, and taken apart and put together in endless ways. A car steering wheel, old letterbox, bike wheel, handlebars, or pedals, cloths, cubby-making blankets, pots and pans, old phones, pebbles and shells, plumbing pipe sections, planks and crates, tiles, and sticks…. Make any number of these items accessible to children and you have created the opportunity for loose parts play. This type of play, this tinkering, encourages creative thinking, open-ended learning, and personal and social growth. It allows children to make their own choices, develop their own ideas, solve problems, and explore their world and the way they relate to themselves and others.

Now, loose parts are generally already commonly available in early childhood settings where children often enjoy access to a range of wooden loose parts in their block areas and shovels, buckets, and an array of pots and pans in the sandpit, mud pit, and outdoor play areas. However, loose parts play takes this further by making available a range of objects that have no prescripted or specific predetermined purpose or role in play. They are not toys; they are junk—everyday objects reclaimed for the purpose of play. They don't say to a child: Use me to do this. They say: Create! (Fig. 42.1).

Yet junk is a crude word for the much-loved objects that are at the centre of loose parts play. I prefer the word repurposed. There is a subtle yet clear message being conveyed when we value objects that others have finished with. In our current materialistic world, it is far easier to be a buyer than it is to be a waste manager and as a result, the earth suffers for our lack of responsibility as consumers. By valuing items that others choose to no longer have a use for in their lives, we help to create a step in between the "buy new and use" phase and the "throw in landfill or put in the recycle bin" phase of consumerism. We are prolonging the life of an object in

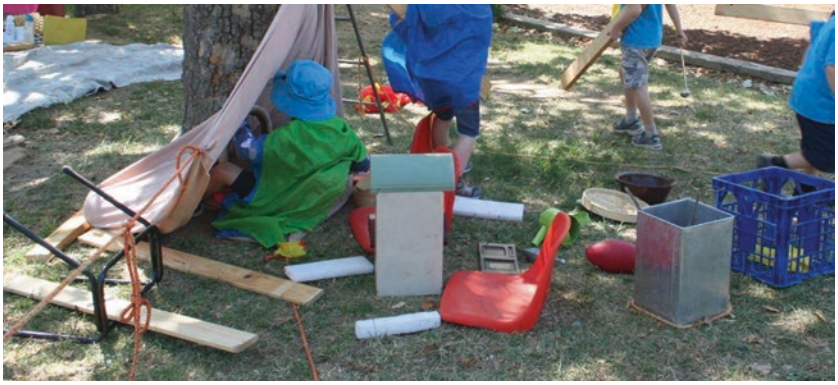

Fig. 42.1 Loose parts play

an economic climate of short-lived products. Children receive a different message about play through engaging with repurposed, reclaimed, and donated things. They get an alternative perspective from those offered loudly and repeatedly through media, advertisements, and the dominant neo-liberal economic paradigm (Swiderska, Roe, Siegele, & Grieg-Gran, 2008, p. 20). Often, toys bought at a shop give off two messages: first, the "you want/need this, buy me" message and second, the "use me in this particular way only" message. Perhaps loose parts play contributes an opportunity for two different messages to emerge from inside a child: first, the "I am an inventor, creator, and innovator" message of a confident and creative individual and, second, the "I value reusing, repurposing and rethinking about junk" message of an environmentally aware waste manager.

Why Loose Parts Play?

The theory of loose parts play seems to have first emerged in the 1970s through landscape designer/architect Simon Nicholson (1972) who felt there needed to be a shift away from creativity being associated with a minority who were deemed gifted. He saw creativity as being inherent to all humans throughout their lives and advocated for all children to be given opportunities to play with loose parts. Over the past 40 years, there has been an uptake of the theory of loose parts play in schools and public parks, including the commercial and recreational introduction of loose parts materials to enhance play by providing a richer environment than just a landscape of fixed equipment and concrete. Yet there is no one way to do loose parts play, as it works equally well in the backyard, a school yard, and a childcare facility, or as a facilitated session within a year-long outdoor/learning programme (Fig. 42.2).

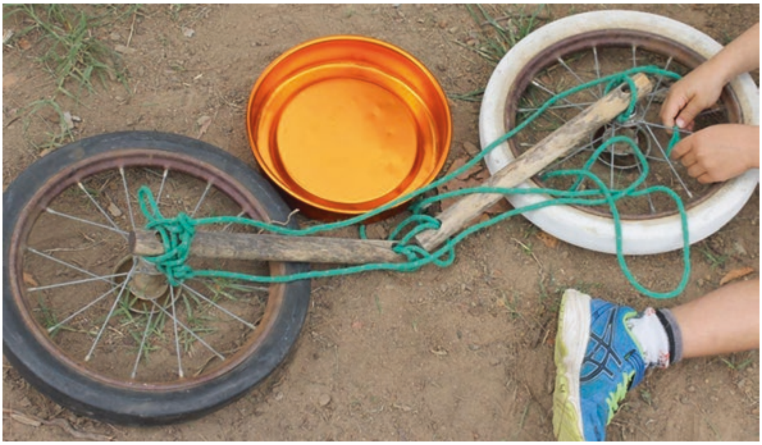

Fig. 42.2 Innovation and problem-solving in loose parts play

Medical doctor, psychiatrist, clinical researcher, and founder of the National Institute for Play, Stuart Brown (2010) highlighted the important link between play and professional life with the story of the capacity of engineers to problem-solve (pp. 9–11). It was found that engineers who had had opportunities to play with loose parts, to tinker and discover, were better equipped, better skilled for life to deal with the type of problem-solving that arises in that job than those who were chosen based solely on their high grades. Daly and Beloglovsky (2015, p. 3) made the link between playing with loose parts and the development of collaboration, cooperation, creativity, and innovation as social competency skills that are highly valued and serve us as adults. In particular, in the future, these skills and capabilities are going to be more useful yet exist, using technologies that haven't yet been invented, in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet" (Gunderson, Jones, & Scanland, 2004). Thus, we need to appreciate that when these life skills, these capabilities are nurtured early and throughout our lives through opportunity, this equates to confident, creative, and active adults who contribute to their world in meaningful ways.

Hewes' (2011) photo slide show presentation encourages us to expand our thinking as to what is a loose part—mud, snow, and a pile of dirt certainly do the job. Fox and Wirth's (2015) work with the Dimensions Education Research Foundation explored recent research on the benefits of playing outdoors, including the value of nature-based loose parts. Indeed, the current focus on the value of reconnecting overly screen-fixated children to nature means that loose parts play in the outdoors also ticks the box for engaging children in the natural environment. Even the word play itself is battling to be justified as a valid learning experience in an age of rampant testing, test prepping, and "indoor-ification" (Sobel, 2016) of early childhood education. When looking through the lens of health and concern for rising levels of childhood obesity and lowering rates of daily physical exercise, a recent study into the impact of loose parts play "suggested that the introduction of movable/recycled materials can have a significant, positive long-term intervention effect on children's PA [physical activity]" (Hyndman, Benson, Ullah, & Telford, 2014, p. 1). Loose parts play is not just a good idea; it's a very good one.

How Do We Do It?

In our setting, we frame loose parts play within our outdoor learning programme, and sessions are currently run by class teachers who have been through in-house training. Outdoor learning is now a weekly 80-minute session on a regular day and can involve gardening around our school grounds, bushwalking on our local hills, exploring walks in the local suburb, or loose parts play on site. We value outdoor and indoor learning equally, and teachers bring learning outside at other times of the day and week. We are an all-weather school, which means that unless there is lightning and thunder, very heavy rain, or a very high fire danger, then outdoor learning sessions are run all year around. Our loose parts are roughly stored on metal shelving in a customized shipping container with a roller door.

A Loose Parts Play Session

A Term 1 Week 5/6 Kindergarten one-hour loose parts session might run a bit like this: Children gather under a large shady tree in a circle. There is a buzz of excitement generated by the anticipation of the opening of the shed! But first, the children are asked to prepare themselves for the loose parts session—this is called the set up.

The Set Up

First, we spend time reviewing safety: What is number one in loose parts sessions? [Safety!] Who looks after Taylor's safety? [Taylor!] Who else looks after Taylor's safety? [Everyone!]. I start by stating the skill that is the focus for the session—use of planks and frames. Children share and add to each other's thinking and learning from previous sessions about the hazards and benefits of using these particular loose parts. We review the safety precautions together and then model good practice. Then I introduce the disposition—collaboration—and ask how it relates to the use of planks and frames. I remind them that this will be our focus at reflection time, and that I will be coming around to share in their thinking—what are they doing or saying that is making great collaboration happen. The children are encouraged to write their observations about collaboration on the mobile chalkboard during the session. Let's start!

A Word About the Participants

The front runners race to the roller door in an intense surge of bubbly excitement, followed by a frothing pack in the middle chatting feverishly one on top of the other as their group forms and blends ideas, and a slower moving few at the back who are perhaps pondering what their solo exploration might involve today; and yes, bringing up the rear, perhaps there is someone who is not comfortable, dragging their feet because this type of open-ended play falls outside their comfort zone. Loose parts play challenges children (and adults) to make choices. There is a shed full of stuff and no instructions or directions as to how to use them. What if I'm the type of child who thinks that stuff is just stuff and it's junk, and why would anyone want to even touch it? Or, what about the child who doesn't like to touch random objects that don't make sense when they are not presented in the original context they were made to be used for? Or, what if I'm the adult who literally has never in their life been given this level of creative freedom and is feeling really awkward and challenged and totally lacking in confidence? Educators notice this child (or adult) and facilitate their experience. That's their role; that's what their job is—to notice, observe, guide. But their job is not to take away or try to fix the experience or dull the challenge. Their role is perhaps best described as making the challenge level of the experience visible to the child, normalizing that challenge level, and allowing the space for there to be this stuckness. Because it is only by allowing that child (or adult) the space to feel that stuckness that they also get the opportunity to get themselves unstuck, and that is where real learning happens.

The Play

A mixed group is collaborating on creating a kind of base using a tree to lean the metal ladder against, many parts strewn about in a thoroughly negotiated manner below. I hear a lively and loud communal effort going on to hoist a sheet with ropes attached to each corner from the fence to the tree. Over in the digging patch, three girls have upended two milk crates and are role playing a cafe using a variety of metalware, switches, wheels, and canisters and discussing the merits of bringing mud into the mix. A boy spends 30 minutes gathering, negotiating for parts, and then constructing a robot with special powers and features. A child is collecting twigs, measuring them, breaking them off, and lining them up (Fig. 42.3).

Then I check in with the child who is stuck. The conversation might go something like this:

Me: Hey there, how's it going? [I offer the chance to talk by sitting down on the ground nearby, close but not overly close.]
Child: Weellll, you know I'm not liking this at all. I don't have anything to do.
Me: Yeah, I noticed that. You were watching people for a bit there …
Child: Yeah, they're getting all this stuff out and doing stuff. And I don't know what to do.
Me: You felt, like maybe a bit like … stuck, yeah?
Child: Yeah, I'm stuck.
[I nod my head and a few moments pass gently by, whilst we watch the others play.]
Child: I found this. [Shows me a lawnmower engine.]
Me: WHOA!
Child: This is from a lawnmower. I've got one like this at home. My mum and dad use it and I've always wondered about the bit that makes the noise. Is this where the noise comes from? [We poke and prod,

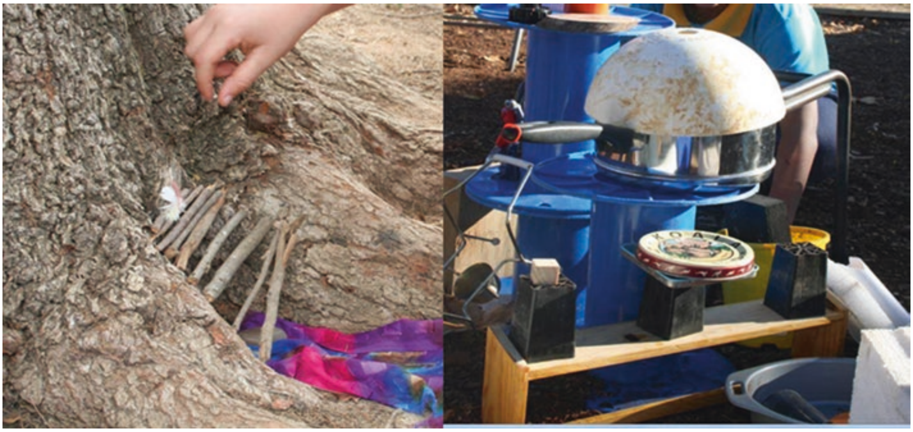

Fig. 42.3 Play is open ended and creative

ponder and wonder, question together for some moments. We work together to mount it on the billy cart from the shed and we make the noise when we pull the cord. Another child notices our play and offers to pull the cart with the child in it and take turns.]

Me: Awesome collaborating! Look at that! Can I write about that on the chalkboard to share at reflection time? Hold on … [I scrunch my eyebrows] Did you just get yourself unstuck? [We high five.]

The Packaway

Tip #1: Always allow slightly more time to pack away rather than less.
Tip #2: Train everyone up—whatever you get out, you bring back, then help others.
Tip #3: Train everyone up to know where the items go in the shed.

The Reflection

I signal for a gathering under the big shady tree. It's time to reflect. This is possibly the key to the session—the sharing, voicing, honouring of the play, and the learning that took place. I bring the chalkboard over. It already has some mark making on it from a collaborator who is ready to share in written form. I ask the group members to sit in a circle today, though a reflection with this group often works well as a peer-to-peer, partner-knee-to-knee talk. But today, there is learning that needs sharing across the group. Big learning. My job is to notice those moments during play and bring them to reflection time. I facilitate the sharing about collaboration by reading off the chalkboard and then offering an open invitation for anyone else to add to that learning. Hands go up. Words are written as stories are told. The term collaboration becomes more familiar (Fig. 42.4).

Fingers play mini scratchings and diggings with twigs, leaves, and grass seeds. I know they're thinking listening, so I add something to the reflection process:

I'd like to share something. Maybe you've noticed this, too. Sometimes in life and during learning, I get stuck. I've noticed other adults do, too. Have you noticed yourself getting stuck? [Some nods, pondering time.] Well, I was wondering, is there anything I need to do when I get stuck? You guys got any ideas? Do I need to do anything in particular when I get that stuck feeling? Saying it this way helps to normalize the stuckness and gives a safe forum for ideas about just being in the stuckness, that it's okay to be in it. We hear a few

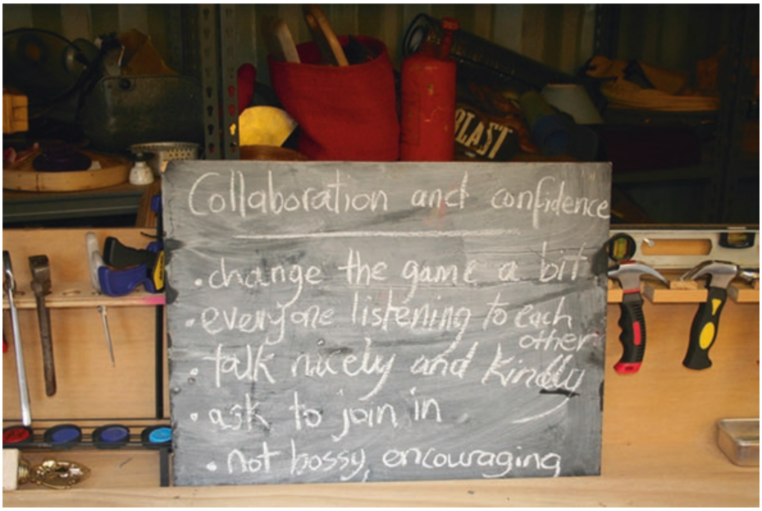

Fig. 42.4 Dispositions for learning

ideas, fingers scratch and dig, and I know that a seed has been planted inside those children that we will water and nurture over the year and that will grow steadily into a tree of understanding about being stuck/unstuck. We carry the chalkboard of ponderings and wonderings up to our inside learning space because big ideas grow and deepen when we look at them in different contexts and settings. Throughout this whole process, I draw on and am reminded of my experiences working in outdoor learning as an instructor. Although my students are considerably smaller, my setting is less wild and remote, and my time frame for the session is quite different, I am doing outdoor education. I have found a way to continue the work I began in the outdoor field before having children of my own, and a way to do it whilst living in a city.

Hazards, Benefits, and Safety Precautions

This description of a session leads us to considerations of safety, which is often a sticking point in childcare and school settings when introducing educators to outdoor learning. The work of Claire Warden (n.d.) in the area of unpacking risk management is to be highly commended. Our whole school staff used the Risk It online learning module to work through and discuss risk using a common shared language. We now explicitly teach children to become risk managers themselves by facilitating joint agreements around the hazards, benefits, and safety precautions for particular loose parts in our shed. We use this same process of group discussion and shared language with the children to agree on safety precautions for the outdoor landscape and equipment, especially in relation to loose parts play in that environment. A next step would be to use this shared language between adults/adults and adults/children to assess the hazards, benefits, and safety precautions for all activities across our school.

Now for another poignant example: how we manage risk with ropes. The hazards of a rope are plenty, especially with young children, but the benefits they came up with in discussion are tremendous! By identifying both hazards and benefits, they were able to co-create appropriate safety precautions that include:

- Ropes are stored out of bounds to all children.
- Ropes already secured onto sheets are for cubby building only and are to be left on the sheets.
- A teacher can set up a simple rope construction for use by preschool to Year 1 after deciding on safety precautions and only with a teacher present.
- Only Year 2s get to learn rope skills.
- Before a Year 2 can construct with a rope, they tell a teacher what their idea is, discuss and agree on where they are building, and are helped to select the right rope for the right job. After they build a structure and before they go on the structure, the teacher does a final safety check and the child comes up with three safety precautions for the use of that structure and has to stay and teach those safety precautions to others who choose to use it.

As you can see, these are comprehensive safety precautions for rope usage. The fact that the precautions are co-constructed makes them powerful and peer enforced. There are checks in place in manageable steps. However, another important aspect of our setup is that it is a year-long outdoor education programme—let's look at how that affects the delivery, focus areas, and gradual release of responsibility.

In Our Setting…

The design of the loose parts play sessions in our setting are based around four interrelated elements: age range, safety, dispositions for learning, and the length of the programme. As you have read above in the description of a session, there is a focus on skills and on dispositions. Let's consider the skills first. Specific skills are taught explicitly, supported, and reflected on each session as required by each group. Safety is number one throughout all loose parts play sessions and is regularly reviewed as more items are introduced. Each child is taught how to be responsible for her/his safety and the safety of every other person in the group. Skills include: accessing items, carrying objects, using planks and frames, pack away, cubby making, and rope structures. The skills are explicitly taught to a particular level with each year group, so there is a gradual release of responsibility over the year and ideally over five years.

Now, let's consider the dispositions for learning. Loose parts play creates opportunities for the development of critical and creative thinking, and personal and social capabilities. These capabilities are deemed of equal importance as literacy and numeracy in the Australian curriculum and in line with the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, which states:

> All young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens. (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MEETYA], 2008)

Loose parts play provides authentic opportunities for play-based learning and for nurturing the foundations of these capabilities in early childhood, as outlined in the Australian curriculum:

> Responding to the challenges of the twenty-first century—with its complex environmental, social and economic pressures—requires young people to be creative, innovative, enterprising and adaptable, with the motivation, confidence and skills to use critical and creative thinking purposefully…. Dispositions such as inquisitiveness, reasonableness, intellectual flexibility, open- and fair-mindedness, a readiness to try new ways of doing things and consider alternatives, and persistence both promote and are enhanced by critical and creative thinking. (Australian Curriculum, 2015)

Our school recognizes the importance of both play-based learning and the explicit teaching, modelling, and valuing of these dispositions. We have adopted a shared language for the dispositions for learning from the book *Educating Ruby* (Claxton & Lucas, 2015). The seven dispositions for learning explicitly taught at our school are confidence, curiosity, collaboration, communication, creativity, commitment, and craftsmanship. These are taught, referred to, discussed, and reflected on across both inside and outside learning every day. These dispositions relate closely to the life skills and habits that many outdoor education programmes emphasize. Confidence building, resilience, determination, team-building skills—I am explicitly teaching these as a core part of the day-to-day classroom schedule, as well as through the outdoor learning programme. Have I actually managed to weave all the elements of my life together and be living the blended life of a mother, outdoor instructor, environmental educator, and teacher?

Putting It All Together

This mother, this outdoor educator, this mini eco-warrior has presented loose parts play as a type of play involving random, everyday objects repurposed for play and made available in an outdoor environment, along with discussion and reflection of hazards, benefits, and safety precautions. This chapter has strongly suggested that this type of play creates open-ended learning experiences that promote and nurture creative innovation, which is a key capability and life skill. However, the setting could be a school or a backyard, local playground or childcare outdoor learning area, a family day care home, or university grounds. If a facilitator explicitly teaches the skills and/or the dispositions for learning before, after, or during the play, then this is an added bonus to loose parts play. If a parent/grandparent/carer/teacher/family friend points out just how great it is to play with repurposed items and not just blindly or unconsciously be part of a throwaway society, then this is another added bonus to loose parts play. I acknowledge that I choose to add these two elements of my life learning and passion, and many more threads and ways woven from my experiences in the outdoors as an instructor and traveller, into my own facilitation and explicit teaching of loose parts play.

Here in the fine company of many accomplished women outdoor environmental educators, this chapter proposes that loose parts play has a place in the realm of outdoor instructing and environmental education just as much as it has a place in the realm of the explicit teaching of dispositions for learning that are the core life skills that we reflect on as outdoor educators. So, I encourage you to take a look at the contents of your house and your garage through a junk lens. Visit your local recycle store and the tip. Repurpose objects, and play! Stop and consider how loose parts are also a medium through which people can learn about themselves and their relationship to the environment, just as much as they can through bushwalking in nature and connecting to wild landscapes through adventure activities in outdoor education programmes across the world.

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Outdoor Learning in Primary Schools: Predominately Female Ground

Amanda Lloyd

Introduction

Guiding young children outside was something I did and enjoyed from a young age, and this became the catalyst for my career in education. After teaching primary school for over a decade, I was faced with growing apprehension towards my career and felt a need to deepen my pedagogy. I began completing outdoor learning with my primary school classes to enrich their education. However, my quest did not end there, and I embarked on a study to mentor another female teacher to take her curriculum outside. Most primary teachers are women who do not regularly access the outdoors; therefore, I chose a woman who did not have a background in outdoor activities to be involved in the research. The outdoor mentoring was positive, the teacher involved enthusiastically taught in all manner of local outdoor places, and there were significant academic gains evident to the children in the study. My driving force was to connect children to their local environments, just as I had had the opportunity to do in my own childhood.

A. Lloyd (✉)
Gerringong, NSW, Australia

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My Childhood of Outdoor Adventure

As a little girl, my boundless sense of wonder flourished in the outdoors. My holidays were spent in a tiny coastal hamlet on Australia's Eastern seaboard. Throughout childhood, this place was my large, unstructured, and wild playground. There was constant adventure, with bushy headlands to wander, cliffs to climb, old bikes to ride, fires to build, waves to catch, billycarts to race, and a whole lot of mischief to be had. Amongst the trees, we built cubby houses, working as a team to find the longest and strongest sticks to support our structures. Intricate details were added to our creations with small leaves, twigs, and ferns. Being the eldest child in a large extended family, I looked after the "little ones" from an early age. For hours on end, we would play away from the watchful parental eyes.

During my childhood, I enjoyed guiding others in outdoor pursuits and had a strong connection with the local environment. Evidence supports that early bonds with the outdoors help create a lifelong connection to the environment (Chawla, 2007). As I grew older, my outdoor interests expanded to include hiking, orienteering, cycling, and paddling. I firmly believe my wild childhood playing in the bush was the catalyst for my career path in primary school teaching, nature education, and outdoor programme development.

When I began my education career, "Miss Lloyd" the primary school teacher wore a costume of sorts. The outdoors lifestyle was notably absent from my teaching. I became increasingly despondent towards teaching as the constant academic testing regimes heightened, the pressures on teachers to drive lessons towards sedentary learning amplified, and written work took over from more inquiry-based tasks. The children in my classes were learning, but the awe and wonder that the outdoors promotes was missing.

Planning a career change, I began postgraduate studies aiming for a desirable career in the outdoor sector. A Graduate Certificate of Outdoor Education and Master's of Environment led me into a doctoral research project drawing on all my educational qualifications thus far. Through my studies, I learnt about an emerging movement of outdoor learning in primary schools that was occurring around the globe. Upon discovering that outdoor education was achievable within the primary school sector, I chose to remain working in my lifestyle-friendly teaching career. The lifestyle of being able to continue in regular working hours and remain at home overnight suited me better than being on week-long excursions with groups.

Primary schools are in a unique position to offer innovative learning experiences for children in the outdoors. However, teachers need to be more professionally equipped to hold their classes in outside environments. Whilst teacher training and ongoing professional development involves progressive pedagogy, missing are the protocols for taking children outside and for implementing these pedagogies outside. Most primary school teachers are women, and this chapter reports on the case study of one of these women who was bold enough to implement outdoor learning with her class.

The outdoor learning case study provides evidence that outdoor pedagogy can promote academic learning and well-being for children. Additionally, it found that involving parents and community members within educational programmes further supports children's development. Within the case study, the class created bonds with their local environment that would not have occurred within the classroom. Due to the more relaxed atmosphere outdoors, they also formed deep relationships with their teacher.

The Female-Dominated Primary School Teaching Profession

Primary school teaching is a female-dominated pursuit. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011) reports that in Australia, 80.7% of primary school teachers are women. Education and training is the second-highest employer of females in Australia behind health care and social assistance (Australian Government, 2013). Significant numbers of women teachers work part time as they raise their families; the Australian Government (2013) equates this to 30.7% of the teaching workforce. In England, a quarter of all primary schools are staffed entirely by women (Paton, 2013); from personal experience, I propose that the situation is similar in Australian primary schools.

The predominately female workforce holds a range of experiences and confidence in the outdoors. Many women teachers are competent in the outdoors and regular visitors to wilderness environments for all manner of reasons. However, this is not always the case. Insights into the gender differences of people who use the outdoors for recreation are presented in the large-scale Australian report, *Who Cares about the Environment* (State of NSW and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, 2013). The report highlights that men are more likely than women to have accessed beaches, waterways, bushland, and other natural environments for enjoyment. Significantly, the report states that women are more likely to have engaged in an organized nature education activity. These findings promote that whilst women are less likely to access the outdoors, many are keen to learn more about nature and the environment. This bodes well for educating the largely female-dominated workforce of primary educators in outdoor pedagogies.

Equipping primary school teachers with the skills to teach outdoors may empower them to enact a more confident approach to teaching in natural environments. To this end, there are a range of options available to educators wishing to enhance their outdoor teaching skills. In Australia, these include Early Years Bush Connections by Technical and Further Education (TAFE) NSW, short courses conducted by Nature Play Western Australia, and in-school professional development offered by educational consultants for example Outdoor Connections Australia. Therefore, there is emerging potential for the workforce to upgrade their pedagogical knowledge to include outdoor learning for the advantage of their students.

Outdoor Learning in Primary Schools

Outdoor learning promotes a change of location rather than a change of curriculum. As such, outcomes do not alter from those that would be experienced in a regular classroom; instead, the site of learning—from a classroom to an outdoors environment—differs (Beames, Higgins, & Nicol, 2012). Outdoor learning is not an additional component to the already crowded curriculum but rather a philosophy of teaching using an innovative method of learning for children. Activities are planned within the teacher's general learning programme, across the curriculum, and consistently include an awareness of environmental perspectives.

Outdoor sessions occur each week for a duration of between one hour to the entire day, depending on the location and activity being completed. Learning sessions can occur in the school playground, local residential area, nearby parks, bushland, suburbs, or townships. Focus is positioned on revisiting the same places repeatedly so children form lasting connections (Chawla, 2007; Litz & Mitten, 2013; Sobel, 1996). Importantly, outdoor learning occurs in authentic environments that cannot be transported to other locations. Classroom teachers deliver sessions with assistance from other educational professionals where appropriate. The social, direct experiences that occur in the outdoors aim to stimulate an interest and engagement in formal indoor learning tasks. The development of affective outcomes for children is considered throughout all planning, delivery, and evaluation.

In outdoor learning, creating maps or shelters, designing story settings, collecting items, using geographical equipment, taking scientific readings, capturing photographs, and making artworks using loose natural materials are common activities. Children are encouraged to interact with their friends as they make constructions, go on bushwalks, and splash in rivers. Sample sessions and photographs are included as Figs. 43.1 and 43.2.

- Children are read the picture book *The Great Expeditions* (Peter Carnavas, 2011).
- Children organize "Year 1's Expedition" by drawing a map of a route around the school playground.
- Children go on "Year 1's Expedition" making observations of their surrounds as they go.
- Children recreate their expedition by making large maps with natural materials with their friends.
- Children recall details of their expedition as they retrace their steps and describe their route to their friends and teacher.
- Follow-up whole class, small group, and individual writing tasks in class involve children in retelling their experience, describing photographs, and making a class book.

Fig. 43.1 A sample English session for primary school outdoor learning—*The Great Expedition*

- Children are read the picture book *Diary of a Wombat* (Jackie French, 2002).
- Children observe scientists' photographs of nocturnal wombats.
- Children draw, colour, and paint wombat pictures.
- Children walk through paddocks and explore wombat holes.
- In sand, children make wombat tunnels and holes with their friends.

Fig. 43.2 A sample English, art, and Geography session—titled *Wombats*

Researching Outdoor Learning

The research was two pronged. First, could a teacher new to the outdoors and outdoor pedagogy learn to engage children in outdoor learning, and second, would and how might place-based outdoor learning enrich children's education in a primary school? It was important to conduct the research with a typical primary school teacher and not someone with significant outdoor experience or training, the reason being that outdoor learning should be able to be implemented by any teacher with the confidence to deliver lessons outside the classroom walls.

For the research project, Annie became the lead outdoor learning teacher. She was new to utilizing outdoor learning pedagogy and was not a regular user of the outdoors during her own recreation time. Whilst Annie had no specific skill or interest in the area before the start of the programme, she was eager to implement the progressive outdoor pedagogy. The research was conducted during the second year Annie and I worked together job sharing a Year 1 class, where we each worked part time 2.5 days per week. There was a clear distinction during outdoor learning sessions that Annie was the teacher and had control of all behaviour, first aid, management, and teaching. I was present as an observer, and children knew that during this time my role was the "investigator." I mentored her throughout the year in outdoor learning pedagogy knowledge and practices.

The class involved in the research project was a Year 1 group of 27 children, with 14 girls and 13 boys. Children were five or six years old at the commencement of the study. The outdoor learning programme was delivered over the duration of one school year, and sessions occurred in the school grounds and local area. Core subjects included in the outdoor learning programme were English, science, geography, and health and physical education. Whole-class data collection included academic results, behavioural records, a connection to nature survey, and general observations. In addition, eight focus children were involved in further research tasks to ensure a depth of understanding. These methods included semiformal interviews, visual methods, photographs, photo elicitation, structured observations, utilizing body-worn GoPro cameras, and the collection of work samples. Data were collected throughout sessions and analysed into key themes.

A plethora of advantages was discovered when analysing the outdoor learning data. The extensive results were categorized into three emergent themes:

- curriculum and engagement;
- well-being; and
- connections to the past, places, and experiences.

Curriculum and Engagement

During the outdoor learning programme, the children's positive behaviours were enhanced, for example, children listened to instructions attentively, responded immediately to teacher requests, and used resources safely. Significantly, there were no major behavioural incidents experienced in outdoor learning, defined as intentional harm to another child or property, leaving the learning space, or abusive language. The data showed that numerous major behaviour incidents occurred with these children in the classroom and during school breaks; however, none occurred in outdoor learning. A key finding of the study was that children who found the indoor classroom challenging, for the most part excelled outdoors.

Outdoors, the class remained focused on the specified learning intention of the session. In conjunction with the syllabus, documents, academic attainment, creativity, and imagination were all enhanced as a result of completing outdoors curriculum. The school-based quantitative data depict the class to have achieved at or above a standard year of learning growth when measured alongside standardized assessments. This learning gain provides evidence that spending approximately 10–15% of the class year outside the classroom was not detrimental to their academic learning growth. Indeed, the achievement at or above the standard year of learning growth suggests that it is the opposite of detrimental. The results indicate learning outside the classroom was in fact beneficial to the children's overall curriculum learning.

As children's independence and perceived self-confidence to complete tasks grew, an intrinsic motivation to take risks in their learning became apparent. During outdoor learning, children independently manipulated natural materials whilst engaging in experiential play, construction building, and various map-making tasks. Continual interactions between the children during playful learning enabled the development of oral language skills. Analysis of the children's dialogue with their friends depicts that they were effectively constructing their own understanding of phenomena as they experimented with language. As the children in the case study developed vocabulary and knowledge to use in tasks, their self-confidence and independence to complete written work also improved.

Well-Being

Areas of children's overall well-being that gained as a result of outdoor learning were responsibility, risk-taking, leadership, social skills, self-care, and parental involvement leading to a heightened sense of community. During off-site ventures, there were increasing responsibility and self-regulation exhibited by the class members. The children progressively faced unexpected and challenging events as a significant growth in resilience occurred. Pivotal to this development was the preparation of the class with realistic expectations for potentially uncomfortable situations like extended periods in the rain, walking up hills in hot weather, or having to do a bush wee. The class members met these challenges to increasingly complete events that were previously uncomfortable and unattainable for them.

Relationships in the class throughout the outdoor learning programme grew positively stronger. When evaluating the complete data set, a constant theme of social skills development became apparent. Through regular interactions with their peers, valuable social skills were learnt. These included turn taking, leadership, compromise, and sharing. As the year progressed, the class members formed interwoven friendships built on trust, fun, enjoyment, and care for each other. Peers began turning to each other for support instead of to adults, and as the children turned to each other for assistance, they formed new friendships. Whilst bonds with their classmates became stronger, so did their relationships with the teacher. Parental support for the programme was substantial, with most sessions attended by parents and grandparents who joined in the day along with the class.

Connections to the Past, Places, and Experiences

Children often made mention of their experiences to explain the outdoors as they participated in activities during outdoor learning. Their background offered a base for their new knowledge, which allowed them to develop further understandings of the world. Memorable moments they reported often included their parents or other relatives. Children made connections to environmentally conscious actions and could link actual places to Indigenous stories they knew.

For the children involved in the study, regular visits to the same environments promoted knowledge, attachment, and connection to place. The familiarity of the environments enabled the children to fully explore the areas beyond surface-level interactions. The class began to look into the intricate details of local environments and could describe their experience of nature with forever increasing clarity. They appeared connected to the local landscapes and were no longer estranged from their local environments.

The Importance of the Outdoors for Children

Developing a relationship with nature in childhood is pivotal to allow comfort, connectedness, and care of the environment to emerge. However, there is mounting evidence that our children are missing out on direct experiences with the natural world (Kellert, 2012). Nature disconnection occurs in many aspects of children's lives, including family time, unstructured play, social interactions, nonformal education, and formal education (Lloyd & Gray, 2014). Greater awareness of the nature disconnect has led to its increasing prevalence in all manner of research, publications, and media. In his popular books, Louv (2005) coined the phrase, *nature deficit disorder* to describe "the human cost of alienation from nature" (p. 36). The deficit from not coming into contact with nature can change lifestyles, the behaviour of people, cause depression, and impact social issues.

An Australian national study found that one in 20 children never leave their homes to play (Laird, McFarland-Piazza, & Allen, 2014). Additionally, one in four Australian children has never climbed a tree (Planet Ark, 2012). These concerning facts reflect the indoor lifestyles evident in modern times where electronic screen time and indoor activities are predominant. Children today have fewer opportunities to spend time in nature compared to 20–30 years ago (Laird et al., 2014). Diminished outdoor exploration is being compounded by the fact parental concerns of safety are reducing children's opportunities to explore their local area (Derr & Lance, 2012; Dolan, 2015; Loebach & Gilliland, 2016). Children no longer independently access natural spaces easily. Essentially, a lack of time spent in the outdoors can be overcome by making green spaces available to children to allow a nature connection to manifest (Townsend & Weerasuriya, 2010). Spending time in the outdoors can be the catalyst to allow a nature connection to develop in children.

Play in natural spaces enables a variety of personality types and play styles to flourish (Groves & McNish, 2011). This allows children to engage in known activities and increasingly complex tasks, utilizing greater enjoyment and proficiency (Knight, 2009). The self-directed essence of the outdoors allows children to develop skills specific to their lives, interests, and talents. Interactions occur between children as they play, make constructions, and observe the natural world. Moore (2014) acknowledged that nature play offers "opportunities for enhanced social interaction as well as solitude, where needed, have been provided" (p. 22). With unsupervised play on the decrease, there is a need for measures to overcome the alarming trend.

The importance of including nature experiences within the curriculum is highlighted by Lloyd and Gray (2014). In primary schools, outdoor learning is evident in educational practices around the globe. Having established a firm place in Scandinavian curricula, it is now becoming increasingly common in the United Kingdom (Beames et al., 2012; Bensten, Jensen, Mygind, & Randrup, 2010; Mannion, Mattu, & Wilson, 2015). Models of implementation vary according to the local educational context. Educational advantages of outdoor learning in primary schools are emerging in various international reports (O'Brien & Murray, 2007; Rickinson et al., 2004; State Education and Environment Roundtable, 1995, 2005). However, further development of primary school teachers' skills is needed for outdoor learning to flourish in Australia.

Teaching Outside the Box

Through an extensive analysis of this outdoor learning case study data, it seems evident that preservice teacher training courses about outdoor learning pedagogy, and logistics for primary school teachers and as accredited professional development for existing teachers would benefit students and teachers. Current teacher training includes the use of constructivist pedagogy, behaviour management, and subject content; however, it does not include how to apply these skills in the outdoors. Professional development for outdoor learning can include science and geography fieldwork skills, environmental studies, and the pragmatic application of existing pedagogy outdoors. Additionally, teacher professional development needs to be devised in the area of play within the curriculum, especially for educators working with Kindergarten to Grade 2 classes, including an opportunity for teachers to ascertain the value of play for social skills, vocabulary development, and the encouragement of creativity within the curriculum.

The opportunity Annie had to be involved in an outdoor learning programme was professionally and personally beneficial to her. In her teaching role, she adopted outdoor practices to benefit the children in her care. She became confident teaching in the outdoors as a result of the mentoring and substantial engagement with the local area. Additionally, Annie's own family benefited from her newfound enthusiasm for the outdoors. They now go camping and complete environmental art projects.

Whilst this case study focused on one female primary school teacher, Annie is testament to the fact that women are likely to be interested in the outdoors and incorporate it in their teaching. Perhaps all that teachers need is some simple instruction in how to utilize outdoor pedagogy. The message behind this chapter is simple—empower the teachers in our primary schools with the skills to get outside and teach. Provide them with the skills to teach and learn outside the box.

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44

From the Classroom to the Cow: What We Have Learnt About Learning through School-Farm Cooperation in Norway

Linda Jolly and Sidsel Sandberg

It is a Thursday in January. A visitor to the Hegli Farm outside of Oslo might get the impression of a chaotic anthill. Teenagers are running back and forth in the barnyard between the buildings, carrying wood for the stoves and dishes for the tables. Others are clearing paths in the snow and placing torches along the way. Some students are bringing food scraps to the chickens and pigs. Down by the new barn, some pupils are forking the silo fodder to the cows lined up along the feeding trough.

The teenagers belong to one of the grade 10 classes, the last year at the local junior high school. It is their fourth week at the farm during their three years at the school. They have done most of the tasks before, but this time it is different. Tomorrow evening is the feast they have planned for their grandparents. The students will fetch around 30 guests from the main road, with horse and sleigh if the snow is deep enough. The grandparents will be met at the entrance of the farmhouse, built in 1750, by a team of students who will help them up the steps, take their coats and scarfs, and lead them into the drawing room where there will be a fire burning on the open hearth. There, another group will welcome them with a warm drink made from the berries harvested on the farm last fall. When the student with the guest list sees that all have

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L. Jolly (✉)
Department of Teacher Education, Norwegian University of Life Sciences,
Ås, Norway

S. Sandberg
Nannestad Junior High School, Nannestad, Norway

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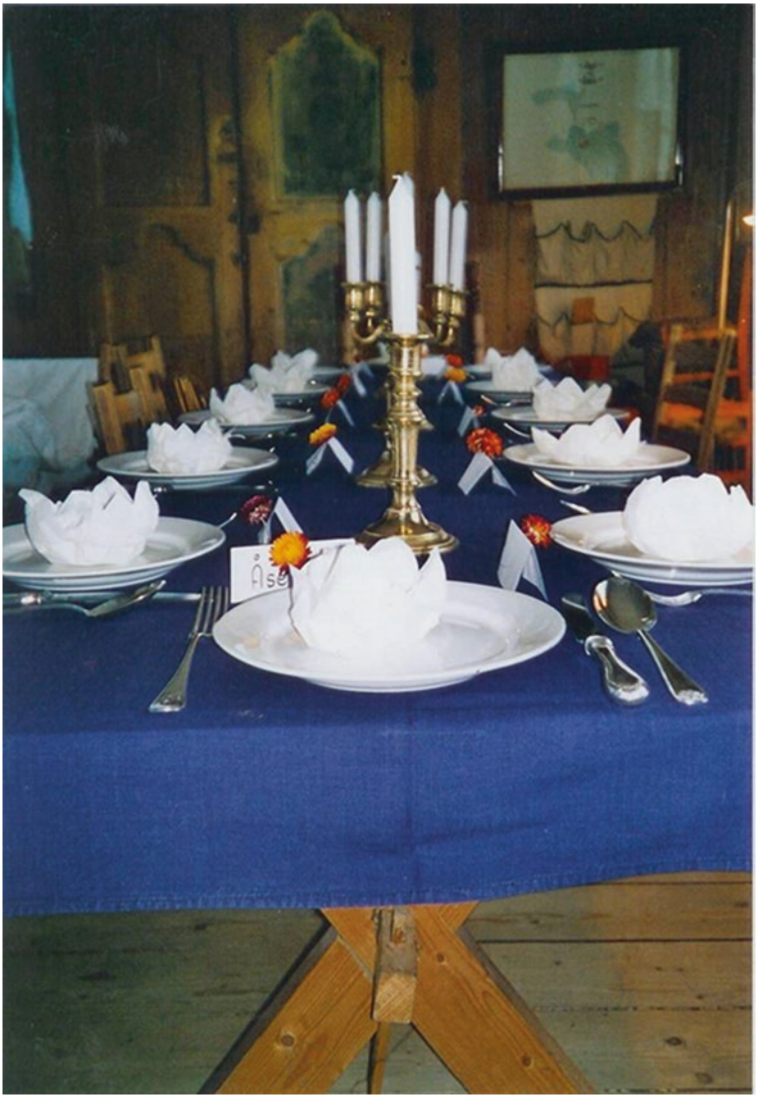

Fig. 44.1 The table is set for the grandparents' dinner (Photo credit: Sidsel Sandberg)

arrived, she or he will ring a bell and fill the expectant silence with a little speech about what the guests have in store for the next few hours (Fig. 44.1).

The class has worked all week to plan an evening with a meal cooked mostly from raw foods from the farm that they have helped to produce, as well as a programme with song, perhaps poetry, musical performance, and stories about what they have learnt during their weeks on the farm. The observant visitor will discern the figure of a little woman, standing behind the students, ready to prompt them and to encourage them. This is the farmer and teacher at Hegli, Sidsel Sandberg. As a classroom teacher many years earlier at the school, she was tired of bringing bits and pieces from the farm to the classroom to teach the students about plants or about the soil and animals. She dreamed of what these youngsters could learn on the farm from first-hand experience. This project still glows of her vision. Sidsel's vision started with her own childhood in a family where hands were mostly used for holding books and playing the piano. At the cabin her grandfather built, Sidsel visited the neighbouring *støl*, the Norwegian word for summer farms in the mountains. There she learnt to milk the cows and make cheese. The joy of working with animals in practical work became her life task. Now, when the distance between food production and the next generation has become so great, she uses her farm for production of both food and hands-on experience. Education in sustainable development depends on a basic understanding of life processes. A better setting for learning about the conditions for sustainability is difficult to find!

What kind of outdoor education is this? Let us leave the farm and the festive dinner to turn to the background and the national project that served as a midwife for this and many other projects across Norway.

Living School

In 1995, The Norwegian Ministry of Education began planning a new curriculum for the obligatory grade school and junior high school. Some of the staff and students at the Agricultural University looked at the sketches for the new curriculum and recognized the need for new, or rather renewed arenas for learning. The curriculum required teaching about food plants and farm animals, as well as activities such as sowing seeds and cooking traditional dishes. How could teachers accomplish this within the four walls of the classroom? A survey amongst teachers and school authorities showed that there was an interest in and a need for outdoor activities such as school gardening and farm experience. School gardens had earlier been a part of the Norwegian school system, but as food became more abundant and cheap, most school gardens had disappeared. Some schools still found an opportunity for a short visit to a farm, but only a few students experienced a field trip where the farmer showed young visitors around the farm, explaining what goes on, but with the motto, "Don't touch, just look and listen."

In addition, the group at the university shared a growing concern for societal factors that left children and youth increasingly estranged from nature and agriculture as the source for human existence. Most young people have a limited understanding of where food comes from as well as little experience with practical tasks. The rapid increase in behavioural problems at school and food-related psychological disorders are just two possible outcomes of this estrangement. The lack of opportunity to *contribute to meaningful work* can also contribute to an existential crisis for young people who must not only succeed at school, but also create their own identity.

This is a part of the background for the question posed by the group of students and teachers in 1995: "How can we contribute to fostering hope, courage and resolve in children and youth so that they are able to participate in a productive way in shaping their surroundings?" In an attempt to address this question, we initiated a national project, Living School, from 1996 to 2000. Working with this project from my own experience as a biology and gardening teacher, I met Sidsel with her plans for developing a new learning arena on the farm. Sidsel's farm, Hegli, together with Nannestad Junior High School, became a pilot project for Living School and has continued to be an inspiration and example for new initiatives. Many of our teacher students learn from practice periods at Hegli with the students. Around 300 such projects with school gardens and farm-school cooperation have arisen in the courses held by the university after the Living School project ended. Each project finds its own goals and possibilities for development, but they all have in common that they take outdoor learning seriously and see it as a means to stimulate interest, increase a sense of self-efficacy, and encourage positive activity amongst their students. Let us look again at the activity at Hegli to see what kind of school day the farm can offer (Fig. 44.2).

What Is a School Day Like at Hegli Farm?

The school day begins at Hegli without a bell. The pupils come on foot to the farm that lies ten minutes from the school. They go into the *bryggerhus,* originally used for baking and washing clothes, and sit down at a long table. There is always a fire in the hearth and a cup of steaming herb tea or occasionally cacao at each place. Each student has a copy of the day's programme. They look to see what their tasks are, but there is also a theme for the day. Maybe there are rocks or small piles of soil on the table; some days it might be weeds from the garden or an article from the newspaper. At any rate, there is something to look at, think about, and discuss before the work begins. They find the instructions for each team of three students on the programme, so they start to find the tools and go to where they have their work.

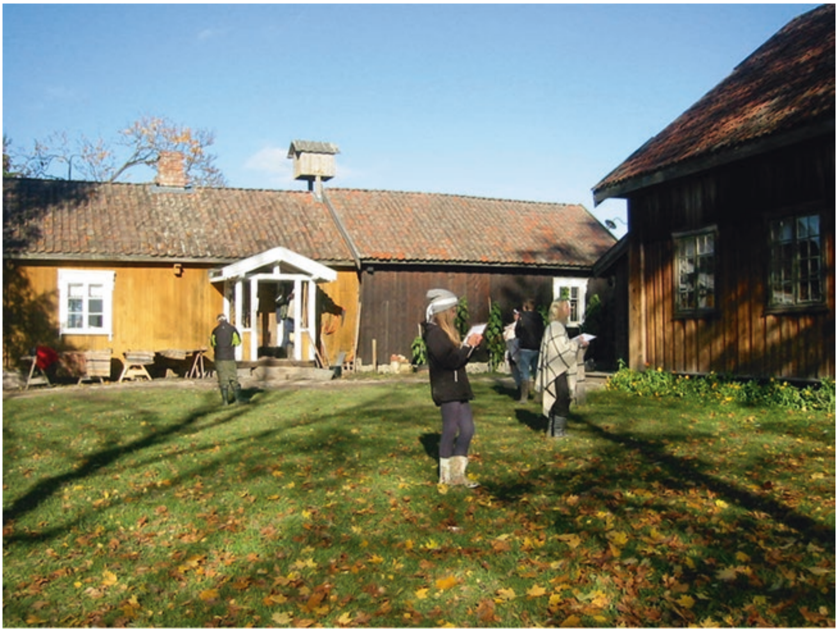

Fig. 44.2 Grade 8 pupils drawing the buildings in the barnyard (Photo credit: Sidsel Sandberg)

When the eighth graders begin at the school, they come to the farm for the first week in a smaller group. Half of the class, as many as 15, need to get acquainted with the farm, the people, the animals, and the tasks. How do they know they have come to a farm? The question leads to a discussion about what makes a farm a farm. Half of the days are spent in practical activity, whilst the farmer uses the other half for a basic orientation about farming and food production. The first day they go outside to make drawings of all the buildings on the farm. Sidsel, the teacher-farmer, shows them something of the construction of the houses and the history of this farm. They measure the circumference of the buildings, calculate the square metres, and try to find out what purpose each building has, or has had. They also count all the types of animals and draw the machinery.

On the second day, the students are sent outside to stride up the borders of all the fields and to make a map of the farm. How big is the farm? Where are the pastures, the woods, the creek? Most of the day goes to the difficult task of collecting the measurements and coming to an approximate number of acres that constitutes the whole farm area.

The third day is devoted to the people. Sidsel says that she has been a farmer here for more than 40 years. She has also been a teacher at their school almost just as many years. Most farmers in Norway must have additional jobs to keep their farms running. After Sidsel's husband died, the school decided that she needed an assistant to manage the classes of around 30 pupils every day. That had to be someone who could do all the tasks at the farm and enjoy working with youth at the same time. That person is now Bushra, who came to the farm with her son one day because Sidsel had asked the student if he (not she) could cook some Pakistani food. He said "I can't, but my mother can". His mother, Bushra made the food together with the pupils and came back day after day to learn Norwegian. As it turned out, she could do all the tasks that belonged to the farm, as well as more, such as transforming the plastic nets from the hay balls into long ropes that the students twisted across the length of the barnyard according to her instruction! Bushra's daily work is a constant demonstration of what small farmers in other countries know about and can do. Bushra Khanam grew up in Pakistan without the possibility of going to school. At the farm, the students have contributed to teaching her Norwegian, just as she has taught them the ABCs of gardening and animal husbandry. On this day on the farm, the lesson ends by looking at farmers in Asia, Africa, and South America.

The fourth day casts a light on where all the food comes from that we do not produce ourselves in Norway. Haiti is an example. Who does the work and who owns the farm? For whom do they produce food? What food does Norway import, and what are the consequences for those who live there? There is also perhaps time for a discussion about what food scarcity has had to say for revolution and migration—currently an extremely relevant topic!

By the end of the first week, the students have made measurements, done algebra, geometry, history, geography, social studies, studied the architecture, and have become familiar with the people and the animals on the farm. Sidsel will try to sew it together the last day before they return to school. They have done some thinking about food production and the people who do it around the world. On the back of the daily programme that each student receives, there is room for individual logging with descriptions and drawings about what they have done that day and what they have learnt. The students collect the logs each day in folders so that they have a logbook of all the days they spent at the farm.

Many of the practical tasks they do during their first week at the farm will turn up again the next time their class works on the farm. One group each day has the task of making a warm meal from the produce at the farm—to be served to the class at 11.15 a.m. The menu and recipes are there, but they may need multiplication by a factor of four or five! A meal for over 30 people is to be ready in two hours! Fortunately, Bushra is also in the kitchen to help them with organizing the tasks. It is a run against the clock and they know that a hungry crowd of classmates will be waiting for the meal. They meet reality!

The other groups undertake tasks according to the time of year and weather conditions. In the spring, the main work is with the vegetable garden. They sow seeds, dig and prepare the soil with compost, transplant the seedlings, and see that the plants are watered and the soil mulched with hay or grass cuttings. In the fall there is much to harvest. The vegetables are cleaned, cut, and canned or frozen for winter use, or sold fresh on a stand at the village market. After harvesting, they cover the soil with mulch or sow a covercrop for the winter. Each week in autumn, they fire up the huge wood oven and bake bread. However, the highlight of the autumn weeks is that each week an animal on the farm is slaughtered. A retired butcher does the slaughtering as the students watch. A better biology lesson where they see all the organs and their placement in the body of the animal is difficult to find. It is especially good to go into a vegetable soup afterwards. When the meat has hanged a day or two, the students cut up, package, and label the meat.

Tasks that need attention every day, regardless of the season, are always on the programme. The cows need their silo grass and some grain; the chickens and pigs get their scraps; the eggs are collected; wood must be sawed, cleaved, and stacked; the fences repaired; the meals made and the table set; the dishes washed and the floor scrubbed—every day. In the winter, there is also time to do more in the workshop. There are carpentry repairs to do, and each student learns to weave. Dish clothes, rugs of rags, and other textiles emerge from the looms. The students even get to try their hand at spinning wool from the neighbour's sheep.

After both the morning and the afternoon sessions with practical tasks, there is a short evaluation of the effort and contribution of each student. A scale for evaluation hangs large and clear on the wall where everyone can read:

0:Not being where you are supposed to be
1:At the right place, but make a lot of difficulty
2:At the right place and do not make trouble
3:At the right place and do a little
4:At the right place but must constantly be reminded of the work
5:At the right place and working well, but slowly
6:At the right place, working surprisingly well, shows a good capacity for cooperation and joy in working

Sidsel explains to the students that on the farm there is only one rule: to be there where you have a task to do. You cannot make a farm "safe" for 30 youngsters. The only guarantee is that everyone is where they should be. Therefore, the character scale starts at zero and must improve immediately if the student is to remain on the farm. Most of the students get from four to six with the first task on Monday morning. A college student, an apprentice, or a WOOFer (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) follows the work in a given group and gives each one in the group a character accompanied by a short description as they sit around the table. Miracles happen! Youngsters who have problems at school need sometimes only a few hours to completely turn around and find that here, everyone who makes an effort can succeed. Their class teachers describe a remarkable change of attitude—overnight! After the first few days, almost all the students are going for "6 with exclamation marks."

What About Learning?

We have described what the days at Hegli Farm can look like. After many years of integrating Hegli into the routine of the school, the students seem to glide into the daily work with a certain satisfaction. Sidsel laughs and says, "The older I get, the more polite and helpful they are." However, are they learning from what they do at the farm? It is important to ask the students themselves about their experiences. In 2008, a survey of all the students in grade 10 (then five parallel classes) was conducted at school after their time at the farm was completed. A questionnaire in written form was distributed to all the teachers and filled out by 134 students (Jolly, 2009; Jolly & Krogh, 2010). In addition to some multiple-choice questions about their general understanding of the farm weeks, the open question about what they had learnt is the focus in this chapter.

The students responded to the open question with enormous variation. Many answered by naming practical skills such as taking care of animals and planting a vegetable garden. Others mentioned knowledge they had acquired such as learning about the path of crops from the soil to the table, the history of the farm, or sustainable development. Some students wrote that they had learnt they could work outside in all types of weather! There were also many comments that indicated a new change of attitude. One wrote, "I learned how much work lies behind food production" and "I learned that there is a lot you have to be able to do on a farm." The majority of the students mentioned the bonds between them that grew through working together, a new feeling of solidarity in the class. One wrote, "I can talk with everyone when we are at the farm. It is easier to be open than at school." Another reflected, "I learned that it is solidarity that gives us real strength."

Personal development was also a theme in the answers the students gave. Mastering tasks, whether it be washing the dishes after the warm meal or felling a tree, were of high importance. “I became better at cooking and planning,” is an example of how some could see their own development during the time they were at the farm. Another wrote, “I learned that I can go outside in all types of weather.” One student, most likely a very conscientious girl, with perfect handwriting, wrote, “I didn’t learn so much, just never to give up.” To find out that you can complete tasks and reach goals, reflected by these remarks, is the very definition of the concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Through research on the lives of women who had survived the concentration camps in Germany, Antonovsky (1987) came to a similar conclusion that comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness are the basis of good health and are characteristic of good learning processes. From these answers about what the students have learnt, we see that the tasks have been manageable, meaningful, and understandable for them.

We have used the experiences of the students at Hegli and of students in other farm-school projects to rethink how learning occurs. The cognitive-oriented school divides learning up into isolated subjects focusing on measurable learning results. The emphasis is on mental learning at the cost of practical and aesthetic activities in schools. However, when we looked at the process of learning on the farm, we saw that the practical tasks function as a motor for the acquisition of knowledge, as well as for changes of attitude and the feeling of self-efficacy. We see the learning at the farm as a process that begins with connecting to the work, to people, and to place, which grows through experience that entails mastering tasks and gives an impetus for reflection and a foundation for making a choice on further participation, as in the graph below (Fig. 44.3).

Our theory of learning takes its point of departure in John Dewey’s work on experiential learning (Dewey, 1916, 1938). Dewey’s own personal experience as a teacher and founder of a radically different school based on practical activity such as carpentry, gardening, cooking, and so on helped to form an understanding of learning based on a cycle of action, observation, and knowledge as a basis for judgement (Kolb, 1984).

This model for relationship-based experiential learning begins with the farm as an enterprise where the farmer plans the tasks to be done and invites the students to make a decision to participate. The outer stages of activity are designated on the outside of the circle, whereas the inside of the circle has to do with the inner participation of the student doing the task. These stages of inner participation are described as a span between polar opposite behaviours. It is the task of the teacher to lead the student through the process such that learning is facilitated and reflected.

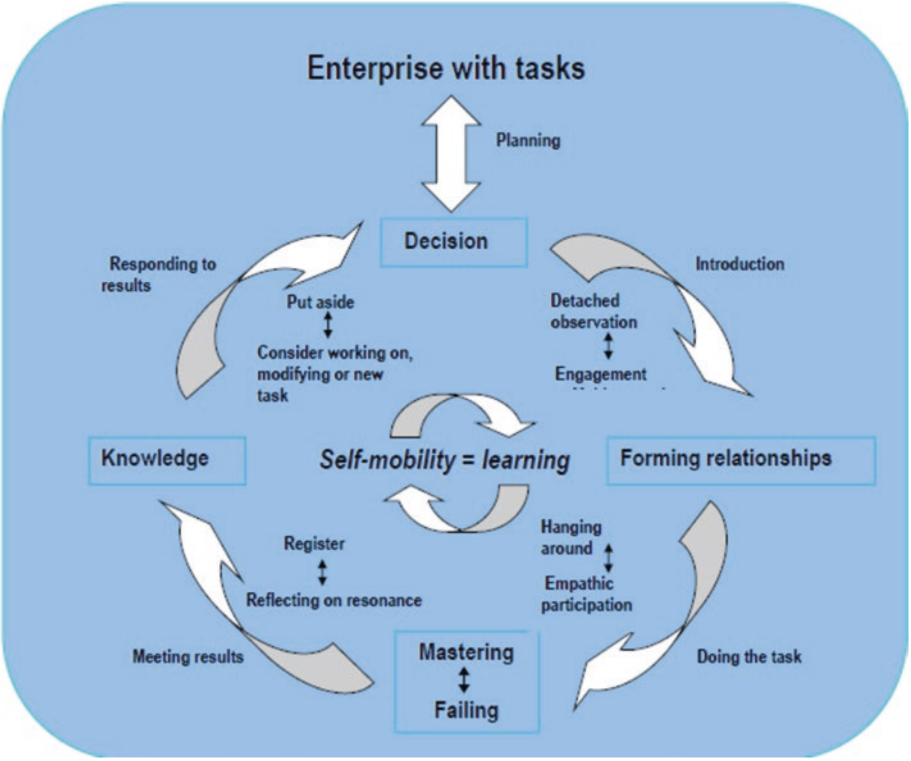
Enterprise with tasks
Planning
Decision
Responding to results
Put aside
Consider working on, modifying or new task
Introduction
Detached observation
Engagement
Knowledge
Self-mobility = learning
Forming relationships
Register
Reflecting on resonance
Hanging around
Empathic participation
Meeting results
Mastering
Failing
Doing the task

Fig. 44.3 The model for relationship-based experiential learning

The introduction to each task is where the student can see how the work is part of a larger picture and the needs at the farm. The student can throw her/himself into the work or remain detached, but participation usually starts somewhere in between.

When the work begins, the student also begins to make connections and form relationships. It might be to the soil, to seeds or to plants, to the animals, to their coworkers, and to the people on the farm. The more connections and the more intensively experienced these relationships become, the stronger their engagement may become in the task at hand.

Depending upon the student and the nature of the task, the student experiences degrees of mastering or failing in the execution of the task. This provides a resonance on which the student can reflect. As we have seen in the descriptions of the students' experiences, the result can be knowledge, skills, and attitudes that represent new discoveries for them. These realizations can in turn become the basis for a new decision, either to work on and improve the task or to choose a new one.

As the model shows, learning is described here as an ability to change, which corresponds with the definition of learning by the Norwegian researchers in pedagogy (Hiim & Hippe, 2009). Learning as self-mobility, or self-transformation as it may be called, is the key to understanding why hard, dirty work on an old farm can have such an appeal to youth at an age when they are inclined to consider brand clothing as the most important part of their lives.

What we have not discussed is the importance of farm and garden work in relation to cultivating a caretaker role for nature in the coming generations. This was the main motive for the Living School project and not any less important today! George Monbiot (2012) wrote that perhaps the largest environmental crisis is not the climate, the pollution, or desertification, but the fact that children and youth have extremely little contact and experience with nature. Moving from the classroom to the cow is one strategy for creating arenas for committed caring work with nature.

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45

Changing Girls' Lives: One Programme at a Time

Anja Whittington

Introduction

In the 1980s and 1990s, professionals and researchers examined the constraints of women's participation in leisure (Henderson, 1991, 1994; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1986, 1991; Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freysinger, 1996; Jackson & Henderson, 1995; Shaw, 1994, 1999) and also focused specifically on constraints, rationale, and benefits relevant to outdoor recreational programmes for women (Bialeschki & Henderson, 1993; Hornibrook et al., 1997; Nolan & Priest, 1993; Warren, 1985). The main constraints discussed included: lack of time and power, the responsibility of taking care of others, and lack of financial resources. Practitioners also called for a different approach to programming designed for women and a philosophy that focused on all-women's experiences. Programmes would be led by women and allow these leaders and participants to challenge gender-role stereotypes and develop skills and competence in outdoor recreational activities (Henderson, 1996; Loeffler, 1997; Mitten, 1985, 1986, 1992).

Additionally, the book *Women's Voices in Experiential Education* (Warren, 1996) was compiled and offered insights into women's experiences in experiential settings. The book added women's voices to the field and focused on the

A. Whittington (✉)
Radford University, Radford, VA, USA

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constraints, outcomes, and philosophy of women's programmes. During this period, the literature primarily focused on women's experiences and inferences were made about girls based on these findings. Only a few studies were actually conducted on recreational programmes for girls (Henderson & Grant, 1998; Henderson & King, 1998), and even less were conducted on girls' experiences in the outdoors (Culp, 1998; Porter, 1996).

Over the past ten years, I have had the privilege to work with several organizations that offer all-girls' programmes in outdoor/adventure/experiential education (OE/AE/EE) settings and have focused much of my research on the rationale, benefits, outcomes, and impacts of girls' experiences. I am an advocate for all-girls programmes and truly believe that programmes designed for girls, led by women, promote healthy development for girls. The purpose of this chapter is to serve as a collective analysis of research conducted on girls' programmes in OE/AE/EE settings. The chapter examines constraints, discusses the benefits and outcomes of girls' participation, and shares programme-planning and implementation strategies to develop girls' programmes.

Girls' Experiences

Constraints to Girls' Participation

In 1998, Culp stated that there were several constraints to girls' access to and participation in outdoor recreation. Constraints included stereotypical gender roles, differences in access and opportunities for males and females in availability of outdoor programmes, peer and family expectations, self-concept (belief that being capable and seeing themselves as a type of person who would do outdoor activities), lack of competence, and lack of female role models. In 2015, the Girls Scouts of the USA conducted a study to examine barriers to girls' participation in outdoor activities. Girls reported material and social barriers as factors impacting participation in outdoor activities. These included cost (too expensive), transportation (hard to get to), their troop did not have enough time, and/or the girls were not interested in participating in outdoor activities. Other factors included lack of knowledge about outdoor activities and troop leaders serving as gatekeepers to participation (Tsikalas, Martin, & Wright, 2015). This study serves as a reminder that women must continue to provide opportunities for girls and facilitate experiences that support girls' access to and participation in outdoor-related activities.

Benefits and Outcomes of Girls' Participation

During the past 30 years, researchers and practitioners have examined the benefits and outcomes of girls' participation in OE/AE/EE programmes (see Table 45.1). The amassment of the current research adds significantly to our understanding of the impact of programmes on girls' lives. The increase in literature has been followed with the creation and development of numerous programmes that were designed to reduce constraints and promote positive development for girls in OE/AE/EE settings. Additionally, a strong rationale has been provided to support all-girls' programmes (McKenney, Budbill, & Roberts, 2008; Whittington, Mack, Budbill, & McKenney, 2011).

Whilst programmes vary according to type—OE/AE/EE and several other terms, duration (day, weeks, months), location (all over the world), type of activity (ropes courses, mountain biking, wilderness tripping)—they have several common characteristics. These characteristics include being focused on girls, facilitated by women, the use of intentional strategies to reduce constraints, promotion of inclusiveness, and supportive of adolescent girls' development.

Table 45.1 A synthesis of outcomes of girls' participation in OE/AE/EE programmes

Outcome(s)	Authors(s)
Body image, images of beauty, freedom from stereotypes	Barr-Wilson, 2012: Budbill, 2008; DeBate & Thompson, 2005; Edwards-Leeper, 2003; Whittington, 2006; Whittington & Budbill, 2013; Whittington et al., 2011
Courage	McKenney, 1996; Porter, 1996; Whittington & Mack, 2010; Whittington & Budbill, 2013
Leadership skills	Whittington, 2006, 2011
Perseverance, strength, determination, sense of accomplishment	Long, 2001; Whittington, 2006, 2011; Whittington & Budbill, 2013
Physical activity	Galeotti, 2015; Whittington & Budbill, 2013; Whittington & Mack, 2010
Relationship building	Barr-Wilson, 2012; Culp, 1998; Hurtes, 2002; Sammet, 2010; Whittington, 2006; Whittington & Budbill, 2013; Whittington, Aspelmeier, & Budbill, 2015; Whittington et al., 2011
Resilience	Whittington et al., 2016; Whittington & Budbill, 2013
Self-esteem, confidence, self-aware	Culp, 1998; DeBate & Thompson, 2005; Galeotti, 2015; Long, 2001; Mitten; 1992; Whittington & Budbill, 2013: Whittington & Mack, 2010
Long-term impacts	Galeotti, 2015; Whittington, 2011; Whittington et al., 2016

Research indicates that participation in OE/AE/EE programmes allows girls to develop courage, leadership skills, perseverance, strength, determination, a sense of accomplishment, resilience, self-esteem, confidence, self-awareness, and participation in physical activity (Table 45.1). These outcomes demonstrate positive change in girls, some with impacts that exist one month later (Whittington et al., 2015) or years later (Barr-Wilson & Roberts, 2016; Whittington, 2011).

More contradictory results have been found concerning relationship building and freedom from stereotypes and body image. An important component of all-girls programmes includes the opportunity to develop relationships with other girls. Several studies (Barr-Wilson, 2012; Culp, 1998; Hurtes, 2002; Sammet, 2010; Whittington, 2006; Whittington & Budbill, 2013; Whittington et al., 2011) show evidence that programmes promote positive relationship building. It is important to note that research also suggests that some girls are resistant to developing positive relationships and some girls experience social outcasting, even within these small communities (Hurtes, 2002; Sammet, 2010; Whittington & Budbill, 2013; Whittington et al., 2015). One study (Whittington et al., 2015) used quantitative methods to examine girls' relationship building and found a modest change in sense of relatedness to other girls. Sense of relatedness referred to relationships and feeling connected socially. This included trust, support, comfort, and tolerance of differences (Prince-Embry, 2006). Comfort with others improved, but trust, support, and tolerance of others' differences did not show improvement. Simply putting a group of girls together does not result in change in a positive direction; intentional strategies for creating an inclusive environment must be created by programme leaders. Strategies for programme planning are discussed later in this chapter.

Research indicates that participation in OE/AE/EE programmes allow girls to challenge gender-role stereotypes and question images of beauty and body image. Early research on sex-role stereotypes (Humberstone, 1990; Pate, 1997; West-Smith, 2000) found that when participants experienced and observed nontraditional behaviours of male and female leaders, they were able to challenge their perceptions of gendered behaviour and abilities. Pate (1997) found significant differences pre- versus post-participation, for both boys and girls. Regardless of course composition (co-ed or single sex), participants from both types moved from a traditional attitude of sex-role stereotypes to a nontraditional attitude. Whittington (2006) found that participation in an extensive outdoor wilderness programme challenged girls' constructions of femininity and offered significant opportunities to defy stereotypes. Whilst qualitative evidence exists on how these experiences impact girls' notions of femininity, challenge gender stereotypes, and question body image, quantitative evidence is less significant. One study (Whittington & Budbill, 2013) measured the impacts of girls' participation in a mountain bike programme. Overall, 38% of the girls stated they felt more confident about *how I feel about my body*. Another study (Galeotti, 2015) analysed the impacts of a girls running programme on girls' post-participation, and when asked if the programme *helped me like my body*, 30.8% said *very much* and 30.7% stated *sometimes*. Interestingly, the same programme analysed pre- and post-outcomes ten years earlier and found significant improvements after participation on body size satisfaction and eating attitude/behaviours (DeBate & Thompson, 2005). Barr-Wilson and Roberts (2016) found that participation in an outdoor adventure programme positively affected their body image and healthy living during, immediately, and three years after their participation. Instructors, other girls on the course, and nature, all supported these outcomes. Regardless of the mixed outcomes, evidence suggests that there is some change and even small changes are meaningful in short-intervention programmes.

Programme-Planning Strategies

Simply offering an all-girls programme does not result in change. Appropriate practices must be implemented to promote change in a positive direction. "Facilitators working with adolescent girls should seek training that is specific to the issues identified by and faced by girls to increase awareness and sensitivity" (Hurtes, 2002, p. 119). In the past 20 years, the literature has examined a variety of practices for creating programmes for girls. Three key strategies from the literature suggest developing safe spaces to promote relationship building with other girls, women leaders who serve as positive role models, and technical skill development.

Intentional strategies must be implemented in order to foster relationship building with girls. All-girls programmes do not simply create an inclusive environment—an inclusive environment must be encouraged by leaders. Friends serve as the most important domain for adolescent girls' culture (Hurtes, 2002), and creating an emotionally safe course that values and promotes positive relational development is key (Sammet, 2010). Jordan (1992) recommended that a leader promotes communication through trust-building activities, creating positive group environments, and handling conflict. It is important to note that some girls remain resistant to programmatic interventions and others are treated as outcasts from the group (Hurtes, 2002; Sammet, 2010; Whittington & Budbill, 2013; Whittington et al., 2015). Outcomes for girls who develop authentic relationships with their peers and do not participate in relational aggression reported feeling more trustful of peers, were able to share their feelings and opinions, and were more optimistic about making new friends (Sammet, 2010).

Staff play a significant role in fostering relationships within the group. Effective instructors participate in training on relational aggression (Sammet, 2010) and are educated on specific strategies to support girls' healthy relationship building. Specific strategies include intentional relationship-building activities, creating an inclusive environment, proactive and creative group management, and teaching communication and conflict resolution skills (McKenney et al., 2008; Whittington et al., 2011). Other activities include welcome, introductions, getting-to-know-you activities, games, setting a tone of safety and inclusiveness, structured time for relationship building, and opportunities for self-expression (Whittington & Mack, 2010). Staff that "foster inclusive communication and teach communication and conflict resolution skills" can promote courage skills in girls (Whittington & Mack, 2010, p. 178).

Another key element for all-girls programmes includes strong adult leadership and programmes that are led by women (McKenney et al., 2008; Whittington et al., 2011). Key characteristics of a leader include competence, experience, and understanding of adolescent girls' development. The leader designs lessons that convey a strong message of empowerment, health, and self-worth, followed by practice activities that reinforce lessons (Galeotti, 2015). Leaders offer girls choice during the programme and allow girls to choose how they would like to participate (McKenney et al., 2008). In the Hurtes (2002) article, one girl stated good leaders "let us make our own choices, but they warn us if we're going to screw something up" (p. 114). The concept of providing choice is complicated because many of our choices are influenced by "habit, inaccurate self-perception, gender roles, or social conformity" (Tyson & Asmus, 2008, p. 270). Tyson and Asmus suggested that many people do not have the skills or awareness to make authentic choices, identify and express their needs and wants, and to voice or act on them. A conscious choice requires an

> awareness that a choice exists; belief that one has the power to impact the outcome; understanding of one's values, wants and needs; ability to distinguish between short-term and long-term goals; information necessary to make informed choices; [and] courage and self-efficacy to voice desires and/or take action (Tyson & Asmus, 2008, p. 271).

A leadership style where women help girls develop skills to make conscious choices may promote girls' self-awareness and allow girls to make decisions based on their own awareness, not on social conformity.

Another important component of all-girls programmes is the opportunity to gain competence in technical skill development. Research indicates that women and girls' sense of competence and actual competence is misaligned and that sense of competence is much lower than actual competence (McKenney et al., 2008; Warren & Loeffler, 2006). These feelings impact girls' ability to view themselves as outdoor recreationalists and potential leaders in the field of outdoor recreation. Just as women have supported women's technical skill development (Loeffler, 1997; Warren & Loeffler, 2006), women leaders of outdoor programmes for girls must support technical skill development for girls. Strategies for promoting technical skill development for girls include:

1. the creation of a supportive and collaborative environment in which competition is minimized (Warren & Loeffler, 2006);
2. the use of intentional curriculum by instructors who understand the importance of developing girls' sense of competence through technical skill development;
3. opportunities for reflection in which girls can process their experiences as they develop technical skills; and
4. the presence of female role models who demonstrate technical competency, yet also demystify that competency and share their own struggles and challenges with participants (McKenney et al., 2008, p. 545; Warren, 1996).

Research indicates that there are many strategies to create all-girls programmes and several activities can be incorporated to support positive outcomes. The research is limited in that it focuses primarily on Caucasian girls and does not factor in the diverse background of each girl. Programmes are unique in that they are developed with specific goals and objectives in mind, serve girls from various backgrounds (e.g., at-risk, differing socioeconomic status), and use different mediums for accomplishing their goals and objectives (day/overnight, wilderness programmes, ropes courses, etc.). Continued research on girls' experiences is necessary to understand the programme strategies most effective in supporting girls' development.

Conclusion

Girls' programmes that employ appropriate strategies for programme planning serve as an important space for promoting healthy development in girls. Outcomes may include courage, leadership skills, perseverance, strength, determination, a sense of accomplishment, resilience, self-esteem, confidence, self-awareness, participation in physical activity, changes in perceptions of body image and images of beauty, the offer of freedom from gender-role stereotypes, the offer of interaction with female role models, and helping girls develop healthy relationships with other girls and women.

These programmes, created and led by women, address constraints experienced by girls: stereotypical gender roles, lack of access and opportunity, peer and family expectations, self-concept, lack of competence, lack of female role models, material and social barriers, expense, and lack of interest, experience or knowledge of outdoor-related activities (Culp, 1998; Tsikalas et al., 2015). Reducing or removing these barriers and implementing best practices for programme planning allow girls to view themselves as outdoorswomen, adventure recreationalists, and possibly even leaders in the field of OE/AE/EE. Continued research on the long-term impacts of girls' participation in programmes and the influence their experiences have on their lives as adult women would add significantly to the literature on girls' participation.

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Empowering Girls and Women Through Experiential Education: A Peace Corps Volunteer's Story

Susie K. Barr-Wilson

Introduction

Experiential education, as a form of positive community recreation, offers valuable contributions to the larger concept of community development. From a recreation programming perspective, community development "rests on the basic assumption that individuals should be partners in determining their leisure destiny" (Edgington, Hanson, Edgington, & Hudson, 1998, as cited in DeGraaf, Jordan, & DeGraaf, 1999, p. 34; Rossman, 1995, as cited in DeGraaf, et al., 1999, p. 34). As outdoor and experiential educators, we strive to meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve. How might our process for offering experiential education opportunities vary in different countries considering cultural norms, community needs/priorities, and nationwide challenges? What can programme development look like in a developing country, and what obstacles exist for the sustainability of such programmes?

I served as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in rural South Africa from 2007 to 2009, working with four women educators to design and implement a young women's empowerment and experiential education programme, emphasizing HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. The goal of this chapter is to explore programme development in an international setting, offering a cultural perspective based on my experience working with girls and women in a developing country. Recommendations for future programme

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S. K. Barr-Wilson (✉)
Girl Scouts of Western Washington, Bellingham, WA, USA

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development in international learning environments based on personal reflection and scholarly literature, including considerations for sustainability, are also included in this case study. Grounded in experiential learning, the insights gained from this experience can be applied in the larger context of outdoor education. Moreover, this chapter provides a forum to honour the experiences and give voice to the girls and women of a local community in South Africa.

Peace Corps: South Africa

Founded by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, the Peace Corps is an international service organization that provides volunteer opportunities for US citizens (Peace Corps, 2014). Peace Corps Volunteers typically serve abroad for approximately two years and are encouraged to find their niche in their assigned local community whilst working in one of six programme areas: education, health, environment, youth in development, community economic development, or agriculture (Peace Corps, 2013). Peace Corps Volunteers are stationed throughout the world: Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Asia, the Caribbean, North Africa and the Middle East, and the Pacific Islands (Peace Corps, 2013).

Location and Demographics

I was placed in the rural village of Mokuruanyane, South Africa. Mokuruanyane, also referred to as "Abbotspoort," is located in the northeastern region of the country, in the Limpopo province. Mokuruanyane is considered part of a larger community of Northern Sotho villages, the combined population of which is approximately 15,000. Residents of Mokuruanyane primarily speak Sepedi and Setswana, with English being taught in schools. At the time of my Peace Corps service (2007–2009), many people in the village were unemployed; some farmed, others had a family member who lived and worked in a nearby town, and several received old-age pension and child support grants.

In 2007, the village health clinic stated that one in every four people tested were HIV positive. The Lephalale Municipal area, which includes Mokuruanyane, reported that the region continued to struggle with high levels of HIV/AIDS in 2013 (i.e., 30.4% prevalence estimate), as well as tuberculosis, unemployment, and illiteracy (Lephalale Municipality, 2013). South Africa as a whole has the greatest population of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world, and was estimated to have an 18.9% prevalence rate in 2014 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). Globally, 60% of all new infections reported in young people are found in adolescent girls and young women aged 15–24 (UNAIDS, 2014). Sub-Saharan Africa includes 80% of all young women living with HIV, and young women aged 15–24 in Sub-Saharan Africa are twice as likely as young men to have HIV (UNAIDS, 2014).

Work Area

Considering the high percentage of people living with HIV/AIDS, the Peace Corps assigned me to Mokuruanyane as a Health Volunteer, and more specifically, to the Community and HIV/AIDS Outreach Project. Peace Corps encourages volunteers to begin with a community needs assessment, a "systematic inquiry about needs, attitudes, behaviours, and patterns" of potential programme participants (DeGraaf et al., 1999, p. 75). The idea is to first gather information about a community (e.g., demographic data, current activities, skills, needs, values, and interests) and then develop programmes that support the community's overall well-being.

In talking with community members such as school principals and educators, I learned that the community faced multiple challenges in addition to the high HIV/AIDS prevalence: adolescent girls in the village often became young mothers and stopped attending school, older girls gathered outside the local tavern to be propositioned by men in exchange for money (increasing their risk of becoming pregnant or contracting HIV), and there were very few extracurricular activities available for children and youth. Recognizing a need for sex education and HIV/AIDS prevention, I pursued this possible focus as my primary project for the next two years. My interest and prior experience with young women's empowerment and youth recreation programming laid the foundation for programme development within this community.

Involving Community Members

A key step in successful community development and establishing recreation programmes for new communities is partnering with local community leaders in programme design and implementation (DeGraaf et al., 1999). Seeing that the schools were highly respected by Mokuruanyane residents, I first approached the two principals of the lower primary and upper primary schools about developing a weekly after-school girls' empowerment programme focused on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention. Both principals, Mr. Moruane and Mr. Mongwe, were enthusiastically supportive of the idea and confirmed that there was a definite need in the village to empower young women to make healthy choices.

Next, I spoke with women educators from both schools to hear their perspectives. The educators further verified that developing a young women's empowerment programme would address a great need in Mokuruanyane, and some expressed interest and excitement in being involved in its design and leadership. I then reached out to Abbotspoort Home and Community-Based Care (HCBC), a local nongovernmental organization that provided health services to adults with HIV/AIDS, to solicit their feedback. The administrators were also supportive of starting a girls' programme and offered to provide two staff members to assist with its leadership. Finally, I met with the village leaders, particularly the neighbourhood chief and council members, to propose the young women's empowerment programme and request their approval. With the support of the community, official endorsement from the Peace Corps, and inspiration from other Peace Corps Volunteer projects, I began the next phase of programme development.

Chrysalis Girls Club

The programme development team included two educators from Abbotspoort Higher Primary School, two educators from Jacob Langa Lower Primary School, and four care providers from the HCBC. The programme was designed for seventh-grade girls in Mokuruanyane and was called Chrysalis Girls Club (CGC). Using a chrysalis as a poignant metaphor, the purpose of CGC was to encourage, educate, and empower girls through the exciting, yet challenging, transformation process of adolescence. Weekly recreation activities, with applicable life lessons, helped the girls become confident, educated, self-aware, and independent young women. CGC aimed to provide girls with the long-term benefits of positive relationships; increased self-esteem; heightened awareness of their environment, community, and world; HIV/AIDS knowledge and prevention methods; and practical life skills. By the completion of the programme, the goal was to empower the girls to begin their next adventure, secondary school, having transitioned from *caterpillars* to *butterflies*.

Funding

A critical component of programme development involves securing sufficient funding for the implementation and sustenance of the programme. The US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) provides international funding to prevent new infections, and to treat and care for HIV-infected people. Since CGC emphasized HIV/AIDS prevention, I worked in tandem with community leaders to apply for PEPFAR funding through the Peace Corps to secure supplies and equipment for CGC. Providing evidence of the need for HIV/AIDS prevention and the support of the community, we were granted funding to organize events and purchase materials totalling US$6400 in 2008 and US$7100 in 2009.

Leadership and Management

In 2008, CGC started with eight volunteer programme leaders: four women educators from the primary schools and four women from Abbotspoort HCBC. However, the HCBC leaders' caregiving and health-promotion responsibilities did not allow them to regularly participate in the newly developed programme, so in 2009, we adapted our leadership model to have only the four women educators leading CGC. I found it essential that the programme leaders be people who were committed to the success and further development of CGC. Abbotspoort HCBC remained supportive of our efforts, but successful programmes require having the *right people* in the *right seats* on the bus (Collins, 2001). In this case, the *bus*, or programme direction, was CGC, and the four women educators were the most suitable programme leaders because of their skills, experience, and dedication to promoting healthy lifestyles and positive well-being in adolescent girls. CGC leaders included Constance Moatshe, Jeanette Majadibodu, Beauty Hlako, and Elizabeth Tukakgomo (Fig. 46.1 and Fig. 46.2).

Involving key community members as much as possible in design and implementation provides leaders with a sense of ownership of the programme (DeGraaf et al., 1999). The four educators ultimately took on the majority of the club's management and implementation, with me primarily providing assistance as needed. Prior to our first CGC gathering each year and at least once a month during the programme, I met with the four leaders to discuss weekly activity facilitation, general club structure and management, and to provide basic leadership training. Training topics included understanding CGC, recommended approach and attitude for working with adolescent girls,

Fig. 46.1 Chrysalis Girls Club (CGC) leaders Constance Moatshe and Jeanette Majadibodu

Fig. 46.2 Chrysalis Girls Club (CGC) leaders Beauty Hlako and Elizabeth Tukakgomo

group facilitation, and planning and organization. For the first year of the programme (2008), I played a more direct leadership role in its management to help ensure that the vision, goals, and objectives were understood and effectively executed. Upon beginning our second year (2009), I assumed much more of a supportive position, empowering the leaders to move towards fully leading the programme themselves. Embracing more of the direct role as programme leaders allowed the educators to acquire the knowledge, skills, confidence, and experience to continue CGC after I left South Africa.

In the programme's second year, we implemented a leadership programme for the girls as well. The adult leaders nominated four girls, each term, to serve on the CGC Youth Leadership Team. The Youth Leadership Team prepared supplies for weekly gatherings, took attendance, and assisted in facilitating club activities, including team building exercises and self-defence techniques. This leadership opportunity empowered club members to take ownership over their programme and further develop public speaking and presentation skills. Working with the women educators, the CGC Youth Leadership Team aimed to promote young women's empowerment and HIV/AIDS awareness, and prevention in the larger community of Mokuruanyane. This process of involving youth in efforts for positive change is known as community youth development, an approach that emphasizes "young people themselves becoming community change agents, fully capable of improving their communities not only for the young but also for families and other community members" (Cohen, Chavez, & Chehimi, 2007, p. 78).

After the first year, we improved the programme structure to reflect feedback from CGC leaders and girls. In its first season, the girls were divided into two groups, each participating in CGC for a total of 27 scheduled sessions, four optional gatherings, and a final awards ceremony. In the second year, we divided the girls into three programme sections, each section participating in CGC for one ten-week term plus special events held during the final quarter of the year. This change made weekly gatherings more manageable due to the smaller number of girls, and it was less complicated to adapt the schedule if needed. We prioritized, combined, and modified activities to fit within the shorter ten-week structure, and the programme leaders scheduled additional special events according to their discretion.

Programme Goals and Activities

CGC was developed as a weekly young women's empowerment programme for seventh-grade girls in Mokuruanyane. Employing experiential education, activities involved team building, HIV/AIDS education, health and fitness, life skills for daily living, crafts, and community service. Our first session of CGC introduced girls to the concept of the programme and featured introductory games and activities that involved music, dance, and movement—all integral components of South African culture. We next invited the girls to agree to a group contract or *Full Value Commitment*. Adult leaders presented the girls with membership folders, including a CGC schedule, pledge card, membership survey, and membership card. Working with the four women educators, we developed five goals to guide our remaining weekly activities.

Goal #1: Participants will increase self-actualization, more fully realizing their true potential for success.

Identifying goal setting as essential to success, programme leaders agreed that the second CGC session should focus on goal setting and supporting one another in pursuing personal ambitions. First, the girls participated in a team building partner-tag game, followed by a discussion about setting a goal and developing strategies to reach that goal. The girls completed a reflection and affirmation activity, identifying short-term and long-term personal goals, sharing their goals in small groups, and writing notes to other girls that encouraged them to follow their dreams. Finally, the girls composed essays about their ambitions as a take-home project. Some girls chose to write more about individual goals, whereas others focused on goals related to their community. Lydia proclaimed:

> At this stage I'm studying to become a manager. My ambition is to run a big company … I'm studying very hard so that I can achieve my goals … I want my parents to be proud of me and I want to thank myself at the end. In my life I want to make changes … I want to offer free services to my community so that things can be easier and decrease poverty … I want to see my community developed and open jobs for unemployed people. I will open workshops for people who are suffering from HIV/AIDS … We have a lack/shortage of nurses in our clinic so I can make a difference.

A measurable objective for increasing self-actualization was participants reporting greater knowledge or ability in various life skills and hands-on, creative expression projects. The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) defines life skills as:

> psychosocial abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands of everyday life … [including] cognitive

> skills for analyzing and using information … skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself, and interpersonal skills for communicating and interacting effectively with others. (UNICEF, 2003, para. 3)

One of the most well-received life skills in CGC was the theory and practice of self-defence. From 2004 to 2010, South Africa had the highest percentage of reported rape in the world (NationMaster, 2016) with an estimated 40% of women being raped in their lifetime (Middleton, 2011). In 2008, I recruited a self-defence instructor from the Johannesburg area, and in 2009, the adult leaders and Youth Leadership Team presented the information and hands-on safety techniques themselves. Both girls and leaders expressed appreciation for learning self-defence, recognizing the ability to protect oneself as an important skill to have, and one they planned to share with other girls and women in the village.

Additional life skills sessions included critical thinking through challenging course initiatives (e.g., Human Knot, Hula Hoop Pass, Magic Carpet, Blob Tag, trust walks), problem-solving through map-reading and orienteering that featured a village scavenger hunt, a session on peer pressure and relationships that included making friendship bracelets, and a lesson on understanding and communicating with boys. Various creative expression projects were incorporated into both programme years, including the crafts of making handmade cards, making necklaces with coloured beads representing the South African flag, and tie-dying bandanas printed with butterflies and the CGC programme title.

Special events incorporated into the theme of self-actualization included community service projects, since contributing to one's greater community can offer a sense of personal accomplishment and self-worth. One service project was Random Acts of Kindness, in which girls club members divided into small groups and went out into the community to offer support to members of the village (e.g., sweeping floors, gathering water, caring for younger children). Other service-related activities included a short hike to the nearby river to increase nature appreciation, followed by a session on environmental awareness that involved reading *The Lorax* and picking up litter near the girls' school.

Goal #2: Participants will develop a deeper understanding of women's empowerment.

Adult leaders operationalized women's empowerment to mean giving women power or ability, helping women become *aware* of their power or ability and being the best they can be, and ultimately possessing the strength, success, and confidence to achieve their goals. In a session focused on women's empowerment, girls explored what it meant to be an *empowered woman* through conversations with programme leaders and each other, identifying examples of empowered women role models and creating posters with qualities of empowered women. Applying their burgeoning ideas, participants decoupaged pictures and positive phrases about empowerment on an empty tin can, to be used as a pencil holder and regular reminder of *their* potential to become empowered women and to strive to achieve their goals.

Participants also reflected on their ideas of women's empowerment through a written essay and in their final evaluation of CGC. As Daphney described:

> An empowered woman is when [she] believe[s in] herself [to] do something, [she] will do it with … all [her] power, because [she] want[s] people to know her story. Every woman can be empowered … If [the] teacher say[s] something and you [put] … up your hand, you empower yourself … You empower … yourself if you [become] President of South Africa.

Goal #3: Participants will increase knowledge of women's health and physiological processes.

In 2008, girls club activities related to general health included physical fitness, relay races, Ultimate Frisbee, eating healthily, and discussing the effects of alcohol. Both 2008 and 2009 girls club years included the health benefits and practice of yoga, and more comprehensively both years addressed topics specific to women's health.

Building an after-school girls programme with women leaders allowed the women and girls to discuss sensitive topics that were not typically discussed in public. Puberty and menstruation, for example, were often considered mysterious and unmentionable. Tukakgomo, one of the women leaders shared, "When I first started menstruating, I thought I was dying!" Due to this lack of information and open dialogue, as well as the fact that adolescent girls can experience increased body image concerns due to weight gain associated with menarche (Abraham, Boyd, Lal, Luscombe, & Taylor, 2009), we planned a few CGC sessions specifically focused on menstruation.

Menstruation lessons presented an overview of the physical and emotional stages of the menstrual cycle, the connection between a woman's menstrual cycle and nature (i.e., parallels to the lunar cycle), and practical guidelines for management and self-care (e.g., feminine hygiene products). Experiential activities included making Moon Beads, a craft project using different coloured beads to represent the stages of the menstrual cycle, and Moon Diaries, a journal designed for girls to write daily thoughts about their cycles and general life experiences. Open discussions normalized the experience, and creative art projects helped increase girls' appreciation for their menstrual cycles as a unique and special aspect of being a woman.

Goal #4: Participants will increase knowledge of HIV/AIDS and their role in helping prevent further transmission of the virus.

Since HIV/AIDS prevention is linked to comprehensive sex education, we chose to focus three sessions of CGC on sex-related topics: sex education, foetal development, and HIV/AIDS. Sex was another topic not commonly discussed in Mokuruanyane, and certainly not with an opportunity for questions. However, it is worth noting that the seventh-grade girls in both programme years generally had a more accurate understanding of sex than the adults in the village did at their age. For example, our girls club adult leader, Tukakgomo, grew up believing in earnest what she had been taught as a child, "Babies came from airplanes."

The sex education session involved basic female and male anatomy and physiology, defining sexual intercourse, birth control methods including introducing both male and female condoms provided by the local health clinic, and an opportunity for questions and answers. Continuing the conversations about women's health and sex education, programme leaders facilitated a session on foetal development and the physiological processes of pregnancy. Providing an opportunity for hands-on learning, we used allotted funding to purchase life-size, dark-skinned foetal models for the girls to explore, including a baby's size in utero at seven weeks, eight weeks, nine weeks, ten weeks, three months, five months, six months, and seven months.

In the HIV/AIDS sessions, girls learned about the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Mokuruanyane and South Africa, methods of transmission and prevention, myths and facts about HIV/AIDS, and they had another chance to openly ask questions in a safe environment. This opportunity allowed girls to pose such questions as, "Is it true that condoms can give you HIV? That's what I heard on the radio." As with the sessions on menstruation, adult leaders felt liberated and empowered to be able to respond to these questions, sharing their knowledge and wisdom with the girls to help them understand the truth about sex, and preventing HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies. Girls processed their insights about HIV/AIDS prevention through written reflection, and in 2008, participants beaded HIV/AIDS symbol key chains. As a special project in tandem with student artists from the secondary school, girls in 2008 also designed and painted an HIV/AIDS mural on an outside wall of Abbotspoort Higher Primary School with their chosen message, "Love an HIV Positive Person as You Love Yourself."

Goal #5: Participants will increase appreciation for being young women.

Throughout the entire programme, the adult leaders aimed to help girls develop greater appreciation for being young women. Identifying positive body image as one aspect of this appreciation, the girls participated in a discussion specifically on body image in 2008, exploring the idea of *real beauty* (i.e., internal vs. external beauty). Body image amongst adolescent girls is an international concern (Knauss, Paxton, & Alsaker, 2008; Mooney, Farley, & Strugnell, 2009; Sabbah et al., 2009; Tiggemann & Miller, 2010), so this topic offered the opportunity for adult leaders to affirm the girls for being beautiful just as they were. Although this was not a separate session in 2009, programme leaders incorporated the messages of real beauty and positive body image into other club meetings, such as those addressing women's empowerment and menstruation.

Since CGC was designed specifically for seventh-grade girls, members automatically felt recognized and valued for fitting this demographic and receiving member-only gifts, including their girls club folders and cards, weekly snacks, and prizes. Similarly, at the end of each year, the girls were celebrated with a special CGC Awards Ceremony planned and implemented by the girls and programme leaders, featuring singing, dancing, food, and certificates of accomplishment. Family members, educators, and community members attended the event to congratulate the girls on becoming *butterflies*.

Finally, one of the greatest opportunities for girls club members to increase appreciation for being young women was the National Women's Day celebration. When working in partnership with local leaders and residents, schools in rural areas can have a positive impact on overall community development (Miller, 1995). In 2008, CGC coordinated with Abbotspoort HCBC and the Abbotspoort Health Clinic to offer a village-wide event for all women and girls. The clinic presented information on women's health and allowed the event to be held on their property; the HCBC provided food, a tent, chairs, and a sound system; CGC members and leaders spoke about women's empowerment, demonstrated self-defence techniques, and taught empowerment-related crafts to the Women's Day attendees. The clinic, HCBC, and primary schools independently offered valuable services to the community, but collaborating on one special event allowed the three organizations to enhance their ability to make a positive difference in the village. The best part, to me, was my role in the process—rather than directing, I spoke to each organization and introduced key members to begin the planning process. The girls club programme leaders, clinic staff, and HCBC representatives took it from there and offered an informative, motivating, well-received event, attended by over 100 people! Of any single programme day throughout my Peace Corps experience, the National Women's Day celebration felt the most worthwhile, successful, and fully embraced by the people of Mokuruanyane.

Programme Impact and Sustainability

A total of 86 girls participated in CGC, in 2008, approximately once a week for nine months. A total of 78 new girls participated in 2009, each for a ten-week session plus special events and celebrations. I ended my Peace Corps service in March 2009, but the four women educators continued to successfully facilitate the programme throughout the calendar year. CGC participants were given the opportunity to share their learnings after each day, and at the conclusion of the programme, through written reflection. After the women's empowerment session, Sophia shared, "I learned about empowerment, that it means to give me more power and strength." Concluding the programme, Precious recognized, "I have been an empowered woman by helping others [who] need help…[and after learning about menstruation] I see the importance [of] 'knowledge is power.'" Finally, Francina concluded, "When I start[ed]…CGC, I was a caterpillar but now I am a butterfly…I am [an] empowered human…I will never forget CGC, because [it] change[d] my life."

At the 2008 CGC Awards Ceremony, Principal Moruane proudly reported that all of the seventh-grade girls had completed the school year and none had "fallen pregnant" or contracted HIV, thanks to the success of this programme. Near the beginning of the second programme year, CGC leader Moatshe attested:

> [CGC] gives [girls] the opportunity to build positive relationships among themselves and their leaders and it teaches them about true friendship … They learn to use their minds and to think for themselves … They learn that *Knowledge IS Power* and that unity is strength. They are taught to have confidence in

> themselves, not to be afraid to express their emotions, and to be able to speak in public … They learn that clear communication is best and that silence needs to be broken.

After facilitating CGC through November 2009, eight months after my departure, adult leaders informed me that they did not continue the programme in the same format the following year. Rather than organizing a structured club for new seventh graders, the women educators made themselves available as informal mentors and resources for the 2008 and 2009 programme graduates. Girls approached the women on an individual basis to seek guidance, and the educators felt valued in their ability to create a safe space for the girls to feel supported and appreciated. Following my Peace Corps service, CGC leader Hlako shared in a letter:

> The club has established a good relationship between me and the girls, 'cause [*sic*] some of them still come to me and ask for some advices [*sic*] … I was so touched by this girl, Dorah Kwadi … One day, early in the morning before … school start[ed], she came to my office and ask[ed] … to call her mom and tell her to [bring] her asthmatic medication … so I help[ed] her to call her mom. I was happy that I … helped her. I feel so good when these kids put their trust and love in me.

When asked about their reasons for choosing not to continue CGC as a structured programme, Hlako mentioned financial limitations but acknowledged that several no-cost or low-cost activities were still possible. She described the greater challenge to continuing the programme being the time constraints of the leaders as busy primary school educators. In reflection, this comment indicated that although the leaders demonstrated increasing interest and ownership over the programme, whilst I was in South Africa, there might have been a need for further adoption of programme content by adult leaders, with more opportunities for them to be involved in the programme design process to maximize their commitment to its longevity.

Although it did not continue as an official programme, the individual impact CGC had on 2008 and 2009 participants was long lasting. In 2014, a former CGC participant wrote to me, "Thanks…for being a great impact in our lives. Being part of…CGC is one of the good memories not to be forgotten. It was…very much helpful as we were growing towards our [adulthood]" (Sophia). Similarly, Naomi, studying electrical engineering at Jeppe College in Johannesburg in 2015, wrote, "Six years [have passed and] we still remember what you taught us…What you did [for] us was a great thing…We are [empowered] young women because of you and your work."

Recommendations for International Programme Development

This section offers suggestions for future programme development in international settings, including recommendations based on this current study, insights from other experiential education programmes implemented abroad, and guidance for maximizing sustainability in health-related programmes. Reflecting on my Peace Corps experience, personal recommendations include careful assessment of a community's assets and needs. For example, the schools, health clinic, and HCBC were valuable assets to Mokuruanyane, and two of the greatest needs in the village were HIV/AIDS prevention and the positive development of healthy, informed young women. It is also essential to involve key community leaders in programme design and development, such as the four women educators who became CGC Leaders. Finding the right people who are genuinely invested in the success of the programme is crucial, as well as continually seeking ways to support their ownership of the programme and dedication to its continuation.

Exploring a 14-day adventure education course in Taiwan offered by the Wilderness Education Association, Wilson (2008) discussed the disconnect that can occur when Western instructors from an individualistic culture offer programmes to students from more collectivist cultures, and suggested adaptations to teaching approaches. For example, rather than praising individuals, Wilson complimented students on their positive effect on the group. Instead of emphasizing individual leadership, Wilson facilitated conversations about how students could support the group's advancement as a whole. In working with Taiwanese experiential educators, Wilson described the importance and local expectations for building social relationships with coleaders prior to professional relationships and recommended establishing these social connections with students prior to their outdoor programme, as well. Finally, Wilson recommended having at least one instructor on adventure education courses who is fluent in the primary language of the students.

Compared to Western experiential education, Beames and Brown (2005) identified a stark difference in Chinese educational culture: Whereas students are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings in experiential education, in the tradition of Chinese education, students are taught to memorize the *correct* answers presented by the all-knowing teacher. To enable participants from different cultures to work through this potential educational culture gap, Winkelman (1994) suggested defining culture shock with students and helping them recognize that some adaptation is necessary to move past it.

Finally, focused on health-based projects in the United States and abroad, Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone (1998) suggested that to help maximize sustainability, programmes should (a) be wanted by the local community, (b) be implemented successfully and be visible to the public, (c) receive funding for an extended time period, with plans for gradual reduced funding, and (d) involve training local community members to continue offering the services being provided. Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone (1998) recommended implementing community programmes through established organizations and integrating new programmes with existing services. Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone (1998) also identified the larger environmental factors affecting sustainability to include economic challenges of underserved communities, and the level of community involvement in designing and leading the programmes.

Conclusion

CGC was an experiential education programme in the rural village of Mokuruanyane, South Africa, offered from 2007 to 2009. The programme was developed in collaboration with four women educators to empower seventh-grade female students of the village to live healthy lives, build leadership and communication skills, identify and strive to achieve their goals, and be active members of their community. CGC emphasized HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, and included recreation activities focused on team building, self-defence, sex education, women's health, physical fitness, leadership development, creative expression, community service, and nature appreciation.

Key recommendations for international programme development include careful assessment of the local community's needs, interests, and resources, involvement of key community leaders in programme planning and implementation, recognizing and respecting different cultural norms and adapting one's teaching approach accordingly, and careful considerations for sustainability. When developing an international programme, it is important to first focus on building positive social relationships with local programme leaders, then work collaboratively on programme design. As the programme is being formed and during its implementation, experiential education professionals should continually provide opportunities to involve local leaders in management decisions, programme direction, and evaluation to ensure their ongoing interest and investment. To support sustainability efforts in health-related projects, additional recommendations include ensuring effective programme execution, offering programmes that can be observed by the local community, securing programme funding for an extended duration, careful training of local leaders, and implementation within existing organizations.

Although CGC did not continue beyond two years, I still witness the positive impact it had on individuals through ongoing communication with the girls and programme leaders. As stated in the popular Starfish Story, when the boy was asked why he took time to throw a starfish back into the ocean when there were so many more to be rescued, he replied, “It made a difference to that one!” (adapted from Eiseley, 1978, as cited in EventsforChange, 2011, para. 1).

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47

Turning Inside Out: Learning Through Local Phenomena and Lived Experience

Clarice Lisle

Step Into Our World

I flick the security off and turn the lights on. It is almost winter solstice and the air is icy. A thick blanket of fog encompasses our campus and beyond. To the north, a dim outline of our beloved Mount Rowan is starting to appear, casting an ethereal presence over country. I take a few minutes to stop and savour the silence that accompanies that moment…when night becomes day. Soon the children will be arriving and school will begin.

A surge of gratitude flows through me. I consider myself the luckiest teacher alive. This project has emerged from my interest in the social-ecological nature of learning. I have a passion for teaching children about life and the essential relationships we share with the natural and not-so-natural world we are a part of, not "apart from" (Orr, 2004). It relates an ontological foundation that embodies my own maternal need to care for the world. Then there are all those dedicated members of our community who have further enriched the programme. Through their skill and passion, every dimension of what makes our campus so special embodies a shared vision: landscape artists, business managers, builders, teachers, researchers, children, and school leaders. The list goes on.

Stemming from what was once a seed of thought, my idea was embraced and further expanded on by a like-minded headmaster. The thought soon set

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C. Lisle (✉)
Ballarat, VIC, Australia

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its roots deep into the earth, mingling with other thoughts and became reality: a school farm with a living building and curriculum that encompasses the ethics of life through hands-on, experiential, place-based learning.

The sound of a car draws my attention to the present. Within minutes, this silent space will be filled with the chatter of excited students, sharing their world with their parents.

Today, a sense of excitement is induced by the heavy fog that shrouds us from the greater world. Finn and Sandro come to the door with an old billy-cart piled up with logs. They have learnt the art of lighting a fire and make sure that they are first to arrive every morning so as not to miss out. Within minutes, the fire is brought to life and more children are beginning to gather in the hope that they will be chosen to check the sheep. Foxes have been separating the ewes from their young, often killing mother and baby. We have already lost more than ten lambs this season. To secure his place, one child bravely volunteers to carry any ailing lambs back to be tended to.

Sarah and Charlotte offer to check the chooks. They most likely won't return until school starts. Last week, they saw a chook lay an egg, and they are hoping to capitalize on this further with their friends. Meanwhile, other students mop floors, tidy the kitchen, and do various odd jobs that will lighten the load for the cleaner. Soon the bus will arrive with those who couldn't make it early, and the formal lessons will begin.

This is the nature of our programme. Located on the school farm of 120 acres, this purpose-built campus is home to over 75 Year 4 students.

Experiential Learning Through Place: A Social-Ecological Approach Towards Learning

The Year 4 Mount Rowan experience aligns with an important developmental stage in the students' lives, marking a memorable moment that can last a lifetime. Stepping beyond the mainstream classroom, *caring for life* is an underlying theme that encompasses everything through self, others, and place (Tooth & Renshaw, 2009).

To facilitate a deepened understanding of self, others, and place, students commence the year with illustrating their seen and unseen worlds as a nested system. As the year progresses, their work is open to ongoing review and is adapted using collage to represent any changes that have occurred in their lives. As can be seen in Fig. 47.1, this powerful practice enables students to see themselves as part of a greater whole.

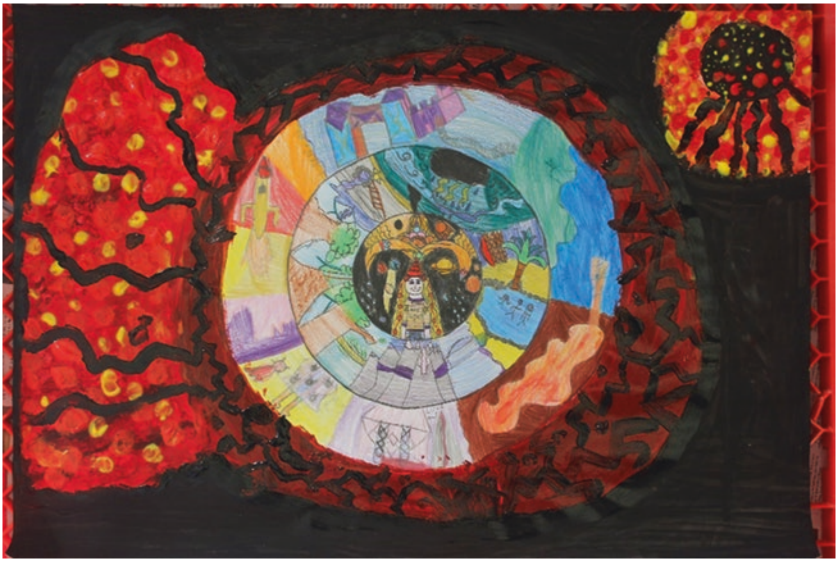

Fig. 47.1 Nurturing systemic thinking through self, others, and place (Artwork by student Sarah McDonald-Williams, 2016)

Nurturing a systemic world view, this lens aims to develop ecological understanding as a primary way of seeing the world in which we live, as an assemblage of systems nesting within systems. From the micro to the macro, this thinking underlies every thought, action, practice, and thing that takes place within the programme. Starting with the multitude of systems that give life to the human body, the mind is extended beyond the self to the relationships that are shared with the surrounding natural and not-so-natural systems that bring forth our world.

It is within this farm-based context that students can experience life first-hand and learn to appreciate, value, and understand their birthright and the natural way of things through guided inquiry. With these understandings, we look towards nurturing empathic learners and future citizens who comprehend and respect the symbiotic relationship they share with the natural world and all it has to offer.

Whilst the idea of place-based learning is gaining popularity in our schools, the philosophy goes back to early civilizations where the relationship shared between cultural knowledge and place was essential for survival. Today, in a fast-moving world of uncertainty, we seek to re-ground learning through students' lived experiences, revisiting the philosophies of past scholars such as John Dewey. Smith (2002) discusses Dewey's insights. At the end of the nineteenth century, Dewey noted the disconnect between schools and the external world, suggesting that children possessed minds that are primarily drawn to local phenomena rather than ideas about the phenomena (Smith, 2002, p. 586).

A key quality of place-based education is the relationship shared between the attributes of place and learning. Such learning not only draws on the surrounding environmental elements but also captures the historical, political, and cultural stories that accompany the context. Place-based learning enables students to develop enduring relationships with their surrounding landscape, supporting a deepened desire to care for place (Orr, 1993; Smith, 2002; Stone, 2009; Taylor, 2002).

Every element of the campus has been woven into the Mount Rowan experience, bringing to life a *living curriculum* that addresses the expectations of the Australian Curriculum and the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program. Surrounded by innovative play and farm spaces, the centre makes use of an ephemeral river, wetland area, cubbies, billycarts, archaeological digs, farm systems, and a variety of domestic and native animals. These are just some of the things that inspire learning.

There are also the incidental occurrences that breathe life into the curriculum. Living alongside the protective plovers who decide to nest at our front door can be daunting to say the least, but it opens opportunities to explore the perspectives of *others*. The violent storm that brought down the ancient swamp gum we had all grown to love also opened doors to learning. Our sadness from the loss was tangible until we noticed the abundance of seed that would activate the process of renewal. Heavy rains, gale-force winds, and parched summers, all contribute to the learning that takes place within our fold.

As a platform for learning itself, the building promotes ecological sensitivity through its sustainable design. Facing north, it incorporates a range of naturalistic elements that not only successfully fuse culture with ecology but also promote an ongoing relationship with sustainability. Whilst deep overhangs shade the windows from the summer's heat, the winter's warmth is captured and absorbed by the polished concrete floors in the central open area. The glossy bluestone and quartz fragments relate a geological context, whilst the ceiling features the irregularities you might find in a rocky outcrop. This pattern continues throughout the classrooms, representing the orderly variation of patterns we often see in nature.

Natural light and views are also captured through the double-glazed windows along the northern and southern walls, enabling ongoing exposure to the natural world. Kellert, Heerwagen, and Mador's (2008) biophilic design theory is present, casting its therapeutic presence in everything we do. Solar energy, passive solar design, ethical waste management, and water conservation are additional themes we explore.

Our Mountain Space…Above and Below

Mount Rowan itself provides a backdrop that narrates a geological story of its own. As part of the volcanic plains, this small mountain speaks to the children's imagination, provoking rich investigations that honour the Indigenous heritage of the area. Located on the border of Dja Dja Wurrung and Wathaurong country, this local icon was used as a lookout by the Wathaurong people, who lived with and cared for this land for close to 30,000 years. Students hear stories from the local elders of ancient ancestors wearing possum cloaks, young boys delivering message sticks, and woomeras being used to hunt kangaroo for sustenance.

At the beginning of the year, students explore the mountain. From the highest point, students view and connect with the learning space they will become a part of for the next 10 months. They also hear from guest speakers and develop questions that lead to a deepened examination of the impact of human exploration. Journals of their explorations are produced, history is revisited, and perspective and mapping skills form the mathematical focus.

As the year progresses, this landmark becomes an important part of the experience, nurturing a sense of place within all who are associated with the campus. From the sky to the ground, children watch the wedge-tailed eagles seeking prey and connect with the antics of the Friesian cows and feisty herd of horses communicating with each other. Each year, the bonding with this mountain is evident through the students' creative endeavours. Fig. 47.2 illustrates the ontological nature of being with place, later inspiring descriptive text, artwork, and theatrical performances that further deepen their connection.

> A giant turtle hiding in its shell, waiting patiently. Bruised by the horses and cows, disturbed from its slumber. But still Mount Rowan sleeps. Dreaming peacefully of the past. Covered in its warm blanket of earth, Mount Rowan does not stir. Whispering softly, Mount Rowan watches over the Year Four Campus. (Hannah Crompton, 2014)

By enabling students to develop enduring relationships with their surrounding *learnscape*, we come to know ourselves as one with place.

Fig. 47.2 Being one with place

Like a guardian, Mount Rowan stands alongside an extensive wetland area that has been installed as habitat for a diversity of local wildlife. Students have been assisting with the development of this area, which will, over the years, contribute to the development of the "environmental identity" (Clayton, 2003) of those who pass through the programme. They practise advocacy through caring for the land and working with Indigenous flora and fauna, including the critically endangered growling grass frog, whose image they now wear on their uniform with pride.

Students investigate the surrounding ecosystems, looking for data through observation, and presenting their findings in a formal report. For example, one student chose to investigate the life that lives in one of the old swamp gums. After hearing from an expert on data collection, she was excited to find an abundance of life within this tree. Then her mind extended to the life she couldn't see. Deep in the earth, high in the branches, the microscopic, underneath the bark, the scat of a possum, a family of huntsman spiders, and a skeleton of an unfortunate small bird that had been taken as prey. Pond life, water quality, soil ecology, birds of prey, introduced species, and the water cycle are just some of the many topics we explore.

Simply through exposure to all elements of the campus, students are learning to understand the full value of natural beauty and its importance in their lives and personal well-being. Mindfulness is an all-encompassing theme. All children are challenged to focus on developing an attentiveness to the moment. Drawing on empathy as an *attitude* in the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program, they learn to listen with their eyes, ears, and hearts.

Learning to Speak Animal: A Series of Transformative Moments

The animals of the farm play an important role in the development of empathy. It is through empathy that our students learn to understand each other and the animals they work with. Arnold (2005) defines empathy as a heartfelt, thoughtful act of imagination. This requires being able to see from and understand the perspectives of others, including the more-than-human life that surrounds you.

Over the course of the year, there is a notable improvement in the children's ability to connect on an empathic level with the animals and each other. Many commence the programme having never touched or been up close to chickens, cattle, or sheep. Some live in urban worlds where entertainment is often technology driven, others are too scared to interact and observe from a distance, and there are those who come from similar contexts and can't wait to get started. The first rule that must be adhered to is to resist the urge to chase the animals.

> "Sit quietly and let them come to you. Listen to what they have to say. Notice their body language. If an animal has a good experience with you, it will come back."

It was a warm and sunny afternoon. The students had been desperate to get an opportunity to visit the piglets that were now 10 days old. I suggested that we might take our work outside and draw the ecosystems we find at the dam. This happened to be where the pigs were wallowing in the water whilst the piglets played on the water's edge.

Each child took a position and sat silently, including those who often found it hard to sit still. They knew the rules and waited, hoping that one would make contact with them.

Over to the left four piglets were having a game of tag. In and out of the tussocks they scuttled. The children watched in astonishment.

"It's like us!" one child exclaimed. "They are playing like us."

"Look at the little one over there. They're not including her."

"She looks like the runt. See how she's much smaller?"

"They seem to like each other's company. I can almost guess what they're thinking. I wonder if they have feelings."

Suddenly there was an agitated series of grunts. A group of piglets had wandered off too far. Breaking her repose, the mother raised her head and called them back.

"They can talk to each other," one child exclaimed in astonishment. "They can actually speak pig."

This was a revelation that those students took with them throughout the year. They felt protective of the little runt and were critical of the more dominant piglets when they stepped out of line.

Working with the farm animals is a time of wonder and great joy, with the occasional moments of sadness that reminds us of the realities we face in life. They know that the Wessex Saddleback piglets will eventually be sent to market and so will some of the Corriedale sheep and Lowline cattle. Whilst this can be a challenging emotional obstacle to overcome, their perspective is balanced with the knowledge that this meat is *loved meat*. It is not factory produced. It is ethical, stress-free meat.

A Lamb's Tale

Recently, some agricultural students found a newborn lamb, barely alive in the paddock. They brought her into our fire in the hope that she might survive. The Year 4s quickly took over the care. We cautioned them that there was a high chance she might not survive. With this knowledge, they sat around her and said a prayer. Every student was willing her to live.

It wasn't until six hours later, when she suddenly drew on all of her energy to stand up, that our hopes were raised. At that point, the students named her Miracle, and prayed that she'd make it through the night. Word spread around our community quickly, inspiring an early start the next day for many families who wanted to see what had happened. On seeing her alive and well, a great sense of relief flowed through the children who understood first-hand the struggle that had taken place.

Miracle, or Miri, is now strong, and takes turns visiting the homes of the students. Whilst slightly humanized, she has provided an essential connection with each child, stirring the emotions that stem from love. Whilst embracing the responsibilities that were part of her care, something very special happened. The students formed fresh bonds with each other and some of their friendship groups changed shape. The children all had something in common.

The therapeutic relationship that animals share with humans is well documented, and Miri is an example of this.

Macca's Huntsman Spider

Surrounding our building is a collection of ancient old swamp gums. It is thought that some are original relics from the past. Over the warmer months, we had regular visits from what are often large huntsman spiders. Once again, they became part of the curriculum, with the main aim being for the students to understand their role in life and to not be afraid. This is a good theory but does encounter challenges in practice.

One morning a student noticed a large huntsman in the woodpile he was unpacking. Bravely he declared that he would move it. News spread quickly and a group of students gathered to watch. The boy jumped back, "I can't do it. It's creepy!" The other children all moved back also declining the opportunity. Then Macca offered to help. Gently he lowered a stick the length of a ruler and the beautifully coloured huntsman stepped onto the stick. You might have heard a pin drop. The suspense was palpable.

Macca started to head towards the swamp gums to relocate his new friend. The spider crawled up the stick and finally came to his hand. By now, half the students were gathered to see what would happen next, expecting Macca to drop the stick. Instead, Macca took hold of the opposite end, turning the stick around. Holding the spider close to his face, he stared into its eyes as if he were studying its soul. After pausing to study Macca, the spider recommenced its journey to the other end of the stick. Macca selected a hollow and lovingly let the spider go. The children cheered in awe at what Macca had done.

In that short space of time, Macca had formed an intense relationship with the huntsman spider. He might even have been referred to as a spider whisperer. This rich interlude inspired a ripple of change within the way students perceived the huntsman spider and Macca. This change extends to how they react next time they are confronted by a spider.

Techno Chicken

> "I don't do dirt, I don't do animals, I don't do outside!" screamed Erik as he stalked out of the room. "I hate this place!"

These words came from a student whose life revolved around computer games and technology. On commencing the programme, he was resistant to anything outdoors, regularly claiming that he had lost his hat. This soon changed when he was drawn to the chook house to see what the big deal was. Erik was astonished with what he saw. Later that morning, he excitedly recounted his first feathered experience to his teacher.

> Mrs M, you will never, never guess what I just saw! It was so funny…first a chicken jumped onto Penny's hand. I couldn't believe it. Then, [laughter] it jumped up her arm and sat on her shoulder! [The laughter continues whilst he does a demonstration with his hand]. It was amazing, and then it, [he pauses and beams at her] it jumped onto her head!!!

Erik was astonished that such a thing could happen. He couldn't believe that the students were touching and playing with the chickens. He had discovered a new world of entertainment and quickly found his hat. Six weeks later, he carries Baxter the Light Sussex rooster around, encouraging others to have a turn. He is a prominent member in our Chicken Committee, and his grateful mother is always happy to wait at the end of the day whilst Erik locks the chooks up.

Feral Kitty Brigade: Aka "Kit Catchers"

It was an exciting day when our students won a state award, Student Action Team of the Year. This was the result of their endeavours to reduce the feral cat population at Mount Rowan, knowing the devastation they can cause in the environment. Overall, they relocated 12 cats. In a ten-year period, 12 cats have the potential to breed in excess of 10,000 additional ferals. The students achieved this result through taming and rehoming the cats/kittens they caught. One cat, the hero of this story, is Ned.

After four weeks of relentless seduction, Ned disappeared, only to be found late in the evening with a cat food can stuck firmly on his head. It was wedged on tightly, and he was very distressed, unable to walk or drag the can with him. As the vet was closed, I carefully set about removing the can myself. It took almost an hour until success. Soaked in gravy, he stared at me as if to say, "I will take you up on that offer of a home."

On relaying the story to the students the next day, they chose to call him Ned after the famous Australian bushranger Ned Kelly who wore a helmet of armour to protect him from bullets. The children raised funds to have him de-sexed, and we soon found him a home. Ned is now an indoor cat who enjoys a fire in the winter and plenty of love from his adopted family.

Engaging Within Our Community

Wilson (2003) argues that we are human because of the particular way we affiliate with other organisms. They are the matrix in which the human mind originated and is permanently rooted. Through identifying with our origins, every person can feel like a naturalist and form connections with the seen and unseen communities that surround them (p. 138).

Our surrounding communities encompass everything we do. Alongside the group of magpies that gather on the old tree stump, a variety of parents, friends, neighbours, and local community members visit to share their skills and wisdom with the children throughout the year. Spinning wool, making pasta, bush food cooking, planting trees, first aid, animal handling, making gardening tools with a blacksmith, and orienteering, the list goes on.

MacKinnon (2011) makes a beautiful analogy, perceiving communities as gardens—as living, evolving, self-organizing organisms (p. 91). Our community is our garden that is nurtured and cared for. To assist with this, we are developing a community performance group called Singbiosis. I use present tense to emphasize the ongoing, emergent nature of this group. Fusing a variety of skills together, drumming, singing, dance, and art, we seek to inform, inspire, and embrace our audience through our imaginations.

Students also run a community market to fund their numerous projects. Once a month, they present a harvest table at the main campus that draws on ethical enterprise and consumerism. This also includes natural fertilizers, worms, and native plants they have grown.

All students participate in some way. They might work in advertising, designing wild chutney labels, cooking preserves, growing vegetables, farming worms, or simply collecting the horse manure.

Conclusion

The learning outcomes of this programme further endorse the growing awareness of the important role that the natural world plays in whole-child development. Social issues tend to settle and children who normally sit outside social circles seem to find their place. In particular, we have found it to be a calming environment for students who have been on the teachers' radar. As the fog again rolls in, blanketing the campus, the children return to their homes and share their experiences over a dinner they may have helped prepare. They discuss where their food has come from and talk about the feral cat

Fig. 47.3 Mount Rowan in repose

that was captured that morning. They might mention the visiting scientist, or how they saw a calf being born. Their clothes are dirty and need a wash. It is time for bed. Who knows what Mount Rowan has in store for them tomorrow? (Fig. 47.3)

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48

OOSH Artists Explore Eco-Art for Ecopedagogical Outcomes

Sam Crosby

Introduction: Setting the Scene

> *Wilting leaves shade the group from the mid-morning sun, around us the still air is hanging hot and low. Under the itchy bomb tree we share the shade with a few lorikeets and a lone gallah. The birds chatter amongst themselves as they expertly climb the canopy using a combination of beak and feet searching for snacks. Together we spend a few moments observing their antics and as the group's interest wanes, I point out a different creature sitting in the bough of a neighbouring gum tree. Staring out with gum nut eyes, twigs for arms and helicopter seeds for wings attached to a body of clay shaped by human hands, the creature, like the air around it, is still. Curiosity is awakened and the group shuffle positions to get a closer look. The creature from my own imagination has come into being and draws the group in with the aim that it will inspire them to go and create for themselves. After receiving this message the women begin to wander, along the way collecting some clay to help shape their work. Their eyes scour the landscape for inspiration, seeking out location and materials, and one by one they settle down to make.*

These educators are attending a professional development workshop on ecopedagogy with a focus on nature play. Working in the Out of School Hours (OOSH) care sector, the women are hoping to gain skills, knowledge, and attitudes to deliver nature play educational experiences for children aged 5–12 years who attend after-school and vacation programmes. As their trainer,

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S. Crosby (✉)
Education Services – Centennial Parklands, Australian Botanic Garden,
Sydney, NSW, Australia

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it is my role to help provide this experience and to empower these women to feel confident to take their own children outdoors and into nature, and to help shape their ecological identities.

The term *ecopedagogy* defines a movement and an approach to education that in name emerged from Latin America in the late 1990s out of the Paulo Freire Institute and the Earth Charter meetings. Rather than a rigid set of educational practices that can exist in some teaching pedagogies, ecopedagogy's principles are critical and fluid and to be interpreted by the practitioner's own relevance and changing circumstances. Operating within this fluidity is a set of guiding principles outlined in the Ecopedagogy Charter that has since been cemented into theory through Moacir Gadotti's *Pedagogy of the Earth*, Francisco Gutierrez's *Ecopedagogy and Planetary Citizenship*, and the book *Critical Ecopedagogy, Ecoliteracy and Planetary Crisis: The Ecopedagogy Movement* (www.practicingfreedom.org).

The principles include:

- *Popular education* where power is shared, participatory dialogue is key to the methodology, and learning starts from the learner's lived experiences;
- *Post-issue activism* where the educator decides which issue their learners are intimately connected with and uses this as an entry point to move towards an integrated understanding of wider ecological issues;
- *Planetary citizenship*, aiming to globalize our sense of community, responsibilities, and commitment;
- *Art education*, which is the use of creativity to develop the capacity to feel, imagine, relate, and express oneself to express and create the world we want; and
- *Care*, which prioritizes the social over the individual.

(Practicing Freedom, n.d.)

Using the fluidity and critical engagement of these ecopedagogical principles, this chapter aims to investigate the experience of these educators through their eco-art practice, created on that day, amongst the itchy ball trees and busy parrots. This is done through an autoethnographic and narrative enquiry of the experience collected via reflective conversations with these women and photographic images of their work.

The early incarnations of ecopedagogies from Freire and the Earth Charter have been considered to focus more on models of social justice and transformative experiences rather than an educational practice (Gray & Birrell, 2015). However, taking the initial principles and relating them to my teaching practice can help establish the ecopedagogical elements contained within it, as well as to understand this and other programmes that could be considered ecopedagogical, and finally, to critically examine their success and their limitations.

The programme, undertaken over two days in an open space in Canberra, consists of many elements considered to be core in nature play practice including risk management, planning activities, the role of the educator, creativity and imagination in the outdoors, nature connection, and assessing the potential of landscape for learning. These elements are echoed in other learning programmes delivered here in Australia and internationally including but not limited to: Forest Schools/Nature Kindergartens in Europe (Williams-Siegfredsen, 2012), Wilderness Awareness Schools in the United States (Young, Haas, & McGowan, 2010), Bush Kinder in Australia (Elliot, 2013), and the state chapter Nature Play organizations operating out of Western Australia (Nature Play WA), South Australia (Nature Play SA), and Queensland (Nature Play QLD).

Many of these nature play or ecopedagogical programmes have arisen or become more visible in today's society due to the well-documented decline of play in nature (particularly in urbanized Western society) highlighted by Richard Louv (2005) in his book *Last Child in the Woods* in which the term "nature deficit disorder" is coined to describe the phenomenon. To combat this deficit, research has shown that learning and play in nature has been linked to supporting children's imaginative play and the development of positive relationships (Dowdell, Gray, & Malone, 2011) as well as positive cognitive and physical child development (O'Brien, 2009). Research is limited in linking these programmes towards positive attitude and behaviour for the environment and the development of a lifelong connection to nature (Collado & Corraliza, 2015). However, a study by Louise Chawla (1999) demonstrated a correlation between positive environmental attitude (people who had chosen conservation or environmental careers), free play in nature, and the influence of an environmentally positive role model (Chawla, 1999). From this research, a question has been raised, that is, where do these positive role models come from?

Is it reasonable to expect that this role was traditionally filled by a family member: parents, aunties, or uncles? Is it reasonable to expect that parents who spend longer hours working, where both parents may be employed, or who have little or no nature connection do not feel confident to mentor their children in nature? If this is true and children now spend longer hours in the care of professionals, is it reasonable to expect that this role may now need to be fulfilled by those professionals themselves?

The OOSH providers form one of the largest childcare sectors in Australia, second only to early childhood services. Many of these services are not-for-profit, community-based provisions and many of the staff are unqualified. In 2003, a statutory quality assurance programme and a quality learning framework called My Time, Our Place was introduced with an aim to improve the quality of delivery from these services.

From the perspective of this study and the educators who are participating in the nature play training, it can be assumed that the OOSH sector could follow in the footsteps of the emerging Bush Kinder (Early Childhood) movement in Australia to work towards developing nature-connected role models in their staff. In the UK, a programme of this kind took place in South West England titled Wild About Play (Maudsley & Smith, 2004), a networking project between Playwork providers (Playwork being the UK OOSH equivalent) and environmental organizations with the aim to support, develop, and promote environmental play in South West England. Through a published report titled "Wild About Play," it was noted that a substantial proportion of Playwork settings were not providing children with regular opportunities for environmental play and that a combination of measures, such as access to wild spaces and training and support for Playwork staff, was needed to provide these regular opportunities (Maudsley & Smith, 2004). As a result of these recommendations, a Wild About Play resource was compiled and regular training opportunities for Playworkers was delivered, including the Wild and Away Conference in 2008, which I was privileged to attend. It was this experience and my work as a nature educator that inspired the development and delivery of a pilot programme titled OOSH in the Bush in 2015 and the subsequent delivery of training opportunities for OOSH staff with an aim to develop positive, nature-focused role models for children attending out-of-hours school care.

At present, there are limited nature play training opportunities for OOSH staff in Australia; however, similar programmes exist in the early childhood sector including the Early Years Bush Connections TAFE programme and an unverified programme in nature pedagogy delivered by Claire Warden, a nature education consultant from Scotland. In Canada, the UK, Germany, and Scandinavia, higher education pedagogy programmes exist in varying levels from bachelor level pedagogue training in Denmark (Williams-Siegfredsen, 2012) to short courses delivered via the vocational education sector such as the Open College Network (OCN) Forest School training in the UK. Recently, the expansion of these vocational training programmes via training organizations such as Archimedes (now Forest School International) has been criticized for undervaluing the importance of developing meaningful nature connections and focusing more on child well-being, which, it is argued, continues the exploitation of the natural world for human benefit (Taylor, 2013).

As a result, the OOSH nature play programme aims to move away from the child development aspects of many current nature pedagogy programmes towards a more holistic programme of ecological understanding, nature/human connection, and imaginative expression, returning us to the eco-art practice of the OOSH educators.

Eco-art, nature art, and environmental art takes many forms and is as diverse as art can be; materials, locations, and experiences vary, and whilst it can be difficult to define what it is, it can be more easily understood by knowing what it is not, which is that art is anthropocentric, focusing only on the human condition (Weintraub, 2012). Eco-art can address themes that honour more-than-human worlds, the interconnected life systems of which humans are a part rather than separate. Well-known practitioners of eco-art include the land artists of the 1970s, including Robert Smithson and his *Spiral Jetty* and Walta De Maria's *Lightning Field*, to today's artists that include Olafur Eliasson, Chris Drury, David Nash, and the popular Andy Goldsworthy (Weintraub, 2012). It is also important to note that aside from these modern examples, eco-art has also been around for thousands of years within Indigenous cultures, where animals and plants have been used as metaphors for fertility, balance, regeneration, and connection in cave art, paintings, and carvings (Simon, 2006). Where this study focuses its lens is not on the effect these examples of eco-art have on their audience when addressing environmental or ecological themes, but rather on the lived experience of the OOSH artists themselves, asking the questions: "What do they experience when making their art?" and "How may this communicate their own ecological understanding and personal relationship to nature?"

Art education and its relationship to ecopedagogy was first discussed as being one of the original principals used to define the Earth Charter. Freire (1970) understood the importance of creative practice as a vehicle for social change as evidenced in his earlier work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. From an ecological perspective, arts-based pedagogies have been highlighted as useful and creative approaches for exploring and expressing understandings of the natural world and for assisting participants to engage with their own local natural environment (Ward, 2013). Through the making process, emotional attachments form alongside affective connections to objects and places (Flowers, Carroll, Green, & Larson, 2015) and it is these attachments and connections that help to bring a deeper understanding towards the natural world (Gray & Birrell, 2015). How these attachments and understandings are formed can be explained further by investigating the role that imagination plays in this process.

Imagination is a way of thinking that is not bound to the actual. It is flexible, tied up in our emotions and bodies, and is as much about feeling and perceiving as it is about thinking (Egan & Judson, 2009). Imagination offers the possibility to extend our understanding of the world and take in alternative perspectives (Judson, 2015).

As participants, the OOSH artists engage in a practice whereby they use the inspiration and materials from the landscape in which they are placed to create a three-dimensional ephemeral (temporary) sculpture. The natural materials used to construct these pieces could be considered what is termed to be *loose parts* and can be described as any object (natural or human made) that can be moved, stacked, carried, or combined to create something larger or more creative than the sum of their parts.

Using natural loose parts as an artistic medium helps to engage the imagination during the art-making process because they provide variation as they are manipulated, mixed in with other objects, or placed in position, and become something other than their intended biological origin. A stick can become a bone, the foundation for a house, or feet on a bird. Leaves become wings, tails, or tracks. Seeds become eyes or bodies. Bark becomes walls, a boat, and a table. The imagined becomes possible.

When the loose parts are not precollected, participants need to find their own materials and this provides a way of exploring, engaging, and knowing the landscape. It makes the process site specific as well as personal, as the makers pay attention to and choose what to use in their sculptures. Through delivering this loose parts practice as an educator in many locations over many years, both in Australia and in the UK, I am well aware that the seeds, leaves, bark, feathers, and soil vary in every habitat that becomes the artist's studio. As an educator, I find that this process of hunting and gathering can help the artists to build an ecological picture of their environment without having to *tour guide* them through the landscape; their interactions are more meaningful than any factual spiel an educator could deliver.

The absence or presence of the parts can also illustrate seasonal change, particularly if making occurs in the same place over long periods of time. Consider Andy Goldsworthy's use of autumn leaves, winter icicles, or spring flowers to create his pieces, or David Nash's wooden boulder as it moves though the Welsh landscape via the water levels in the creek as it is filled from the autumn rains. The ecosystem becomes the inspiration and it is ever changing.

Methodology

The impact that art can have on environmental understanding has been seen as highly questionable, particularly when the research approach favours a scientific, measurable, or quantitative approach. Participatory, qualitative methods that give high importance to social learning, emotions, and engagement are now being acknowledged as methods by which to generate understanding, and it is through this process that eco-art can be seen as a valid method to generate ecological understanding. Implementing this approach, the data collection process for this study was captured in the field via two methods. First, personal observations of and reflections on the OOSH artists' practices and my own teaching practice were made in an attempt to grasp the pedagogical essence of this experience (Van Manen, 1990). The second method was to hear the reflective stories of the OOSH artists, captured via voice recordings collected after the making process. These two approaches were then combined with photographic examples of the artists' work to form a collaborative narrative that were analysed to form conclusions on the process (Creswell, 2014).

It is also worthwhile to note that through this project the art practice becomes not only a method for the OOSH artists to explore and develop their own ecological understanding but also serves the purpose of becoming a research process in itself.

The Art Practice

After the encounter with the gum nut creature, the OOSH educators take the opportunity to go and make something for themselves. I give very little instruction or prompting and try to leave the activity as open-ended as possible, reflecting the ethos of nature play that in its purest form is based on the principles of free play, which is child centred and freely chosen. Educator influence is deliberate when it needs to be—reactive rather than prescriptive—and the educators themselves become expert observers of children's play. Here the skill is not in delivering whole-group learning activities but in understanding the intention and purpose in the play and using a high level of trust to allow the children to enter into their own world with their friends, taking on challenges that are of their own making and within their limits.

I explain that this activity is to be carried out solo, and although I like seeing the collective consciousness of art making come alive during group activities, most of this programme up until this point has been working in assigned animal mobs (groups)—so it is time for a change. I want them to be able to explore their own ideas and imagination in their own space where they are comfortable and can relax into the making process without too much external human distraction. In addition, the proximity of being able to view others in their creative processes can influence the process of making. It can bring into play the inner critic where people may judge their work in comparison to others.

I give the group members about 30 minutes to create their piece and tell them I will use the "cooee" call to give them the 10-minute notice and then the "raven" call to signal them back in. This time-keeping method was used regularly over the last day. Before they head off, I ask one final question: What can they use to make their sculpture? I use this approach, as I want to tease out an answer rather than just giving them an instruction or a rule. I get the answer I am hoping for with little prompting: that they can use most of what they find around them, from the ground—but not pick living material off plants, including the removal of leaves or seeds.

There are 15 women participating in the exercise and they come from diverse backgrounds, ages, fitness, and OOSH experience. As this activity is taking place during the middle of the second day of the programme, I have been able to observe that they have varying experience of being out in nature, from seasoned campers and bushwalkers, to some that have shown some discomfort in being outside for long periods of time. Although there has been some reluctance, they have all shown high levels of motivation that I believe has come from the collective *will* from their animal mob team members, *peer-to-peer* learning, and their desire to be able to learn how to provide nature play experiences for the children in their care.

As the emerging artists wander off, I take the time to observe them hunt and gather the loose parts they desire for their pieces. Their search range varies, with some moving to the different places in the park away from the itchy ball trees and towards the native gums and grasses. There is affordance in the landscape to keep the group engaged, including pathways that are lined with bush rock and some small gullies providing interesting terrain. It is a typical Australian suburban park: wide spaces with mown grass and a tired-looking children's playground. There is a considerable amount of litter, cigarette butts, and broken glass from smashed beer bottles scattered on the ground that make the site look neglected but well used, although we are the only people in the park at that moment (unsurprising due to the time and the heat). The human influence on this landscape is considerable, with every tree planted deliberately; the only sign of nature's design are the opportunistic weeds that are taking over the garden beds, looking out of place next to the native grasses that have been purposely planted there.

The learning landscape may look like it could provide little inspiration for an art practice, but the educators are busy. There are plenty of loose parts around for the group to collect, including dried leaves and seeds, and sticks of varying shapes, sizes, and lengths. The clay is the only material I have provided as I find it can be used as a glue to stick loose parts together or it can provide additional body and shape to their creations.

After about ten minutes of collecting, most of the educators have settled down to make, with a few still left wandering. I observe them using their fine motor skills, manipulating, arranging, and weaving the loose parts together. I enjoy the quiet and the time to observe their process. It is fascinating to watch their engagement and concentration, reminding me of children playing, entering into their imaginative worlds as they play with toys. I ask myself, What are they thinking right now? What thoughts are conscious? What is unconscious? What considerations are being brought forward? The properties of an object, its texture, its strength; are there any considerations for its role in life or how it fits into the ecosystem? What attention is being paid to the wider goings-on around them: the wind, the birds, the humming of cicadas? Occasionally I'll hear some exasperated noises coming from a maker communicating trial and error, willing a loose part to play along and become part of their vision. One or two get up to search for a new part, returning to their piece with a renewed sense of excitement as the discovery of this new piece has unlocked an idea (Fig. 48.1).

To bring the group members back, I give the "cooee." I am hesitant as some are still deep in creation, some close to completion, and I want the activity to last long enough for them to be inspired and engaged, but not long enough that they begin to get critical about their work. For some, panic sets in as they hurry to finish their creations; others do a last check and wander back to the shade of the itchy ball trees. Eventually the call of the raven is given, signalling the end of the making process.

It is now time for the eco-art gallery to open and as a group, we wander from piece to piece, giving each artist time to share their creation story. The group listen intently to each other's story and at times become quite emotional, especially when one woman shared the reasons behind her echidna sculpture:

> It's an echidna. I love echidnas—they are my favourite animal. When I was a little girl, I was worried that no one would ever give them cuddles because they were so spikey so I decided I would. I have echidnas all over the place. I think

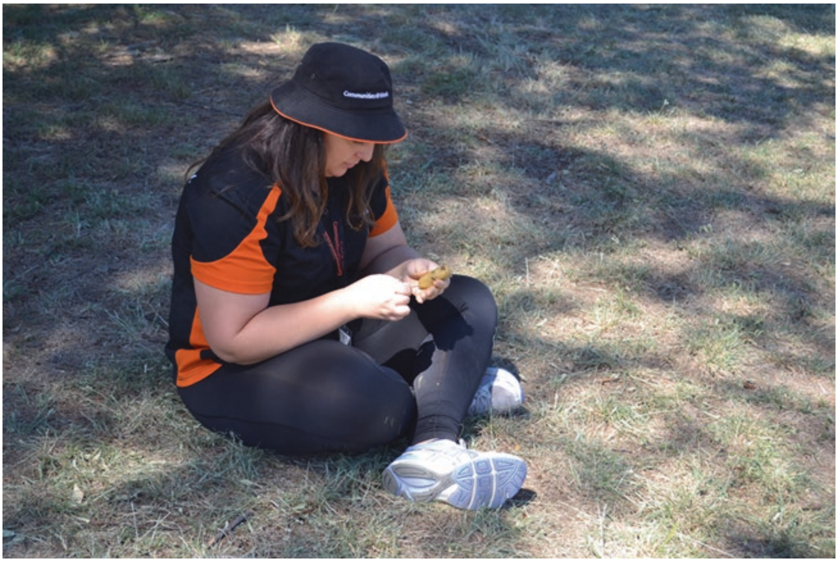

Fig. 48.1 Making in the outdoors

> they are beautiful. I get so upset when I see them on the side of the road hit by cars.

Another participant's sculpture, a sphere with sticks coming out of it, was inspired not so much by love but irritation (Fig. 48.2):

> It is my inspiration. It is my itchy bomb and how I feel about it, the spikey doom. I wanted to illustrate how terrifying it is when I see one and I just want to run away. I feel that this perfectly captures that.

> It reminds me of a dandelion.
>
> Do you know what the itchy bomb and the dandelion are? What is their purpose in nature? I ask.
>
> Are they seeds?
>
> Yes, and that fluffy itchiness and the parts from the dandelion that fly off are how it disperses its seeds. So what can be an irritant for us, for the tree is …
>
> Life.

Others also shared their pieces inspired by nature:

> I just started weaving a nest; I was inspired by the birds in the trees and probably the sticks lying around. I might go and put it in the tree over there; I think that tree could do with a nest.

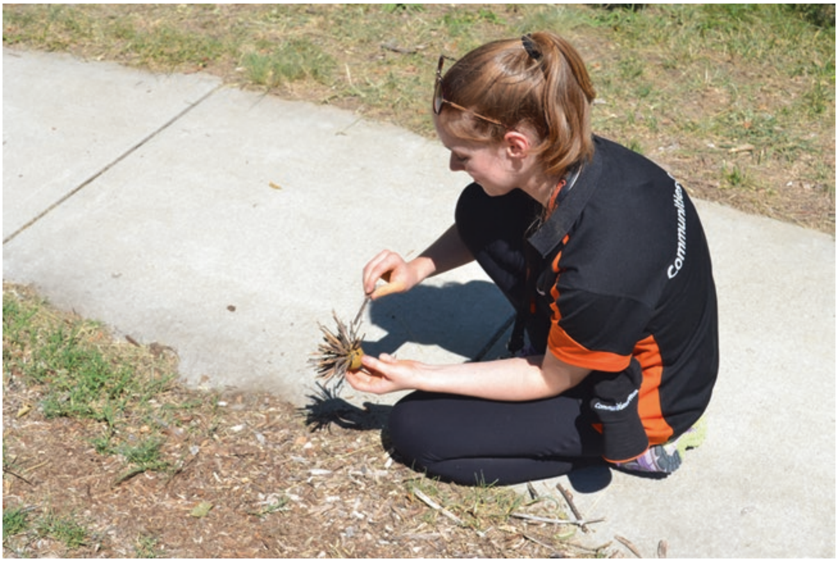

Fig. 48.2 Itchy bomb construction

My intention was to start off making a bird as it reminds me of sitting in the backyard drinking coffee with my mum watching rosellas and of living in a busy city and then noticing the birds there amongst all the buildings. I just like sitting and watching them doing their thing. I used to have this joke with my sister where we would watch the cockatoos eating and I would be like, 'Look, they are using their people hands!'

SNAP! When I was walking along I saw this log and it reminded me of a crocodile. Then I just used some of the clay and other things to make it look more like a crocodile.

I've never really looked at this log before but now you've added these bits I am starting to see how beautiful it is.

Some used the human-nature relationship as their inspiration:

I was inspired by watching the kids fishing. They love doing it, even if they only pull up a piece of grass they are so excited.

I wanted to make a tree so I tried a few things that didn't work. Then I found this sawn bit of wood that I could use for the trunk and made some branches and stuck some leaves in. I then tried to decide where to put it and I was thinking back to how we were discussing this piece of kid's play equipment yesterday with all the litter and glass around it and how the kids can't use it. So I decided to put it on top of it, to make it prettier.

Then the conversation turned to the making process itself (Figs. 48.3 and 48.4):

> I just looked around and as I was moving I just looked at that stick and just went with that.
>
> I had to get past the end product and just enjoy the journey and I think that is something that we struggle with as adults to get past sometimes. I mean, we

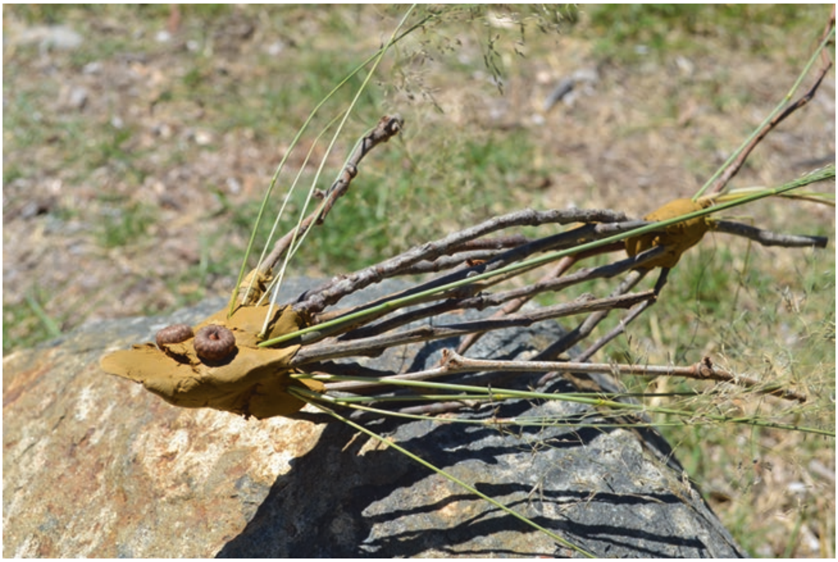

Fig. 48.3 The stick parrot in its finished form

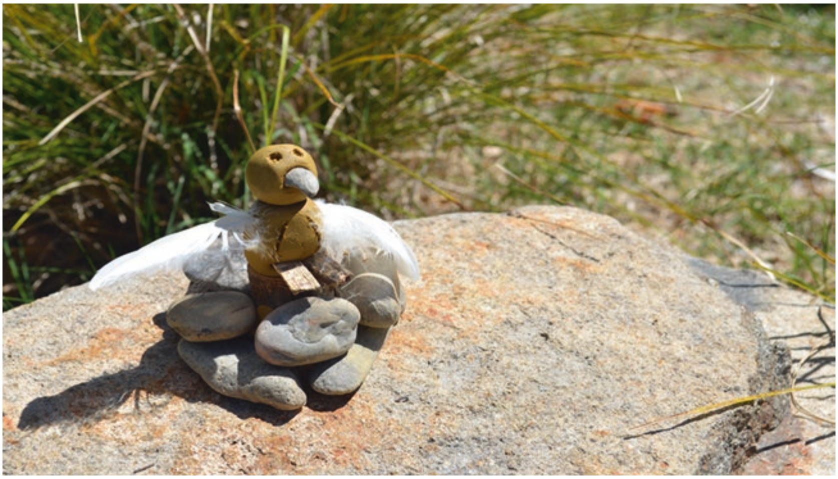

Fig. 48.4 Exhibiting outdoors: A stone makes a perfect plinth

> try to get our kids to do this all the time but rarely do that ourselves. I just really enjoyed spending the half an hour to myself, the sitting and the making and enjoying the outdoors. It was great!
>
> I had a similar problem; once I decided to make a tree I was worried what it may look like, then I started by making the branches with the clay and sticking the dried leaves into the ends. I just got really into the process. It was quite intricate and then by the end I was like, 'Whoa, look what I've made!'
>
> It didn't matter what I made. I achieved, just by making.

There was also appreciation of just being outside, making:

> I work here and at lunchtime; I often come out here and sit under the trees, so the tree was my inspiration. Then I found this banksia cone and rolled it on the clay to make the bark texture. I like to come out here and listen to the breeze. It was good to just be in the moment.

Through investigating these themes and my own reflections of the practice, it can first be concluded that the OOSH artists enjoyed the activity, with high levels of participation evidenced by all participants achieving success to produce an artwork. Personal feelings of pride and achievement from the making process were evidenced by the depth of their responses presented during the reflection process. This was reciprocated by the audience through their comments and compliments, which contributed to these feelings. This sense of achievement is an outcome of Forest School education and other comparable nature education programmes (Knight, 2013). The open-ended practice also provided an opportunity for the participants to set their own goals, whether it was the completion of a desired piece or to participate in and enjoy the practice itself. Personal goal setting meant that outcomes were achievable and within the limits of the participants, therefore providing a high success rate. This can be replicated in any nature play programme when educators present the right conditions for achievement and challenge, through encouragement and planting the seeds of engagement in the children in their care.

Over half of the educators had themed their work around plants and animals, including a crocodile, echidna, trees, birds, and nests. The animal sculptures in particular seemed to elicit a compassionate, emotional response from the group, particularly when the echidna story was told. This indicated what could be termed "participatory consciousness" (O'Neill, 2004), enabling feelings of compassion towards the natural world, others, and self. These responses could also be seen as being empathic.

The practice of making eco-art in the outdoors seemed to move beyond the creative process. This was evidenced by the reflections given by the educators regarding the enjoyment of spending time in isolation in nature. They described feeling relaxed and calm as they created their pieces. This process of art making enacted a forced slow down and provided the opportunity for the educators to pay more attention in the moment. This practice, as a technique for relaxation, could be further explored; it seems to relate to research that indicates the positive impact nature can have on an individual's well-being. The process necessitated attention and interaction with what is actually there. What is there includes one's materials and context and one's embodied personal history, alongside one's expressive imagination in the moment (O'Neill, 2004).

Discussion

Relationships with the earth and with each other require time to be developed (Gray & Birrell, 2015). The eco-art activity took no longer than an hour to complete and it is unlikely that any measurable development of ecological understanding would occur in this time, demonstrating the limitations of this study. How the activity can assist in development of this understanding is that the making process and subsequent reflections allow participants to be able to spotlight their own connection to nature. This is further evidenced by the OOSH artists' work that includes themes of personal nature experiences.

Where this study could expand its reach would be to examine if and how the participants begin to enact this practice with children back at their centres, and what the outcomes of that process might be. If this study were to continue as an action research project, I would aim to direct the reflective questioning process to include a discussion on how this activity can be implemented back at their service, and how this might benefit children. By being an active participant in the process, it could be assumed that the OOSH artists/educators would be more likely to introduce natural loose parts play into their programming to enable imagination and to act as a bridge between play and learning about the environment (Fleer, 2011). As a result, the children might begin to expand their ecological understanding and appreciation.

As discussed earlier, childhood is a crucial period to develop nature connections, creative thinking, problem-solving skills, and healthy emotional and cognitive development. If this capacity is to be fulfilled, there is much opportunity for educators to be able to assist. How these educators are trained and mentored is crucial. No longer can we expect close or extended family members to fulfil these roles, particularly if their own nature connection has diminished. Where this can be rectified is through a network of skilled educators and carers that are trusted to fulfil this role. Holistic, professional development that includes elements of eco-art practice can help to dissolve barriers to nature connection through emotional and imaginative outcomes and should be seen as crucial in the delivery of quality ecopedagogical programmes.

Conclusion

Eco-art as a pedagogical practice can help dissolve barriers to nature connection through its imaginative and emotional engagement. For these reasons, it is important to consider creative acts as a valid method for developing understanding and communicating our personal stories of nature, which can help to build ecological understanding. Art making as a practice in and from nature as demonstrated by this study provided an opportunity for the participants to intimately connect with their own nature stories and helped to develop a sense of creative community amongst them, through the sharing of these stories.

Creativity and art-making practice is a core element outlined in Freire's original ecopedagogy manifesto. From the outcome of this study, we can see why it should be considered as a valid method to develop a new ecological story between humans and more-than-human worlds.

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Udeskole in Denmark: A Narrative of Mutual Support and Sharing

Karen Barfod and Lærke Mygind

Introduction

Our narrative oscillates between a macroview, providing an insight into the context and structure in which *udeskole* (out-school) is located, and a first-person perspective to emphasize the importance of the choices and actions of every single person in the patchwork of people working towards getting children outdoors. We see the individual actors as nodes in a larger and continuously growing national and international network. It is the effort, united and powered by a shared idea or affinity, of these nodes and their particular configuration, shaped by macrolevel structures, possibilities, and boundaries, that have given form to current Danish *udeskole* practice as we see it today. Networking, cooperation, and empathy are in this case embodied by individuals being affiliated to different organizations. As such, it is not possible to point to one person or organization as the driving force behind the development of outdoor teaching in Denmark. Rather, we point to a shared vision and affinity for the *udeskole* approach, uniting people from different sectors, geographical entities, and a growing public and, more recently, a political awareness of the potentials of the approach.

K. Barfod (✉)
Department of Teacher Education, VIA University College,
Nørre Nissum, Denmark

L. Mygind
Steno Health Promotion Research, Steno Diabetes Center, Gentofte, Denmark

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The Meeting

It's the very first day of the annual Danish nature guides' conference. The nature guides are certified, having taken their training in teams with one cohort graduating per year. As they work scattered around the whole country, this conference provides the only occasion for the nature guides to meet. Therefore, there's a lot of hugging, recalling memories, and laughs. On this day, there's a walk up one of Denmark's highest mountains (the mountain measures 170 metres—on a global scale not very impressive). As I walk, I ask the dark-haired woman beside me who she is, and what she does. Her name is Malene and she is the coordinator of the largest open-access source of outdoor educational activity descriptions in Denmark, skoven-i-skolen.dk *that translates directly into "the forest in the school." Funded by private and public sources, she and her organization have created a webpage which thoroughly describes and tests activities and courses in all subjects in the national curriculum, accessible free of charge. Every teacher can send in their activity descriptions and the organization will edit them, draw printable work sheets, and when possible, refer to existing knowledge. Finally, the materials are published for the public to be used free of charge. From this webpage, all teachers can find high-quality ideas and material, easily applied in their next outdoor lesson: "How can you work with fractions in your outdoor maths lesson?" "How might one build an underwater viewing scope?" "How can the children measure relative humidity during outdoor teaching?" "How might I use nature for a poetry slam?" I have known this webpage for years and so I am honoured to meet Malene. She smiles at me and asks—"and what do you do?"*

The Danish Outdoor Landscape

Outdoor activities are common and diverse in Denmark. There are many outdoor leisure-time hobbies; along the coastline are kayakers, sailors in small sailboats, kite surfers, anglers, fly fishers, and people who swim and windsurf. Hang gliders soar near the slopes of the shore and birdwatchers search for water birds, people walk their dogs and camp in tents, and hunters, mountain bikers, scouts, and runners use the forests. Being densely inhabited (about 132 people per square km) and heavily cultivated, not much wilderness (if any) can be found. However, being outdoors is seen as healthy and safe, as can be seen by the abundance of nature kindergartens, and culturally, being an outdoor person is mostly considered valuable. Children nap outdoors in cribs and baby carriages, from birth and even during winter, and nature kindergartens are common and popular. The Danish outdoor landscape and the general cultural acceptance and appreciation of spending leisure time outdoors by many people afford the context and background for outdoor teaching in Denmark. In this environment, teaching children outdoors on a regular basis grew from the bottom up just before the millennium. The present chapter provides a narrative of the birth and growth of the practice of outdoor teaching, in Danish termed *udeskole*.

The Danish School System

In the Danish school system, children start at the age of 6 and have 10 years of compulsory schooling with the same classmates until the age of 16. All children are taught together during these ten years, with no segregation according to gender, colour, academic level, religion, or social status. Children with special needs are, when possible, also included in public schools. One-fifth of all schools are independent or private schools, although they receive massive governmental support which, in practice, opens up a relatively free choice of schools to all parents, despite income. Women represent approximately 70% of the staff in primary and secondary schools (Danish Ministry of Education, 2012), and about 84% of staff in preschools (three- to six-year-old children) (BUPL, 2010).

The preschool and teacher education takes place at university colleges. Both educational degrees are called "bachelors of profession"; the preschool teacher education called "pedagogue" lasts for three-and-a-half years, and teacher education lasts for four years.

Becoming Part of a Network

"I work on the teacher education course at the University College," I answered Malene. "I do outdoor courses for teachers who want to start or develop their teaching outside the classroom." "Well, we have a small group that meets every month when the moon is full to study and discuss udeskole*," Malene said. "Do you want to come to our meetings?" From that day, I took the train five hours each way on a monthly basis to meet Malene, Eva, Henrik, and Poul. In these meetings, we would share, read, write articles and features, discuss, plan, write applications, build castles in the air, and slowly build up a strong intersectoral network. Eva was a nature guide, Poul was initially a part of the national Danish Outdoor Council and later employed at the Forest School, and Henrik was employed at the Municipality of Copenhagen. Together, we represented or had contacts widely in the outdoor land-*

scape, and realized that we needed to create a network for people working with, or who had interests in, outdoor learning, teaching, and education.

Udeskole in Denmark

Udeskole involves regular teaching outside the classroom in curricular subjects. Most commonly, it takes place half a day every week and mostly in the main subjects Danish, mathematics, and often science, although all subjects can be taught outside (Bentsen, Mygind, & Randrup, 2009). It is frequently the teachers who decide to take the children outside during class, allowed for by a tradition of teacher autonomy and methodological freedom of choice in Scandinavian countries. Implicit in this approach is that the teachers are the experts and the ones carrying the responsibility for the educational goals, and the activities are by definition connected to the common aims and the subjects. Teachers are not required to have any special certification, or education, to take the children outdoors; it is the same curriculum but processed in another way. As such, a teacher can decide to take the children out in the schoolyard or in the nearby surroundings to measure the height of the church tower in mathematics: "What's the estimate?" "How can we use trigonometry?" "Can we climb the tower and then measure from the top—but what about the spire?" "Can we get up there?" Alternatively, we might be interested in going to the grocery store in a geography lesson to investigate where the food comes from, and if continents are represented, how many countries we are importing from. As such, the subjects can be used, elaborated, and activated by the teachers and pupils outside the classroom, usually without an overwhelming pile of paperwork.

Establishing an Organizational Structure

With support from the organizations and institutions of our employment, the first steps to establish the national network UdeskoleNet *was taken in 2006, where educators, researchers, and practitioners met for the first time. UdeskoleNet aims to develop udeskole practice, by getting new input on seminars and sharing knowledge and experience with the everyday work outside the classroom. Since then, the network has grown in numbers whilst maintaining its independence being a grassroots movement, and powered by collaboration and mutual effort. The network succeeded in mobilizing the former Minister of Education to a meeting in which school practice was discussed. The first time she mentioned the word udeskole on* *national television, hands clapped and we felt that we took part in not only practice and research, but also increasingly in policymaking.*

Udeskole in Denmark, Continued

Taking the children outside on excursions during school time has for a long time been a common practice, but conducting teaching outside the classroom systematically has grown in the last 20 years. Teaching outside the classroom has come alive and, as a rising tidal wave, has grown from small-scale initiatives fostered by passionate individuals, organizations, and schools to large government-supported projects. One of the main tasks for enthusiastic outdoor teachers has been to open up the school, lifting the children's eyes from books, texts, and tablets to walk outside, letting them learn about subjects, issues, and fields of knowledge through interaction with the surrounding world and society. With the first described project in 1999–2002 (Mygind, 2007, 2009), the development of nature classes and *udeskole* took off in Denmark from the bottom up, initiated by two practising teachers and partly inspired by the practice and research conducted by Dr Arne Jordet in Norway. Subsequently, increasing public interest, coverage, and probably public support due to a zeitgeist of appreciation of the outdoors inspired teachers all around the country to start *udeskole*. Even though it is possible to practise without further applications or approval, *udeskole* is not mentioned explicitly in the national school curriculum. It is not seen as a separate subject with recognizable content but more as a method for teaching content. And this should be done by someone who is not only an outdoors person but also deeply embedded in the content of her/his subject.

Did We Celebrate Too Soon?

The holistic, hands-on, and experienced-based approach to *udeskole* has been practised widely in Denmark, most often with formation (*bildung*), socialization, physicality, and well-being as the main goals. Combining problem- and inquiry-based learning with creative, practical approaches in nature has been seen as a holistic way of letting the child grow up in harmony and feeding in to a curiosity for learning. However, with the previous reform of the public school in Denmark, more emphasis was laid on learning goals. The intention of the reform was to "provide students with more time for learning. With new and more varied forms of teaching. And with more focus on academic standards and well-being" (Danish Ministry of Education, 2014a). Whilst not mentioning *udeskole* explicitly in the reform documents, the former Ministry of Education founded the Development of Udeskole project (Danish Ministry of Education, 2014a, 2014b) as part of a wider initiative to raise the academic levels of school children and to reduce the impact of social background on academic performance, both of which *udeskole* was thought to contribute towards.

These recent initiatives, we would argue, are indicators of an increasing political interest in the potentials of *udeskole* and perhaps the coming of a political agenda or vision for *udeskole*. Whether the political interest in the outdoor field stems from a passion for bringing children in closer proximity to nature to enhance children's socialization and physical well-being shared with *udeskole* practitioners or is related more narrowly to the enhancement of testable, academic achievement remains debatable. However, these different approaches disturb the intuitive, nonverbalized understanding of what teaching outside the classroom should support, held by many practitioners, and therefore might foster fruitful discussions. Should teaching outside the classroom be a method for generally achieving higher grades and better academic test results? Or ought it to be a time and place where children, perhaps not thriving or succeeding in the regular indoor school, might gain confidence and positive experiences and where learning is seen in a broader, less testable perspective? Is it possible to work with, and develop, a practice that contains both academic and formational purposes? These discussions must be undertaken in research and practitioner networks, courses, and during teacher education. Care must be taken to choose examples, exercises, and approaches that make the student (or teacher) aware of the wide array of different ways to work outside and what kind of learning this supports. Furthermore, care should be taken to continue to discuss with, and influence, policymakers so that the idea of *udeskole*, based on a holistic view of the children, is not substituted for with academic standards and performance.

Udeskole in Teacher Education

Seven university colleges across Denmark provide teacher education in Denmark: the Bachelor of Education. Students can choose to take courses consisting of, or explicitly being, *udeskole* courses. These courses are optional, highly popular and our statistics, based upon students in 2014 and 2015 at VIA University College, records 70–82% of attendees as women, reflecting the ratio in the profession of teachers. As we started to offer *udeskole* courses in teacher education, the grass-roots engagement had to fit into organizational structures and management. With the economic issues connected to the different providers of *udeskole* education at the university colleges, small fractures in the strong network could occur when we to some extent become competitors in securing funding for our courses. Our loyalty must be to both the vision and the idea of education outside the classroom *and* to our workplace. But being aware of the possible fissures whilst continuing to collaborate with each other in meetings, writing, debating, and developing courses will keep the outdoor scene alive and us aware of the dangers of organizational competition.

Sharing and Getting Input from the Field

The steps on the university stairs creak as the teachers arrive. The research project "TEACHOUT" has one of the monthly open-door arrangements, where a PhD or master's student gives a lecture based upon her preliminary results. This occurs just after the teachers' work time. There are lots of greetings, laughs, and hugs as teachers, researchers, nature interpreters and guides, school leaders, and students arrive at the auditorium. "Welcome to the seminar series" starts the senior researcher of the project, and silence spreads through the seats as a young researcher starts to explain her research question and methodology. After an hour, the windows have to be opened as a lively debate starts and the speaker, smiling, tries to both answer and write down some of the comments.

Two and Two Is Five

Many teachers put in tremendous effort every day working with children, taking them outside the classroom, and conducting high-quality education. Volunteers and organizations provide resources and knowledge free of charge; researchers explore the practice, study, describe, interpret, and communicate results, and teacher educators create initiatives for developing practice. Nationally and internationally, the figuration of individuals and organizations contribute to developing *udeskole*; in this network, powered by an affinity and idea, we are interconnected, sharing, discussing, and using experiences across nationalities, organizations, institutions, professions, educational levels, and individual horizons.

Common for the network, we would argue, is the understanding of and affinity for the importance of getting the children outside the classroom. Today's children are facing challenges beyond our imagination; climate change, ecological catastrophes, and cultural meetings and conflicts must be either lived with in new ways or solved. We have to teach the children more than we readily know. We have to provide them with the tools to create solutions to some of the issues inherited from earlier generations. Using the outdoors can be one way of supporting the development of initiative, creativity, and problem-solving. From the very beginning, openness, sharing, and free access has been a cornerstone in developing *udeskole*. Many funding organizations, like the Danish Outdoor Council, subsidize applications and actions that involve volunteers and citizens and are non-profit, open-access initiatives.

The issue is not to earn money or power but to get as many children in the outdoors during their schooldays as possible. From the start, interest in children in the outdoors has connected different fields and the work towards this goal has been paved by cooperation and sharing.

The five-person *study group* that targeted *udeskole* on a wider front was one of the first established intellectual, nongovernmental volunteer groups. Participants represented a wide array of human resources: nature interpreters, academia, strategic thinkers, practitioners, teacher education—and from this group, the national network was established. Parallel to this, and in collaboration through communication, knowledge, and interest, a scientific environment was built up at the University of Copenhagen. From well-examined case studies and a few PhD students, it has developed into an international centre of excellence in the field, still diverse and connecting very different sectors, education, and people.

As gearwheels interacting and driving each other, together accomplishing a difficult task, the hands, minds, and wills of cooperating people have lifted this field in Denmark.

From university funding and teacher education to everyday work with children, people have worked to get children outdoors.

Conclusion

The idea of *udeskole* is bigger than personal goals. The idea of teaching children outside the classroom has united knowledge and resources from different levels of society. For some engaged people, *udeskole* is seen as an opposition to an increasingly controlled, test-focused, measuring society, perceived as narrowing education to academic qualifications. For others, it is a way to accomplish political strategies and educational goals. With access to this movement, and with involvement from all levels of society, women have been a part: from the Minister of Education to the female teacher.

It's not only about power, money, or academic acknowledgement. It's about our children's lives.

And It Continues

The webpage skoven-i-skolen.dk *has a new coordinator as Malene has left to work in education in the national parks. After a few weeks, I grab the 'phone and call the new coordinator: "Hello, this is Karen Barfod. I am just calling to get to know you, to talk with you." "Well, wonderful, I was just about to call you," he answers, "Let's make an appointment and see how best we can cooperate."*

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Bringing the Inside Out and the Outside In: Place-Based Learning Rendering Classroom Walls Invisible

Katherine Bates

Introduction

As a woman in education for over 30 years, a socioecologic approach has always underpinned the "head, hand and heart" of my teaching (Brühlmeier, 2010). In part, connecting with the natural world began with my own childhood by being immersed *in the wild*—or what I thought at the time was sneaking in on the edge of wilderness and mixing with all that was natural. As a child, I was the only girl amongst the neighbourhood of boys and brothers that played in the creek that ran past our backdoors down to the bay. With very restrictive limits set by my parents on where we were allowed to play and with whom, I never divulged where we roamed or the legless reptiles that we sometimes glimpsed in the grasses for fear of losing permission to explore the *creek out back*.

Nature's Incense
Moss smothered rocks making slippery velvet moccasins for our bare feet
Water striders skating and tadpoles beating tails
Confirmation of the captured crystal creek water
Songs of frogs, cicada calls and dragonflies in flight
Fresh crisp air nipping at our skins turning cheeks pink and hair curly
Willow trees make a twilight canopy making the sun an unreliable timekeeper.

K. Bates (✉)
Western Sydney University, Bankstown, NSW, Australia

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Transformed crowns of sweeping branches become pendulous ropes
for crossing the riparian habitat.
Earthen clay, boggy humus and turpentine residue from crushed oil-laden leaves
—Nature's incense
My sanctuary, my friend, my adversary tester—my undisclosed special place.
—By author

Hung (2014) explains that an authentic sense of place comes from direct personal lived experiences that build up both consciously and unconsciously over time. In alignment with this view and others purporting the same, my childhood experiences of doing, feeling, and watching *in the wild* seem to be early vanguard counsellors of my human–place relationship and teaching pedagogy (Chawla, 2007; Hung, 2014; Kudryavtsev, Stedman, & Krasny, 2012; Malpas, 1999).

This presumption also resonates with eco-psychology's views identifying the importance of transpersonal connections between humans and the natural world (Chawla, 2007; Wolsko & Lindberg, 2013). Retrospective research also indicates that fulfilling experiences in nature during childhood positively affects adults' self-rated pro-environmental attitudes and actions (Collado & Corraliza, 2015, p. 39). To this end, the meaning that emerges from early experiences with nature can be carried forward implicitly into a person's appreciation for, connectedness with, and stewardship of the natural world (Gendlin, 2004). These views, particularly in light of current world environmental issues, emphasize the importance of embedding ecopedagogies in everyday educational practices.

Beginning Teaching

As a teacher graduate in the early 1980s, however, going into *the wild* was somewhere we took students annually or perhaps once a term on an excursion. In these cases, this form of experiential education provided a mediated experience outside of students' *common dwelling* as a type of novelty rather than simple living-in-nature experience (Thoreau, 1854; Wattchow & Brown, 2011).

Particularly evidencing this type of experiential education were the greatly anticipated yearly co-education camps in Stage 3. Students were involved in cookouts, orienteering, bush survival techniques, and bushwalking activities for up to five days. Whilst positive, this experience replicated a tribal initiation into nature returning to an alternative reality back in the classroom.

A notable trend of adventure camp education programmes in the early 1980s was the focus on involving students in high-challenge activities that were risk-centric (Gray & Birrell, 2015; Miranda & Yerkes, 1996). Activities such as abseiling, caving, canoeing, and high ropes were on students' *must do* lists, with the overwhelming majority of the girls taking part in these activities for the first time. Whilst these high-risk, first-time experiences were most popular, these were often accompanied by the most heightened fear and anxiety responses, which Wattchow and Brown (2011) argue can limit a person's positive interpersonal connection with place. In addition, the structure of the camping programme allowed the students a one-time-only participation. This structure limited the opportunity for practising skills and building competence. This approach is now considered myopic with a broader movement towards magnifying the consciousness of walking the ground without dominating or trying to tame it (Gray & Birrell, 2015; Mulligan, 2003). Despite these limitations, there were some significant positive outcomes from these camping experiences in the 1980s. These were around the notions of self-efficacy, peer cohesion, and teacher–student relations.

Self-efficacy is one of the four processes of goal realization in social cognitive theory. Perceived self-efficacy about a person's capabilities plays a major part in motivation for undertaking a task, how the task is approached, and persistence in completing it (Bandura, 1994). The activities provided to the students over these five-day camps provided them with opportunities to develop their self-efficacy. One example where this was clearly expressed was after the high ropes course. This course was a particularly challenging activity for many of the girls. Whether their goal was sitting in the harness, balancing on the low rope structure, completing the first level, or the entire course—they all experienced a sense of achievement and shared this through gesture and dialogue. This pattern of positive reinforcement, more sustained efforts in vicarious experiences, and visible improvements in students' motivation to participate became more prolific over the period of the camp. Research supports this response by arguing that those individuals who engage in positive experiences in nature report experiencing higher levels of flourishing, subjective vitality, and positive emotions (Wolsko & Lindberg, 2013). As such, self-efficacy is a useful tool for students' lifelong learning and active citizenship.

The adventure experiences also provided students with opportunities to develop esprit de corps amongst the group, facilitating prosocial behaviours. These behaviours included a greater degree of acceptance, perspective taking, and decision-making during group tasks. More democratic discussion and decisions were also made such as when deciding on a path to take during orienteering or how to paddle a two-person canoe most effectively. In these situations, students were more open to considering alternative solutions offered by individuals as they worked towards achieving a common goal.

Other prosocial behaviours were evident such as encouragement and responding to each other in empathetic ways. Empathy, as the ability to understand another living thing's experience from its frame of reference, reduces biased thinking and intolerance. As a key element of emotional intelligence, empathy also encompasses a broader awareness of what is happening in the world. Empathy is therefore both beneficial for an individual's everyday life and also ecologically valuable because *applied empathy* leads to change-making and action-taking (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2016; Gordon, 2009).

Improved student–teacher relations with the teenage girls were also experienced over the course of the camp. In the construct of experiencing nature alongside my students, I became a critical co-investigator (Freire, 1970). And, as we assisted each other through the challenges, encouraging and supporting each other, we built mutual trust and acceptance, thus developing stronger bonds during and after the nature-based experiences.

Experiencing Nature Whilst Leading Nature-Based Outdoor Experiences

Despite the rise of the girls' camping movement and the expanding feminist-based theory in experiential education of the 1990s, the camps I attended were operated by an all-male crew both onsite and in the hierarchical company structure (Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Martin, 2005; Miranda & Yerkes, 1996). This situation reflects the historical male *gender trend* in outdoor education. A body of research supports this trend by acknowledging the continuing cultural struggle and under representation of females in the field of outdoor education (Bialeschki, 1992; Dalla-Longa, 2013; Gray & Birrell, 2015; Wright & Gray, 2013).

However, in the context of Australian primary schools, female gender disproportion is reversed from that of outdoor education, with 83% of primary school teachers identifying as female (Centre for Education & Statistics, 2015). Discussion about this gender dichotomy is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, attention is drawn to this disparity because it highlights the important role that female educators play in everyday primary school experiences for bringing the *outside world in* and *the inside dwellers out*.

Bringing the Outside World In and the Inside Dwellers Out

This section discusses a place-based approach, as a subset within the broader ecopedagogical pedagogy, for engaging students in relevant, authentic lived-in nature experiences that continue over time rather than those one-off adventure-based experiences of the 1980s (Gray & Birrell, 2015; Hill, 2012). Experiential, place-based experiences do not come without their challenges in today's social contexts. A body of research identifies that outdoor immersion experiences are competing with other demands such as increased technology, media-based recreation, and virtual social connections that keep children inside and alienated from nature (Andrejewski, Mowen, & Kerstetter, 2011; Dowdell, Gray, & Malone, 2011; Gray & Martin, 2012; Kellert, 2013). This challenge is accompanied by suggestions that a *bubble wrap* generation has increased the number of children growing up in walled gardens, thus limiting their immersion in nature's playground (Malone, 2007).

In the Australian schooling context, these challenges are coupled with competing educational demands and growing sociocultural diversity. A body of research indicates that pressure from an increased locus of accountability around standardized and national testing is arguably impacting on how, how much, and what curriculum is addressed in order to *teach to the test* (Bates, 2014; Higgins, Miller, & Wegmann, 2006; Hipwell & Klenowski, 2011; Klenowski & Wyatt-Smith, 2011; Kostogriz & Doecke, 2013). This increased need to find time for assessing, rather than doing, may place unnecessary pressures on repeated immersion experiences in nature. Of no less importance are the complex and intertwining *intra-actions* between humans in and with nature (Malone, 2016). From the sociocultural perspective, all participants are sign-makers and sign-readers who bring different cultural, social, and geographical experiences to their context of learning in and about the world. As Fig. 50.1 illustrates, these experiences are not only different from one individual or group to another but vary for each individual at different times in their lives. This sociocultural view (Thibault, 2004) suggests that individuals' motivations, values, engagement, and responses to nature are relational to their prior experiences. Thus, today's educators require a broad brush if they are to engage children in nature-based learning beyond the *white middle-class view* (Malone, 2016; Robinson, 2013). Furthermore, developing students' understanding of the beneficial exchanges between humans and the non-human natural world is critical (Abram, 2010). This approach requires

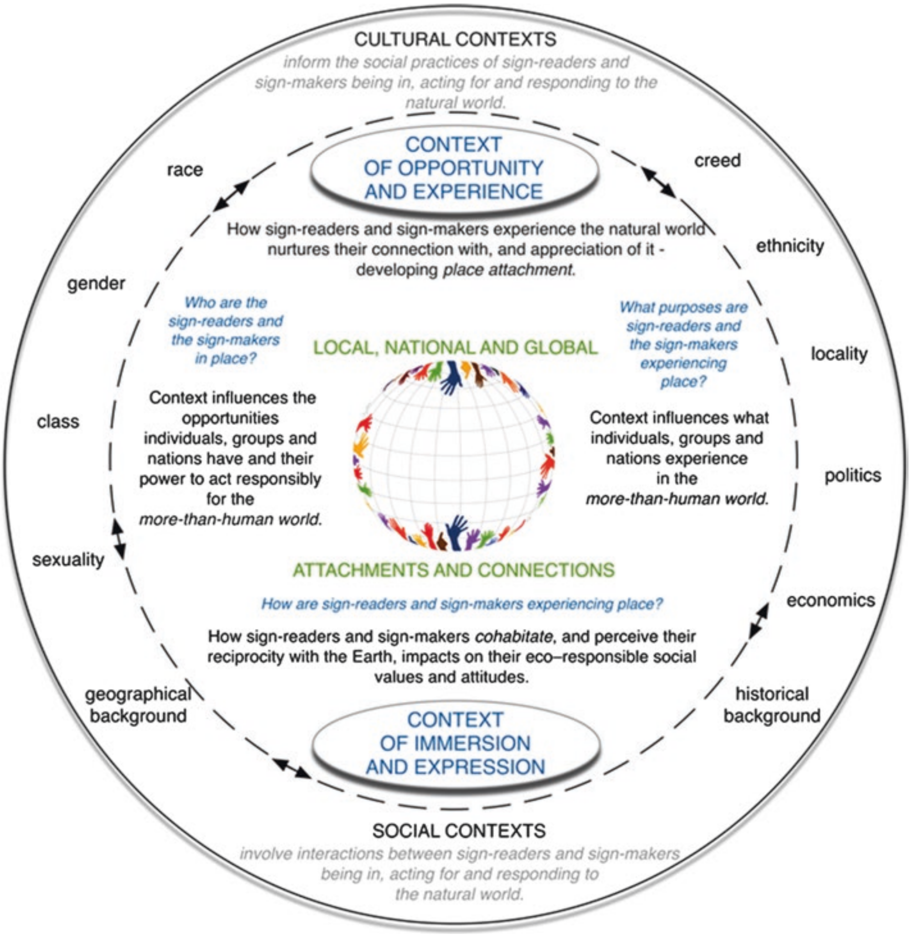

CULTURAL CONTEXTS
inform the social practices of sign-readers and sign-makers being in, acting for and responding to the natural world.
CONTEXT OF OPPORTUNITY AND EXPERIENCE
How sign-readers and sign-makers experience the natural world nurtures their connection with, and appreciation of it - developing *place attachment*.
race
creed
ethnicity
gender
locality
class
politics
sexuality
economics
geographical background
historical background
Who are the sign-readers and the sign-makers in place?
What purposes are sign-readers and the sign-makers experiencing place?
LOCAL, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL
Context influences the opportunities individuals, groups and nations have and their power to act responsibly for the *more-than-human world.*
Context influences what individuals, groups and nations experience in the *more-than-human world.*
ATTACHMENTS AND CONNECTIONS
How are sign-readers and sign-makers experiencing place?
How sign-readers and sign-makers *cohabitate*, and perceive their reciprocity with the Earth, impacts on their eco–responsible social values and attitudes.
CONTEXT OF IMMERSION AND EXPRESSION
SOCIAL CONTEXTS
involve interactions between sign-readers and sign-makers being in, acting for and responding to the natural world.

Fig. 50.1 Place attachment and global citizenship from a sociocultural perspective

incorporating the plurality of ways that humans see, immerse, and respond to nature (Reiss, Boutler, & Tunnicliffe, 2007). Considering these challenges, it could be argued that balancing ecological literacy and connectivity to nature in a culturally and socially diverse twenty-first century is growing in complexity.

Acknowledging this complexity, I respectfully argue that the fluidity of ecopedagogical principles allows educators to design transformative educational experiences that provide nature-based inquiries in students' everyday learning experiences that are culturally and socially inclusive, authentic, relevant, and child-centred (Andersen, 2013; Chawla, 1999; Collado & Corraliza, 2015; Louv, 2008; Wattchow & Brown, 2011).

Research suggests that the core elements of place-based learning can be interwoven into pedagogy for ecological education very effectively (Judson, 2015; Wright, 2013). Examples of transformative ways that ecopedagogical approaches explore cohabitation and nature immersion are evidenced by a number of successful current educational programmes, both nationally and internationally. Notably these are, but not limited to:

- Bush Kinder (Elliot, 2013)
- Children & Nature Network (Morag, Tal, & Rotem-Keren, 2013)
- "My Schools Kitchen Garden" Programme (Yeatman et al., 2013)
- Nature Play organisations (http://www.natureplay.org.au/)
- Focus on nature and schools underpinned by Reggio Emilio philosophies (Hall, 2013; Louv, 2008)
- Forest Schools (Knight, 2017; Williams-Siegfredsen, 2013)
- Wilderness Awareness Schools (Young, Haas, & McGowan, 2010)

Sustaining Connections with the Environment in Light of New Curriculum Directives

In Australia, a new national curriculum three key areas as priorities for students' learning across all subjects from the early years (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2012). These three key areas, termed the "cross-curriculum priorities (CCPs)," are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures,
- Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and
- Sustainability.

These priorities draw on the Melbourne Declaration (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008), identifying the collective responsibility of governments, school sectors, parents, care givers, and education providers to assist "all young Australians to become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens" (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 8). As part of the elaboration within Goal Two of the Melbourne Declaration, there is a clear direction to educate students to "work for the common good, in particular sustaining and improving natural and social environments" (MCEETYA, 2008, p. 9). This is a positive move to ensure ecopedagogies move from a peripheral to centroidal position across all levels and educational disciplines (ACARA, 2012; Dyment & Hill, 2015; Hill, 2012).

Whilst all three CCPs embed aspects of sustainability through culture, society, and nature, the *sustainability* priority is of focus here as the three concepts supporting this priority provide:

> The opportunity for students to develop an appreciation of the necessity of acting for a more sustainable future and so address the ongoing capacity of Earth to maintain all life and meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations. (ACARA, 2012)

Preparing Tomorrow's Educators for Teaching Sustainability Through Place-Based Pedagogy

Preservice teacher education plays a critical role in developing teachers who are ready, willing, and able to teach for sustainability (Dyment & Hill, 2015; Nolet, 2009). Evans, Whitehouse, and Gooch (2012) also identify a number of key areas when preparing preservice teachers for their future work in schools. From these viewpoints, supporting teachers for teaching sustainability through place-based pedagogy requires:

- challenging their dispositions, perceptions, and attitudes;
- developing their knowledge, understandings, confidence, and preparedness for teaching the nine multifaceted dimensions of sustainability highlighted in the Australian Curriculum.

This final section of the chapter reports on how place-based notions of curriculum, as a subset of ecopedagogies, are introduced to preservice teachers in a number of subjects and contexts. Not to be interpreted as the *soft end* of pedagogy, place-based learning sustains students through embodied experiences in the *here* and *now* (Bateman, 2015; Casey, 2001; Hung, 2014; Kudryavtsev et al., 2012). This approach explores the world through students' connections in their local situ moving outwards to a broader understanding of community, national, and global perspectives (Gruenewald, 2003). The approach moves from focusing on environmental catastrophes or fear that can result in detachment, despair, or a sense of powerlessness for making a difference (Andersen, 2013; Cameron, 2003; Gray & Birrell, 2015; Orr, 2004; Winograd, 2016). Rather, place-based pedagogy provides opportunities for a balance between initiating positive connections with nature along with learning facts about ecological issues and actions to protect and restore biodiversity.

Immersing Preservice Teachers in "A Sense of Place"

Explanations of *place* by Cameron (2003) and Relph (1976) are drawn on to describe the relevance of place attachment in today's society and the value of place-based pedagogy. From their perspective, *a sense of place* is an attuned embodiment and realization of human experience with fabricated and natural landscapes, in particular, geographical spaces. These experiences lead individuals to feel a sense of belonging or attachment to those surroundings that positively influence an individual's motivations for living sustainably.

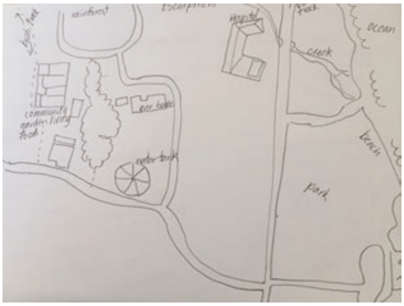
Research also acknowledges the importance of the affective domain as a critical aspect of developing a bond with the environment through *slow engagement* with place and storied landscapes (Gray & Birrell, 2015). With a connection to the natural world, an appreciation of it, and a feeling of comfort when being in it, individuals are more likely to maintain, restore, and protect it (Cameron, 2003; Sobel, 2014). Therefore, the notions of place are important contributors to active global citizenship and environmental stewardship, and are therefore valuable aspects of teaching and learning.

Place-based learning has been a part of my pedagogy across various contexts throughout my teaching career up to and including my current role in the tertiary sector preparing preservice teachers for their future work in schools. This section reports on some examples of implementing a place-based pedagogy across subjects that I have been involved with in teacher education. They build on from my 25 years in primary and secondary teaching in classrooms and my ongoing love for being in nature.

Exploring Place-Based Approaches Using Literature

In 2008, whilst teaching in Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) Bachelor of Primary Education with the University of Wollongong, place-based pedagogy underpinned the close study of *My Place* (Wheatley & Rawlins, 2008). This picture book was selected as an appropriate text for exploring notions of place attachment through historical recounts from various children's connections with significant places, people, and events.

Using a similar approach, preservice teachers composed place maps from their own local childhood area recording in a personal place journal along with significant places and activities in place. These descriptions were repre-



Every worldview describes a universe in which everything is connected with everything else. Stars, clouds, forests, oceans and human beings are interconnected components of a single system in which nothing can exist in isolation. (Suzuki, 2006, p. 22)

Fig. 50.2 Students constructed place journals mediated by text and image

sented through drawings, photos, artefacts, written recounts, and poems. Students also selected quotes from *The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature* (Suzuki, 2006) to accompany their photos as personal expressions of their attachment to place Fig. 50.2.

Place-Based Experiential Learning as a Sustainability Project

The opportunity to be involved in Education for Sustainability came about again in 2014 as an invited member of a participatory action research project with Western Sydney University (WSU, formerly University of Western Sydney). This project was concerned with implementing the CCP of "sustainability" in preservice teacher education subjects. The initial Professional Development Day for the Education for Sustainability project was situated at the Hawkesbury Riverfarm in New South Wales, Australia (Fig. 50.3). As a participant, I experienced the potential of *place as a site for learning* incorporating notions of place-based learning into English and HSIE subjects in the Master of Teaching course at WSU.

To initiate the project, participants were asked to create place maps as a visual method for sharing connections and as a way of introducing group members to each other. A group process to design an inquiry unit around place immersion then followed. This process began with an exploration of the Hawkesbury Riverfarm where all group members had the opportunity to collect photographic material, some of which is illustrated in Fig. 50.4. These images became the stimulus for tutorial discussions and planning for teaching back on campus.

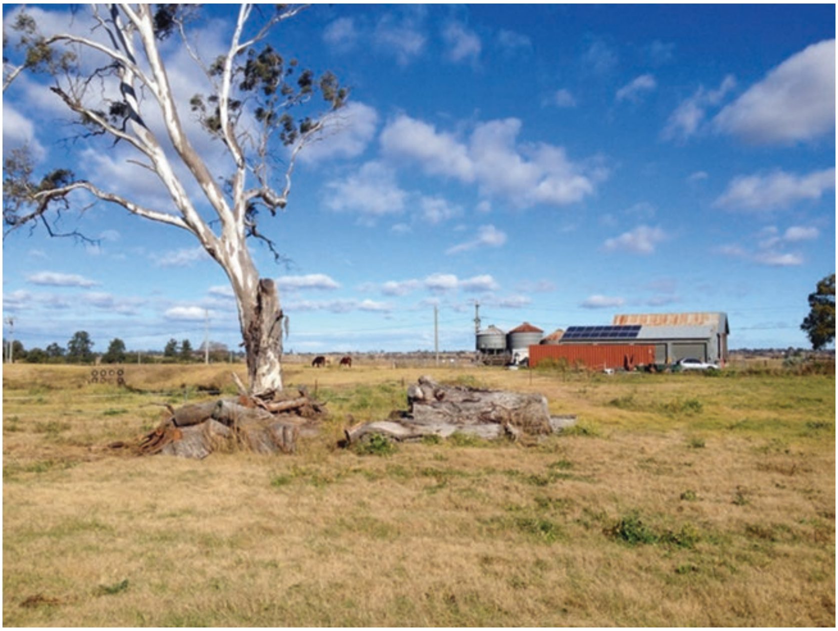


Fig. 50.3 The Hawkesbury Riverfarm

All Semiotic Resources Used in Seeking, Finding, Making, and Reporting

Multimodal representations are mandatory requirements in the Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2012). As semiotic resources, they provide an engaging and relevant platform for story-making and telling using place-based notions. The photos taken on the Riverfarm site immersion were therefore useful visual stimuli for modelling how to initiate an inquiry process for teaching HSIE in the primary school setting. Preservice teachers were guided through various *front-loading* strategies designed to draw on collective existing knowledge about the participants, settings, and actions depicted in the photos. Individual reflections also provided students with time to mind map and record ideas about sustainability on coloured slips of paper. In random groupings, ideas were then categorized into sustainability themes and, after considering *big ideas* around the topic, inquiry questions and supporting strategies for investigating, finding, recording, making, and sharing about topics were developed. Tutorials groups also undertook a *planning for teaching* process using the following set of resources:

- photograph of a significant object from the Hawkesbury Riverfarm immersion experience;

Fig. 50.4 Photos from the Hawkesbury Riverfarm immersion experience

- factual text such as a research article, persuasive argument, or information text about an environmental issue around a topic; and
- stage-appropriate quality picture book related to the topic or issue represented.

Using Images to Read and Tell Stories

The Australian Curriculum mandates that the CCPs are not subjects in themselves but are a set of organizing ideas through the learning areas (ACARA, 2012). Therefore, the collected photographic data were used as a stimulus for connecting learning across subjects underpinned by the sustainability CCP. One of the photos depicted a beehive constructed from natural materials

K What do we know about bees?	W What do we need to learn more about?	L What did we learn about bees from the texts?

Fig. 50.5 KWL chart for gathering information

as a *bee's nesting place*. After an initial discussion about the photo, the groups collectively shared existing knowledge about the topic using a graphic organizer chart more commonly referred to as a *KWL chart*. Students recorded their ideas into the three columns of K (what we know), W (what we want to find out), and L (what we learnt). The groups were then provided with an article from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust on the plight of the bumblebee (https://bumblebeeconservation.org/about-bees/why-bees-need-help/). New information that the groups gathered from reading the factual material provided was then added to the KWL chart (Fig. 50.5).

High-quality stage-appropriate picture books were then explored and strategies for making and telling factual and imaginative stories about bumblebees were developed. Three examples for students in different primary stages of schooling are now briefly summated.

(a) Stage One: *Rosie's Walk* (Hutchins, 1968)

The choice of a traditional picture book was made to discuss the interconnectedness between animals and the use of animals on farms over time. We also discussed the understory being shown and not told in the story. The discussion centred on comparing the opportunities and challenges for telling the bee's story using a picture book compared to using a multimedia resource. The following resource was used as stimulus for this discussion: http://www.schooltube.com/video/13e5b71bb3663c832b4b/Rosie%27s%20Walk

(b) Stage Two: The Adventures of Maya the Bumblebee (Bonsels, 1922)

This classic story about the adventures of *Maya the Bee* was discussed as a topic for storyboarding using the multimedia technique Claymation (https://vimeo.com/tag:claymation). The discussion included representing current environmental issues for native bees and possible future actions. In this way, the story became a stimulus for illustrating negative human impacts on the nonhuman living world. It was also used to promote constructive public actions for safeguarding and restoring biodiversity.

In keeping with curriculum directives, students were made aware of multimodal versions of the classic text that are currently available such as an anime television series and *Maya the Bee: The Movie* (Screen Australia, 2014). These recently released film genres bring the language used in the classical 1922 text into languages and images that are more colloquial for young viewers in the twenty-first century (http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3336368/?ref_=vi_tt_t_tt_ov_vi). Again, the KWL chart provided opportunities for students to record their prior knowledge about the topic, which was revealed during their engagement with the various stimuli (Fig. 50.5).

(c) Stage Three: *The Harry Potter Series* (Rowling, 2001)

The groups discussed the inclusion of bees in this popular culture novel series. We discussed the possible author intentions for referencing bees in such symbolic ways such as the Weasley beekeeper family and the use of the eighteenth-century English word for bumblebee as one of the main characters—Dumbledore.

Discussions were also undertaken based on significant objects from the Riverfarm immersion such as an abandoned water tower. Environmental audits of their local areas were introduced with preservice teachers using Google Maps and Google Earth to undertake water tower and water reservoir audits. Other factual aspects for sustainable water practices were highlighted, such as sustainable water use and storage, climatic weather patterns, and different uses of water in regions of Australia as further possible inquiry avenues for primary-aged students. Opportunities for accompanying these factual inquiries with stage-appropriate quality picture books were considered as ways for enriching topic knowledge and sustainability themes such as those listed below.

- Crew, G. (2011). *The Watertower*. Northampton, MA, USA: Crocodile Books.
- French, J. (2011). *Flood*. Sydney, Australia: Allen &Unwin.
- Suzuki, D. (2014). *Rivertime*. Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Shaun Tan's (2000) picture book *The Lost Thing* was also selected as an appropriate text for exploring consequences of unsustainable practices and the positive impact individuals can make for restoring and "feeding": biodiversity as active and responsible citizens.

A comparative analysis between the obsolete farm machinery on the Riverfarm and imaginative representations were undertaken. Images from *The Lost Thing* (Tan, 2000) were selected and compared with photos of disused machinery for tuning students into an inquiry about the effect of unsustainable practices and advances in technologically informed sustainable farming practices.

Group *think tanks* also explored current curriculum content and the sustainability CCP using an inquiry process. Their ideas were recorded via a planning template. Visual data collected from the place immersion and quality literature were incorporated into the planning of the inquiry process.

Planting the Seeds for Future Teaching Practice and Sustainable Living

The chapter now closes with the voice of one preservice teacher's experience in *being, doing, and seeing* experiential place-based learning within a garden school. The vision of this not-for-profit initiative is to feed the minds, bodies, and futures of every Australian student through a kitchen garden experience. Currently, 10% of primary schools in Australia grow, harvest, prepare, and share fresh food as part of an ecopedagogical approach to teaching and learning. The voice of this teacher is a purposeful conclusion to this chapter as evidence of the important role of dedicated teachers in transformative ecopedagogically sound schools. Teachers in these schools provide critical channels for developing students' capabilities as active and informed citizens in sustainable communities.

Research indicates that permaculture taught through school kitchen gardening transfers to home and the broader community (Yeatman et al., 2013). Thus, the initiative to include kitchen gardens in schools supports ecological communities of practice and is a seed in growing education for sustainable schools, communities, and futures from the ground up (Robinson, 2013).

In the Australian context, the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Australian Institute for Teaching and Leadership [AITSL]) requires teachers to:

> appreciate the role of an ecological approach to school organisation, events and programs in enhancing HSIE and civics and citizenship, outcomes, stage statements and organisation of content, including assessment. (AITSL, 2014)

In my role as a tertiary educator, it is so encouraging to see theory in practice, especially for preservice teachers building their pedagogical stance for their future teaching. Therefore, to receive an email from Roy, a dedicated preservice teacher describing his professional experience in a garden school was very exciting. Roy explained that three years into operations, the school is currently running a completely sustainable garden where students from Years 3 to 6 "harvest the seeds, take cuttings to grow plants and use water tanks to water the garden" (email correspondence, May 2016).

Successful implementation of ecopedagogies such as this is evidence that schools are moving from an abstract propagation about the environment to *participatory and metacognitive engagement*. This moves the ecopedagogies approach from one that is based on fear and adventure experiences outside of students' common dwelling, to one of living in a nature-connected society as living, learning organisms supporting the well-being of our planet (Gordon, 2009; Kahn, 2010; Robinson, 2013). These experiences, like the early adventure programmes in the 1980s, also provide opportunities for developing students' self-efficacy, group cohesion, and teacher–student relations. However, these activities involve participatory lived-in experiences rather than high-risk challenges against nature, outside of students' common dwelling place (Fig. 50.6).

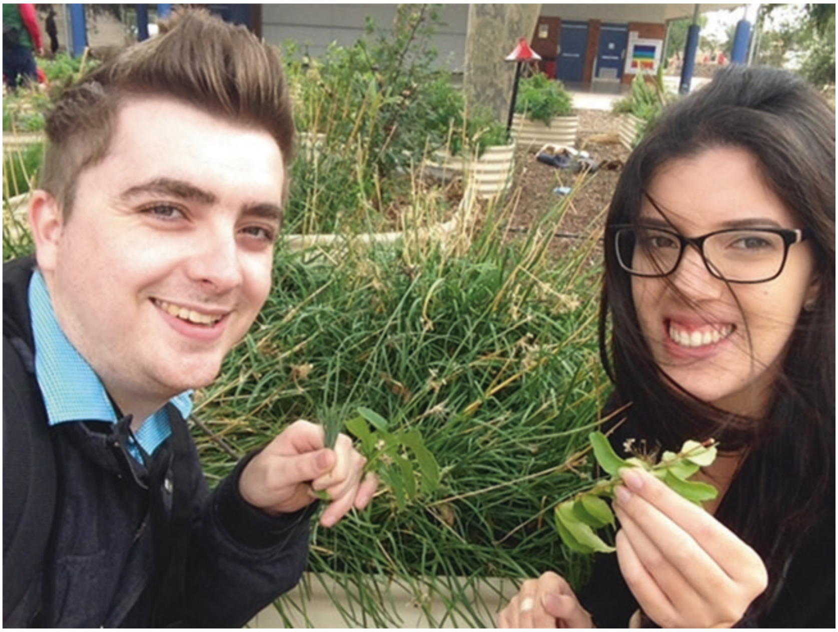


Fig. 50.6 Experiencing nature-based pedagogy (Photo credit: Roy Nixon)

> This was one of the most unique learning experiences I have seen in a school. This program involves students caring for and maintaining the garden beds in their school. This involves planting, watering, weeding and taking cuttings to make a completely sustainable garden. Every week, students also participate in a kitchen class where they cook the produce harvested from their garden. (Excerpt from Roy Nixon's journal, May 2016)

> We rejoice in our humanity and our connection to our planet. Such experience should be part of the everyday. (Bateman, 2015, p. 15)

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Space to Create: Learning with Nature in an Arts and Cultural Context Through a Woman's Lens

Mary Preece

Introduction

Experiencing a diverse range of government and independent school settings has resulted through my journey as an educator. My tertiary education involved exposure to the creative arts: drawing, printmaking, woodwork, design, photography, textiles, and painting, whilst my formal qualifications include a B.Ed. in Arts and Crafts teaching. Majoring in woodwork was something that led naturally from being one of the first girls allowed to "take" woodwork as a subject in year 10 at my local high school. My woodwork teacher wrote in my year 10 report: "In a class of mostly boys, Mary's work was the equal of the best boys." Yet I received a B and those boys obtained an A. The rationale given was that only three As could be awarded in the class and that they had to go to the boys! This and other injustices based on gender served to make me more determined to overcome gender-based life choices. As a graduating teacher, I was one of a new breed of woodwork teachers coming into creative arts departments—one with a craft background, rather than a trade one. Occasionally this created conflict with trade background teachers in the system who were not prepared to meet a woman on equal terms in the (male) machine room.

M. Preece (✉)
Bundanon Trust, Illaroo, NSW, Australia

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A Nurturing Space

Growing up in a rural town in North Central Victoria, Australia, my deep connection with nature was established early as a through line weaving its way through my life. I always felt part of nature. My family lived on the edge of the town, in close proximity to the bush. There were weekends spent exploring our local area on bikes, cross-country running through the goldfields bush, yabbying at the family farm, and helping Dad with collecting wood for the winter fires. Holidays involved fun with visiting city cousins as we explored hills, creeks, and the bush.

Even though I was part of a nurturing and encouraging family, there were the odd incidents that piqued my concern for gender-role restrictions. During a family fishing trip to Teddington Reservoir and fishing for redfin, nine-year-old me had persistently asked my father for a chance to row the boat. My older and younger brothers had, after all, had their turn. We came back to shore and I was still complaining that I'd not had my chance. I was left in the boat and Dad pushed it off the shore to give me a go. The wind came up, I could not get the oars going, and the tinnie drifted further out. I summed up the situation, took a leap into the water, and swam for shore. Dad had to strip down to his undies and swim to retrieve the boat.

My mother was a great role model in her connection and insights to the natural world. She kept a vegetable garden that increased each year until it finally took over the cricket pitch in the backyard. She has green thumbs and the DNA of generations of farmers and market gardeners. Her garden was, and still is, a delight. She took us on wild flower walks every spring and always revealed her delight in plants and flowers. Mum was also a wonderful exemplar for a daughter—she went back to work in the 1970s as a midwife in our local hospital, introducing a second generation of babies into the world. This enabled my siblings and me the opportunity to attend university. She also took on many leadership roles in the community, from mother's clubs, church groups, to the swimming club.

My father was first a carpenter, then brick maker, and in later years a beekeeper. He loved fishing, shooting, and camping: an explorer at heart. My four siblings and I went on camping and fishing holidays and saw a lot of our state and New South Wales (NSW) in our school holiday trips. These journeys took us to different environments and all four of us, regardless of gender, were encouraged to explore, get dirty, and create.

Into the World of Education

The opportunity to share my interest in nature and the outdoors arose as a secondary teacher working in schools. In my role as an art and design teacher, I brought students out into nature and incorporated nature as inspiration for artworks. The annual art camp held at the regional town of Castlemaine, whilst I was teaching at Ivanhoe Boys' Grammar School, enabled students to experience new environments, using pinhole camera photography, printmaking, and drawing to create a large body of work.

Camping, bushwalking, ski touring, and rock climbing absorbed my weekends and holidays during my 20s and 30s. During this period, I became aware that as a female pursuing these adventurous outdoor activities, I was often in the minority. As a qualified cross-country ski instructor, I coached a school ski team for about eight years. I enjoyed numerous school trips to outdoor education camps such as Rubicon and Bogong in Victoria. Later at Geelong College, I walked long-distance trails with students, such as the Larapinta and Heysen trails.

I contributed to leadership programmes for senior students working as outdoor education leaders in camps with younger students. Once again, during these experiences, there were always more male than female teachers involved. This, however, had certain advantages. When I put my hand up for these programmes, invariably I was always selected and as a result, many opportunities arose for me to develop the necessary skills and experience in outdoor learning environments (OLEs). Also, because there were few other female teachers who wanted to or were able to get involved, my opportunities increased. Albeit being a woman, attracted to the OLEs had its advantages.

Bundanon Beckons

In 2008, after 35 years teaching in Victorian secondary schools, I relocated interstate to NSW as the education manager at Bundanon Trust. This was a great leap into the unknown. Together with my dog Rosie, I hit the Hume Highway and headed for Shoalhaven, knowing no one in NSW.

The position involves leading a small team of visual arts educators, conducting day and residential visual art education programmes, and developing new education streams in literature, textiles, performing arts, and environmental education. I could see the endless possibilities for outdoor learning at this special place. From 2009, I began exploring and photographically documenting the flora and fauna of Bundanon Trust to build a photographic archive of the diverse plant communities on the properties. This digital archive was eventually incorporated into their new website (https://bundanon.com.au/place/landscape/flora/) launched in 2015.

This immersive experience led to a greater knowledge of and connection to plant species suitable for working with fibre techniques: weaving, coiling, sculpture, and basketry. By harvesting vines, rushes, and grasses from my local environment and in the studio, I explored using them with various traditional weaving techniques. The process of string making particularly held an appeal. Artist and master basket maker Jim Walliss first taught this skill to me in 2010. Interestingly, the domain of basketry seems to have very few male practitioners, being historically associated with women's crafts.

The evolution of my practice has been a very slow progression from the creation of some simple baskets in early 2013 through to an exhibition titled "Bound" held at Squid Studio, Nowra, in January 2014, with Jim Walliss and Lissa De Sailles. The work for this exhibition was inspired by the native flora of the Shoalhaven region. I have more recently tutored basketry for the Sturt Winter School at Mittagong, NSW, sharing my skills and plant knowledge.

Since I was 18 years old, family history has interested me. My maternal grandmother was a Country Women's Association (CWA) basketry and glove-making demonstrator in Victoria and an amateur artist. My paternal great-great-great-grandfather William Preece was a rope spinner from Bristol, England, before he immigrated to Australia in 1856. I have "makers" hands and I feel very connected to those aspects of my family history when I am creating.

The plant materials I work with are harvested and prepared sustainably from the local environment. I only harvest as much as I can use. Most of my work is small scale, minimizing the use of materials. When I use other purchased twines, they are from natural materials such as linen, coconut fibre, and cotton. My work is slow, delicate, and all hand-stitched and hand-formed. I believe this intimate handmade quality is reflected in my small baskets. Each artwork is an individual. Local flora, seasonal changes to the environment, the qualities of plants such as colour, texture, and flexibility are all important whilst ensuring the integrity and authenticity of my practice. I have focused on plants which have been traditionally used by Aboriginal people for fibre such as Brush Kurrajong (*Commersonia fraseri*) and different species of wetland rushes as shown in Fig. 51.1.

Having always enjoyed drawing, every time I travel, I make my own artists books and then pursue the slow, deep engagement with the place which sitting down to draw observationally enables. Whilst living in Melbourne, I further developed my printmaking skills at the Australian Print Workshop and recently have taught myself wood engraving. Photography is a lifelong pleasure, used to research and document the world as well as an artistic end in itself. My arts practice knows no boundaries between mediums, approaches, and contexts.

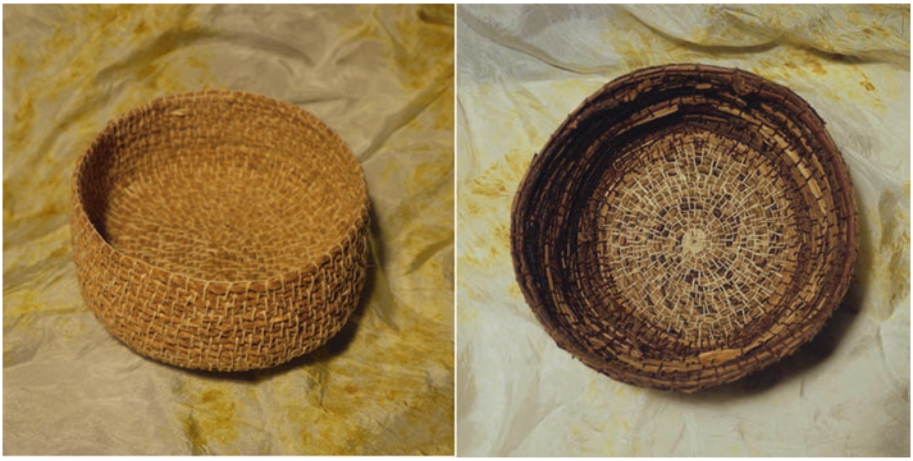

Fig. 51.1 *Commersonia fraseri*, Brush Kurrajong basketry

Background to Bundanon Trust

Arthur and Yvonne Boyd's gift of Bundanon has given Australia a unique cultural and environmental asset. Born out of Boyd's often-stated belief that *you can't own a landscape*, combined with the desire that others might also draw inspiration from this remarkable place, he gave this property to the Australian public.

Bundanon had a profound effect on Arthur. He also purchased Riversdale on the banks of the Shoalhaven near Bundanon and added to the buildings to create a home and studio. Returning to Australia in October 1974, he lived at Eearie Park whilst work at Riversdale was completed. He observed the Shoalhaven River in flood for the first time, which delayed the move into Riversdale until May 1975. Arthur and Yvonne Boyd purchased Bundanon from Sandra and Tony McGrath and Frank McDonald in the summer of 1979. Arthur Boyd was to bring the beauty of the Shoalhaven River to international attention.

In 1993, Prime Minister Paul Keating announced the Australian Government's acceptance of Arthur and Yvonne Boyd's gift of Bundanon and the intention to establish the Bundanon Trust. Since 1993, Bundanon Trust has strengthened and grown. Its mission states:

> Bundanon Trust supports arts practice and engagement with the arts through its residency, education, exhibition and performance programs. In preserving the natural and cultural heritage of its site, Bundanon promotes the value of landscape in all our lives. (Bundanon Trust)

During my time as education manager, I have had the opportunity to create new learning streams. The following case studies describe these programmes.

Connection to Place: Touched by the Earth

Touched by the Earth, a year-long cross-curriculum education programme, grew from a pilot programme, The Art of Learning, developed in 2010. Bundanon Trust had, from the 1990s to 2008, established a visual arts programme of excellence, providing day and residential experiences for primary and secondary schools. Arriving in 2008 to take up the new role of education manager, I could see the potential for cross-curriculum and environmental education streams that extended the experiences of regional schoolchildren to connect with the landscape and properties of the Trust.

Touched by the Earth aimed to engage Year 7 and 8 gifted and talented students in a year-long learning programme at Bundanon Trust, through study of the cultural, environmental, and architectural heritage of the Bundanon property (see Gray & Birrell, 2015; Gray & Thomson, 2016). There were several objectives for this site-specific programme. The intention was to immerse students in nature through hands-on observation and sensory experience of varied habitats, research land management practices and environmental rehabilitation, and to experience art making based in the environment. We believed that it was important for the students to experience the property in four different seasons with varied climatic conditions (see video link to Touched by the Earth: https://vimeo.com/57989106).

The nature of this programme is essentially place-based. I examined the context, the landscape, and the knowledge base unique to Bundanon to create learning activities for the year-long programme. This approach is supported by researcher Lou Preston (2014, p. 42) who stated that: “In my own work as a geographer turned outdoor and environmental educator, I have argued for an outdoor and environmental education practice that replaces ‘abstracted environments with particular places’ and substitutes ‘generic methods with contextually specific learning opportunities.’” Like Preston, I wanted to cultivate and elevate site-specific knowledge and improve connections between local students and their home environment.

The social, historical, cultural, and environmental context of Bundanon is a microcosm of the wider Shoalhaven district which the students call home. This meant the students were at home at Bundanon and owned the experience, not as travellers to “the other” but as homegrown researchers.

Working collaboratively with the teachers of Bomaderry High School, I was able to link the experiences of the Touched by the Earth programme at Bundanon with curricular learning. This was assisted by working with the school's 4e class, a group of selected, Year 7 and 8 students from an opportunity class. The programme enabled Bundanon Trust to further develop and test concepts and resources for cross-curricular educational programmes and importantly, enable the students to connect with leading artists and scientists involved in Bundanon's long-term SITEWORKS programme. The gender balance of these groups was equal, and I was conscious of involving an equal number of female and male presenters and artists into the programme.

The experiences developed for the students and teachers involved in Touched by the Earth were informed by several key management plans initiated by the Trust from 2010 onwards: an Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management Plan, the Land Management Plan, and later, the Landcare Australia Living Landscape Project. The forward-thinking leadership of the Trust's board members and CEO Deborah Ely had created the content and strengthened the context required to create this new education stream.

The programme included orientation to the site's heritage precinct at the property with a tour of Bundanon Homestead with four generations of family artworks from the Boyd family and a tour of Arthur Boyd's studio—an introduction to the artistic life of the Boyd family and Arthur Boyd's connection with the Shoalhaven landscape. Fieldwork activities introduced an understanding of the significance of historical Bundanon and contrast with today's varied uses. Workshops run by Indigenous artists led to the appreciation of the indigenous connection to country and to examine the Indigenous Cultural Heritage Management Plan. Yuin elder Aunty Julie Freeman is highly esteemed as a presenter for this programme, and Bundanon Trust has continued to involve Aunty Julie as a workshop provider for education programmes.

Students investigated the geology and river systems of the Shoalhaven valley through their fieldwork. They created artworks in various art forms reflective of the experience of being at Bundanon. They investigated and documented flora, fauna, and habitats guided by experts. Students and teachers experienced a river journey by kayak and an overnight camp at Bundanon, collaborating as a group to prepare for the experience, plan menus and equipment needs, cook dinner, and make records of nocturnal fauna. Throughout this programme, the girls and boys demonstrated immersion in their environment. The girls often initiated the more adventurous responses: standing up to paddle their kayaks and deliberately falling in the water; sensory explorations of fauna and flora; setting up camp and campfires.

The artefacts produced in response by these young people are self-evident of rich learning as shown in Fig. 51.2.

This programme was extended, with funding from the Australia Council, to reach three high schools and one primary school in 2013–2014. Secure funding enabled different iterations of the programme to be tested and reviewed. The achievements of this programme have been extensively documented in the research project conducted by Drs Tonia Gray and Carol Birrell (see Gray & Birrell, 2015; Gray & Thomson, 2016). The research partnership with Western Sydney University enabled Bundanon Trust to establish and promote the outcomes of Touched by the Earth, which would otherwise have been beyond the resources of the Trust.

From my perspective as education manager, there were some significant successes which have continued to inform current and future education programmes. We realized that by linking with local experts such as environmental scientists we were able to provide the students with unique, context-based and site-specific learning experiences.

One example of many is how Garry Daly, an experienced local scientist and ecologist, was engaged to use harp traps to enable students to study bats. This occurred during an overnight camp at the Bundanon property, which provided an alternative residential experience: an immersive and deeply engaging learning experience for the students. Getting close to the bats as Garry handled them carefully in the light of his head torch, listening quietly in the amphitheatre to owl calls, the students were more able to absorb the sensory experiences of the night. With one group, there was a very special occurrence. In the amphitheatre, after settling into silence in the pitch black and searching for arboreal mammals with a spotlight, we all heard a "THWACK!" on a nearby melaleuca tree. I aimed the torch, and there was the most perfect Feathertail Glider clinging to a branch, looking at us. This event is still spoken of by those students years after, when I met them in town: "Remember that night when we saw the feather tailed glider."

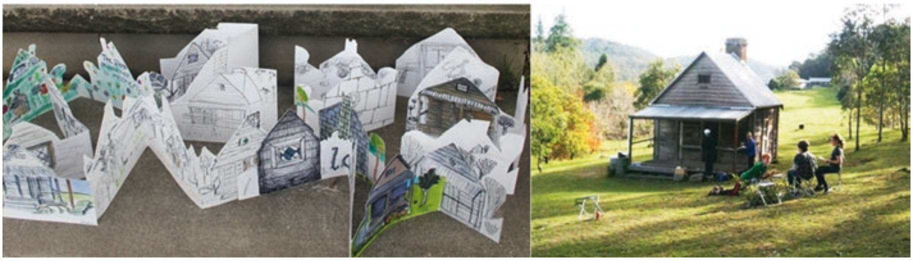

Fig. 51.2 Artists' books and the Single Man's Hut at Bundanon

Touched by the Earth enabled access to Bundanon for local schools. The students developed very significant connections to the properties, and they continue to engage in other programmes offered by the Trust. The year-long duration of the programme allowed the students to observe and analyse the seasonal changes of the environment and they created visual art, geographic, and written documentation of their experiences. Including a river-based journey was significant in providing a different perspective and viewpoint where the students eagerly employed waterproof cameras to record and share their river journey.

The overnight camp experience gave the students the sense of settling into the site and feeling part of the landscape and enabled them to really see nocturnal fauna in their habitat guided by a specialist. The programme also involved collaboration with the teachers who took knowledge and inspiration back into the classroom. Measured drawings of the heritage precinct were later developed into computer-drawn buildings. I made several visits to the school in between the activity days to brief students and maintain momentum.

Bundanon Trust runs Australia's largest artist residency programme and this provided a great window to the art world for the students involved in Touched by the Earth. The students experienced artists as presenters and collaborators working on site to create SITEWORKS artworks for the public event day. The students visited their studios and gained insight into an artist's worldview and processes, witnessing the way artists respond to and interrogate the same environment that they were getting to know.

Above all, for me, Touched by the Earth expanded the possibilities of education programmes at Bundanon Trust. The programme allowed me to interpret the unique aspects of the site and its knowledge base to create specific learning experiences in a variety of curriculum areas. My early experiences gave me the confidence, as a woman in a key leadership role, to tackle these challenges.

The next part of this chapter examines other projects involving literature, science, and textiles.

Inspiration from Eucalypts: Eco-Poetry With The Red Room Company

Bundanon Trust had been working with The Red Room Company since 2012, developing a site-based poetry programme. The partnership involved a residency for a poet, as well as a series of poetry workshops offered to local schools and community groups. During the workshops, we trialled using different settings, landscapes, and sites on the property. The participants eagerly engaged and created memorable poems, reflective of the environment and their personal experience of place.

In May 2016, this partnership was extended, through a grant from the Dahl Trust, to enable us to run the Eucalyptus Eco-Poetry Project, which is part of The Red Room Company's New Shoots umbrella programme. This project involved fieldwork for me, studying and learning to identify eucalypts on the Trust's properties as preparation for the workshops. The project, facilitated by poet Eileen Chong and supported by Director Tamryn Bennett, clearly demonstrated that an affinity with nature can be developed through learning about specific species and writing about them creatively, with a management team that were all women.

The teachers who accompanied the students commented on the sensitivity, observation, and understanding shown. Students created a collaborative group poem written on yellow bloodwood leaves and told a secret to a special tree.

A special aspect of this project was working with a group of adults from Shoalhaven University of the Third Age. These older citizens made their way more slowly but confidently through the environments we engaged with and eagerly wrote their poems imbued with life experience. Three quarters of this group are women over 70.

Locality and Specificity: Living Landscape

The Landcare Living Landscape project is an environmental and educational initiative to increase biodiversity, capture carbon, and reconnect native habitat on the Shoalhaven River properties managed by Bundanon Trust. In 2012, through the auspices of Landcare Australia, Bundanon Trust benefited from both the Borland Bequest and the Clean Energy Futures Biodiversity Fund. In partnership with Landcare Australia, South East Local Land Services, Jacobs Group, and Greening Australia, Bundanon Trust will have seen over AU$1 million spent over four years on the restoration of this culturally significant landscape.

My task was to develop a case study with funding for the education component of the project, which became an online education resource designed for NSW secondary school students and teachers studying Earth and Environmental Science, Biology, and senior science courses. The case study closely aligns with learning outcomes for parts of Years 11 and 12 courses and is applicable to a wide variety of other learning contexts. Furthermore, it was prepared with the assistance of the Living Landscape partners and a teacher reference group with participating local high school teachers.

The project focuses on the 1100 hectares of land uniquely gifted to the Australian people by the artist Arthur Boyd and his wife Yvonne Boyd. Bundanon Trust properties include over 11.5 kilometres of Shoalhaven River frontage and comprise significant areas of high conservation value bushland, watercourses, and river, previously cleared for farming and grazing. Bundanon is an important refuge for threatened flora and fauna species. This is a unique project, particularly for a cultural organization, and demonstrates the leadership role the arts can play in foregrounding the importance of protecting the environment for future generations.

With additional funding from Inspiring Australia and National Science Week, the Trust developed fieldwork activities to augment the resources, working with presenters from Bird Life Australia, National Parks and Wildlife, and other specialists. In 2014, SITEWORKS for Schools brought 100 students and teachers from three local high schools to explore biodiversity, bush regeneration, and issues of feral and native fauna and conducted a flora audit at Bundanon. Years 9 and 10 students studying Zoology, Biology, Science, and Earth and Environmental Science from Bomaderry High School, St John the Evangelist School, and Nowra High School had the opportunity to learn from and engage in fieldwork on site with leading ecologists and scientists. As they explored the property, the groups rotated through different activities. Many of these presenters were women scientists, providing an opportunity to address gender-based issues in science education and to provide positive role models for young women in science. Volunteer students acted as reporters and photographic documenters during the day to record their experiences and learning (refer to video link SITEWORKS for Schools: https://vimeo.com/107131978).

In 2015, regional high school science students and science teachers spent a day participating in fieldwork activities during Science Week involving geology, bush regeneration, species preservation, and biodiversity mapping, led by specialist facilitators. The field days gave the participants an opportunity to contribute to scientific surveys, learning scientific methods and processes. The participants were mentored through a sequence of survey and fieldwork activities, which included flora surveys of riparian transects and geological mapping.

An additional programme for adult learners from the University of the Third Age was held at Bundanon with orchid expert Alan Stephenson leading participants around the property to view native orchids and discuss orchid habitats. These pilot programmes will become part of Bundanon's regular education offerings. Once again, the majority of the participants were women (refer to video link Bundanon's Orchids: https://vimeo.com/144735677).

In Touch With Nature: Textile Design

Explorations of flora on the properties also led to the creation of textile workshops for students, using eco-dye processes. Using barks, rushes, ferns, vegetables, and natural mordants, textile students can immerse themselves in a multiday eco-dyeing and textile embellishment workshop using materials sourced from the site. Students experience direct engagement with natural forms, colours, and textures of the plants and learn about their properties of change and enhancement.

Conclusion

Throughout my years as an educator, there has been the constant weaving of through lines: deep engagement with my personal arts practice; research-based practices; intimacy of relationship to the environment and nature; material practice as meditation; linking research, knowledge, and sensory experience; place-based connections. Finding a deeper, spiritual connection to place through my arts practice has enabled me to develop innovative approaches to teaching and learning at Bundanon Trust. As a woman in a leadership role in an arts and education context, I have challenged myself to develop experiences that are not gender-based and which champion the skills, abilities, and professionalism of women in the community. At Bundanon, I can be an effective role model by communicating my passion for the natural world and my direct relationship with nature in this unique outdoor education context.

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52

Insights from a Canadian Woman: Place-Based Relationships and Narratives in Outdoor Education

Liz Peredun

The last 20 years have seen a growing interest in place education and its relationship to outdoor and environmental education. However, there has been little research into the relationship between a development of sense of place and narratives in outdoor education. Whilst it has been suggested that nature writing produces an emotional affinity towards the land in communities of people, little is known about how nature writing affects the person–place relationship of individuals in those communities (Farnum, Hall, & Kruger, 2005). As the understanding of place relationships has evolved, it can be suggested that narratives are influential in the creation and development of place identity. According to Mitten and Woodruff (2010), outdoor education in the United States has its roots in a narrative of a militaristic style of wilderness travel, one of risk-taking, conquering, and egocentric attitudes. This subject introduces the implications for further research into the subject of outdoor places as traditionally gendered places and how emerging female-centred narratives and storytelling can be used to construct a stronger sense of place for women.

L. Peredun (✉)
Sault Sainte Marie, ON, Canada

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Place Relationships

The concept of places (or *place*) has its roots in the writings of human geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1974). Tuan described the nature of person–place relationships and brought forward an idea that a place only comes into existence when humans give meaning to a part of an undefined space (Tuan, 1974). This in turn implies emotional engagement with the place in question and elicits a differentiation between a physical space and place. Place is a meaningful phenomenon that follows an idea that landscapes embody meaning and exist in a reciprocal relationship between the landscape and the individual. Tuan (1974) approached person–place relationships by recognizing that the meanings we assign to places are part of a fundamental concept to being human. The nature of these meanings are explored in this chapter to determine what factors contribute to procuring and developing a sense of place in individuals as well as how that relationship changes over time.

A sense of place can be defined as "an individual's ability to develop feelings of attachment to particular settings based on combinations of use, attentiveness and emotion" (Stokowski, 2002, p. 1) and "the variety of affective and cognitive bonds people form to a particular environment" (Hutson & Bailey, 2008, p. 23). The contributing factors towards establishing a sense of place include experience, a sense of belonging, familiar rituals, and a sense of peace (Fishwick & Vining, 1992; Relph, 1976). A *sense of place* may be understood in two dividends: Place dependence is commonly defined through a functional attachment to a place for utility or resources, whilst place identity is commonly defined through an emotional attachment to a particular setting (Proshansky, 1978; Vaske & Kobrin, 2001). In this chapter, the concept of place identity is the focus of discussion.

Associating Place with Outdoor Education

Researching the implications of relationships between communities of people and places is appealing to many disciplines, including the field of outdoor recreation. Furthering the understanding of relationships to places within outdoor recreation contexts is integral both to understanding ways of managing and promoting practices that affect environmental sustainability in a positive light and to understanding the role place relationship plays in pursuing a profession in outdoor leadership (Fishwick & Vining, 1992).

It has been suggested that people work to maintain self-identity both through the meanings and emotions they associate with specific places and through identifying and seeking out types of places that are consistent with their desired identity (Fishwick & Vining, 1992). For outdoor recreationalists in training, seeking out and identifying with places that are congruent with a desired identity helps direct their choices in the professional realm. This population may fixate on places that become prominent features in their place identity. By way of example, a preprofessional that generates positive experience through kayaking in the Vancouver Island area may associate themselves both through others that share their recreation philosophy and through the area itself.

By understanding that places are never neutral, as the gendered and cultural history of that place is incorporated in its interpretation (Henderson & Potter, 2001), place relationships can be understood as dynamic concepts. The relationship between people and place is multifaceted and takes into account the lens through which that place is being presented and how it is being interpreted by the individual. People associate a specific meaning and emotion with a particular place and identity and look for places that reaffirm their desired identity. Due to this complicated relationship, a place relationship is biased—people bring the history of the place into their relationship as they become aware of it, but they also bring their own history, biases, and associations into the mix. Mitten and Woodruff (2010) addressed the limitations that existed when women were invited into the outdoor industry. Most organizations "did not critically examine their philosophies and pedagogies, they just opened enrolment to females and offered the same programs" (pp. 11–12). This limitation highlights the complexity with which place identity is built and potentially narrows the scope in acceptable identities that women can undertake in the outdoor industry.

In addition to the dynamic viewpoint of the subject, place landscapes, similar to almost all natural environments, undergo a cycle of flux and change. Heft (2013) distinguished the ecological perspective as dynamic: paying attention to the unfolding of people–place interactions as interdependent elements that affect and influence one another. Heft understood the constant change existing between the unfolding of time between humans and their environments as transactional. In addition, Simmel (1997) commented on the idea of mobility of space in the modern world, acknowledging that fixed places—living within one interdependent community—increase cohesiveness of a social group, whilst post-industrial or urban cultures foster more abstract forms of spatial experience. Simmel identified the metropolis, a constant space of mobility, as well as urbanization and technology as a vehicle for the unfamiliar and indirect. He understood the displacement as changing and redefining the way modern sense of place is understood.

Place Relationships and Narratives

Human experiences with places have been understood largely through the affective and cognitive bonds that people form with their surroundings (Low & Altman, 1992; Tuan, 1974). Similar bonds are experienced through consumption of narratives and literature about places. Nature writing can be described as literature or text that utilizes the natural world literally or through metaphor to describe and understand the human experience (Stillinger, 2006). Nature writing is a broad concept that engages a variety of meanings of intent, imagery, and interpretation; this celebration of wilderness may also simultaneously discourage environmental exploitation (Mehrpooya, 2012). The field of nature writing can include environmental writing, environmental journalism, and ecocriticism, but the relationship between sense of place and texts remains largely undocumented.

Johnstone (1990) brought forth an idea that "stories can serve to create places" (p. 22). Whilst some have suggested that nature writing produces an emotional affinity towards the land in communities of people, less is known about how nature writing affects the person–place relationship of individuals in those communities (Farnum et al., 2005). The primary emphasis has been on the individual as the unit of analysis, and little work has been done on how meanings come to be shared within groups (Stokowski, 2002; Williams, 2002). Narratives about places often serve as interpretations of places subject to the author's personal beliefs. Johnstone (2001) argued that although an individual might develop a personal sense of place around a specific place, the "social place" known and understood across sets of people is "created and reproduced through interpersonal interaction, formalized in social behavior, and ultimately persists in collective memory" (p. 15).

Building Place with Storytelling

An understanding of place as a dynamic, working relationship opens the concept to affect in many different forms. Johnstone (1990) illustrated ideas of metaphor in her study of place making through storytelling. She explained:

> Just as narrative structures our sense of self and our interactions with others, our sense of place and community is rooted in narration. A person is at home in a place when the place evokes stories, and conversely, stories can serve to create

> places. Stories represent, pattern, and express the meanings of place across society, and no place is a place until things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments. Fictions serve as well as facts. (p. 5)

Literature can offer an exchanging of images and symbols and offers interpretation through the interaction of the author and reader. Stories have been told for millennia, and the use of storytelling is known to evoke an emotional domain within the human spirit. Storytelling and narratives also have been used to understand and illuminate the history of a place, particularly within some Indigenous cultures. The inherent power of stories is well known within child development and educational research, and the reflective process plays a role in experiential learning and as a therapeutic tool (Bettelheim, 1976; Gray & Stuart, 2015).

Narrative acts as a context to address affective dimensions of an experience. Storytelling provides an "anchor for lifelong memory and a ready-made, rich pool of metaphor" (Gray & Stuart, 2015, p. 395). The concept of seeking confirmation through narrative is not new. A considerable part of early and modern literature deals with humankind's struggle to understand and place themselves within the natural world (Mehrpooya, 2012).

The idea of structural narrativism has parallels in Heft's (2013) ideas of dynamic place. Structural narrativism exists as a theory that acknowledges the stories that people tell having a reciprocal relationship with the reality that surrounds them (Johnstone, 1990; Norrick, 1997; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989). Research in this dimension supports the idea that stories perform social actions, and audiences and storytellers are involved, directly or indirectly, in their construction. Rosen's (1988) idea of the personal experience narrative (PEN) addressed identity within this construction and acknowledged that the PEN stems from a need to make our lives coherent by talking about them. Rosen's idea influenced the idea that storytelling is important in one's construction of identity and experience and acts reflexively in expression.

The work of Stokowski (2002) introduced an idea of place as a nonphysical or theoretical text that is "known and understood across sets of people through interpersonal interaction, formalized in social behaviour and ultimately persisting in collective memory" (p. 4). Her work alluded to the idea that the creation of a sense of place involves the use of both physical and textual characteristics. There is controversy in the existing literature of the relationship towards associating the concept of textual characteristics and the concept of sense of place (Kaltenborn, 1998). Stokowski's ideas acknowledged the social and physical dimensions of attachment. She alluded to a concept that the physical has meaning only because it has been socially constructed. This social construction can be influenced by the nature of the people or social groups that are present when being introduced or repeatedly exposed to one idea of place.

Methodology and Data Collection

To explore the relationship between narratives and place making, an exploration of the perspectives of outdoor recreation preprofessionals was undertaken. Qualitative interviewing was used to explore the perspectives of students enrolled in a university outdoor recreation programme in response to wilderness literature contributing to reports about one's sense of place. Instruments used in this study included selections from Sigurd Olson's (1998) texts to elucidate how outdoor recreation preprofessionals report their feelings about relatedness to the narrative as well as their thoughts and comments on the development of their place identity. This study involved two males and two females between the ages of 20 and 25 enrolled in the second year of a four-year programme.

Participants were exposed to the texts prior to a winter-field experience and were able to provide an in-depth account of their experiences with the content. This choice was made in congruence with Patton's (2002) description of purposive sampling being employed as a way to capture "rich and useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest" (p. 69). The data collection choices were made in the interest of capturing the insight of the phenomenon and not creating generalizability of the outcomes of the research.

Initially, eight reoccurring and relevant concepts were identified within the data. Through the process of converging and prioritizing, five themes developed according to "utility, salience, credibility and uniqueness" of the set of categories and tested for completeness (Patton, 2002, p. 466). This process occurred through the researcher compiling a set of relevant quotes on 3 × 5 cards and assigning colours to emerging codes and themes to identify reoccurring and overlapping concepts within the data.

These themes were then condensed through frequency of data and overlap of concepts. Outliers were identified and separated for further discussion. Several qualities were clustered into themes and subthemes. Once the interviewee statements were placed within a theme, the researcher then removed redundant statements, and theme titles were assigned, adjusted, and synthesized.

Theory triangulation and method triangulation were used in developing the methods and data in this study to strengthen the approach and analysis (Patton, 2002). Theory triangulation was used through combining a multitude of different perspectives to interpret a single set of data. Method triangulation was used during the data collection. During the data collection phase of this study, interview questions were compiled from Patton's matrix of question options—behaviours/experiences, opinions/values, feelings/emotions, knowledge, sensory, and background. Peer review and member checking were other uses of triangulation within the study. Three of the most frequent and relevant themes were drawn from this study to present a concise discussion within this chapter as a way to understand the relationship between narrative and place.

Results and Discussion

Stories Serving to Create Places

Johnstone's (2001) idea of "stories serving to create places" (p. 641) was a central concept in the application of this study. This concept was illustrated in the ways that some participants reported strong affective bonds to the ideas and themes within Olson's text. All participants reported that their physical outdoor leisure places were influenced through exposure to Olson's narrative and text. A creation of an abstract place association was a reality for some participants and occurred through prompted discussion and reflection from the researcher. Schroeder's (1996) idea of place attachment argued that people's attachments to place are often imagined or ideal versions of the area and may encompass more of a psychological process than a physical one. This idea is consistent with themes of connectedness related to Olson's depictions of abstract places. The place that Olson described within his narratives is his ideal version of the area, and thus the psychological process of attachment appears to materialize towards these abstract or ideal versions of the area, rather than a real version of the area.

Relph (1976) and Fishwick and Vining (1992) reported that the contributing factors towards establishing a sense of place include experience, a sense of belonging, familiar rituals, and a sense of peace. Outdoor leisure places were recognized through similar factors that occurred through a combination of stimuli and were supported by narrative and text.

Experience with physical place provided a site of nostalgia and reference for participants. Gray and Stuart (2015) expressed that "story-telling provides an anchor for lifelong memory and a ready-made, rich pool of metaphor" (p. 395). Olson's texts, and for some participants other works of fiction as well, acted as an anchor for discovering and creating place. Participants reported feeling a more substantial connection to places after discovering Olson's narratives and reflecting on narratives they had been exposed to in the past.

Stokowski's (2002) conceptualization of sense of place involved the use of both physical and textual characteristics. The participants were able to redefine experiences with place after being exposed to the text and redefine experiences with the text after being exposed to place. This aspect of fluidity is beneficial to examine from a longitudinal viewpoint where the temporal element between humans and relationships is further examined.

Significance Through Place Identity

The literature highlights that outdoor recreationalists often seek out types of places that are congruent with their desired identity (Fishwick & Vining, 1992). Descriptions of a desired identity were supported by the findings, as many students reported on a certain type of physical place—water, wooded areas, open fields—that they engage with and actively seek out. Participants expressed a desire to engage with certain types of place more than other places that lacked their particular and preferred physical features. In addition, identifying with one type of place appeared to be important for participants to engage with professional direction and career moves. Participants acknowledged the importance of understanding these specific attachments and how these attachments were integral to defining their identity within the outdoor field and telling their own stories. By way of example, one student reported relating strongly with narratives and texts that described canoe expeditions and travelling in remote lake country. They acknowledged that these stories strongly influenced their professional choices and that they were driven to seek out these environments in an effort to recreate and "live out" the narrative.

Narratives as Structural Foundation for Place

Structural narrativism is understood through acknowledging that stories people tell have a reciprocal relationship with the reality that surrounds them (Johnstone, 1990; Norrick, 1997; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989). This social theory suggests that narratives perform social actions, and audiences and storytellers are involved, directly or indirectly, in their construction.

Blake and Shiffrar (2007) argued that places can have symbolic and cultural meanings that are shared by groups, and place attachment "arises regardless of whether people have visited the area" (p. 52). After analysing the data, the findings of this study provide both support and controversy for this idea.

The symbolic meanings of Olson's texts were absorbed and comprehended by the participants of the study, and idyllic place relationships were expressed. The impressions of abstract place were expressed with both fundamental similarities and differences to that of physical place. Physical place expression was understood as taking time in moments and being present, whilst abstract place expression was about using a resource to recover a physical place expression. The affective responses to both physical and abstract place were fundamentally very similar.

The role of these narratives and text is an additional piece to accumulate an understanding of place. Exposure to these texts provided a way for place to be taught and encouraged thoughts about place identity. Additionally, the text allowed a sense of place to develop through participants redefining their PENs. The PEN developed for preprofessionals through providing a resource to identify with, regarding sense of place. Texts and narratives about place created a realm of identifiers for participants to pull from whilst constructing their sense of place. The role of other narratives and texts in supporting place construction should be studied further to explore its potential in helping (or hindering) the creation of place as well as exploring their potential as educational tools.

Implications for Further Practice in Women's Places

In the context of this study, individuals expressed both idyllic relationships with abstract place and a desire to live out these ideals and interpretations whilst seeking out physical places. The discoveries made in this exploration of what influences place relationships add another layer to the discoveries towards the phenomenology of place. Narratives can offer a realm of identifiers with which place relationships are actively constructed.

Further discussion arises from the reality of historically male-centred narratives or narratives written from the male perspective. Many foundational and frequently referenced narratives in outdoor education focus on "the making men out of boys" concept (Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997, p. 46) and the "historical association between wilderness and masculinity" (Leupp, 2007, p. 75) where man goes out to conquer or survive a vast wilderness. The potential for narratives and texts to help or hinder place relationships is heavily based in the social and cultural dynamics that are built into male-centred stories about the wilderness and the messages and morals within those narratives.

Based on the previous discussion of reflexivity in the place-narrative process, it can be suggested that female-centred narratives could provide a valuable wealth of identifiers for women to reconstruct their wild identity in a positive light and offer an understanding of place relationships unique to female ways of knowing. Through this, we can better understand how narratives are influenced by culture and how what is encouraged in culture can influence narratives. Women's narratives as reported by Fredrickson and Anderson (1999) and Mitten and Woodruff (2010) "emphasized a respect for life and a deep relationship with nature, as well as emotional ties and identification with the landscape" (Mitten & Woodruff, p. 1). These narratives finding nature to be healing, feeling spiritually connected to the land, and finding a sense of place counter the typical conquering and survival narratives often promoted in adventure education and demonstrate the possibilities for additional narratives to be heard. In the discussion from Fredrickson and Anderson (1999), participants spoke about their experience with place and how they reported fully experiencing the grandeur and beauty of the landscape around them through both reflection and activity. For several women, the sense of one's physical abilities was one of the primary dimensions of what several defined as a "spiritual" connection to the environment and experiencing that environment with more of a gestalt (p. 33).

Other narratives such as the likes of Clarissa Pinkola Estés' (1999) *Women Who Run With the Wolves*, which discuss in depth an idea of re-wilding a female identity, serve as examples of alternative storylines with a corresponding realm of identifiers to counter the dominant narrative. Alternate narratives and place experience are certainly out there and have the potential to change the cultural landscape when given focus.

Additionally, the rise of women's adventure in contemporary literature and personal online content reflects the growing focus on the perspective of the female adventurer. The potential of these narratives in redefining place identity and relationships for both sexes has not yet been discovered.

Increasing the level of women's voices in wilderness narratives incorporates an idea that there could be more opportunities for place connections considered in social dynamics of place where the narrative voice of both genders is spoken for.

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Learning from Tragedy: The Legacies of Laura and Alice

Clare Dallat

Introduction

The blue flatbed pick-up truck, shiny blue from memory, moved so very, very, slowly; the driver skilfully negotiated the tree stumps on the narrow hiking trail and the low overhanging branches of the eastern hemlock trees. Soaking wet and walking behind that blue truck, my 22-year-old hand stabilizing the orange stretcher that lay in the back of the truck, I removed my overshirt and carefully placed it over Laura's face and chest.

We had tried in vain for the past two hours to resuscitate her. We just couldn't get her back. The only thing we could do now was to bring her home. We had stretchered her to where the blue truck could gain access on the narrow, rocky hiking trail and taken her to the final kilometre. As we walked beside Laura, not a word was spoken: the silence both holy and deafening. My colleagues and I were only starting to process the enormity of what had just happened and what soon unfolded.

Although that was 16 years ago, the lingering, somewhat sour scent of that eastern hemlock forest returns to my senses each time I reflect on that early June day. Laura, a 30-year-old teacher visiting our outdoor and environmental education centre in the beautiful Catskill Mountains of New York State,

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C. Dallat (✉)
Head of Innovation, The Outdoor Education Group, Eildon, VIC, Australia

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tragically lost her life in a drowning accident. As an outdoor educator, the worst imaginable outcome of my profession had become real for me. My life had changed forever.

Choosing to Stay In

In the hours and days that followed Laura's death, I experienced strong competing sensations of wanting to run as far as I could from a career in outdoor education to one of utter conviction that this tragedy would galvanize me to try and make our profession safer. Fear and sheer will competed in equal measure. To this day, I have not been able to fully explain why the latter option prevailed but I simply could not bring myself to exit the profession that had brought me wonderful elation, as well as absolute tragedy.

One major influence on my decision was the belief, experienced personally, of the wonderful benefits that can be achieved through outdoor experiences. As a young child growing up on the troubled shores of Northern Ireland, where violence between Catholics and Protestants was a way of life, I became a living, breathing example of the potential of outdoor education experiences. As Northern Irish teenagers, we were able to access opportunities to participate in multiday outdoor education programmes, designed to introduce us to other young people from the opposite religion. These trips included a whole host of outdoor activities: canoeing down Ireland's longest river, the Shannon, being my most memorable. Without a doubt, I am the person I am today because of these trips. I developed tolerance and understanding through shared experiences in the outdoors with people my own age of the opposite religion, gained through hours of paddling in canoes, cooking dinners together on riverbanks, or setting up tents in the driving rain. Most importantly, I learnt we were not all that different and that we could, in fact, become friends.

Those experiences formed me and they became my strength following Laura's death. From then on, risk management in the outdoors became my professional focus.

Becoming a Risk Manager

Although I knew what I wanted to do, I don't think I knew what I was in for. Not only were there a mere handful of dedicated outdoor risk managers working in outdoor education organizations around the world, all happened to be male and were blessed with many more years on earth. I was a mid-20s

Irishwoman and although I had spent the previous six years leading and coordinating outdoor programmes all over the United States and Canada, I had no formal qualifications in risk management. I had no idea if such a job was even possible for someone in my shoes. I started reading. I read and read. I studied all the published works I could find in the outdoor education field. I read every single book of previous proceedings of the Wilderness Risk Management Conference, as well as from other outdoor education associations and organizations all over the world.

It was through my reading that I came across Deb Ajango and her story. In 1997, Deb had just become the Director of the Outdoor Education Program at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and within mere weeks of commencing the role, her programme experienced a mountaineering accident on Ptarmigan Peak resulting in the tragic deaths of two students. I was inspired by how Deb had so openly shared her learnings from the tragedy that had occurred on her programme. Deb became, and remains, a hugely valued and respected mentor to me. To find another woman who had made such a massive contribution to learning from accidents in the outdoors who was also completely non-judgemental and giving with her time and ideas was immensely important for my professional and personal development. I relied on Deb to support me enormously following more tragedies that unfolded later in my career.

Although often nervous, I was never afraid to ask questions of other professionals or be open to new suggestions. In a way, perhaps my awareness of my relative inexperience in this specialized area facilitated my making connections and gaining access to peer support and resources. I simply asked lots of questions—and I soon developed long-lasting relationships and networks with other practitioners across the globe. I would pick up the phone, send an email, or walk up to someone at a conference and really pick their brains in relation to issues or aspects of risk management that I wanted to learn more about. To this day, engaging in conversation has far surpassed any course or degree I've started or finished in terms of return on investment.

Looking Up and Out

After absorbing everything written about risk management within the specific outdoor education field, I started to look outside the profession, as well. I felt that it was vital to learn from as many places, people, industries, and organizations as possible. Soon I found myself reading books and papers on crew resource management within the aviation sector. I became fascinated by the safety talks prior to take-off and the ways the crew interacted with each other. Every time I flew, I watched intently at how they did their pre-take-off cross-checks. I wanted to know what habits they developed and how they achieved consistency of practice. Major air disasters, such as the Korean Air Flight 007 in 1983 and the Kegworth disaster in 1989, were significant in increasing my understanding of factors influencing accident causation.

In addition to aviation, I also read about accidents in other safety-critical sectors: nuclear power, healthcare, transportation, and space. A book given to me by another significant mentor and friend, Preston Cline, titled *Failure Is Not an Option* (Kranz, 2000), was hugely influential to my learning about the impacts of cultural factors within organizations and industries. Such insight helped me understand that a web of factors, such as financial or production pressures, can often lead to shortcuts. Additionally, political or social pressures, or competition with other organizations, have also been determined to influence the potential for accidents (Rasmussen, 1997). Such factors contribute to the decisions and actions of people within the organization in relation to safety or accidents. A major light-bulb for me, in my reading, was that these factors were often far removed in both time and space from the person at the "sharp end": the nurse, the control room operator, the pilot, or the outdoor leader (Dekker, 2011; Rasmussen, 1997; Salmon, Williamson, Lenne, Mitsopoulos-Rubens, & Rudin-Brown, 2010). It was obvious to me that these learnings and disasters, which eventuated in the loss of many lives across multiple domains, had so much to teach us in outdoor education.

First Risk Management Role

Two-and-a-half years after Laura lost her life, I found myself sitting very nervously on a Qantas plane on my way to Melbourne, Australia. I had applied for and been successful in gaining the risk manager role for the Outdoor Education Group, one of the largest outdoor education organizations in the world. At age 24, I was responsible for developing and overseeing risk management systems and processes for an organization which then worked with approximately 18,000 participants and 200 staff per year on multiday outdoor education programmes. Today, the same organization works with 40,000 young people.

Touching down on the other end of the world, I was acutely aware of my ignorance of those things that could, in fact, kill me. Snakes, spiders, and sharks were never far from my risk antenna. Professionally, I was terrified and felt completely out of my depth. Although an avid reader and learner, I still had no formal qualifications in risk, a point that was not lost on several people who openly questioned my credentials upon my arrival in Australia. My undergraduate in environmental archaeology didn't exactly increase confidence—theirs or mine. One such questioner, a board member with risk management experience in other outdoor organizations, looked nothing but horrified when we met for the first time.

In many ways, it was fully understandable that such concern was evident at that time. My two male predecessors both had a law enforcement background: one in police special operations and the other in the defence force. Both men were quite imposing physically and emotionally, and both were highly qualified in technical outdoor activities. We couldn't have been more different.

I remember speaking to the person who hired me about my concerns; I was wobbly and my self-confidence was low. To this day, I'll never forget what Sue said in reply to my concerns:

> *Clare, we have hired you because we want a totally different approach. We want our staff to think, to question, and to work things out together. We want them to be supported by policies but it's not just about policies. We don't want you to just give them the answer. We want them to know there is very little that is black and white in outdoor risk management; you have been hired to make that happen. If we needed someone who has 30 years of climbing big mountains or paddling rivers, we would have hired them. We don't—we already have those people and they are excellent at what they do. You are here to do something very different.*

Sue, and the other leaders of the organization, wanted me to lead an approach to risk management that both established clear risk management boundaries where such boundaries needed to be set and enabled a culture to be fostered that would value open and honest sharing in relation to risk management. To achieve such an aim, all staff would need to trust that it was safe to speak up and share incidents and opinions. Everyone within the organization would need to contribute.

Needing the Credentials

My brief was subsequently very clear. I set about working with my colleagues to implement change strategies and processes in relation to the risk management programme at the Outdoor Education Group. However, I also realized that I needed to attain some formal qualifications in the area I was specializing. I wanted to be able to really influence risk management practice, both internally and externally. I went on to complete a Master's of Science in Risk, Crisis, and Disaster Management at the University of Leicester, United Kingdom.

My master's degree experience led to significant developments in my outlook and my practice. My mind was once again expanded through the benefits of exploring beyond my field. The subject of risk communication, the focus of my thesis, has since become an important and more considered aspect of the sector's risk management practices (Dallat, 2009, 2013). My desire to enable the key aspects of this topic to be understood within a practical perspective has helped it evolve into part of many organizations' risk management considerations.

Without doubt, attaining my master's degree and publishing the findings of my research became the most important action I took to be able to start to influence the risk management dialogue in Australia. After publishing, I started to receive invites to present at conferences and workshops throughout Australia and overseas. I was asked to sit on government and industry committees in relation to safety guidelines development, as well as consult to independent school associations and perform expert witness duties. All these experiences, however valuable and relevant to my work, could never have prepared me for the heart-breaking reality of another tragedy, one that again changed many lives, forever.

Tragedy

At 12:45 a.m. on August 31, 2005, almost three years since my arrival in Australia, I received the phone call that every outdoor professional dreads—the call that informs you that the absolute worst has occurred and that it happened on your watch. One of our students, a 16-year-old young woman named Alice, had tragically lost her life when a tree fell on her tent whilst camping as part of her school outdoor education programme.

Five years earlier, I had been a field staff member when Laura lost her life. Now, here I was standing in very different shoes as the person ultimately responsible for risk management. Alice's death was absolutely devastating. Her parents and sisters had lost a beautiful daughter and elder sister. Her family, friends, and whole school community had lost a young woman with everything to live for. Our organization experienced a loss and grief that we had never previously known. Our staff team were numb.

In the days and weeks following Alice's death, my job, as risk manager, was to gather huge amounts of documentation and collect accounts of the circumstances surrounding the accident, from multiple people. My colleagues and I gave interviews to the police, as well as the investigators sent by the workplace health and safety regulator and the various other investigation bodies.

I read the newspaper blog sites, which were quick to judge and blame. Criticism was levelled squarely and directly at our feet. How could it be any different? A young woman had just lost her life and her family forever impacted by her loss. I knew and felt that ultimately, as the risk manager, I had failed. I blamed myself and ruminated repeatedly on every detail associated with that programme. I froze when hearing the wind blowing outside. I couldn't bring myself to go camping for several years.

Recovery

I refused to get counselling, even when it was offered to me. I just couldn't. I felt such shame at what had happened and I had no idea how to resolve it. I just knew I couldn't talk to a stranger about it.

That was until the network of professionals that I had so strongly relied on for my professional growth rallied around me. They emailed, they called, and they supported. It took a couch, a foreign country, and my mentor Deb Ajango sitting me down and telling me to start talking, to get it out. Deb was a member of the dreaded "club," those risk managers that had experienced tragedy, and between her and Preston Cline, another member of that "club," I was encouraged to talk, cry, and then talk some more. When I was done talking, I would start again.

With such strong feelings of shame and loss, I wasn't sure, yet again, if I could keep doing this work. I was terrified that it would happen again and I didn't know if I really believed in outdoor education anymore. I wasn't sure I could cope if that call ever came again. Even writing those words now, I feel shallow. How could I think about whether I could cope, when I wasn't a parent or a sibling who had just lost their beautiful child and sister?

Although I looked for every other job under the sun, at one stage considering doing risk management in war zones or even making coffee for a living, my heart and soul gently navigated me back to the outdoors. I knew, though, that yet again a change was occurring within me, within my practice. Alice's death was a tragic accident but I also knew that we needed to learn everything we could from it, and I knew these lessons needed to be shared. Elements of outdoor education that had previously not received much discussion in our management of programmes, such as programme design, weather warning processes, crisis management, and campsite selection, needed to be openly talked about in a wider context with colleagues.

I had to put myself out front again, to stand my ground and be prepared for some to judge, if that's what they desired. I had the full support of my organization and my colleagues to tell the story, the good and the bad, the failures and the learnings. Alice's death galvanized me, yet again, into further education.

The PhD

The idea of a PhD was so foreign to me growing up, so much so that it was never even considered. In fact, a failed national exam at the age of 11 would have likely signed my fate to a formal education that would have ceased at age 16. Had it not been for very determined parents and some wonderful teachers, I would never have had enough grades to leave Northern Ireland for undergraduate studies in Wales and Canada.

In the months and years following Alice's death, I became very interested in, and wanted to understand better, how as a profession we can identify and assess risks that may be present throughout the entire design, development, and delivery of outdoor education experiences. I wanted to see if we could make risk assessment less of a compliance tick-box exercise, to a meaningful process that identifies and prevents harm to our participants and staff. Yet again, I felt it was important to look beyond our own profession and explore what other domains could teach us about the variety of factors influencing accidents and in turn, challenge us to consider attempting to prevent injury-causing incidents. I wanted to seek out and work with world-leading researchers in the field of human factors, a discipline that is concerned with understanding human behaviour, and the many things that influence it. I was tired of seeing reports of incidents, newspaper stories, or coronial reports that repeatedly assigned blame to an individual teacher or instructor following incidents. I now knew, firsthand, twice over, that there was much more complexity to the story. I felt that if we could have better, more meaningful ways to identify and assess the sources of risk across the entire programme (e.g., those associated with policies and procedures development, school preparation of students, or location and activity selection), then we could look at ways to better prevent them. Such factors were commonly identified in accident causation reports as being influential; therefore, they must also be relevant in accident prevention (Brookes, Smith, & Corkill, 2009; Salmon et al., 2010). It felt to me, however, that as a profession we lacked the tools and the methods with which to identify, assess, and openly discuss them.

Of course, not everyone agrees with such an approach. There are still some who adopt the view that if you train an instructor or teacher well enough, the rest is up to them. If something goes wrong, the blame is with them and they should face the consequences. My view could not be more opposite. I feel strongly that by getting rid of the blame approach, people throughout organizations will be more open, investigations will garner more vital information about contributory factors, and consequently, we will learn more about the issues across the outdoor education/recreation system that influence behaviour. When we understand these better, we can address them throughout the system. In 2014, I was honoured to receive a full-time scholarship to commence a PhD in risk assessment with the Centre for Human Factors and Sociotechnical Systems at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia.

These days, I continue to present my research and my perspectives and at times, I receive the "back row, arm cross," usually from "the old guard" who does not agree with such views. Does this make them wrong and me right? Absolutely not. I also don't think it's solely about a male/female issue either; I think it's about new ideas, viewpoints, and how we communicate and receive them. For me, though, I want and need to look back on my career and feel that I have, as best as I possibly can, honoured the legacies of Laura and Alice and the others who have lost their lives on the programmes our profession plans and conducts. To me, honouring their legacies necessitates that we look beyond individuals in the field and instead focus on the whole process of planning, development, and delivery of the programme. In doing this, we see the bigger picture.

A Way Forward

It took me 16 years to return to the place where Laura lost her life that June day in 2000. Standing there in quiet contemplation, I reflected on how much had changed in those intervening years. Although 16 years have passed, the eastern hemlocks have continued to offer their protective cover overhead, and the trail has remained as rocky and narrow as I have remembered; everything else has changed. Looking down on the water, I realized I was a very different person to the one who found herself there that day many years ago. Laura's death had catapulted me in a direction I could never have predicted.

The tragic loss of both Laura and Alice had to mean something, and for me it meant that I wanted to help contribute to continuously improving risk management within our profession. I wanted to find ways to better understand and improve our management of the variety of factors that contribute to both safety and accidents. I was honoured, and remain so, to receive the support of wonderful mentors and friends, positioned all over the world, who back then challenged me to become the best I could be in a career that lacked a clear map or set of coordinates. I am immensely grateful to those people and to the many authors of books and proceedings that led me into the specialized domain of outdoor risk management.

These days, I also consider it my duty to give back and to share what I've learnt. What will continue to drive and inspire me is that I firmly remain a committed advocate of the positive outcomes our profession can deliver to the lives and experiences of our students. Our world is constantly changing; social, political, and environmental challenges dominate our attention for kind, creative, collaborative, and innovative approaches. Never more so than today do our young people require the skills to navigate the increasing uncertainty and change in their lives. Well-managed and planned outdoor education/recreation experiences can help them develop those skills.

Our profession needs many more young practitioners who seek out their mentors and find ways to challenge the status quo, whatever area they focus on. It is my hope that Laura and Alice's legacies also help practitioners find their voices.

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Part VI

Towards an Inclusive and Nourishing Future for Women in Outdoor Learning Environments

Tiffany Wynn

In this part, women throw the doors open for a healthier, more relational mode of operation and dismiss the notion that approval must be sought from their male counterparts by embodying outdoor leadership in the same way that they do. White colonial domination and misogyny, and the inherent power and privilege built into said structure persist as a foundation of outdoor learning environments (OLEs). It remains a surprise to many people that women of colour, including Indigenous women, and women with different abilities have a long history of participation and leadership.

The authors in this part offer us wisdom related to inclusion and identity. TAKANO recounts her experiences as an outdoorswoman, where when participating in a multicultural expedition, she found herself exploring long-held beliefs that did not make as much sense when participating in an intentionally intersectional community where all abilities and strengths were valued:

> I unconsciously had accepted the framework expected regarding performance of being a female…. During the time of the expedition, I never linked any activities with gender but with respective personal capacity. I felt free as an individual and humble at the same time to be given a life on Earth.

Legge, and other *IHWO* authors, echo the importance of cultural immersion in order to learn more about ourselves as well as others.

T. Wynn
Blackheath, NSW, Australia

Authors look at specific activities. Wigglesworth asserts that the practice of journaling for both outdoor education facilitators and participants encourages consciousness raising and an unpacking of the embodied knowledge and values that we uphold in outdoor learning. In particular, journaling can encourage deliberation upon how norms of femininity and masculinity set the bounds of appropriate appearance, attitudes, and behaviours in outdoor learning.

She also articulates the dearth of OLE literature, attending to the overlapping systems of oppression and marginalization by challenging the heteronormative culture. Rao and Roberts point out women of colour have experienced a multitude of barriers in OLEs, and a future must include invitations and pathways into leadership careers in the field. The same invitation must be extended to women with different abilities and nonstereotypical body types, and economically disadvantaged women. We know that our marginalized sisters face a disproportionate number of barriers when compared with their white, nondisabled, cisgender colleagues.

In our efforts to evolve the field to a more inclusive and collaborative industry, Avery, Norton, and Tucker as well as Rao and Roberts articulate the need for development and mentorship for emerging women leaders with mentors who understand gender socialization and normative gender roles. The future will likely include more valuing and partnering with nature as described by Nichols and also by Charles in their "True nature" and "Leading from the heart of nature" pieces, respectively. Charles articulates the benefits of early outdoor experiences, as does TAKANO, Rao and Roberts, and Legge.

Engaging in continual reflection can help us monitor our inclusive processes, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality and how to incorporate these in the next generation of OLEs. In greeting the vision for the future of OLEs, women's voices must be held as sacred offerings of direction. We must look to women in the field who bring their children into the bush, women who draw upon the stories of their ancestors, women who stand before outdoor learning classrooms citing other brilliant women, women who tell their stories of barriers, oppression, and successes in outdoor environments, women whose sexuality exists outside of the heteronormative culture, and any woman who wants to be or is involved in OLEs. These voices will paint upon the future canvas of OLEs, which will hopefully be riddled with faces, stories, and people who have not yet, but will find an inviting, brave, and nourishing space to arrive.

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Writing Gendered Embodiment into Outdoor Learning Environments: Journaling for Critical Consciousness

Jennifer Wigglesworth

Introduction

My master's thesis on the life significance of an outdoor education course was my first foray into the academic field, and it illuminated to me the lifelong lived effects of outdoor learning. I came to value experiential learning and the importance of the *doing* body. However, my project didn't critically engage with how outdoor education programmes were disseminated, by whom, and for what purposes; it was positivist in design and did not consider outdoor education as a cultural practice. Gender appeared as a variable to be calculated rather than a relation of power to be analysed. I was left wanting of what Denise Mitten, Karen Warren, Erin Lotz, and Chiara d'Amore (2012) refer to as the *hidden curriculum* of outdoor learning. So I adjusted my research focus and took the sociocultural doctoral studies plunge, whereby my academic training honed in on theory and methodology, stemming predominantly from a poststructural feminist epistemology. Today, the dynamics of power and gender receive much of my scholarly attention. I start this chapter in this way because I want to make clear that my researcher subjectivity is in a constant state of flux—itself discursively constituted. I am incessantly learning and unlearning, and for me much of this materializes through the process of writing.

J. Wigglesworth (✉)
Socio-Cultural Studies of Sport, Health and the Body, Queen's University,
Kingston, ON, Canada

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In Karen Warren, Nina Roberts, Mary Breunig, and Tony Alvarez's (2014) review of the literature on social and environmental justice in outdoor experiential education (OEE), they found that scholarly attention to gender in the OEE literature lacks discussion of girls and women of colour, heteronormativity, transgender issues, and a relational understanding of gender that incorporates men's role in the dialogue. Regarding these gaps, the authors recommend further use of poststructural feminism and an understanding of intersectionality in exploring gender. The outdoor education field has been slower to chronicle overlapping systems of oppression, and this analysis is especially necessary given Tonia Gray's (2016) finding that women remain dramatically underrepresented in the outdoor education profession. What might my theoretical and analytical training offer to practitioners for fostering inclusive environments for learning and growing outdoors? I draw from my poststructural feminist training to recommend exploring gender relations and intersectionality through the practice of journaling in outdoor learning environments (OLE). I argue that the practice of journaling for both facilitators and participants in OLEs encourages consciousness-raising, and offers a way forward for unpacking the embodied knowledges and values that we uphold in outdoor education.

At this time, I would like to provide the reader with a conceptual map for how this chapter proceeds. First, I describe my epistemological and theoretical orientations of poststructural feminism before reflecting upon my methodological motivations for writing autoethnography. From here, I introduce an autoethnographic vignette followed by a discussion on gendered embodiment in OLEs. Following this, I translate principle into practice and discuss journaling for critical consciousness in the field. The chapter concludes with some thoughts on the significance of consciousness-raising for OLEs and beyond.

Poststructural Feminism, Intersectionality, and Embodiment

In her book, *Feminism Is for Everybody*, American feminist critic bell hooks succinctly states that feminism "is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (2000, p. viii). I ascribe to hooks' definition; for me, feminism is more than working towards equality of the sexes—it is also an approach that addresses oppression on many levels. A key aspect of feminist thought is understanding that privileges and oppressions related to gender do not work independently of other systems of oppression. In this regard, feminist theorists call for intersectional analyses that seek to understand how different categories of identity and structures of power, such as sexism, racism, ableism, and class, are intertwined.

The poststructuralist descriptor that I use in front of feminism points to a theoretical framework that is interested in deconstructing knowledge and reality (King & McDonald, 2007; McCormick, 2007). Poststructural critiques are a response to the 1950s and 1960s structuralism that acceded the Enlightenment and espoused all things knowable. Instead, poststructuralism supposes that there are multiple, competing truths in our world (King, 2016). There is no one knowable reality. Poststructuralism is interested in deconstructing binaries such as male/female and human/culture. This is important to my research into OLEs because I do not want to take experience for granted. As Joan Scott (1992) argued, a poststructural epistemological frame ensures my research can problematize the assumptions and practices of difference occurring within experience: "It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience" (p. 25). Experience is something that is foregrounded by dominant ideologies circulating in our world, which then conditions the possibilities for what individuals might think, feel, and say about their experiences (McDermott, 2011).

Currently, my interest in outdoor education and learning through the body is interjected with a desire to develop more socially inclusive ways of experiencing, negotiating, and playing with our environments. This nexus lends itself well to ideas of embodiment. I understand embodiment as the material inscription of social conditions onto the body; it is the social and cultural ways in which we live our bodies in everyday life. Embodiment allows exploration of how I come to sense, perceive, feel, act, and know in the world with respect to bodily sensations, physiological circumstances, emotions, social interactions, and larger systemic structures. As oxymoronic as it might seem, I suggest unpacking this embodiment through writing, although that writing takes the shape and form of a critical, self-reflexive, embodied approach inspired by the methodology of autoethnography.

Autoethnography: A Critical, Self-Reflexive, Embodied Approach to Research

Autoethnography can also be referred to as a narrative of the self; it is a way to write the self into a research text (Markula, 2001; Richardson, 2000; Sparkes, 1995, 2000). As a methodological choice, autoethnography is important for relating the personal to the cultural (Richardson, 2000). It can attend to the body experience in a storied way (Markula, 2001). But autoethnography is more than a descriptive methodology; it offers space to think critically and self-reflexively about our relationship to the world. It is often explicit in recognizing the authorial role in shaping the writing and thus the situatedness of all knowledge (Haraway, 1988). What is discussed less often in the outdoor education literature is the political choice of autoethnography; it turns the lens onto the researcher's self and, thus, does so without *othering* research subjects. Much academic work has focused on the experiences of the marginal or the other to the disregard of academic's recording of their own experiences; therefore, an autoethnographic approach decreases the distance between the everyday life of others and ourselves (Markula, 1998). In a similar vein, Visweswaran (1994) theorizes *homework* to unearth the hegemonic *fieldwork* of feminist anthropology. Scholars employing autoethnography in their work often share a common repudiation of standardized, rigid, and disembodied research methods; they call for creativity, flexibility, and equivocation in their communications. Autoethnographic projects account for more richly textured and deeply felt renderings of experiences, which is especially important to the moving, feeling, perceiving body in OLEs. However, in order to tackle the charge of self-indulgence levelled at autoethnography, I need to make sure that I write about my lived experience in a vivid manner that resonates with the larger audience's experiences. My bodily recollections seek to increase the understanding of women's cultural condition in Western society. It is in the spirit of writing creatively for effective and sensitive inquiry into the societal construction of our experiences that I set out to write my autoethnographic vignette of the climbing body.

The Climbing Body

I'm on top of the "small" cliff. I've been climbing indoors for several months and this is my first time top-roping outdoors. I look to the south and take in the profound blues of the sky and the river and the deep greens of the bushes and trees. What a spectacle of colour! The crag is nestled up against a canal, and I watch as a few yachts line up to go through the lock system. Who rock climbs and who yachts? How are leisure lifestyles influenced by cultural tastes? It is me and a male and female friend that have headed out to the local crag today. My male friend provides most of the gear—the ropes, helmets, belay devices, and carabiners. I brought along my harness, chalk bag, and climbing shoes. Who might carry the expertise, knowledge of technology, and equipment in outdoor climbing, and why? My male friend patiently and comprehensively demonstrates to us how to set up the *ropes and carabiners at the top of the crag in the bolts. Are those bolts permanent? Who puts them in? Do they hurt the rock? My male friend safety-checks and repels down the rock face, whilst the two of us walk down to join him (getting lost only once). I sit with my back pressed up against the cool granite rock in the shade and strap on my climbing shoes. My friends and I discuss the climbing route. It's a 5.5 if you use the crack, a 5.8 if you go up the middle without the crack. How do we measure and understand difficulty in rock climbing? Is it "muscly" routes that require upper body strength that are celebrated, or routes that require balance, finesse, and flexibility? My male friend begins climbing up the middle as my other female friend belays him. He is the most experienced and competent climber in our co-ed group. Why might that be? In co-ed groups, is it more often men or women leading? How is rock climbing as a male-dominated activity challenged? I begin warming up. I use my arms and legs to travel back and forth along the granite slab, touching and feeling the different crevices, finding a bat sleeping in one of them. Whose "nature" is this? Once warm, I tie myself into the rope and my female friend double-checks my knots. I chalk up. "On belay?" "Belay on." "Climbing!" I start up the rock face methodically using the crack. I get to a point where the rock crops out and I can't seem to get my arm around it to the next chalked hold. I need to flag out with my right foot; I jump and reach. Got it! Now what? To my friend's encouragement, I work on my smearing foot technique and I'm able to manoeuvre further along. Wow. I'm high. No more looking down at the scenery. Keep going Jenn. Breathe. She's got you. I feel the adrenaline coursing fast through my veins. Do my toes ever hurt being crammed into these shoes! The skin of my fingers is being rubbed raw from the friction against the granite as I pull and push my body to move upward. How do I know when to stop? What does it mean, anyway, to successfully complete a climb? Is it getting to the top or getting to know the rock? "Ready to lower!" "Lowering!" I start being lowered. My senses become more keenly aware of the pain present in my toes and in my hands. The veins in my arms are bulging and my forearms are swelling. The act of climbing the rock stamps itself upon my body from my crowded toes to my calloused hands. I carry these material reminders away from the session, and they warn that I have also shaved off rock from the granite crag's surface. We (re)inscribe each other.*

Unpacking Gendered Embodiment in Outdoor Learning Environments

The above bodily dialogue emerges from my ongoing dissertation research exploring how rock climbing is linked to broader social relations. My attitudes, practices, and experiences are investigated as a recreational female climber in relation to gender. Gendered identities are relational, so to understand femininity we need to consider masculinity. Recall, a focus on the complexity of gender relations is undertheorized in the OEE literature (Warren et al., 2014). In particular, I examine how femininities and masculinities are embodied and lived in climbing. From my experiences reading about climbing, watching climbing documentaries, and actually grasping holds on outdoor rocks and boulders, I observe dominant ideologies circulating about gender that undermine many women's physical competence, but I also observe real *material* gendered bodies that affect women's climbing. For example, a relationship exists between gendered understandings about what is difficult and the materiality of particular gendered bodies. Climbing routes that elicit strength and power are valued because they are thought to be what men can do; however, considering the materiality of women's bodies, if they want to get strong and climb at a top level, most will have to work harder than most men to get there, yet this is seldom recognized.

There are everyday examples of girls and women climbing that extend the conventional female embodiment of constraint and confinement (Young, 1990). These emphasize women's agentic potential for transcending the constraints of gender relations through cultivation of the body's motility. The female body can act as a source for social change, especially the contradictory female athletic body that disrupts normative ideas about masculinity and femininity by embodying athletic prowess and femininity (Cahn, 1996). A feminine bodily existence should not solely concentrate on bodily fitness and appearance; it should also detail power, domination, strength, and feelings of this (McDermott, 1994). Outdoor experiences can detract from a sole preoccupation with physical appearance; for example, an outdoor programme may offer space for adolescent girls to value the utility of their bodies over appearance and challenge assumptions of girls' abilities (Whittington, 2006). However, it is a complicated terrain. Liz Newbery (2003) found that meanings of physical strength were privileged in outdoor leadership, therefore valuing certain individuals and voices over others, so she highlights the contradiction in the simultaneous rejection and investment in a strong body.

In the process of investigating how dominant ideas about masculinity and femininity are embodied in co-ed climbing, I am interested in the potential for OLEs to help transform gender relations and disrupt everyday practices of femininities and masculinities. What can be inferred from women who utilize their femininity to engage in risky "masculine" behaviours? What can be inferred from men who employ conventionally feminine characteristics such as grace and balance to show strength and courage? But rock climbing may simultaneously reinforce and challenge traditional notions of femininity and masculinity. We need pedagogue that considers the interactional dynamic of gender relations in OLEs. For example, boys and men should attend to the means by which they can reorganize their physicality, comportment, and behaviour in the outdoors. Drawing on the autoethnographic vignette above, I recommend instilling a gender-informed approach to outdoor learning through journaling.

Journaling for Critical Consciousness in Outdoor Learning Environments

It is into a journal that I write down my bodily recollections, and, as a researcher, I have witnessed benefits in writing in a critical, self-reflexive, embodied way. Jotting down my experience in a journal allows me to recapture it later on so that I may look at it more deeply. Writing requires thought, and so the act of writing something down often crystallizes a particular problem for me. It encourages reflection and engagement. In addition, as one may suspect, journaling can improve articulation and prose. However, the focus of this chapter is journal writing for developing a critical consciousness. The concept of critical consciousness, or conscientization, was first put forward Paulo Freire in his 1970 work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire (1970) uses this term to indicate achievement of an in-depth understanding of our world through exposure to social and political contradictions; elucidated by this understanding, the next step in conscientization is to take action against the oppressive structures in one's life. Therefore, critical consciousness is a socio-political educative tool that encourages individuals to question the nature of their social and historical location, which Freire (1998) refers to as "reading the world" (p. xi).

Notably, I am not the only one nor the first to advance journaling for critical consciousness. In his book, *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills (1959) ascertains that writing and keeping journals are an important means of practitioners achieving judicious reflection: "It also encourages you to capture 'fringe thoughts': various ideas which may be by-products of everyday life … Once noted, these may lead to more systematic thinking, as well as lead intellectual relevance to more directed experience" (p. 196). Furthermore, there are scholars and practitioners already using journaling in their OLEs (e.g., O'Connell & Dyment, 2013); however, I maintain that the use of journaling for instilling a critical consciousness, especially in regards to how gender organizes people's physicality, behaviour, and ideas, lacks sufficient application and investigation.

With respect to OLEs, Warren et al. (2014) importantly question why there is not a larger concerted effort to discuss social justice in every outdoor programme. Concerning educational approaches, my suggestion of journaling for critical consciousness aligns well with Breunig's (2013) recommendation that students serve as social and environmental change agents. Working with the rock climbing example from above, journaling offers an opportunity for both facilitators and participants to unpack their experience in, on, atop, and around the crag. It is an opportunity for facilitators to unearth their hidden curriculum. Possible questions to provoke this deliberation could include: How are we teaching someone to climb the rock? How can this climbing experience be organized by gender, as well as by social class and racialization?

To think of journaling as part of the OLE routine ensures that we actually take time to reflect on what might be happening in our practice and in our lives more broadly. Journals can take different forms, such as a bound notebook, a three-ring binder full of papers, a blog, or an audio recording, but in OLEs a notebook and pen likely makes the most cost-efficient and mobile option. That being said, students can be encouraged to use other forums and social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and discussion boards to support their journaling efforts beyond the classroom. Instructors could begin an outdoor rock climbing session posing the following questions to students to grapple with in their journals: What am I wearing to climb, and why? What are the technologies I employ to climb the rock and how are these manufactured? What is deemed a successful climb, and by whom? What bodies are privileged by this understanding of success? How might I be damaging the rock in my practices? Whose "nature" is this? After students have an opportunity to climb the crag, they can sit down with their belay partners but write individually about that experience. This purposeful communication with the self could include sketching and doodling, as well as writing. It is important that students record their immediate thoughts, feelings, and intuitions, but the instructor can scaffold these accounts by providing necessary language and questions. The questions posed can be framed for different audiences of school, high school, and university- and college-aged students. For example, a question such as "How do you climb like a girl" for school-aged children may start to uncover some dominant understandings of gender as well as resistance to these narratives. The question of how a woman's physical presence on an alleged risky slab of rock might undermine ideas of so-called *natural* differences between women and men would be better geared towards university- and college-aged participants. In addition, students should be encouraged to share their reflections with peers in pair-and-share formats, break out discussions, and larger group settings. Dialoguing together builds collaborative and collective consciousness-raising. It helps move beyond raising awareness of social justice issues on an individual level to considering making structural changes in society. This is the second part of Freire's conscientization—taking action against oppressive structures.

Journaling offers space for facilitators and participants to examine the norms of femininity and masculinity that set the bounds of appropriate appearances, attitudes, and behaviours in OLEs. After a rock climbing session, journaling may embolden young girls and women to recognize their selves as powerful, calculated, and/or fluid bodies. Writing about the experience on the crag may encourage women to feel comfortable recreating in their bodies and help transfer this confidence to other elements of their lives. However, it is good, but it is not enough that individual women leave OLEs feeling stronger. As sport sociologist Lyndsay Hayhurst (2013) writes, we need to ask whether outdoor programmes simply prepare girls to function better in an unjust world or whether they actually resolve structural inequalities that shape girls' lives. Furthermore, it is not just women and femininity that require exploring, as the *relationality* of gender is undertheorized (Warren et al., 2014); we also need to *study up* towards men and masculinity.

In her book on figure skating, masculinity, and sport, Mary Louise Adams (2011) acknowledges that boys and men also face constraints in how they express themselves athletically: "The assumed tight conflation of male bodies, masculine gender, and heterosexuality … limits the ways men and boys can experience, move, and display their bodies" (p. 20). From Adams' work, I contend that normative versions of masculinity restrict the range of ways of living in a male body, and therefore limit the ways boys and men interact in OLEs. For example, a boy who perceives that getting to the top of the rock proves his masculinity and manhood may be less inclined to take the time to feel the rock face and think about the ways in which he could be problematically dominating the rock. Not to mention, if the boy fails to meet this distinction, his masculinity and sexuality may be called into question by his peers. These opportunities are ripe for critical, self-reflexive, and embodied journaling. Teaching how to climb a rock face can be saturated with teaching about how bodies are organized by social structures. Scaling rocks offers teachable moments for social and environmental justice projects as well as decolonization efforts. Furthermore, these documented, lived realities provide empirical evidence for the continual refiguring of outdoor education programmes.

Conclusion

Journaling for both facilitators and participants in OLEs encourages consciousness-raising and offers a way forward for unpacking the embodied knowledges and values that we uphold in outdoor education. One of the reasons why I proposed journaling as a practice for developing critical consciousness in OLEs was to elucidate how naturalized differences between men and women may be alternatively thought of as socially constructed. Journaling about climbing a boulder outdoors may empower women in making obvious the contradictions between their own physical strength and dominant ideas about female frailty; however, we need to be careful not to essentialize women's experiences. In this way, journaling can use an intersectional approach that acknowledges that gender is not a universal category. With respect to the relationality of gender, we also need to turn the lens onto boys, men, and masculinity. Continued critical, self-reflexive, embodied reflection will help create an inclusive environment for learning and growing outdoors, and I maintain that journaling is an effective means for postulating deeper questions of both outdoor education research and practice. Without journaling for critical consciousness, OLEs risk losing the potential for transforming normative gender relations and teaching alternative ways of understanding our world.

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Blazing a Trail … Together: The Need for Mentoring and Collaboration Amongst Women in Outdoor Leadership

Mary Ellen Avery, Christine Lynn Norton,
and Anita Tucker

Whilst growth has occurred in the number of women entering outdoor vocations, white men are still the dominant face in outdoor recreation, outdoor education, and wilderness adventure pursuits (Allin & Humberstone, 2006; Humberstone, 2000; Johnson, Bowker, & Cordell, 2001; McNeil, Harris, & Fondren, 2012; Siikamäki, 2009). This participation gap persists, even as researchers find many positive benefits for both men and women that can result from participation in outdoor activities (Korpela, Borodulin, Neuvonen, Paronen, & Tyväinen, 2014; McNeil et al., 2012; Whittington, 2006). Participation in outdoor learning activities can lead to physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual benefits (Korpela et al., 2014; McNeil et al., 2012). Yet, with white men making up the majority of participants and leaders in outdoor activities, not everyone is accessing these benefits equally.

Our experiences as women outdoor leaders working in a largely male-dominated field inspired us to pursue research with other women to gain a broader understanding of the need for mentoring and collaboration amongst women in outdoor leadership.

M. E. Avery (✉)
Oakland, CA, USA

C. L. Norton
School of Social Work, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX, USA

A. Tucker
Department of Social Work, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH, USA

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For the purpose of this chapter, we focus on outdoor, experiential learning activities with an adventure component that take place in a wilderness setting. Although research supports the benefits of these types of outdoor activities regardless of gender, it also supports their unique benefits for girls and women (Lloyd & Little, 2005; Mitten, 1992; Whittington, 2006). Whittington (2006) argued that outdoor programmes focusing on girls' development could confer benefits such as challenging traditional notions of femininity, promoting positive gender identity development, and helping girls resist social stereotypes. She pointed out that because outdoor recreation requires skills that are both conventionally understood as masculine and those conventionally understood as feminine, participation in outdoor recreation allows girls to explore many attributes of masculinity and femininity. Whittington went on to argue that participating in outdoor recreation programmes with other females "can encourage positive relationships between females and challenge girls to take themselves and other women more seriously" (p. 218).

Gender Discrepancies

Even as researchers find many positive benefits that can result from participation in outdoor recreation, gender discrepancy persists in the outdoors (McNeil et al., 2012). Whilst female participation numbers have begun to increase, their numbers continue to lag behind male participation (Little, 2002a) as does time engaged by women in outdoor pursuits (Siikamäki, 2009).

Gender Socialization and Other Constraints

Gender scholars have argued that one explanation for the difference in outdoor participation levels between men and women is the effect of gender socialization (McNeil et al., 2012). Gender socialization is defined as the socialization process by which people learn and are influenced by the societal expectations associated with their sex (Andersen & Taylor, 2007). Gender socialization's role in outdoor recreation and adventure education has been found to affect not only who participates but also in what type of outdoor activity participants engage (Warren & Loeffler, 2006). Scott and Derry (2005) argued that the dominant messages of traditional gender socialization include valuing female bodies for their form and not their ability; hence, children continue to be taught that there is an essential contradiction between physicality and femininity.

Additionally, gender socialization impacts outdoor leadership specifically when examining the ability for women to develop technical or activity skills (Warren & Loeffler, 2006). These skills include processes such as setting up a rock-climbing anchor, rolling a white-water kayak, placing an ice screw, rigging a haul system, and navigating with a map and compass. Warren and Loeffler (2006) argued that technical skill development is influenced by gender-role socialization because of the perception that certain outdoor activities with an array of needed technical skills are considered more appropriate for men than women, which can dictate how men and women should and should not act. This can limit female technical skill development and impacts how women in the outdoor field are perceived.

The constraints that come from gender socialization are not the only constraints that can keep women out of the outdoors. Little (2002b) conducted a study examining constraints experienced by women in adventure recreation, as well as their ability to negotiate those constraints. She found there to be four categories in which women were constrained: sociocultural, the family and other commitments, self, and technical. Sociocultural represented an overarching category under which the other constraints were confronted. The family and other commitments category represented the responsibilities women experience throughout a lifetime. Little's self-category encompassed personal constraints noted by the women due to the cultural notions they were exposed to about gender and adventure. The last category, technical, encompassed monetary commitment of purchasing gear, technical skill-set development, and the physical ability needed to carry the gear and perform the skills needed for participation. Whilst the women in the study engaged in negotiating participation, through prioritizing and compromising, Little (2002b) warned against disconnecting constraints and negotiations from a person's holistic experience. "Once the women recognized that they had an ability and desire to participate in adventure recreation, their methods of negotiation were not static" (p. 169).

Though we, too, have encountered these constraints in our experiences as women outdoor leaders, our personal and professional choices to participate in and lead outdoor activities have helped us resist gendered social forces (Kleiber, Walker, & Mannell, 2011) that may have been a barrier to our participation in these areas. We believe we were able to do so through mentoring and collaboration with other women in the outdoors. Though some literature supports the need for mentoring for women in the outdoors (Propst & Koesler, 1998), we wanted to see if our experiences were true for other women outdoor leaders, as well. In order to answer this question, we engaged in narrative research to investigate the experiences of other female outdoor leaders.

Methods

Our research employed in-depth narrative inquiry, an approach useful for rich investigation of personal experience and exploration of the ways people experience the world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1995). Scholars in leisure research support narrative approaches as they can offer insight into the role played by social forces in leisure choices (Glover, 2003). The intention of this study was to have participants share their experiences in a narrative form and create space for the meanings attached to those experiences to be realized.

The study investigated the experiences of seven female outdoor leaders who were selected using purposive snowball sampling. Criteria for participation included women who had worked in the outdoor recreation field in an adventure capacity. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Texas State University and all women signed informed consent forms to participate in the study. The study used a three-step interview process (Seidman, 1998), facilitated by the lead author. Seidman (1998) observed that a narrative interview might be met at first with some hesitancy from participants to reveal their full stories; hence, interviewing participants multiple times would enable them to gain confidence and trust in the interviewer.

The first interview attempted to get a holistic account of the participant's story in order to establish a framework for their experiences. The second interview focused on the specific details of the participant's pertinent past experiences, as well as the details of their present experience. The third interview focused on the meaning of their experiences. In the third interview, participants reflected on the narrative that had emerged during their previous interviews, their feelings towards it, and their thoughts on continuing participation in the outdoor industry.

Interviews were collaborative, with mutual storytelling; however, a conscious effort was made not to allow the voice of the interviewer to overshadow the participant's story. During the interview process, collaborative storytelling occurred and shared stories emerged. In some cases, the interviewer shared a story that they were reminded of in response to a story a participant shared. In other instances, participants would ask the interviewer if they had experienced something similar to them or if they could relate to their stories. Sample questions asked of participants included a broad "tell me about your whole experience" question during the first interview, with most participants opting to tell their stories in chronological order. In subsequent interviews, questions included asking participants to expand on experiences they had mentioned or examine how they felt during a specific interaction or conversation they had had on their professional journey.

The approach used for data analysis was a multiphase, modified categorical content analysis (George & O'Neill, 2011). The first phase was used to gain a holistic account of the individual stories. The second phase examined patterns across individual stories and included a categorical content analysis where parts of the story from the first-phase narratives were selected and examined for themes or patterns across stories. The third phase examined patterns across all the participant stories and presented broader issues that emerged during the study. The last phase contained theoretical analysis and included an analysis within the larger theoretical literature.

Polkinghorne (2007) pointed out that for narrative research, validity is concerned with how well the storied text expresses the actual meanings experienced by the participants and identified four sources that contribute to the disconnection of storied text and a person's experienced meaning: the limits of language to convey meaning, experienced meanings that are out of one's awareness, resistance of participants to reveal the full meanings of their experiences, and complexity caused by the coproduction of texts between the participant and researcher. In an attempt to gain as much insight as possible into the experienced meanings of the research participants, the interviewer attempted to address each of these sources of disconnect throughout the interview process. To further improve validity, continued clarification from participants was sought during the analysis process, as well as member checking to make sure the narrative accurately represented participants' experienced meanings (Polkinghorne, 2007).

Results

Through examining women's personal and professional journeys, we identified motivations for participation and success in navigating constraints faced along a path to outdoor leadership. What became clear was the power and importance of female relationships in the field in the form of women role models, mentorship (both formal and informal), and collaboration amongst women in the outdoors.

Role Models

First, having female role models played an important role in women's leadership paths. Two participants witnessed successful women in the outdoor industry at a young age and drew particular inspiration from the image of the women they saw. In a powerful statement, one participant explained the impact that a woman she simply saw, but did not interact with, had on her.

> I never really talked to her or anything: she was just this flash … That image of her has stayed with me for the rest of my life and really, really shaped a lot, also, of who I became … She didn't have to try to be pretty, and it counteracted all the body image stuff that my little freshman brain was getting bombarded with every single day in high school…. She really became kind of the model of the woman I wanted to be: strong, capable, independent, didn't subscribe to societal expectations.

Similarly, when describing a rare occasion when many women in the profession had congregated, another described the positive motivational effect that merely being with other successful women in the field had on her. "The outdoor industry is traditionally not a women's profession, so to have all of these incredibly strong and technically capable women in one spot was amazing." One participant reflected on how important a female role model in college was for her success in her future career when she stated,

> I think it was actually mostly her, to be honest, that I was so inspired by … she kind of mentored me, which was really awesome and I started modeling my life after hers … I didn't really appreciate it at the time, but I think I would basically be a completely different person had I not met her.

Formal and Informal Mentorship

All participants experienced formal mentoring relationships, which provided significant motivation because they felt supported in a structural sense by their organizations. Furthermore, formal mentorship often engendered informal mentorship. One woman captured this when reflecting on her experience on an organized, all-female rock-climbing training session:

> It was just the boost I needed to be able to feel confident going out and performing on my own…. It was an all-female environment. I met a climbing partner on it and she was great…. The seminar had many aspects that were amazing, but just meeting a climbing partner, who I felt comfortable with, was such a gift.

Another participant stated, "Having positive mentors and peers around me has been so valuable to me. Having people who told me I was good at this, and that I could do it, was really helpful." Her sentiment was shared by the other participants who also experienced mentorship, which facilitated entry into the field and promoted continued success in the field.

In many instances, participants felt more comfortable in mentorship relationships with other women as opposed to men. Whilst reflecting on why she seeks out mentorship from other women, one woman stated, “I avoid what can be a really patronizing learning experience with men. I really try to find people who I can learn from and feel supported by, without a doubting of my ability attached to it.” Another participant identified her preference for female mentors when comparing how she could feel around men versus women:

> I don’t know if this feeling was real or not, but sometimes I felt that … there was awkwardness or weird expectations present; like, they might have a crush on me and I didn’t reciprocate. They had gone out of their way to help me out, and then I felt, like, ‘Oh, what do I owe them?’ I think that dynamic can feel a little sticky sometimes. I realize that it can happen between more experienced women and younger women, too, but I feel less of a power dynamic with other women than I do with men.

Another participant explained why she sought out and benefited from mentorship from other women stating, “It’s like there’s something about it that I appreciate, because it seems to be coming from this place of trying to help each other develop comfort.”

All participants benefited from informal mentoring relationships, as well. One woman captured the pervasive impact that informal mentorship can have on development when she stated, “You develop these personal relationships, which is ultimately where that skill building comes from.” Because there are more men in the field, the participants saw male informal mentorship networks forming more easily and more often. One woman described this phenomenon when she stated, “I would often see men, sitting in the hallways, talking about their last climbing trip, or the one they want to go on. I thought to myself … ‘How do I get invited?’” She later directly stated the advantage provided by the men’s informal networks: “I believe there’s a stronger culture of mentorship among men … that’s an advantage that’s not formalized, but very real.”

All participants realized a difference between the mentorship relationships they had with men versus women, and valued the unique quality their experiences with female mentors had on them. Participants attributed the ease of female mentorship to shared experiences as women, as well as shared values. This is evident in the statement, “I have noticed that climbing with some men can be really patronizing and not supportive and I am incredibly particular about who my climbing partners are now.”

From Mentee to Mentor

Participants reported experiencing a type of mentorship unique to females in the outdoor industry: mentorship aimed at negotiating success in a male-dominated industry. When reflecting on why a female's experience in the outdoor industry may be different from a male's, one woman stated:

> I think the difference is that they can look at people in positions of power, like supervisors … and see more people who look like them—maybe don't act like them, but look like them, as men. I think there are more obvious pathways to get to where they want to go and I really do think that having role models is pretty important…. If you don't have role models available, it's a different obstacle to hurdle, and I think there are fewer women in our field to look to.

Participants demonstrated a desire to become mentors for other women by serving as supportive role models as well as sharing advice on negotiating the industry. One woman captured the unique mentorship women can provide for each other when she stated:

> Having been a woman going through the channels of, and working my way up through the organization, I have a unique perspective on what it is to be a woman doing that. It is a perspective my male coworkers can't offer.

One woman summed up this idea when she said, "I think that we need female role models sharing their experiences with other women and sharing tips about working with mostly men, et cetera. That informal mentorship network is a way to increase participation in male-dominated activities." Another participant shared her strategy for this:

> I try to initially zero in on women on my courses that may face similar challenges and create a personal relationship, so that down the line we can talk about it and help figure out the actual root of feelings that may emerge for them.

One woman went as far as to organize her own all-female training trip: "I think it is so cool for women to just take control of their own programs … and have that be a supportive environment with other women … I wanted it to be a totally female-led and successful female-led expedition."

In fact, according to the study participants, a desire to be mentors to others has added gravity to the motivational force of mentorship. One participant highlighted this multiplying effect: "I realized that I had the potential to have a lot of significance, because those people really shaped who I was, who I am, and who I've become." One woman captured the effect that she believed, simply by being seen as a strong woman who found success in this male-dominated field, could have on other women:

> I was especially attracted to the idea of showing young women that there is another path. That it doesn't have to be this straight path that falls in the normal, socially acceptable lines of what it means to be a woman.

Becoming Change Agents

Whilst the participants had started their participation and careers noticing the extra challenge they faced as women in the field, over time each developed a desire to become an agent of change who could play a role in transforming that characteristic of the outdoor industry. They forged ambitions about changing the ways leadership development occurred in the outdoor industry, and aspired to try to make it more equally accessible. All participants shared this idea and were motivated to continue their work, in the field and as mentors, with hopes of this realized outcome.

One participant, for instance, was motivated to raise awareness and stimulate conversations about gender in the outdoor culture. Another woman described the power she believed such a conversational shift could have in the following statement:

> If we, as female outdoor leaders, stop and have a conversation about why those men assumed I could not be a leader, because I am a female, we can actually make people conscious of it. I think about those conversations spreading and the power they could have.

Whilst the larger goal of coming together to increase access was motivating, participants experienced negative repercussions from their attempts to raise awareness, in particular resentment from men who were struggling with the changing culture of increased female participation. An interaction with one participant captured this sentiment: "I was talking about [a] diversity inclusion initiative with a very good friend of mine and he said, 'I feel, like, it's like beating a dead horse.'" Reflecting on that utterance, she added:

> At the time, as is usually the case with me, I did not respond immediately…. But, looking back, I wish I had said, 'You know, I bet it doesn't feel like a dead horse to somebody who's not feeling included every day.'

For many participants, the desire to change the exclusive nature of the industry went beyond women's issues. As one woman expressed:

> I think true success will mean, not only can I thrive in this field, but also that anybody who wants to be part of this field can. We will succeed as an industry when gender doesn't have to be a barrier.

The experience of the women in this study contributes to previous research examining women and their participation in the outdoors. The participants' narratives reaffirmed our experiences as women in the outdoors who have benefited from having female mentors. They shed light on the phenomena of becoming an outdoor leader and the importance of mentorship and collaboration in negotiating the gendered constraints they faced. Our inquiry affirmed previous research that identified the importance of collaboration and female relationships (Fredrickson & Anderson, 1999; Lloyd & Little, 2005; Whittington, 2006). Some of the participants in the current study noted that the relationships they built stood out above other aspects of their outdoor experiences. For example, one woman stated, "I think it is the people I am with that truly make an experience."

Mentoring: A Path Towards Social Justice and Inclusion

The desire for and action towards social justice demonstrated by the women interviewed reflects previous research on the power women have demonstrated to transform their experiences into tools for reshaping social structures. Particularly, the experiences of the women in the current study reflect a growing body of research that investigates the combination of feminism and social justice. Kalsem and Williams (2010) explained social justice as referring, in a broad way, to equality and an effort towards fairness.

It is apparent that the women in the current study engaged in social justice feminism on a local level and in some cases on a larger level. Participants sought to open up access to the outdoor industry to all people, particularly women, through mentoring relationships and collaboration. They sought to raise awareness about their experiences amongst other women in the field, and challenged the notions of female ability held by men in their field. Reid (2008) explained the power of social justice feminism when stating that the framework it provides gives increased understanding of "the factors that perpetuate social injustices while providing strategies for responding to such injustices through advocating collective action towards social change" (p. 10). This occurred on a local level for the women in the current study. They shared their experiences with other women, discussed how and when they experienced marginalization, and created support groups and shared techniques for negotiating these experiences.

Perry (2014) argued that social justice feminism could ultimately serve as a framework for women to build confidence "so that they can speak up, be heard, and create change. In this way, social justice feminism is focused on sharing and caring about one another" (p. 352). This is ultimately how the participants interviewed engaged in their efforts for change.

> I engage, almost at every turn, in conversations about how women fit and how we can make our organization different from the dominant culture, which, in my opinion, could do a better job of supporting both men and women.

This desire to spread awareness and spark change, starting on a small scale and then blooming, reflects a similar feeling discussed by Perry (2014) when reflecting on her power as a researcher. Whilst she credits some very successful progress that large-scale, macro-level feminist activism has had, she reflects on her ability to make micro-level impact and the power that might have in the long run. According to Perry, "social justice can be about one person, working with one community at a time, to enact change at the local level" (p. 360). This, too, is the technique utilized by the women interviewed. They recognized the individual power they have for creating change. Whilst small scale at inception, they witnessed growth in their efforts, and they are driven by hope for continued growth and change on a larger scale. "[M]y work as an outdoor educator is on the ground level," said one woman, "and, for me, it's on that ground level that I can use leverage in the outdoor industry. I feel like I can facilitate a change through role-modeling and having conversations about gender within our industry."

Conclusion

The narratives of the women in this study reinforced our experiences as female outdoor leaders. The informal and formal mentoring relationships we have built have helped us overcome gender constraints and find success in this male-dominated field. Similar to the women in this study, we seek to raise awareness about the need for mentoring and collaboration in the outdoor industry to promote the inclusion of new female outdoor leaders, so that our field will thrive. From a social justice perspective, we believe that it is our duty to become change agents in order to make the field more accessible, for women and for other marginalized populations. We believe we need to remember to work for each other, not against, support each other, and celebrate each other's successes as our own. For each of us has the potential in each of our interactions to make the difference in another woman's choices about engaging or disengaging in her pursuit of the outdoors.

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Voices of Women of Colour: Dreaming of an Inclusive Outdoor Leadership Environment

Tanya Rao and Nina S. Roberts

Introduction

It is important to adopt a multicultural perspective when imagining the future of outdoor experiential education. We need to especially move away from a homogenous view of women in the outdoors, to integrating the experiences and relationship of women from diverse cultural backgrounds into the fundamental structure and systems of outdoor education. Understanding the role of women of colour in this field, however, is a complex endeavour. It involves the intersection of the study of psychology, gender issues, socialization, cultural ideologies, political history of the people, and of the wilderness.

Women of colour have gained significant strides in breaking barriers to outdoor participation over the last two decades. There has been an increasing number of single-gender (women-only) and ethnic outdoor groups that promote and encourage outdoor recreation to a diverse audience (e.g., see OutdoorAfro.com; LatinoOutdoors.org). The increase in outdoor participation of women of colour has been directly correlated to having strong role models and women of colour as outdoor leaders (Roberts, 1996; Warren, 2002). Whilst research has focused mainly on understanding barriers to

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T. Rao (✉)
Mountain Travel Sobek, Emeryville, CA, USA

N. S. Roberts
Department of Recreation, Parks, & Tourism, San Francisco State University,
San Francisco, CA, USA

© The Author(s) 2018

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participation faced by women of colour, little attention has been focused on factors that influence their career development and opportunities for outdoor leadership.

Women of Colour in the Outdoor Recreation/Adventure Literature

Current research efforts revolve around understanding the influence of gender, race, ethnicity, social class, and cultural identity on the leisure and career choices of women from diverse backgrounds. There is a significant body of literature suggesting that women, in general, have different experiences and opportunities than their male counterparts when it comes to outdoor recreation and experiential education (Mitten & Woodruff, 2009; Neill, 1997). Whilst several research studies have identified constraints on participation typical to women, these studies also suggest there are many *within-gender* differences based on race, ethnicity, and class (Roberts & Henderson, 1997). Furthermore, socialization and acculturation play a significant role in shaping the outdoor experiences of women of colour and, often, they face more barriers to participation (perceived or real) than European American women (Roberts, 1996).

In addition to gender biases that affect outdoor participation for all women, such as social conditioning, accessibility, education, outdoor skills, and role models (Warren, 1985), women of colour encounter other cultural barriers such as language, racism, traditions, and social values, as well as a number of socioeconomic constraints that limit financial resources for recreational activities (Roberts, 1996; Roberts & Drogin, 1993). Certain cultures define the role of a woman in society as central to the family structure, wherein her primary duty is considered that of a caregiver, whilst her individual needs are sometimes deemed to be of marginal importance (Roberts & Henderson, 1997). Warren (1985) further suggests that in many cases, certainly not all, women who belong to ethnic minority groups might receive just enough income to provide food and shelter for their families. Whilst progress has been made in society over the years, such socioeconomic factors remain a large disparity and thus become a huge constraint to outdoor participation of a significant percentage of the population.

In a qualitative study of interviews and previously collected subjective data, Roberts (1996) examined the cultural behaviours relevant to African American, Native American, Mexican American, and Asian American women and their participation in the outdoors. There were some similarities in the cultural constraints between these ethnic groups such as money, family responsibility, and lack of opportunity. However, there were differences in the social interaction between people from different ethnic groups and their relation to nature. This chapter also emphasizes the need for further research that examines the role of socioeconomic status, social class, gender, and other cultural values in relation to outdoor activities that women from different ethnic groups partake (Roberts, 1996).

A study of Japanese students on an Outward Bound course in Australia (Purdie & Neill, 1999) employed a quantitative method to measure the effect of a wilderness expedition on the self-concept of the participants ($n = 30$). The results of this study showed no positive self-concept changes in the participants, thereby raising the issue that programme outcomes can be different across cultures. This study was not focused on women, but it introduced an important concept in cross-cultural behaviour, namely that of well-known constructs of individualism and collectivism. Cross-cultural differences can be explained on the basis of two personality dimensions, idiocentrism and allocentrism, which correspond to individualism and collectivism, respectively. "*Idiocentrics* tend to place particular value on independence, competition, and superiority, whereas *allocentrics* tend to place particular importance on interdependence, in-group harmony, and solidarity and can be characterized by a subordination of personal goals to those of their in-group" (Spering, 2001, p. 12). American, European, and Australian societies are examples of individualist social models, whereas African, Asian, and Latin American cultures follow collectivist patterns. Although only a small percentage of the participants of Purdie and Neill's (1999) study were female, their research question can (and should) be applied more specifically to women from different ethnic backgrounds to further explore the intersection of cross-cultural psychology and female behavioural patterns in relation to the outdoors.

Lack of Role Models

Many studies have also highlighted the lack of female role models, which compromises women's participation to outdoor activities (e.g., Loeffler, 1995; Roberts & Henderson, 1997). This topic has been further explored by numerous studies investigating how the presence of a female role model could, for example, prove crucial in eliminating prejudices against women of colour, or reducing feelings of inequality on their part (Humberstone, 1996; Loeffler, 1995; Roberts, 1996; Warren, 1985). Several media, such as film and the press, have until recently typically portrayed men in the wilderness, thereby instilling a feeling of inferiority and nonbelonging in women (Roberts, 1992, 1996). In a more progressive Western society where increased equal opportunities are available to people from different backgrounds and abilities, "there is still a significant under representation of female 'role models' in leadership and decision-making positions in outdoor education" (Humberstone, 1996, p. 48). Hence, the need for women of colour in leadership positions exists not only to encourage more women to get outdoors, broadly, but it could also be a very empowering mechanism for the many women who are already in the outdoors.

In the book, *Black & Brown Faces in America's Wild Places*, Edmondson (2006) profiles 20 individuals from different regions of the country who have prominent careers in the outdoors. The individuals are primarily of African American heritage (with a few other racial groups represented), and their personal stories and insight about their experience in the field of outdoor recreation, environmental protection, and natural resource management are freely shared. Nine out of the 20 individuals are women, demonstrating the possibility of gender equality and ethnic diversity in the outdoors. Books like this provide an excellent example of role models for people in the community to get outdoors and, more importantly, empower youth of colour to explore career opportunities in the field of outdoor experiential education.

Outdoor education programmes need to be sensitive to the different needs of women, in general, and those of a culturally diverse population, in particular. Subsequently, it is crucial to examine the current state of outdoor education programmes and whether they provide leadership opportunities for women of colour. If not, what strategies are put into place to change the status quo?

Outdoor Leadership and Training

There are several perspectives on how to provide women with increasing opportunities for outdoor leadership. Mitten and Woodruff (2009), in their review of women's adventure history, suggest that while men and women bring different needs and values to adventure programming, outdoor leadership need not be based on gender. The transformational model of leadership proposed by Henderson (1996) recognizes feminist perspectives and values but is gender neutral. For example, the focus of this approach would be more on experiential learning rather than heavy skill building. All participants get the opportunity to assume leadership roles and build on conflict resolution, communication, and teamwork. This approach makes leadership training much more accessible to women from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds because it promotes equal participation and a deeper level of supported learning.

In a critique of traditional outdoor leadership education and training programmes, Warren (2002) advocates for social justice in the field and highlights the gaps between current educational programmes and research findings on race, gender, and class sensitivities in outdoor leadership. An important distinction to consider is that leadership-based education programmes should be changed not just to make them more accessible to people from diverse ethnic backgrounds but, more importantly, to educate everyone, especially White people, on race, gender, and social class sensitivities.

Most of the literature on women in the outdoors, cultural diversity, and outdoor leadership focuses on the different variables individually or in pairs, such as women of colour in the outdoors or social justice and outdoor leadership, and women and leadership. The goal of this chapter is to provide a holistic understanding through the collective voice of women of colour outdoor educators currently working in the field. Their knowledge and reflections on what has worked in the past, current progress, and perspective of future needs not only dispels the myth that women of colour are not interested in the outdoor field but also promotes a sense of belonging and encourages future generations to pursue outdoor leadership careers.

Collecting Diverse Viewpoints

This chapter presents a variety of perspectives and experiences of a small sample of both San Francisco Bay Area and national outdoor educators who identify as a racial or ethnic minority. This exploratory inquiry helps inform new insight into what challenges women of colour face in pursuing and sustaining outdoor careers. By gaining a better understanding of what motivates them to work in this field and how their experiences shape their sense of belonging and operating in the outdoors, we can work towards creating a more inclusive outdoor leadership environment. This may benefit the outdoor industry, at large, in engaging a more culturally diverse audience, as participants, educators, and leaders.

Viewpoints presented here were gathered through a brief online survey and informal personal interviews with four of the survey respondents. The survey consisted of four close-ended questions and five open-ended questions. The survey was distributed online, using SurveyMonkey®, to a total of 23 women outdoor educators who identified as being racially or ethnically diverse (i.e., non-White). The survey link was also distributed through colleagues and outdoor organizations. This informal survey was completely voluntarily with no incentives offered for participation. There was a 56.5% response rate on the email invitations and an additional five respondents from the web link, yielding a total of 18 survey respondents.

The following three key open-ended questions were part of the online survey:

1. What changes (if any) have you observed regarding women of colour outdoor leaders over the course of your experience in this field?
2. In your opinion, what factors influence or impact the involvement of women of colour in pursuing outdoor careers?
3. Looking ahead, what should organizations focus on to recruit and retain women of colour outdoor educators and ultimately increase cultural diversity amongst leaders?

The survey respondents were a diverse group of outdoor experiential educators, currently working in the field in various capacities, with a range of experience from 2 months to 16 years. They reported working with groups of all ages and gender, in a wide range of organizations including public and private schools, universities, nonprofit organizations (small to large), private recreation and adventure companies, public parks, and other experiential education organizations with some outdoor/nature focus. A total of 90% of the respondents worked primarily in the Western region of the United States (US) (Northwest, West, and Southwest), with a small percentage having worked in other regions of the US as well as internationally, mostly in Asia, Central and South America.

Respondents were also asked if they had any formal education in experiential education, or related disciplines, and given the option to specify how they entered into their present career. More than half of the respondents had a college degree (bachelor's or higher) in environmental science, outdoor/environmental education, public health, tourism management, and similar fields. A few respondents who did not have related subject degrees expressed entry into their career through an Outward Bound course, Student Conservation Association service project, and/or personal interest in outdoor adventure.

The survey respondents self-identified their racial group: White, Non-Hispanic (n = 3), Black or African American (n = 3), Hispanic or Latino (n = 6), Asian (n = 9), American Indian or Alaska Native (n = 2), and Biracial or Multiracial (n = 5). In their own words, they specified their ethnic groups as South Asian, Chinese American, Japanese; Mixed Indian and White (European); Afro American/Hispanic/Native American; White (American, Polish) and Hispanic (Mexican); Japanese and Non-Hispanic White; Brazilian; Vietnamese American; Mexican; Khmer American; and Chinese. Despite the small number of respondents compared to potential numbers in the field, they came from a broad spectrum of both ethnic and education backgrounds, providing a rich tapestry of field experiences and ideas for a more inclusive future.

What Did We Learn?

Mentors and Role Models

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents expressed having a mentor or female role model who played an important role in their pursuit of an outdoor/experiential education career. Amongst these, half reported their mentors and role models were White (male and female), whilst the rest did not specify race. A few reported that they had women of colour mentors/role models; however, this was mostly after they were in the field or unrelated to the outdoor industry.

Changes Observed in the Field: What's Happened Over Time?

Some women felt the outdoor industry values the diversity that women of colour bring to organizations and education programmes. Many respondents agreed there are more women of colour educators in the field today than five or ten years ago. These women represent multiple races, ethnicities, and social class strata. The largest growth sector was reported to be amongst Latinos and Black/African American. Regional differences were noted based on cultural diversity in the community (e.g., San Francisco Bay Area vs. rural Colorado). There appeared to be more women of colour outdoor leaders internationally (e.g., Peru).

Another interesting observation was that many women of colour work as environmental science educators, with fewer women leading trips that require technical outdoor skills and certifications. Moreover, there are less women of colour in the nonprofit field because they indicated they do not have the luxury of volunteering; hence, this results in the lack of representation and role models for the younger generation.

Despite this increase in representation, many expressed feeling isolated and *tokenized* in some organizations, reflective of a more limited diversity. Although there is increased dialogue and focus on cultural diversity in organizations, women of colour continue to face the *glass ceiling* effect when it comes to leadership opportunities and growth within their organization. There are very few women of colour in higher executive positions throughout the industry. In fact, organizations targeting participants from diverse backgrounds more commonly still have primarily White professionals in management positions. There has been a growth in grassroots organizations such as Foundation for Youth Investment and Los Angeles Wilderness Training, which currently have women of colour at the helm. Moreover, those that have tried to be change agents within their organization or community have not succeeded due to lack of broader organizational support.

Pursuing an Outdoor Education Career: Motivations and Influences

Results of this project suggest there are several factors that impact the involvement of women of colour in pursuing outdoor careers. These can largely be grouped in four main categories: financial sustainability, emotional support, cultural influences, and organizational support.

Financial Sustainability

A career in the outdoor industry is seen as more of a lifestyle choice than a financially viable option. Many opportunities, especially entry-level field positions, are significantly underpaid and require long hours. Cost and time involved in getting certifications (WFR, AMA, etc.), and required skills training remains a known barrier for people of colour to enter the field. Then, there is additional cost in buying and maintaining appropriate gear for any particular outdoor activity, which was conveyed as a constraint to study participants.

For many women of colour, both young and older, this is not a practical long-term career choice that can support their families. One respondent expressed that for most women of colour, coming from a marginalized background, "this seems more like institutionalized slavery in the outdoor industry." Being a field educator, for example, is something one does when they are young and can afford to work on a part-time or volunteer basis. They eventually move on to "real jobs" with better pay and benefits. Such opportunities are only accessible to those with financial stability or family support. It is not a practical option for many women who come from diverse backgrounds or cultures considered to be marginalized who value careers of financial prosperity and advancement.

Emotional Support

Findings show that women of similar backgrounds gravitate towards each other due to shared experiences such as common identities, marginalization, gender bias, and cultural stereotypes. Accordingly, having other women of colour to share their struggles and overcome similar challenges facilitates a supportive environment where women can thrive and grow. It is considered crucial to have people of colour in the field as role models, who not only represent but also advocate career development and growth of women of colour in the field. However, one respondent proposed that the dearth of female role models encourages women to pursue careers in the field and make a difference in their community.

As discussed in the literature review, women of colour often have a very different experience and relationship with the outdoors compared to other social groups. Their perspective needs to be shared with larger audiences to help women of colour relate to, and feel valued within, the outdoor industry. Moreover, the environment of outdoor careers (such as residential outdoor education programmes) is extremely insular, making it hard to find people of similar interest and mind-set. As the only person of colour in a large group of White educators, it is difficult not to be tokenized (as noted) and required to assimilate into the dominant culture without respect or recognition of cultural differences and values.

Cultural Influences

Many ethnic groups still largely see outdoor adventure activities such as camping, backpacking, rock climbing, and so on, as a European leisure concept. Several respondents expressed that they did not grow up doing these activities mostly because it was inaccessible, required expensive gear, outdoor skills, and knowledge. Additionally, women in this study indicated that different ethnic groups associate different values to their outdoor experiences. For example, as widely known in the literature, Latinos prefer to spend their leisure and outdoor time with family or with their larger community of friends or acquaintances.

Latina participants in this study noted that current outdoor programmes are designed for individual participation rather than family or community involvement, thereby making it unattractive to a significant portion of the population. Working in the outdoors is known as a novel career for most women of colour. As indicated through outcomes of this study, “no one in their family has done it and don't know how to support it." This creates a sense of isolation from one's family. Moreover, being in unfamiliar places for extended periods of time creates more misunderstandings and anxiety with the family. Hence, women face more pressure to leave the field and choose a *safer* long-term career path.

Organization Support

Structural or institutional racism is still prevalent in American society. The most common issue women of colour face, in addition to gender bias, is the lack of awareness about challenges faced by people of colour and how this affects their outdoor experiences as both a participant and an employee. The premise of most outdoor education programmes is to value leaving one's family to be with a group of potential strangers to facilitate self-discovery and personal growth. This is considered a very European concept predominantly embraced by White outdoor leaders (women and men). Many cultures value time with family and believe formative experiences can happen together with their family members. Additionally, the lack of representation of people of colour in organizational leadership and diversity of staff, not only amongst varying ethnicities but also different social classes, plays a significant factor in making outdoor experiential programmes unattractive and completely foreign, certainly to a large segment of the US population.

Recruitment and Retention: "The Elephant in the Room"

As emphasized, outdoor education programmes need to be sensitive to different needs of women in general, and that of a culturally diverse population, in particular. Following are sample ideas from survey respondents for recruiting and/or retaining women of colour in the outdoor industry, and ultimately increasing cultural diversity amongst outdoor leaders.

What can organizations do to recruit more women of colour?

- A shift in organizational culture is essential to recognize the needs of women of colour rather than impose preconceived ideas of what they might need. This can be achieved if they strive for multiculturalism rather than increasing staff diversity for face value or marketing.

- Outdoor career opportunities need to be more supportive of women with families by offering liveable wages, health benefits, better hours that allow for time with family and friends, and access to multicultural environments. Historically, this field has been "accessible for wealthy White folks"; organizations need to change this impression and make it more accessible for women from different cultural backgrounds and social class.
- Role models play a key role in paving the path for future generations. Youth programmes for women of colour, by women of colour—having leaders that reflect the population they want to attract—will have a great impact on recruiting youth of colour into the industry.
- When targeting youth, there needs to be a clear pipeline to an outdoor career, starting from outdoor programmes in school to internships and summer jobs, and then to a college education that eventually leads to career opportunities in the field.
- Intentional recruiting: create job postings that are more focused on general leadership skills than just outdoor experience. Job postings should indicate people of colour are encouraged to apply, with no discrimination in hiring. Target-specific audiences such as women's groups, ethnically based community groups, public school systems, and city parks and recreation departments.
- Create a welcoming and inclusive work environment by talking about organizations' dedication to social justice issues during the interview; this needs to be embedded in the organizational culture first.
- Change the image of the outdoor industry by creating more publicity about diversity across all sectors: having media images of women of colour leaders in the field, programme advertisements portraying women of colour as participants and leaders, sharing stories of women of colour experiences in the field, and more.

What can organizations do to retain women of colour currently working in the field?

- Financial incentives play a major influence on retention. Organizations need to create a pipeline for professional development and advancement for individuals, from part-time, hourly based income to full-time opportunities that include health benefits and other *perks* that will encourage retention.
- There needs to be more people of colour represented at the board of directors and management levels. Getting women of colour involved in shaping

the organizational mission and goals, as well as active decision-making involvement for programme planning and implementation, can help achieve relevancy with the community.
- Organizations should dedicate funds towards professional growth for women of colour such as skills development training, required certifications (WFR, AMA, etc.), mentoring programmes, and opportunities for advancement. This will show organizational support and will attract more women of colour to the field.
- Create a sense of *you are needed* amongst women of colour educators. Respect their viewpoints and experiences rather than require them to fit into a homogenous ideal *outdoor leader* model. Instead, encourage different leadership styles that speak to many cultures: historical matriarchy, community leadership, collaborative leadership, and so on.
- Mandate cultural competency training for all staff. Create an open platform for staff members to discuss race, class, ethnic identity, stereotypes, and any of the *-isms* pervasive in society across international boundaries. This helps create a work environment where women of colour, or any person who faces any institutionalized form of oppression, can stay and feel valued.
- Develop more urban and nonresidential programmes that allow educators to maintain familial contact and community involvement. This can be less alienating and intimidating to women of colour. Suggested ideas include one- to three-month environmental education programmes or weekend learning programmes, teacher fellowship programmes (taking outdoor learning into everyday school teaching), and mixed-age/intergenerational community programmes.
- On a larger scale, building a social network for women of colour educators to share ideas, advocate social justice issues, and support each other will create a sense of community and encourage more women to stay in the field.

Many of these ideas and suggestions may already be implemented at various outdoor organizations across the US. However, the message from study participants was loud and clear that we still have a long way to go in creating an inclusive environment for women of colour outdoor educators in this country.

> *When we shift what we think we know about leadership to a broader representation, and then demand that leaders of all styles are hired, we can affect change.* (Mexican, second-generation immigrant)

The first step requires acknowledging that there is an issue; only then we can begin to work towards facilitating change.

Conversation with Four Leaders: Embracing Unique Perspectives

The online survey participants were asked if they would be available for a short, informal follow-up interview. Out of the 13 women that opted for the follow-up, 4 were selected based on their unique experiences, varied ages, and diverse ethnic representation. The informal interviews were conducted by phone with the aim of gaining deeper insight into their personal outdoor experience and ideas for a more inclusive outdoor leadership environment. In order to protect the anonymity of the women, fictitious names have been used to convey their ideas and experiences.

The Mexican woman, who shall be called "Rose," has worked as an outdoor educator for 12 years. She does not have a degree in outdoor education and entered the field through summer camp and odd jobs at an outdoor school. Rose did not have any female mentors during the early part of her career but has since sought out women of colour in working for equity in the outdoor field. The Asian woman (self-identified as Japanese) will be known as "Saki." She has a BS in Geography, MS in Environmental Science, and did a one-year teaching practicum graduate programme at the Teton Science School in the Grand Teton National Park. Saki has worked in the industry for 16 years for public/nonprofit organizations and private interest groups. "Kendra" is an African American woman, who became an outdoor educator due to her passion and interest for rock climbing and the experiential education field. Her female climbing partner and best friend who worked with girls' outdoor leadership programmes was her inspiration to pursue an outdoor career. Last, "Michelle" identifies as multiracial, from Euro-American and Mexican descent by citizenship, blood, and culture. She has a BA with a special focus on outdoor education. All her formal mentors were White and male. However, her informal mentors included women and she encountered more women of colour once she became more active in the field. Having worked in the industry for 14 years, she is now looking to switch to nursing in order to financially support her family. The following compelling stories of these women help us better understand their ways of knowing, operating, and being in the outdoor industry.

Sense of Belonging: Participant and Educator Perspective

Kendra grew up in a White neighbourhood in Colorado and was used to being the only person of colour when participating in outdoor programmes. She feels a sense of belonging because she has always been the token Black person in the outdoors. However, as she continues to work in the field and becomes more aware of social justice issues, she feels a stronger sense of being *othered* and a lack of authenticity amongst the mostly White organizational leaders in the industry.

Although Michelle identifies as a Mexican and American, she is socialized as a White American. Michelle owes her success as an outdoor educator to this factor. During her education and early career, she did not experience any racial or ethnic bias and felt loved and supported for who she was. However, she faced many barriers and challenges when trying to introduce outdoor education into her high school in Mexico. She believes residential programmes and spending too much time away from family can be isolating for women from cultures with strong family ties.

Saki's pursuit, on the other hand, of a deeper connection when working with kids brought her from Japan to an outdoor educator programme in the US. From the beginning of her outdoor career, Saki felt welcomed and created a movement around inclusion and empowerment of women of colour. Organizational support played a big role in this movement, although there were not many people of colour in leadership roles. Saki believes women of colour should take the initiative, express their ideas, and empower other women to do the same in their respective organizations. She alluded to the fact that if people of colour do not advocate for themselves, no one else will.

Growing up Latina in the Central Valley in California, Rose was surrounded by White people when it came to summer camps and outdoor programmes. "It felt like a bubble," she says. Her sense of belonging came from having shared experiences and standards of teaching that made the colour of skin irrelevant. As an educator, she actively pursued opportunities with communities of colour or started her own programmes for youth of colour. In doing so, she had the freedom to showcase her leadership qualities without having to prescribe to expected norms.

Career Development: Wants and Desires

A career in the outdoor industry is not a typical choice for most women of colour. This is primarily due to the lack of financial sustainability, family and/or community support, or more commonly lack of knowledge of job opportunities within this industry. Women of colour who pursue careers in the outdoors do so because they are passionate about spending time outdoors and have emotional/financial support from their families. This endeavour often requires courage to challenge social expectations and cultural norms.

The women interviewed share ideas for what tools and resources they believe are important for career development of women of colour.

Kendra and Michelle believe having women of colour role models and people of colour in leadership positions makes a huge difference in breaking down stereotypes and supporting younger generations in advancing their careers in the field. Furthermore, Kendra strongly advocates for programmes where the instructor/educator(s) reflects the diversity of the participants. This will be empowering for both the educators and participants. Rose believes organizations can support professional development of women of colour by allocating funds for higher education, training, and social justice initiatives. Michelle expressed that having financial aid or programme scholarships in school was helpful, especially in pursuing extracurricular activities that would otherwise be unaffordable for youth with low-income backgrounds.

The National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) had a women's initiative programme that helped Saki become an outdoor instructor. She received a scholarship to enrol in a course and had a female mentor (albeit not a woman of colour) who understood the issue of lack of female leaders. NOLS currently has a "diversity and inclusion" plan to engage a more diverse range of students and educators through scholarships and innovative programmes (NOLS, 2015). Such initiatives create accessible opportunities for people of colour and establish a supportive community for professional development. Saki believes having targeted pipeline programmes is the key to increasing visibility and attracting women of colour to the outdoor industry. The idea of starting a collective of women of colour working in the industry or having a woman of colour national conference was suggested by both Rose and Saki. This would provide a forum to share ideas, collaborate on initiatives, and, in general, support each other in promoting social justice rather than working in silos.

Strategies for Increasing Cultural Diversity Amongst Outdoor Leaders

To affect change, there needs to be a shift in the culture of the industry where whiteness is no longer the norm. Marginalized populations may require more advocacy and support to challenge the status quo. People of colour currently working in the field are the strongest advocates and change agents in the industry. By showing a continued sense of intention, and extending an invitation to advocacy to their White counterparts, they can build capacity and move towards greater action. Moreover, current industry leaders need to be held accountable to their verbal commitment to promoting social justice. This was the underlying sentiment expressed by all women interviewed for this chapter when asked for cultural diversity initiatives. Other strategies include the following:

- Start young: Get youth from diverse backgrounds interested in outdoor activities in local communities. These outdoor spaces should be easy to access so that it is less intimidating and led by people of colour, preferably from the community. Establish deeper, ongoing relationships with parents of teens to help build trust and show support. Provide scholarships.
- Set achievable goals and motivate employees to institute change after diversity and/or cultural competency training. Hold them accountable rather than just perpetuating *lip service*.
- Cultivate leaders of colour by providing mentoring programmes, leadership training, and benefit corporations/nonprofit management training.
- Develop more programmes for women of colour by women of colour (e.g., see "Women of Color Backpacking Trip" organized by Balanced Rock in California).
- Grant funds to organizations working towards cultural relevancy. It is important to increase conversations and have an open dialogue around both cultural competency and cultural relevancy in the outdoor field.
- Change hiring practices so they do not require a minimum college degree for entry-level positions (e.g., weigh experience in the field heavier towards candidate review process).
- Increase outreach within communities of colour about outdoor programmes and career opportunities. Invite women of colour to share their outdoor experiences; this can be a powerful tool for advocacy and recruitment.
- Create opportunities with liveable wages and outline a clear and progressive path for career advancement within the organization and/or industry. Financial sustainability is key for retaining women of colour in this field.

The online survey responses and informal interviews were very insightful. This process gave women of colour the chance to voice their thoughts and opinions in an unstructured setting. Such opportunity is greatly lacking in this field, especially from a leadership standpoint. The viewpoints presented here are also unbiased and do not reflect the views/opinions of the authors.

Diversity in the Workplace: Making the Case

Current demographic shifts in the US population have several implications for the field of experiential education. According to the 2014 US census data, 62.1% of the population comprise White persons alone (non-Hispanic), with the rest being Hispanic/Latino (17.4%), Black/African American (13.2%), Asian (5.4%), Biracial/Multiracial (2.5%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (1.2%). The Census Bureau predicts that, by 2050, people of colour will constitute a majority of the population (US Census Bureau, 2014). Furthermore, women comprise a slightly larger percentage of the US population than men at 50.8% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014), highlighting an important segment of the population who are park users, programme participants, employees, and future leaders. Yet, there is compelling evidence of the *glass ceiling* effect where people of colour and women, in general, have not exceeded the 14–16% mark in holding management or leadership positions in environmental organizations and corporate jobs overall for decades (McKinsey & Company, 2015; Taylor, 2014).

Historically, the outdoor industry has been dominated by a Western perspective that "conquering the wilderness" and overcoming challenges in nature can lead to personal growth. Many other cultures do not share the same relationship to the outdoors, and their lives are intertwined with nature in different and often deeper ways. Moreover, the outdoor and environmental/nature experiences of women of colour are also defined by historical oppression, perceived discrimination and racism, gender bias, and social expectations that continue to pervade today's society (Bowser, Roberts, Simmons, & Perales, 2012; Roberts, 1996; Roberts & Drogin, 1993). Interestingly, one of the interview respondents stated the following observation:

> *The Wilderness Act was passed in 1964, the same year as the Civil Rights Act. Last year there was a big celebration about the Wilderness Act, but no celebration or acknowledgement about the Civil Rights Act at that event. Just 50 years ago, women of color did not have access, were oppressed and could not enjoy these outdoor areas. Hence, they do not consider this as their heritage.* (Japanese, adult immigrant)

Therefore, current outdoor programming that assumes a "one size fits all" model cannot be applied across cultures with different sets of cultural and social values. Organizations need to have a better sense of accountability and accommodation when developing programmes relevant to their prospective audience.

> *There is currently no incentive for the industry to change because it is easier to say that there are no qualified women of color to hire, because they can consistently find their white/male/western leadership model at every turn.* (Mexican, second-generation immigrant)

There is a lot of value in outdoor education for individual growth and development. However, both the literature and results of this study corroborate showing the current structure of job opportunities for educators is not financially sustainable or widely acceptable across different cultures. Additionally, women of colour face greater barriers to advancement and have limited scope in assuming leadership positions. Although progress is slow, many organizations are beginning to recognize these issues and are taking action. The Green 2.0 (formerly the Green Diversity Initiative) studied several environmental nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and grant-making foundations to understand the state of diversity in environmental organizations (Taylor, 2014). The Taylor study found that all three types of organizations have made significant progress on gender diversity in staff and leadership positions, but most of these are White women. The next decade will require organizations to prioritize and commit the necessary resources to increasing racial diversity amongst staff and leadership.

A Road Map to Leadership Diversity

Changing institutional structure, systems, and overall mind-sets of any industry requires serious commitment and sustained efforts. However, diversification of the workplace is an imperative for outdoor organizations in providing relevant programmes to the changing landscape of the US population. The collective perspectives of the women of colour educators surveyed and interviewed in this study provide a wide range of strategies, based on personal experience, for creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace. These ideas are combined with a review of literature and industry initiatives to recommend the following five key steps:

1. *Demonstrate commitment to diversity*: It is important for each organization to first define what diversity actually means and how it relates to their missions and goals. Increasing diversity is not just about having quantitatively more people of colour in the workplace; it also requires adopting a multicultural approach at all levels of the organization. Organizations should

institute diversity and inclusion goals in their master plan and hold leaders accountable for reaching them as part of their annual performance review.

2. *Track data and share strategies*: A diversity and inclusion plan is useful only if data are collected and key performance metrics tracked. Only then do organizations know what is working and where to improve. Tracking these metrics over time will also reveal trends and programme effectiveness. Publicizing data and related metrics and sharing strategies that work with other organizations will further benefit the industry as a whole.
3. *Provide financial sustainability*: A long-term career in the outdoors can be a lucrative option for women of colour only if there are more full-time job opportunities with liveable wages, reasonable hours, and provision of health benefits. Organizations should provide financial incentives for higher education, institute-required training, and certifications, especially to marginalized groups.
4. *Level the playing field*: There is a lack of awareness of the intricacies of being a person of colour across the outdoor landscape. To create a welcome and supportive environment, organizations need to encourage an open dialogue around race, class, White privilege, and gender bias amongst *all* staff members. Cultural competency and diversity training should be mandatory and offered annually (at a minimum) at all levels of the organization.
5. *Foster female leadership*: Representation of diversity at the senior management and board of director levels portrays an organizational commitment to social justice instead of just making face value claims. Moreover, organizations should invest in the professional development of women of colour and make those in leadership roles feel encouraged and valued. These women serve as positive role models and help create a supportive community that attracts more women of colour to the field.

Bringing It All Together

Outdoor organizations will greatly benefit from having a diversity of perspectives, talents, and representatives amongst industry leaders. Whilst there is significant work to do, it is important to tap into the potential of women of colour already in the field and call them to action. It is easy to blame institutional structure and organizational culture for the lack of diversity amongst outdoor leaders. However, genuine change comes from within the individual, not from imposed change. What can we do as individual outdoor educators, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, and social class, to work towards creating a more inclusive outdoor environment for future generations of our richly diverse population? Change that is driven by those it impacts the most will last longer as its ownership is never in question. Women of colour currently in the field, challenging the status quo, overcoming barriers, and questioning unconscious bias, lead by example and collectively can be the catalysts for change. Imagine the future of outdoor experiential education without women of colour? It's a hard vision to face or accept. The path ahead may be difficult, but it is definitely feasible and worth the *time* and energy that's required for progress to occur.

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A Pākehā Woman's Journey Towards Bicultural Responsibility in Outdoor Education

Maureen Legge

Outdoor education in a variety of forms has a strong history dating back 100 years in New Zealand. Historically shaped by a range of influences, particularly from the United Kingdom, New Zealand has developed its own flavour of outdoor education because of its unique cultural and social understandings. Boyes (2012) and Lynch (2006) have traced the historical and conceptual development of outdoor education in New Zealand, documenting an evolution over time that has included nature study, curriculum-related field trips, school camping, outdoor pursuits, environmental education, and social and personal development as features of the flavour.

Boyes noted that by the late 1970s, the outdoor pursuits lobby was gaining the most capital, and in 1980, the New Zealand Department of Education introduced Education Outside the Classroom (EOTC) to relocate the domain back to its original wider roots across the curriculum. This concept is a generic term describing curriculum-based learning that extends beyond the classroom walls. The New Zealand Ministry of Education (formerly the Department of Education) acknowledged (1999) that the concept of EOTC could be applied to a diversity of approaches to teaching such as art gallery or *marae* visits, geography field trips, and outdoor education camps. In 1999, the Health and Physical Education curriculum included outdoor education as one of its key areas of learning. This curriculum suggested the following learning opportunities in outdoor education: the development of physical skills; enjoyment

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M. Legge (✉)
Faculty of Education, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

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and personal and social development through adventure activities and outdoor pursuits; learning about the traditions of their own and other cultures, including the *tangata whenua*, the Māori who are Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand; strategies to evaluate and manage safety, challenge, and risk; accessing outdoor recreation opportunities in the community, including their environmental impact; and strategies to care for the environment. EOTC is an umbrella term that embraces these outdoor education curriculum recommendations.

The chapter is written to describe my experience as a female "Pākehā," (a Māori term for people of European descent), working in the context of Māori culture alongside physical education teacher education (PETE) students studying for an undergraduate Bachelor of Physical Education (BPE). For over 20 years, as part of my teaching in EOTC/outdoor education, I have lead PETE students to stay for four days on a *marae*. A *marae* is an ancestral home where Māori values, traditions, and beliefs are practised. The *marae* stay is positioned as a component of the EOTC/outdoor education courses situated within the degree programme.

To explain underpinning cultural meanings and to make sense of the why, what, and how of the *marae* stay, the chapter is descriptive, interpretive, and explanatory. My aim is to connect my idiosyncratic experience to the universal human experience of professionals, in this case, caught between Pākehā and Māori culture. Dialogue used to tell parts of the narration is composite, written to recapture moments and inserted into the text to bring it alive. I represent myself as a woman, teacher, narrator, and presence in other people's lives. The focus is to interweave a narrative of the experiential, the cultural, the professional, and the personal as I have worked alongside the *tangata whenua* (Indigenous people of the land) and the PETE students in the practice of EOTC/outdoor education.

Background

Aotearoa (land of the long white cloud) New Zealand is located in the Southwest Pacific Ocean. New Zealand is an island country with two main islands, the North Island, *Te Ika a Maui*—the fish of Maui—and the South Island, *Te Waipounamu*—the waters of greenstone—with a collection of smaller islands adding to the land mass. Human populations arrived about 1250–1300 CE when Polynesians migrated across the Pacific and developed the distinctive Māori culture. Today, the population of approximately

4.5 million reflects New Zealand's continued migration story as a British colony with a majority of European descent, whilst Māori is the largest minority, followed by Asian and Pacific Island peoples.

My ancestors came to New Zealand three generations ago from Ireland and the Channel Islands. I grew up in a small rural town in the North Island. Situated close to a large river and harbour, the area was an important place on an ancient Māori trading route. After European settlement in the 1850s, the fertile soils meant the area prospered, and grazing, dairy, and arable activities continue to underpin the local economy. From a young age, my interest in Māori culture had been nurtured by my father who had a strong interest in anthropology and archaeology. Whilst rabbit shooting on local farmland, he found many Māori stone adzes and evidence of "factory"-like production of these implements. He brought a few home for us to see. I often went on these expeditions, walking along behind him, trying not to moan about the distance, learning to be quiet and listen to nature, not walking in front of the gun. Walking across farmland that overlooked the Tasman Sea on the west, the river to the south, and harbour to the north and east, I observed the pre-European Māori *pā* (fortified village sites). I learnt of the importance of the area as a "food basket" for the Māori people, because the harbour provided a diversity of birds and fish life and a portage link for trade to the river. Recently, I returned to live in my hometown, residing in a property on an estuary of the harbour once part of the ancient trade route.

Stance to Include Bicultural Approach

I have been a PETE educator for over 20 years. Teaching EOTC/outdoor education is one aspect of my work. The stance to include a bicultural approach in my teaching came from my interest in Māori culture but also emerged as an important step in the development of a new degree in physical education in the mid-1990s. My colleagues and I had observed that although some PETE students had experience with *Māoritanga* (Indigenous culture of New Zealand) through school, sport, and family, for the majority of the students, extended contact with Māori people was limited (Legge, 2006). In classes made up of a majority of non-Māori, there was little empathy towards diversity and cultural difference. I had experienced firsthand the PETE students' resistance whilst teaching them *te reo kori* (Māori movement). They questioned, "Why do we have to do this Māori stuff? This isn't PE!" Once, I overheard a male student say, "What can this woman teach me about my

Māori culture?" I felt hurt by these expressions but recognized that the limited experience or understanding about Indigenous Māori knowledge obstructed the PETE students' thinking about culture and its significance to education. They did not understand the composition of the dominant mainstream Pākehā culture and how that influenced their worldview. I observed that, as a consequence of this social discrepancy, many of the students' perceptions of Māori people were grounded in a deficit discourse that highlighted disparities such as high levels of imprisonment, low socioeconomic status, and poor achievement in education.

Our decision to develop a new degree in physical education included coursework where a four-day immersion in Māori culture via *e noho marae* (*marae* stay) would be mandatory. The BPE course that included the *e noho marae* was designed to examine Māori underpinnings in the physical education context and address questions as follows: How can teachers understand what it is to be Māori? What is the cultural significance of Māori movement forms *ngā mahi a rēhia* (games and pastimes)? What is a culturally responsive pedagogy? For continuity, the *e noho marae* course was linked to other outdoor education field-based activities, health education, and the unique Māori physical activity, *te reo kori*. Translated as the language of movement, I teach *te reo kori* alongside contemporary dance at other stages in the degree programme. Our decision to make *e noho marae* a significant part of the BPE was a culturally responsive action. We felt it wasn't enough to study *Māoritanga* in the classroom—cultural immersion was necessary so that the PETE students were in a lived situation able to see and experience something of what it means to be Māori. Through these actions, we wanted to improve relationships, knowledge, and understanding between Māori and Pākehā.

The intent of the *marae* stay and subsequent coursework was to advance the PETE students' understanding of how Māori and Pākehā are positioned by the *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (Treaty of Waitangi) as partners and what that means for them as educators. The Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840 between Māori and Pākehā, and whilst there are historical and contemporary contentious issues around the "treaty," it is considered the founding document of New Zealand. By learning the history, values, and traditions, demonstrated during the *marae* stay through perspectives such as *ako* (learning), *whanaungatanga* (family ties), and *manākitanga* (hospitality), the PETE students are encouraged to look to the future to see what they might be able to contribute. I wanted to educate them to promote cultural knowledge and understanding through personal, lived experience and the prospect of professional agency.

E noho marae

The key cultural event discussed in this chapter is the *e noho marae*. *E noho* means to sit or stay. A *marae* is the spiritual and ancestral home for Māori, the Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand. There are many tribal *marae* in New Zealand where a series of buildings form the *marae* complex. In a central position is the ancestral *wharenui* (meeting house) with the *wharekai* (dining room) and *wharepaku* (bathroom) in close proximity. A perimeter fence bounds the *marae*, and a special gateway is located in front of the *wharenui*. It is here where visitors gather before being welcomed onto the *marae*. Another gate allows for the ordinary coming and going from the complex. The *marae* includes the *urupa* (cemetery), although it may be situated away from the main buildings. There are also storerooms for mattresses when they are not in use, large coolers for storing food, and *hangi* (earth oven) stones set in readiness for the occasions when they are heated so that food can be cooked in the Māori tradition by steaming underground.

The *wharenui* is an A-framed building that is customarily named after a significant ancestor. The support posts of the *wharenui* represent other important ancestors who connect the generations of the tribe. The *wharenui* may or may not be carved or decorated with culturally significant representations of ancestors and the stories about the tribe. When staying on a *marae*, people sleep on mattresses arranged side by side in the interior space of the *wharenui*. In modern times, photographs of deceased relatives are hung on the interior walls of the *wharenui* to honour kinship relations.

However, to stay on the *marae* is to recognize that the domain of the *iwi* (tribe) is more than the immediate buildings. The tribe's domain includes close spiritual connections to the land, sea, and other waterways in their area. Particular environmental features are known as revered ancestors and acknowledged through *whakapap*a (genealogy) connections. The *iwi* is invested in the *kaitiaki* (guardianship) of these natural places, to retain the *mana* (respect) of other tribes, amongst themselves and of their tribe. When we stay on the *marae*, the outdoor environment permeates everything we do—when we enter the *wharenui*, we remove our shoes and hats to be closer to *Papatuanuku*, the earth mother, and *Ranginui*, the sky father.

The foundation for the *marae* stay is laid in outdoor education and shaped by the idea of learning through living often referred to as experiential (Quay, 2003). This means I plan and undertake the journey to the *marae* as I would for a significant expedition into the outdoors. To travel to the *marae* requires organization of medical forms, dietary requirements, route selection, and the coordination of drivers, passengers, and vehicles. The organization is through committees formed by class members who under my guidance manage transport, clothing, and equipment, and cultural preparation.

For their cultural preparation, PETE students learn in class about the traditions of the *pōwhiri*, the welcome ritual. (This learning is at an introductory level, and during the *marae* stay, this knowledge is extended.) When *manuhiri* (visitors) are welcomed onto a *marae*, women stand at the entrance of the *wharenui* and *karanga*, a call of welcome likened to the first cry of life. This moment highlights the importance of women for giving birth to the children of the tribe. Inside the *wharenui*, senior male elders perform the *whaikōrero*, or ceremonial speech making. I have been told that the process can be viewed from the perspective of safety management where possible cultural threats are addressed in a pro-active manner contextualized for the place where they are based. To this end, the *whaikōrero* follows a pattern beginning with a chant to bring goodwill to the event, followed by acknowledgement: of the dead, the *wharenui*, *Papatuanuku* (the living), connections between the visitors and *tangata whenua*, and the purpose of the assembly. The speech making may alternate from side to side or all speakers from the *tangata whenua* follow each other, then the *manuhiri* have their turn, but the *tangata whenua* always have the last word. Their final speaker is the most senior male elder who is recognized for his high level of knowledge and ability to correct any misrepresentation or misunderstandings that may have occurred in the previous speeches.

With agreement amongst themselves, the class members select speakers to *whaikōrero* on our behalf. These are young men who would not ordinarily speak on a *marae* until much older; however, for the purpose of the *noho marae,* they are given permission to speak on our behalf. There is risk for these men because of unfamiliarity with the context, so guidance to write and speak their *whaikōrero* comes from expertize within and outside of the class. The *kaupapa* (protocol) requires us to learn a *waiata* (song) appropriate to the occasion to sing after the *whaikōrero*. A woman usually initiates the *waiata*, choosing a song that is suitable to endorse a speaker's words and the reasons for the four-day stay on the *marae*.

We also need women to *karanga* in response to the call of welcome made by the *tangata whenua* as they begin the *pōwhiri* and we advance across the open space between the gate and door into the *wharenui*. According to custom, the skill of *karanga* is not learnt in a formal way but over years of being present. It is different for us as we step into the shoes of a *kuia* (older woman) for a brief lived experience of the Māori world. Some may be horrified to think that this *tikanga* (tradition) is transgressed. This is a special educational *noho marae* devised to teach cross-cultural understanding and meet the needs of the PETE students. The *tangata whenua* I work with want the PETE to know experientially about *tikanga Māori* to be more able to teach in culturally responsive ways in health, physical education, and outdoor education.

Travelling to stay on the *marae* is for most PETE students a step into another world. A common experience is for them to feel apprehensive about their stay. Like my students when I first attended *e noho marae*, I was hesitant to participate fully because it was a completely new experience for me. I had been onto a *marae* before and Māori culture was something I was aware of, but I had not had any formal introduction. I felt uncertain about my role as a woman and my acceptance as a Pākehā. I felt challenged by what seemed to be the dominance of men. However, I have developed a more informed understanding because the cultural significance of rituals, such as the *pōwhiri*, has personal meaning. Now, when we cross the road to wait outside the gate for our welcome, I have a sense of being a *pukeko* (swamp hen) surrounded by her brood as the class members cluster around me with the anticipation and uncertainty of fledgling chicks.

I have learnt from oral and written work that the PETE students initially view the *marae* trip as a valuable opportunity to develop their own social connections within their class. The lived experience of being together in a shared sleeping space, eating in the *wharekai*, and time out weaving flax flowers, as they sit on the steps outside the meeting house, serves to construct and reconstruct their social bonds in positive ways. The lived experience of the *marae* places an emphasis on *whanaungatanga*, and this draws out the students' friendship attachments between themselves and me and shapes new relationships between all of us. I have to be aware that the PETE students do not focus too much on the "new good feelings" amongst themselves during the stay, so that they don't miss the cross-cultural understanding point of the *marae* interaction.

During *e noho marae*, the students participate in a range of activities that allow them to experience their stay in culturally appropriate ways: "Helping out in the kitchen as *ringawerawera* (helping hands) gave me a sense of purpose at the *marae* and being able to take the workload off the ladies in there made me feel good as well." Men and women work together in the kitchen because hosting visitors is considered an honour and privilege for any tribe. There is cultural significance in being considerate of hosts and other visitors. Active participation in the *pōwhiri* ritual, not as the *manuhiri* when we arrived but now as *tangata whenua*, means women from the class call the *karanga* to welcome other visitors to the *marae* whilst we stay there, and our men sit on the *taumata* (speakers' bench) waiting for their turn to *whaikōrero* to the visitors. These can be exciting and nerve-racking events for the PETE students, but on reflection, their lived experience seems to fill the students with a sense of satisfaction and achievement: "I did it! I made the calls, then when I heard Joanne call alongside me the hairs on the back of my head stood on end." During their stay, the students participate in *manākitanga* (caring and hospitality), *kotahitanga* (unity), *tikanga pōwhiri* (welcome protocols), *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship of the land and sea), and other traditions such as reciting *whakapapa*.

In a Māori worldview, *tangata whenua* are the people of the land and the world is a huge family. Humans are children of the earth and sky and cousins to all living things. The practice of reciting *whakapapa* in Māori culture describes a spatial metaphor for where they are, what this place is about (where they are), and whose place it is (Penetito, 2004). References are made to mountains, rivers, lakes, and seas as identifying features of the metaphor each tribe adopts. This connectedness means nature is the teacher of life. When staying on the *marae*, our learning is situated in the context of *Papatuanuku*, the mother of all living things.

During the stay, students are taught about the environment through a deep and powerful mythology. The land, sea, and sky are represented through various gods such as Papatuanuku, *Tangaroa*, god of the sea, and *Ranginui*. Experiential activities in the forest promote the cultural significance of *Papatuanuku*, intensifying the students' awareness of how they may have not really looked at, or seen, the natural world:

> I have come to appreciate the natural beauty of our country, and of Māori culture, a culture that in the past I haven't often appreciated. I marvel in the wonders of the world, and so do Māori. They see the beauty and usefulness of everything in nature, this is something I can relate to and agree with.

Awareness of *tangata whenua* beliefs shows the students how Māori understand and relate to the world around them. Personifying *Papatuanuku* as earth mother means that central values of Māori are laid down. The earth is cherished because it grows food; humans were fashioned from earth and return to the earth when they pass away. According to a Māori worldview, everything that has life comes from the womb of *Papatuanuku*, including humans: "We took our shoes off when we entered the *wharenui* not just to keep the floor clean but also to be in closer contact with the earth." On the *marae*, learning is through direct experience of the forest and sea from Māori perspectives. The myths of *Tane*, god of the forest, for example, separating his parents (*Papatuanuku* and *Ranginui*) so he and his brothers could have light to flourish give the landscape meaning. *Tane*'s actions created "the world of light" now dominated by human beings. The *marae* is a place that can teach about living respectfully with one another and the planet.

By taking PETE students to stay on the *marae*, I am asking them what it means to be Māori. The *marae* stay tests PETE student identities, as they are challenged to reflect on who they are alongside how Māori identity is expressed. Māori always remember the dead, seeing them as still living in the spirit realm and believing there is a continuous link between the gods and past, present, and future generations. Pākehā students are taken aback by the gravity of this value. I prepare the students prior to the *marae* stay with an assignment that requires them to research and become informed about their genealogy and why their families travelled to live in New Zealand. During the *marae* stay, there is constant interaction with *whakapapa* as an underpinning discourse in the *marae korero* (dialogue). The interaction enables the PETE students to contextualize and value their *whakapapa*. By reconstructing the meaning of their ancestry, they realize that their values and those of Māori might not be as different as they thought.

But then, colonization rears its ugly head. A rendition of reverse history and role-play, told by the *tangata whenua*, confronts the PETE students with contemporary Māori reality. In this history, the Māori are the colonizers and the Pākehā the colonized. The story unpacks the idea that the Pākehā had settled in New Zealand with their way of life, cars, individual smart houses, and fast food outlets … but then the Māori arrived, took their land, and closed down everything the Pākehā knew as their way of life. The Māori offered carved *waka* (canoes for transport) and the communal living of a *marae* and ate seafood instead of McDonalds. There is more, but this is the gist of the story that is told.

The PETE students are challenged by the concept that their ancestors were colonizers and that the serious effects of colonization is still in evidence for Māori people. The *wānanga* (discussion) puts the students into the shoes of Māori, the *korero* brings their thoughts back to how they perceived Māori status before they came to the *marae*—the litany of disparities, high imprisonment, low achievement—to realization about how colonization has impacted the *tangata whenua* of New Zealand. The dialogue is challenging. We only have a short time to stay on the *marae*. The cultural challenge is up there with a difficult rock climb or hard paddle in a kayak.

If you understand that the PETE students' average age is about 19 or 20 years, there is much to ponder in response to their commonly held beliefs: "Until this 'camp,' I never really thought about the colonisation of Māori and how the Māori had been treated during that time." "I sat down and had a proper think! The story and role-play gave me an insight that reading history books or watching movies never could." "Hearing the story and other activities opened my eyes to a whole new perspective that I had never thought about." "I never thought that there is the possibility of Māori being a dying culture." "This experience has allowed me to stop sympathising and start empathizing."

The reverse history might influence how Pākehā students think, but it can also reverse the thinking of Māori students: "What stood out for me was I connected with my culture for the first time and it made me realize how much I was missing out on." "I used to be ashamed to be Māori because of all the no-hopers in NZ. But I see that they are the outcome of colonisation." "As long as I am true to who I am, I can be proud to be Māori."

I understand that the lived experience of *e noho marae* positions the PETE students and myself in a social, cultural, and political world that is not Eurocentric. The effect of the lived experience can create resistance: "I got angry not because some people were expressing how they felt but because they didn't even try and see things from a Māori perspective." It also promotes the need for Māori and Pākehā to learn that they have a role and responsibility to address biculturalism as citizens and teachers in this country: "I felt I needed to change my attitude towards being Māori. I had to ask myself if I'm not proud of my nationality what is going to make other people want to learn about who we are as Māori?" A key aspect for my continuing these visits is to support Māori identity because I believe it is important for the PETE students to recognize that increasing their bicultural understanding will support their Māori peers and later, the students they teach in schools (Legge, 2010).

E noho marae is an educational opportunity to expand knowledge about cultural diversity in Aotearoa New Zealand. Educational opportunities for diverse students can be hindered if teachers are not aware of their personal cultural lens. The primacy of the place, the *marae*, allows the framing of being culturally responsive to be situated in the PETE students' experience and current understanding. During the *e noho marae*, the students are part of the process of lived experience and this requires them to think about themselves in the moment, to make connections to their family and education, and to challenge what is cultural knowledge in New Zealand. If education is to empower people who have been marginalized, it must be transformative. Developing self-awareness may mean being culturally uncomfortable during the *marae* experience. A critical pedagogical approach includes uncertainty and complexity that requires adaptation and possibly unlearning and risk taking.

The key criteria for success on the *marae* has to be framed in the concept of *ako*, where learning and teaching are reciprocal. The PETE students are guided through their day-to-day cultural interactions on the *marae* to develop the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become social critics who can make and apply reflective decisions in effective personal, social, political, and economic action:

> There was negativity, mostly due to small mindedness, but it made me feel sad and angry at the same time. Especially, when they were asked if they enjoyed it [the *marae* stay] and they said 'yes' but didn't own up to how they were really feeling about having colonising ancestors.
>
> The thing is they were not blamed but somehow they took on the responsibility to defend and take the blame for the outcomes of colonisation. That was silly really because all they needed to do was hear the korero.

Nurturing self-awareness is critical for teachers to become culturally responsive. There is a point for translating the *e noho marae* experience into their own lives and, later, the context of teaching. In synthesizing their experiences, the PETE students can contribute to a different way of thinking or of embracing and including *tikanga Māori* and, through having had bicultural experiences, be more informed to relate to other cultures.

Implications

The teaching and learning of outdoor education through Māori culture is important to me as a woman because the security of a "warm *marae*"—in the sense of loving humanity—is a powerful foundation for learning. Participation in cultural events led by the *tangata whenua* inside and outside the *wharenui* during our stay helps the PETE students, and me, to develop an understanding of the nuances of some traditions: "I thought I had some understanding of what it is to be Māori and what the culture is about. How wrong I was." However, we will always be there as outsiders not fully committed to the place nor with the same sense of belonging to the *whenua* (land) that the *tangata whenua* have for their marae. By participating in an *e noho marae*, as in many outdoor education experiences, the PETE students find out what it is like to be part of a supportive group. However, experiencing an extended *marae* stay highlights differences in perspectives and this can sometimes give rise to cultural discomfort because of misunderstanding and inexperience. The intent of the immersion is to help participants develop attitudes characterized by openness and receptivity to other perspectives. For the PETE students and myself, learning to be open-minded about any of the experiences on the *marae* is the key to being able to take what is expected of us in our stride. We must be able to accept this; otherwise, we might as well not participate. The *marae* is not necessarily a place just for fun time.

In my view, an outdoor education learning experience that is culturally responsive and based with Indigenous people introduces participants to different settings than their everyday world by being away from it. *E noho marae* works towards developing critical thinkers who think through the cultural content they are learning and consider how they can apply it to their everyday life. The *marae* stay has a holistic impact by integrating structured and unstructured activities that allow for a balance between cultural and social interactions so that the point of the experience is not lost. The opportunity for immersion with a culture and interaction with nature from a cultural perspective has much to offer in understanding how a culture is conceived. Through a discourse of *whakapapa* that links Māori to the environment, *e noho marae* teaches cultural sensitivity and connectedness and aligns cultural practices to personal histories, local and national history, and heritage. As a situated site of learning, *e noho marae* is a place for the PETE students to examine their cultural identity and to see that they also have a role to play in supporting Māori identity. My pedagogical decision to go off campus for a *marae* stay and to work alongside the *tangata whenua* was designed to seed change from first-hand experience with Māori culture in the belief the PETE students would value and integrate the experience in a way not necessarily possible in a regular classroom.

Glossary

ako	learning
Aotearoa	New Zealand
e noho	to sit or stay
e noho marae	marae stay
hangi	earth oven
iwi	tribe
kaitiakitanga	guardianship
karanga	call of welcome
kaupapa	protocol
korero	to speak
kotahitanga	unity
kuia	female elder
mana	respect
manākitanga	hospitality
manuhiri	visitors
Māori	Indigenous people of New Zealand

Māoritanga	a generic term for Māori culture
marae	ancestral home
ngā mahi a rēhia	games and pastimes
pā	fortified village
Pākehā	European New Zealander
pōwhiri	welcome ceremony
pukeko	swamp hen
tangata whenua	Indigenous people of the land
taumata	speaker's bench
te ao kori	the world of movement
te reo kori	the language of movement
Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Treaty of Waitangi
tikanga	traditions
urupa	cemetery
waiata	song
waka	canoes
wānanga	discussion
whakapapa	genealogy
whanaungatanga	family ties
wharekai	dining hall
wharenui	meeting house
wharepaku	bathroom
whenua	land

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58

Seeking a Way Beyond Gender: A Case from a Personal Story

Takako Takano

Japan Now

In October 2016, the World Economic Forum (WEF) announced in its Global Gender Gap Report that Japan is ranked 111 out of 144 countries regarding gender equality. This is the lowest for Japan since the WEF began the survey. It looks at the four areas of health, education, economy, and politics, and Japanese political and economic participation and opportunities were critically evaluated. It is worth noting that women's educational attainment is high, but that is not reflected in their professional, technical, and management positions, nor on female politicians and ministerial positions.

Additionally, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2016) released concerns and recommendations comprised of 57 items covering 14 pages. The concluding paper included the phrase "(It) reiterates its previous recommendation" ten times, which shows the committee sees that the situation has not advanced since 2009 when they inspected previously.

Despite these deplorable facts, I believe social understanding about gender has made progress in the past 30 years since the Act on Securing of Equal Employment Opportunity and Treatment between Men and Women came into effect.

T. Takano (✉)
Waseda University, Niigata, Japan

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The official studies disclose the social reality only to a certain degree; much of how lay people think and act in their daily lives cannot be easily measured or summarized, as some aspects touch value systems, buried into so-called culture, custom, and traditions. Also, the meanings of experiences can vary from person to person. Therefore, I choose to describe my personal story not to represent the women of my age in my area but simply as mine. I have sometimes been portrayed "untypical" as a Japanese woman, and I would like to think that there is no "typical" person but just the unique, individual self.

Whilst there is not a typical person, where and when an individual was born and how she was raised matter very much in thinking about experiences and roles in outdoor learning from gender perspectives. No two persons in the world have identical experiences concerning outdoor professions and gender, though those who were born and raised at the same time in the same place—perhaps the largest unit being a country—could share an understanding around their experiences.

My Childhood and Society Expectation

I was born in a small town in the countryside in Japan in 1963. Whilst I say a town, when I was a child, rice paddies and crop fields were common in the area. I remember visiting a cow nearby, which was used for farming. In winter, snow could be as high as the houses' roofs. It was not until I entered elementary school that the snow got more or less removed from the main street during the winter. Even then, apart from the main street side, our house was buried in the snow, which provided a bit dangerous but fantastic playing environment for children (Fig. 58.1).

At that time, the Japanese society was not particularly liberal, especially in countryside and farming areas. I was raised by parents who grew up in a time and society where dating before marriage was unthinkable; most marriages were arranged and sometimes the husbands and wives met for the first time at their wedding. Women were expected to marry into the men's families and literally serve for the family and parents-in-law. Wives were to be quiet and hard-working. Wives were not individuals but regarded as someone's wife or mother and always associated with the family. They were expected to do all housework, look after aged parents-in-law, and quietly do extra jobs on the side if husbands did not bring in enough money, whatever the reasons. The women always worked behind the scene. They were supposed to give public credit to their husbands, and they were expected not to

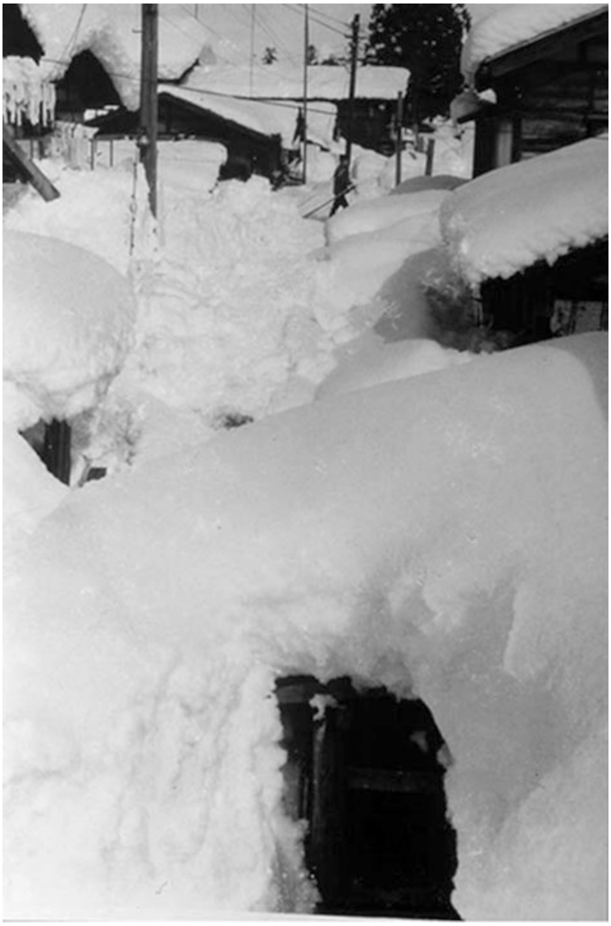

Fig. 58.1 Houses get buried under snow in winter. The ground floor entrance to my house is seen in front where one would walk down the snow steps to enter

question these expectations. Though there were some differences in various areas and families, this way of thinking was prevalent until the 1980s or my mother's generation.

Eldest sons were expected to succeed the respective family lines, remaining with their parents. Men were supposed to be the family breadwinners, represent the households, and fulfil community responsibilities and public relations. The governmental opinion poll conducted in 2014 showed that 44.6% of respondents thought that wives should stay at home whilst men work outside, mainly because it is better for children. This figure had decreased from 51.6% in 2012. This shows that in general, women are still regarded as caregivers and expected to attend to family and house matters.

I could see it changing as the rapid economic growth in the 1970s affected people's lifestyle and values. However, I also understood what the society assumed in general. There were certain expectations for girls and boys. Girls should be quiet, humble, kind, and less mobile. Boys were allowed to be active and noisy and were expected to be physically and mentally strong.

I did not question the norm, but my nature led me to be scolded often by mother, grandmother, and teachers, as I did not behave as a girl should have. I followed the norm to my best, such as being less active. I did not take a role of a class or school representative, which by unspoken agreement was a boy's position, but I was vice-representative—an assistant position and the highest girls could attain.

I was lucky that my family ran a small business of *sake* making (later a retail store) and I grew up watching my mother constantly working at the store. We also had female office workers. I rode in the delivery van, went around the neighbourhood to collect monthly bills, and helped wrap products for customers. I saw different roles between male and female workers, but I did not consider that I should not carry cases of beer whilst delivering. In fact, as a child, I liked it when people gave me compliments about carrying heavy things.

Participation in Operation Raleigh

I have been curious since childhood and like to try new activities. Curiosity usually outweighed other ramifications of behaviour, such as being scolded for misbehaviour or being scared. I felt the natural and spiritual world always close to me, believing in myriad gods in many natural things. This was partly because of the Japanese belief in mountain religions and ancient Shintoism as well as animism. I loved playing outside. However, I never thought of myself doing any outdoor activities apart from sports through school. Through school activities, I hiked to the tops of some nearby mountains, but it was obligatory, and I never wanted to do it on my own. For me, the mountains around my town were part of the landscape to watch, and the forests were places people went to harvest mountain vegetables and mushrooms, which was work to me rather than fun, so I never went. The rice paddies, too, were serious workplaces for adults, and I remember being a hindrance to my farming relatives, as I was not skilled enough for the job.

What changed my relationship with the natural world was my participation in an international youth expedition called Operation Raleigh (now Raleigh International), headquartered in London. I was 23 years old when

I went to Queensland, Australia, to join the international team of over 100 young people with 5 other Japanese participants—3 women and 3 men.

Before I was chosen to be one of the 30 participants from Japan for the year, I went through 3 stages of screening, including an essay, a physical ability test, and various exams in an overnight camping setting. The programme fee—around ￥600,000 then—and the flight cost were entirely covered by a sponsoring Japanese company, which made this a dream opportunity for any young person who was interested in going abroad, especially because overseas sojourns were not something a young person could afford. As a result, the opportunity attracted more than 4200 inquiries and 1049 applicants competed for the available places (Operation Raleigh News, 1985).

During the nearly three-month expedition, I was involved in adventure, science, and service work at three project sites in northeastern Australia. To me, the environment I lived in, both natural and multicultural human elements, was most impactful. We set up a camp using a tarp in the middle of nowhere. We found water sources. At one place when we used river water, we removed insects and tadpoles from the pot before placing it over the fire. We walked up to the waterfall to wash ourselves and returned to the camp, making sure no leeches had attached themselves to our bodies. We collected branches, felled a tree, and split logs to build a fire. We had a very simple but, for me, totally fulfilling life.

The three months taught me that the sound nature and a community of people are, fundamentally, what humans need to live happily. Through living and working with young people from different walks of life, I also learned to live with differences. There were an equal number of females on the expedition. Regardless of gender, all participants did the same things and had the same degree of responsibility. Some participants were physically disabled, and they also did everything, including camp chores and outdoor activities. It did not matter whether one was female or male, disabled or nondisabled; it mattered who the person was and how we could support each other as individuals. There were different strengths amongst the members, and each participant played her or his part depending on their ability, in addition to what each of us equally needed to do.

To a certain degree, I unconsciously had accepted the framework expected regarding performance of being a female in Japan. However, being out of the society and working with young people from different parts of the world, my unconscious bias towards gender changed. During the time of the expedition, I never linked any activities with gender but with respective personal capacity. I felt free as an individual and humble at the same time to be given a life on Earth.

I thought that in exchange for this important opportunity, I would give back by somehow generating similar opportunities for others where they could recognize the fundamentals of life as well as the sense of liberation and fulfilment when embraced by nature.

Therefore, when the Japanese sponsorship of Operation Raleigh ended and the office closed down, I volunteered to continue to open doors for Japanese young people to participate in such wonderful experiences. I teamed up with friends who were past participants of the same programme. It was my beginning of providing outdoor experiences to others through selection and training programmes, including trekking and camping.

A Series of Journeys for New Experiences

With the set of outdoor living skills acquired through the Raleigh expedition and strong curiosity about different cultures, especially people living close to the natural environment, my journeys and new experiences had begun. My first "unprotected" journey in the natural environment outside of Japan was to Peru, where in 1987, a group of us—two women and two men—canoed down the upper reaches of the Amazon River. I was excited but anxious at the same time to do things where no one knew what might happen. Immediately after a rain, we arrived at the town to start canoeing. As soon as I saw the rough and wild, dark-brown river water, I wanted to quit the trip. I wondered when I should tell my friends that I was going to quit and go back home, up until the time we finally launched our canoes and left the shore. Once we kicked off, with send-offs by random local people, my thoughts focused on finishing it as soon as we could!

I was in charge of the big and heavy local dugout canoe made out of one huge timber, which was hard to control and very slow. The other two folding canoes moved quickly to catch the current, and they soon were very far from me. If anything happened, I knew I would be in a bad situation.

For a few days at the beginning of the trip, things were trial and error. Much of what we planned did not work out, including how to set up camp and use the stove, food, water, and so on. We had to be flexible to learn from the local people, which was fascinating. There were many things that challenged my "common sense" during the trip, and the experiences opened my mind and taught me not to cling to my thoughts.

I developed huge respect for local knowledge and admired their generosity, and at the same time, I questioned what wealth and the value of a person was. Why were these local people so kind to me, knowing there would not be any return for this? Were they any less than I was simply because they probably owned less products than I did? It was clear that I would not have survived, and our trip would have been less fun without their help. I learned to see people not from their social status but for who they are.

After the trip, I started working for an English newspaper in Japan. It was very hard to describe what I wanted to say in the second language. I got to learn more about how society worked, and it was frustrating as hardly anything went as I wished it to.

About a year later, my friend with whom I had gone to the Amazon told me that someone was looking for a Japanese candidate for an all-female expedition to walk to the geographical South Pole in Antarctica under the theme of "peace making." The project was Russia- (then Soviet) based, and the team members would be Russian, American, and Japanese. I raised my hand and was selected as the prospective member. However, whether I could actually participate depended on fund raising. Because the trip was not yet finalized, I did not consult with my bosses about leaving.

In June, the company decided that I would be stationed in a press club at the Tokyo metropolitan office. In case the South Pole expedition came true, I did not want to complicate the matter later, so I talked quietly with one of my bosses about the project, saying that it was still unclear whether I would be able to take part in it. However, this boss all of sudden stood up, stating loudly, "Everyone, Takano is going to quit the company." I was surprised, as I never meant that. I was summoned by the group of bosses to explain the details, and I cleared my desk within two days. It appeared unforgivable for the bosses (all men, by the way) at that time for the first-year employee to even consider joining an expedition, which would disturb the work schedule.

In the end, the project raised enough money for me to participate. In 1990, I officially became the only Japanese member of the South Pole women's team, joined a training in El'brus, Caucasus, and, after a press conference in Tokyo, flew to Moscow to get ready. After waiting for a month, the expedition was cancelled. We were told that there was a continuing blizzard at the Russian station in Antarctica, but the rumour was that Russian scientists did not like the idea that an all-women's team would come to "their" territory to do something that men had not yet done.

It was not easy to swallow the announcement of cancellation of the trip, having quit my job, had a press conference, and a big send-off by my friends. The explanation for cancellation was pitiful and not satisfactory. Two American women returned home with fury. Julie, my dear American friend, and I decided to take this opportunity to do something else. We changed our plans and decided to ski Siberia to cross the Bering Strait to the US with some Russian friends. The trip planning revealed that our understanding about expeditions was hugely different from the Russians'. Therefore, I had many conflicted occasions regarding the decisions that the Russian leaders made. With these painful experiences and a lack of mutual understanding, when arriving at the Bering Strait, Julie decided to go back home to Minnesota through Moscow rather than going into her country with these women. I officially parted from them at the last village in Siberia, and skied the part of the Bering Strait where the US-Russia border and date line runs, and crossed into the US. My trip ended there in Alaska. About three months after I left Japan, thinking I was going on an Antarctica expedition, I reached the US with hardly any money or town clothes. Luckily, the photographer from the Japanese newspaper, who came to report on our crossing the Bering Strait trip, offered me a job to assist him in covering the story of the oil spill accident in Alaska. Having earned enough money for an air ticket, I returned to Japan in March 1991. Soon after I arrived home, I got a call from a Russian explorer with whom I did a ski expedition in Karelia, just before skiing across the Bering Strait. She informed me of a project to parachute to the North Pole with the Russian Air Force. Therefore, I found myself back in Russia several days after I returned from the Bering Strait trip.

Parachuting to the North Pole was fantastic and helped calm the anger and grudges that I had accumulated, beginning with the South Pole story. From then on, I had opportunities to join in various expeditions, such as a sail training voyage between San Diego and San Francisco, the Russian icebreaker cruise to the farthest part of Antarctica from land, the Raid Gauloises Madagascar race (Tracey, 1994), and the Arctic-crossing expedition with dog teams and canoe sleds (Steger, 1996).

In the course of time, my stories and interviews began to appear in magazines and newspapers in Japan (e.g., Maejima, 1994). Some of the titles of the articles used phrases like, “A wife is on an adventure trip” or “female adventurer,” demonstrating that it was received by the Japanese public as a surprise or unusual for a female, even a married one, to leave home for several months to go on physically hard and sometimes risky trips. Whilst I like to break my own prejudices, I also like to break other’s prejudices.

Crossing the Arctic was a remote, long-term outdoor expedition. Beginning in March 1995, when the air temperature was nearly below 50°C and the daylight was short, we finished in July when the sun did not set. The trickiest thing was that we were standing on ice over a 3000 m-deep ocean that, due to the current and wind, could break at any time. The expedition was difficult and probably one of the hardest to arrange from both the environmental and logistical aspects, which involved varying ice and weather conditions and dogs.

To date, the five of us in the team are the only people to use dog teams to traverse the Arctic Ocean in one season, from Siberia to Ellesmere Island, 1200 miles. To this day, Julie and I are the only two women in the world who have traversed the Arctic. The whole project was initiated by Minnesotan Will Steger, who had conducted a dogsled expedition to the North Pole, starting from the Canadian side in 1986. That team included Ann Bancroft, the first known woman to go to the Pole.

The expedition had an educational aspect (Eloe, Wonder, & Knapp, 2002) that interested me. The plan was to use Internet in education, which was a new technology then, connecting learning groups around the world with the expedition team. Steger developed the idea and carried out an experimental trip in 1993. He had wonderful creative teachers to work with across the world, and most of them were women. I remember Will telling me that the female teachers interrogated Will about why the team had no women, saying, "Are you sending our girls a message that an expedition is only for men? We cannot accept that." Will had to reply that he had no intention to exclude women but said, "I have not found the right women who could do this." When he learnt that Julie and I were planning a ski expedition on Ellesmere Island, he initially asked me if we were interested in joining as two separate expeditions, which would contribute to the learning project. Later, he suggested we join the two expeditions together as one team to cross the Arctic Ocean.

Gender

I hoped especially to encourage girls to do what they wanted and believed in. However, I realized it was not enough to focus on girls. One day, I visited a class of an elite junior high school for boys in Tokyo to give a talk about environmental issues and how they were linked to our daily lives, giving an example of our Arctic expedition. The teacher sent me commenting essays as some typical reactions. I was astonished when I read some from the boys. Some wrote, "I was surprised to find the adventurer came into the class was a woman, and even more she was married."

These boys from the elite school that was attached to one of the most competitive private universities would move on to university without a problem. When they graduate, they will most likely be hired by big companies representing Japanese businesses, enter into the central government, or become politicians. They would one day become decision-makers. I was saddened that boys with such promising futures had a view that adventures should be done by men and that wives were supposed to stay home. At the same time, I was happy to have given a talk there, because I could challenge the view they held. Not only girls but also boys need to be emancipated, and they should both encourage each other to live their lives as unique individuals.

I usually do not think about gender, except I get annoyed if women are using it as an excuse, and fortunately, I am not often treated unfairly to a serious level because I am a woman. But one time, I felt indignation when my acquaintance told me about the discussion for an adventure award in Japan. The award screening committee, which my acquaintance was a part of, had discussed whether to nominate me for the Arctic-crossing expedition. Apparently, one of the judges commented, "Well, the expedition leader was Will Steger. She was taken in and just on the expedition, wasn't she?" I felt like shaking the man and telling him to try doing it by himself to understand what it is like to travel across the ocean and sleep on the moving and breaking ice for over four months. He could not remain "just taken" on the expedition.

I understand the comment was to belittle women and their achievements. Several years before, Will Steger led a group to cross the Antarctic continent with dog teams. The group was made of all men, including one Japanese. The news broke big. The Japanese man was awarded a prize in Japan for the achievement, and I doubt anyone said, "Will Steger was the leader, and the Japanese man was just taken on the trip."

It was 20 years ago, and the views towards achievements by women have changed. Now we have female firefighters and long-distance truck drivers, as well as male childcare givers. However, I still sometimes sense that female achievement tends to get less acknowledgement, particularly in the outdoor field.

Involvement in the Outdoor Education Field

The year I returned from parachuting to the North Pole, inspired by my 1986 participation in Operation Raleigh, I prepared to start providing opportunities for young and old to get a sense of liberation by being in the natural world or in other words, appreciation of being in this world as well as to recognize what is truly important in life.

In 1992, the pilot programme was conducted in Yap, Micronesia. Famous for their stone money, the islanders have wisdom to utilize their environment in non-exhausting manners. I took a group of children to the traditional village in Yap to live like locals, learning island skills. The simple life without electricity, gas, running water, and so on helped them learn so much about themselves and the relationship between humans and nature and appreciate their family and their daily lives. Since then my attempts have continued and expanded with regard to providing experience-based educational programmes. I consider that deep experiences in nature and cultures, if the programmes are so designed, have both direct and indirect implications to building a sustainable society. In light of that perspective, what I do falls into sustainability education and outdoor education.

In designing camping programmes for children, I intentionally assign female staff to logistics and gear and male staff to food and cooking, making sure that the children notice. In camp settings, boys tend to go for fire building and girls take on cooking. I am not sure if that is their instinct or if they are conditioned, but I encourage everyone to try different tasks at least once. Often I see some boys find that they like cooking, and girls get excited that they have built a fire or chopped wood by themselves.

Since my doctorate research with Indigenous peoples (Takano, 2004) at the University of Edinburgh, I value place-based learning and have promoted the perspective through my charity, ECOPLUS. Now I teach based on the concept of sustainability at Waseda University in Tokyo, and I take a place-based learning approach with my courses. Since 2007, ECOPLUS has worked with several depopulating and ageing farming communities in my home region in Niigata to empower the locals through exchanges with visitors (Takano, 2017). The visitors participate in programmes that address the value of local knowledge, which helps them think about values and lifestyles.

I believe the best thing the project did was to provide a platform where women and young people come and discuss freely, whereas in the traditional village system in Japan, only a man represents the household and the rest of the villagers have no place to get involved in decision-making for community management. It was critical to have women involved in the project and because of that, in the past ten years, the village has made some wonderful achievements.

In tertiary education in Japan, many universities offer courses where the students learn through fieldtrips and outdoor experiences, but only a few universities have specialized courses for sustainability education or outdoor learning professionals. I became associated with Waseda University to teach one course in 2006, and since 2013, I have worked full time. When possible, I insert fieldtrips to farming communities and arrange outdoor learning courses, including a snowshoe expedition in Canada and village life in Micronesia and Nagaland, India. The feedback from the students is overwhelmingly positive, suggesting that it has helped to widen their perspectives, question their values, and connect their daily actions with the future of the planet Earth. I believe learning from experiences in nature and culture nurtures citizenship.

End Remarks

The views around women's achievement and roles in society have made positive changes in Japan, though there is still a long way to go. Of course, we have some stars in Japan who dared to get exposed to public views and who received both praise and criticism, such as the late TABEI Junko, the first woman to climb

Mt Everest, who led the change of social views about women in the outdoors. But we owe many more women who have paved the way without asking for recognition, such as MATSUSHITA Tomoko, the first female director of Japan's national youth outdoor centres and the first and only female president of the Japan Outdoor Education Society, and TANAKA Sachiko, a former professor of leisure education at Tsuda College (for women) who devoted herself to the development of the YWCA in Japan for 60 years. I initially asked those two to contribute to this book, but they were too humble, saying they did nothing in their lives.

Whilst in reality women still have hurdles to go beyond, the opportunities are there. I believe we need to continue to encourage girls and women to stretch their possibilities. When more women do so and speak up for the life they want, it may become easier for men also to pursue their own lives beyond society's expectation.

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True Nature: Coming Home to Self Through Nature and Adventure Experience

Val Nicholls

Introduction

Over the years, I have instinctively come to regard the natural world as a colleague and ally in my work as a facilitator and practitioner of Bush Adventure Therapy (BAT). Asked to detail the nature of this relationship I likely find myself struggling for expression, lost for a comprehensive and coherent narrative of the way in which the natural world supports and integrates with the philosophical foundations and counselling approaches characteristic of contemporary BAT practice. I suspect I am not alone. Newes and Bandoroff (2004) made the case that nature-based adventure therapy has yet to "come of age" (p. xi) as a coherent field of endeavour. Hoyer (2004) noted the urgent need for the development of a theory of wilderness/adventure therapy that integrates the dynamic of the participant, the group, the environment, and the facilitator.

With this in mind, I ask of research, literature, and lived experience: "How might this finding, this perspective, this experience, inform effective BAT practice?" I keep a weather eye for models and diagrams that may inform understanding, which may provide simplistic visual representation of significant and complex concepts that prompt linkages and connections that are easily remembered, accessible in the field, and relevant to the dynamic nature of adventure therapy process and practice.

V. Nicholls (✉)
Mt Nelson, TAS, Australia

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In this chapter, I invite the reader to walk alongside and share in a recent academic adventure. My interest had been sparked by the potential to build upon and apply a pro-active counselling model described by Kathryn Geldard and David Geldard (2001). The authors made a convincing case for the need to tailor counselling practices to meet the developmental needs of adolescence and in doing so, identify issues and concerns that resonate with those of BAT participants across the age span. Although the text largely assumes traditional, one-to-one, indoor, time-limited counselling contexts, parallels with BAT practice readily emerge. The pro-active approach describes a counselling practice that requires practitioners to be flexible, open, creative, and responsive to issues and concerns as they arise by pro-actively selecting appropriate counselling skills and strategies from a spectrum of well-established and tested counselling theories and methods (Geldard & Geldard, 2001). This approach resonates with experience in the field, BAT research, and literature. BAT occurs within a dynamic matrix of nature, adventure, and relationship. The ages, issues, and concerns of BAT participants paint a rich tapestry. In my professional life, I have worked with young children experiencing the grief of suicide, adolescence and adults living with addiction, young people negotiating adolescence with chronic disease, over-60s committed to health and wellbeing through nature, adventure, community, silence, and solitude. Whilst the particulars vary, the counselling approach is typically eclectic and responsive. To my knowledge, this integrative approach has yet to be identified by a label or described in a model. I recognize it now as a pro-active counselling approach.

The capacity to respond quickly and creatively so that opportunities are not lost requires pro-active BAT practitioners to be quick thinking, flexible, and opportunistic. This level of skill development demands a solid grounding in foundational philosophies and constructs. Understanding the philosophical soil from which practice has grown affords a competence and confidence to appropriately pick and choose from well-tried methods and strategies. Geldard and Geldard (2001) offer two diagrams to describe the pro-active model. The first represents the foundational building blocks that give strength and integrity to the skills and strategies described in the second.

Invigorated by the potential contribution to the development of BAT theory and practice, I adopted the diagrams as the framework for the delivery of a basic counselling presentation for BAT students. It was well-received. Students commented on their increased understanding and deeper appreciation of the way in which thorough grounding in foundational philosophy informs and prompts creative, responsive, and effective practice. They appreciated the identification of essential skills and a range of strategies that together provide a colourful palette of options supporting creative and responsive therapeutic practice. I will continue to work with the model. It sits comfortably with my experience of BAT practice and theory. Whilst I sense it has much to contribute to the development of an integrative model of BAT counselling practice, the omission of the ways in which the natural world contributes to the therapeutic practice is significant.

Wondering how this might be addressed, I have revisited the model. Motivated by the potential for the pro-active approach and process to provide a practical and systematic framework to justify and clarify a subjective appreciation of nature as metaphorical colleague and ally, I methodically worked my way through the model (Figs. 59.1 and 59.2) considering each element in human terms and then on behalf of the natural world. What follows in this

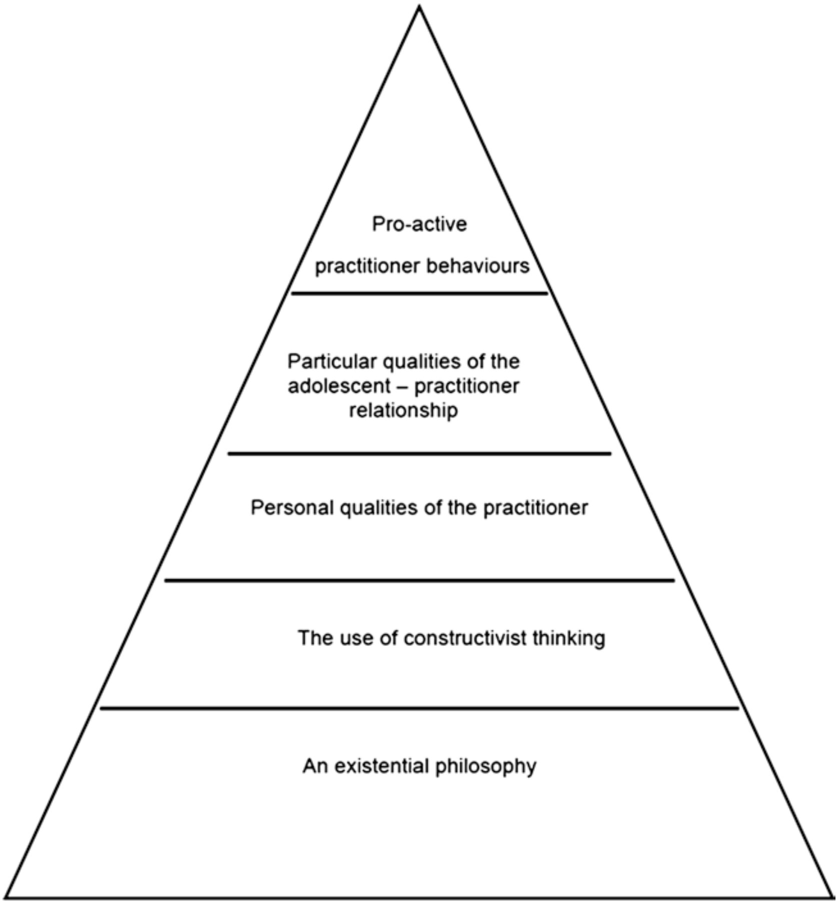
Pro-active
practitioner behaviours
Particular qualities of the adolescent – practitioner relationship
Personal qualities of the practitioner
The use of constructivist thinking
An existential philosophy

Fig. 59.1 The pro-active counselling approach (adapted from Geldard & Geldard, 2001)

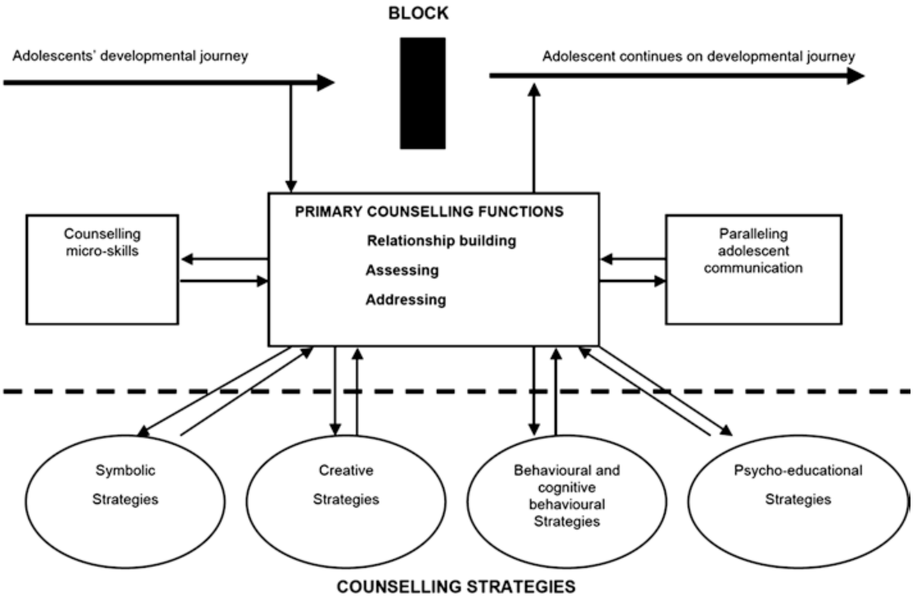
BLOCK
Adolescents' developmental journey
Adolescent continues on developmental journey
PRIMARY COUNSELLING FUNCTIONS
Relationship building
Assessing
Addressing
Counselling micro-skills
Paralleling adolescent communication
Symbolic Strategies
Creative Strategies
Behavioural and cognitive behavioural Strategies
Psycho-educational Strategies
COUNSELLING STRATEGIES

Fig. 59.2 The pro-active counselling process (adapted from Geldard & Geldard, 2001)

reflective chapter shares the product of that exercise in the hope that my adventure sheds light and sparks insight into the processes at work within this unique and dynamic therapeutic approach to personal growth and change. This sharing is prefaced by a clarification of the perspective I bring to my work as a BAT practitioner and academic.

True Nature

Several years ago, someone told me that adolescence was one of the most spiritual times of one's life. For a moment, I was incredulous. At second thought, I recognized the upheaval, the challenge of rapid cognitive, physical, and hormonal change, the drive towards individuation, the search for meaning and belonging: "Who am I? What's the meaning of it all? Do I belong? Can I be happy? What is my true nature?" Practical experience over two decades has taught me that the same spiritual concerns, the search for meaning and purpose, sit at the heart of BAT participant concerns, regardless of age.

Norah Trace (2004) offered Buddhist psychology as an alternate lens through which to view the processes of changing senses of the self that often occur within BAT. Buddhist philosophy maintains that within the routine of everyday life, habitual patterns of thinking and behaviour may become so familiar and automatic that they create a sense of self—for better or for worse—that is static, solid, and permanent and from the Buddhist perspective, a fallacy. “This is who I am, and that’s that! I will never, can never, change.” Limited and inflexible ideas of self are regarded as the key cause of distress and unhappiness and a significant digression from a true nature that is open and flexible in its understanding of self. BAT, like Buddhism, concerns itself with the breaking down of narrow and conventional notions of the self in favour of generating insight, self-awareness, and expanded and fluid senses of self that are life enhancing, affirming, and foster the capacity to cope with life.

I have come to understand BAT and similar programmes as an expression of spiritual healing, a journey back to one’s true nature. Lived experience and a wealth of literature across centuries attest to the spiritual powers of nature. She is a natural colleague and ally.

Nature as Colleague

Geldard and Geldard (2001) emphasized that practitioner capacity and confidence to effectively tailor their skills and strategies within a dynamic context is firmly grounded in a solid understanding of the foundational building blocks represented in Fig. 59.1. It is likely that readers working within BAT and other outdoor multi-day intentional therapeutic practices will recognize these essential elements and appreciate the deceptive simplicity of the figure. Each of the elements progressively builds upon the other. Collectively, the building blocks describe a practitioner’s “way of being,” a philosophical approach that informs the therapeutic skills and strategies of a pro-active counselling process. In this exploration, I guide the reader from base to apex with a focus on the ways in which we might appreciate the contribution of the natural world in consolidating these fundamentals.

An Existential Philosophy

Existential philosophy forms the solid base on which all else is built. In brief, existentialism is a positive, strength-focused, and growth-oriented philosophy that asserts our capacity to create our own destiny, to author one’s own life. Existential philosophy “places emphasis on the search for meaning of life, on freedom and responsibility, on creating one’s personal identity, and establishing meaningful relationships with others … this approach respects individuals for exploring new aspects of behaviour” (Corey, 2009 p. 61). In BAT terms, this implies that practitioners invest their practice with a deep appreciation of human capacity for self-awareness and emphasize opportunity for choice, freedom, taking responsibility, and self-determination (Corey, 2009). BAT practitioners will recognize this philosophical underpinning.

Nature, as my colleague, contributes an ideal non-judgemental landscape rich with natural opportunities for decision-making, problem-solving, acceptance of personal responsibility, and learning through consequence.

The Use of Constructivist Thinking

Pro-active counselling approaches draw upon constructivist philosophy as a frame of reference and reminder that one's worldview is a construct and as such, open to change, revision, and replacement. As BAT practitioners, we are reminded of the need to explore our participant's worldview, to see the world through their lens, believe what they say, and actively listen to their story.

One of the strengths of working with nature as colleague is that journeying through a natural landscape readily invites multiple opportunities for positive re-envisaging of self and challenging self-limiting beliefs.

The use of constructivist thinking cautions practitioners to be alert to the notion that BAT participants respond to nature, not as "it is" but as "they are." For example, social anxiety may preclude a capacity to "let nature in" (Nicholls & Gray, 2009); others' experiences of the outdoor environment may trigger feelings of fear, being out of control, or invaded (Mitten & Dutton, 1996).

Personal Qualities of the Practitioner

In referencing the work of Carl Rogers, humanistic psychology, and person-centred therapy, this third building block underscores the importance of particular personal qualities that support practitioners' capacity to promote a safe climate for self-exploration. In human terms, those qualities include empathy, congruence, and unconditional positive regard. In what ways might nature as colleague innately cultivate a climate conducive to self-exploration? A key quality comes to mind.

Kaplan and Kaplan's (1989) "attention restoration theory" articulates an appreciation of the therapeutic powers of nature that is well-represented within the wilderness therapy literature. This classic research identifies the natural landscape as an inherently therapeutic environment conducive to the restoration of concentration, patience, mental calmness, and relaxation, as well as an enhanced desire and capacity for reflection. This capacity takes on particular significance when considered in the light of many wilderness therapy participants' lives. Conceivably, a wilderness therapy experience may, within the broader context of a participant's life, occur against a backdrop of violence, sexual abuse, family breakdown, drug or alcohol abuse, poverty, homelessness, depression, suicidal ideation, or other factors that render their lives chaotic, complex, and imbued with stress.

In a similar vein, Buddhist psychologist and wilderness adventure therapist Norah Trace (2004) identifies nature's inherent capacity to calm and open the mind as central to the therapeutic process of change.

> Adventure therapy can allow us to slow down the entire nervous system, access calm emotions, and form new neural networks and patterns which in turn, influence our perceptions, emotions, and cognitions … the mind slows down and looks more deeply into what is present in self and the world, and is more able to consider how to create well being. (Trace, 2004, p. 107)

Particular Qualities of the Participant-Practitioner Relationship

This fourth building block underscores a widely accepted appreciation that the outcome of any counselling intervention is determined by the quality of the relationship between the counsellor and client (Geldard & Geldard, 2001). In human terms, this most significant relationship is generally characterized by descriptors such as authenticity, openness, honesty, respect, acceptance, empathy, and so on. Martin Ringer (2014) reminded us that the acquisition and expression of these qualities is a deceptively complex task:

> Our unconscious mind is largely in control of what we do, what we perceive, and how we experience ourselves … it is much easier to act as if your conscious awareness is all that matters but if you take this path you squander 95% of your potential. (p. 2)

Ringer advised that the capacity to build therapeutic relationships requires personal attention and courage applied to the process of self-awareness and discovery. In this capacity, my natural colleague and I could not be more different. As I diligently do the work of increasing personal awareness of my vulnerabilities, "buttons," values, beliefs, internal dialogues, and sensations that impact my capacity for authentic relationship, nature just is. With no cortex to confuse the issue, nature is simply and exquisitely present. "Nature is impartial, taking no sides, rain falls in all the fields and tides rise regardless of who stands upon the shore" (Tzu, n.d.). In simply *Being*, my colleague impels participants and practitioners towards self-reliance, self-efficacy, and fluid and expanded senses of self. Spending time in the natural world, reconnecting with its processes, we reconnect to our self and each other and as Ellis-Smith (2005) puts it, our true self, our indigenous self. I love how she works.

Pro-active Counsellor Behaviours

Pro-active counsellor behaviours are placed at the apex of the pro-active counselling approach depicted in Fig. 59.1. Having explored foundational philosophies and concepts from both a human and nature perspective, this academic adventure now turns towards consideration of the ways in which nature may be purposely utilized in a pro-active counselling process.

Nature as Ally

I take the liberty of reading Geldard and Geldard's (2001) pro-active counselling process model (Fig. 59.2) from the perspective of a BAT practitioner working with participants across a spectrum of ages, stages, and concerns. Once again, the question "In what way might nature as my colleague and ally participate in this therapeutic process?" is posed.

Primary Counselling Functions

Three primary counselling functions sit at the heart of the model: relationship building; assessing participant issues and concerns and addressing participant issues and concerns. Arrows indicate the way in which all other aspects and expressions of the counselling process are simultaneously impacted by and upon these core functions. Within the context of this academic adventure, I pause to appreciate this solid reminder of the intentionality of BAT practice.

Nature, as my colleague and ally, supports BAT practitioners to enact these core functions in ways typically denied by traditional counselling contexts. For example, journeying through the natural landscape, map reading, selecting campsites, crossing rivers, sharing experiences of exertion challenge, fear, success, and fun offer practitioners 24/7 opportunity to observe, interact, and engage, and to build relationships, explore, and gauge participants' self-concepts and beliefs. As part of living and journeying together through nature's landscape and weather systems, conflicts, insights, issues, and concerns naturally and inevitably arise presenting an “in the moment” opportunity to address or assess issues in the “here and now” as well as presenting a “right here right now” participant opportunity to experiment with positive attitudinal and behavioural change.

Counselling Microskills

Counselling microskills are used by all good counsellors as a way of conveying empathy and encouraging the client or camp participant to openly express themselves. Once again, nature offers support in this basic practice. Sharing thoughts, feelings, and lived experience is typically challenging and sometimes threatening for many BAT participants. Free from the constraints of office, desk, and chair, nature offers the reluctant or shy communicator multiple opportunities for pressure-free engagement with peers and practitioners. Walking or resting along the track, gazing into the fire, tying knots, or cooking noodles invite general banter and intimate exchange. Eye contact is not required; ruminative musings are acceptable.

Trace (2003) identified nature’s capacity to calm the mind and slow down the nervous system and cites the Dalai Lama to remind practitioners that as important as counselling microskills are, verbal exchange is not the only route to self-awareness and insight.

> To develop and integrate insights, we first slow down our thinking, habits, and strong emotions so that we can see them more clearly. Slowing down accesses a calmness and openness to seeing what is here and what is new in our immediate experience. Then we can practice looking deeply to understand self, and to generate choices regarding how best to be, and what to do and what not to do to create wellbeing. (Trace, 2003, p. 29)

Paralleling Adolescent Communication

Matching the vocabulary, representational style, and spontaneous use of metaphor is a common way in which BAT practitioners utilize language matching to make discreet links and connections with their camp participants.

With no effort at all, nature matches the aspirations and developmental needs of BAT participants, offering myriad points of connection especially appealing to adolescents but arguably attractive across the age span: opportunities for risk and adventure, awe and wonder, concrete consequences and tasks, and solitude and communion (Nicholls, 2015).

The Strategies

One of the appeals of the process diagram in Fig. 59.2 is that it looks like a paint box, a palette of colourful options from which to mix and match in pursuit of creative, engaging, and responsive ways to fulfil the primary counselling functions of relationship building, assessing, and addressing issues. I recognize the potential for this simple diagram to structure my thinking in the field, in the midst of the multivariant dynamic of a BAT programme in action. I have confidence that working my way through the "colours" will intuitively lead me to innovative action and collaboration with nature.

Figure 59.3 provides an overview of examples detailed by Geldard and Geldard (2001) as expressions of the key strategies. It is likely that many of them would be familiar to BAT practitioners. In considering some of the ways in which my natural colleague supports or may be incorporates into these strategies, two ready factors came to mind. First, an appreciation of the extent to which BAT practitioners have at hand a unique capacity to strategically utilize nature's rich and varied landscape to support the therapeutic process of change: the darkness of a cave may invite communication and trust, an espe-

	PRIMARY COUNSELLING FUNCTIONS **Relationship building** **Assessing issues** **Addressing issues**	
Symbolic strategies	Metaphor	Ritual
	Symbols	Miniature animals
	Sand tray	
Creative strategies	Art	Role play
	Journal	Relaxation
	Imagination	Dream work
Behavioural and cognitive behavioural strategies	Self-control	Challenging self-destructive beliefs
	Anger management	Assertiveness training
	Setting lifestyle goals	Making decisions
Psycho-educational strategies	To get information	To explain relationships
	To explain behaviour	To help change behaviour

Fig. 59.3 Strategies for achieving primary counselling functions (adapted from Geldard & Geldard, 2001)

cial spot to sit and listen to the inner voice (Beard & Wilson, 2007); a mountain peak inspires awe and wonder; a rocky overhang provides an intimate nook for a needed conversation. In a similar vein, my colleague comes equipped with rich and textured media: sand and mud to draw or write in; sticks, rocks, and leaves as symbols or creative building tools; sensuous and unlimited metaphoric potential within the elements of earth, fire, air, water; and literacy-free, psycho-educational material available in the form of nature's patterns, cycles, ecosystems, and rhythms of tide, moon, and sunsets.

The second insight emerged when considering cognitive and cognitive/behavioural strategies. In broad terms, cognitive behavioural therapy, on which the strategies are founded, is based on an understanding that a reorganization of one's self-statements can result in a corresponding reorganization of one's behaviour (Corey, 2009). In other words, thinking effects feeling, feeling effects behaviour. That nature has a way of prompting and revealing capacities or challenges to self-control, self-beliefs, anger, and/or decision-making is well-represented in the literature. One of the especial contributions of the natural world to the BAT process of change may be that it reinstates the body as a source of wisdom. Whilst Mr. Duffy may have "lived a short distance from his body" (Joyce, 1914), BAT makes this difficult to avoid and in doing so opens up the potential to access the thinking, feeling, doing triad through a focus on bodily sensation and feeling. Trace (2004) gave a practical example of how this might spontaneously occur:

> When a plateau is reached and people stop to drink and snack, there is most often a sudden increase in narrative conversations about the physical, emotional and cognitive experiences of the past minutes. Everyone drinks and shares a bite, tightens boots, changes layers of clothing, and in general takes care of the immediate sense of self. This is all part of practicing mindfulness of self through witnessing of the embodied, emotional, thoughtful beings that we are. (p. 11)

Pearson and Wilson (2009) cite current thinking that locates the mind throughout the body, and argue the case that "somatic experiences can open a doorway to environmental influences and background internal thoughts and feelings" (p. 90).

Bringing the Benefits Home

For participant and practitioner alike, the end of a programme is an emotional time. I throw my washing in the laundry, collapse on the sofa, quietly listen as the family share the week I left behind. I will find quiet time to digest the trip. Perhaps tomorrow a new phase of urban-based engagement with the participants will begin. Perhaps I will hand over the reins to another agency as my job is done. Writing this chapter, I hear myself asking, "What about my colleague, nature? What is she doing? Is her job done?" Clearly nature will just keep on "Being." However, it comes to mind that her contribution reverberates in participants' bodies, memories, and photographs. As a rare constant in an ever-changing world, I wonder if BAT has yet to really engage with ways in which nature might anchor the BAT experience and, in all its guises, lend support to consolidating and extending the beneficial outcomes of the bush adventure experience in the present and future of its participants.

Conclusion

Like many adventures, completion of this journey simply brings me to a view of the next. In working my way through the pro-active counselling approach and process models, I have come to realize that I support the call for more recognition and discussion about the value and the role that nature and wilderness play in therapeutic contexts (Gass, Gillis, & Russell, 2012). Looking at the next horizon, I would like to revisit the pro-active model with a view to adaptation to the BAT context. I recognize an excitement to locate nature within the pro-active approach triangle and to find a way to make her unique contribution more visible within an adapted process model. I think I need to get into training. I will engage with the body-mind theory literature and consider its contribution to a broader and deeper understanding of the ways in which nature, as colleague, participates in the BAT process of change.

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60

Leading from the Heart of Nature

Cheryl Charles

Ecology is a term my grandfather, Perl Charles, first brought to my life. He was born in 1899 and travelled with his family to the western United States by train, wagon, and on foot at a time when people sought New Mexico as a place to, it was hoped, recover from a grave illness, in this case, great-grandmother's tuberculosis. The family, with four very young children, settled in New Mexico in 1907. Granddad, as were many in the family, was a lifelong conservationist. He taught me that in an ecology, all parts of any environment, living and nonliving, exist in relationship to one another. The parts interact dynamically, and no one part stands alone. In ecologies, organisms' interactions, in optimal, self-regulating, self-organizing ways, are key to evolutionary success. As poets and naturalists through time have observed, everything is connected to everything else.

Some of my earliest defining childhood experiences, from the time I was four years old and got my first horse Palo to well into my 20s, were spending time on horseback with my granddad or my dad on his horse in the lead. One image tells a lot of this story. I was about 16. Granddad took me to a high knoll in the White Mountain region of Northern Arizona. In every direction, 360 degrees, all we could see was horizon with juniper, some Ponderosa pine on the knolls, big skies, and an open range. Nearly nothing in the way of human habitation was visible. He said, "Vistas like this—a big view—always

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C. Charles (✉)
Nature Based Leadership Institute, Antioch University New England,
Keene, NH, USA

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give me perspective." I have lived my life that way, recognizing that humans are a small part of the big picture in relationship to the Earth, which supports and nourishes us all.

My great-grandparents, Tom and Beulah Charles, were a legendary influence—business people, authors, civic leaders, conservationists, and instrumental in the White Sands being set aside as a national monument in the United States in 1933. I was raised to strive for a balance of culture and nature, with a drive to bring diverse interests to the same table to find the common good, and with a healthy respect and sense of responsibility for the needs of future generations. They were both role models from my earliest years. Watching and learning from great-grandmother Beulah, who was a college graduate amongst her other accomplishments, it never occurred to me that I would not figure out a way to graduate from college and go on to serve in leadership roles. It did not matter that neither my parents nor grandparents were college graduates. They were accomplished in other ways. All of them urged me forward. And I felt inspired, determined, and accountable for doing so.

Throughout my life and career, my primary focus has been on children, communities, and the environment that sustains us all. I have worked to design and implement ways to connect people with nature—in school, at home, in neighbourhoods, towns and cities, in rural and wild areas—everywhere people live, learn, play, and work. And, enhanced by the gift of a fabulous partnership and collaboration with my now deceased husband of 40 years, Bob Samples, nature itself is my guide.

I first remember Bob being explicit about what he described as the principles of natural-systems management in the 1970s. He conceptualized, wrote, and spoke publicly about those principles. I began applying them to my work, to some degree with the early development and implementation of the K-12 interdisciplinary environment education programme, Project Learning Tree, and then especially with the design and implementation of Project WILD in the 1980s and early 1990s. In the 1990s, we applied these natural-systems concepts to civic engagement as well and reported on them in our book, *Coming Home: Community, Creativity and Consciousness* (Charles & Samples, 2004). Beginning in 2006 with the formation of the Children & Nature Network (C&NN), I consciously applied the concepts to facilitating social change to achieve a vision in which all children live, learn, play, and grow with nature in their everyday lives. Currently, I am applying these concepts to help create the Nature Based Leadership Institute at Antioch University New England, where people may receive certificates and obtain graduate degrees with concentrations in this growing field of study.

So what do natural-systems management principles, nature-based leadership, and the movement to reconnect people with nature have in common? They all reflect a yearning and urgent call for action by which humans will live with, learn from, and care for the living Earth in ways that will nourish all life for generations to come. How can each of us contribute? We can do so by what I call leading from the heart of nature.

The New Nature Movement

People throughout the world are hearing this message; it is touching their hearts, and they are taking action. The movement to reconnect people and nature is burgeoning worldwide. It is largely self-organizing and spontaneously generating. It is a manifestation of a sweeping and compelling perceived need for systemic social change—where people everywhere are resonating with the importance of re-righting the balance, especially between children and nature, in their daily lives. Richard Louv coined the term "nature-deficit disorder" in his seminal book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (Louv, 2005/2008). Louv is quick to say that "nature-deficit disorder is not a medical diagnosis, but a description of the human costs of alienation from nature." Through his writing, public speaking, and communications from the international nonprofit organization that he and I co-founded in 2006 with others, the C&NN, Louv has called for a new nature movement (Louv, 2011).

I read *Last Child in the Woods* when it first came out in 2005. I reached out to Rich, not knowing him, to ask him to participate in a National Conservation Learning Summit I was helping to convene, which was held in November 2005 at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The 2005 National Conservation Learning Summit was the idea of, and sponsored by, the Paul F-Brandwein Institute along with a host of federal and nonprofit organizations. This summit was the original vision of Brandwein Institute President Keith Wheeler and President Emeritus Jack Padalino, supported heartily by the rest of the Brandwein Board, including Marily Dewall and Mary Brandwein, who was still alive at that time at 94 years young. Ten years later, the Brandwein Institute again convened a significant summit at NCTC, building on the work initiated in 2005. Inspiring a New Generation: North American Summit took the work further to foster collaboration and build a framework for action. Results of that summit will continue to guide much of the worldwide work to reconnect people with nature.

The messages in *Last Child in the Woods* (Louv, 2005/2008)—combined with the evidence all around us for children's "nature-deficit disorder"—are amongst the energies fostering, nourishing, compelling, and creating the children and nature movement. Whilst the book *Last Child in the Woods* is not the sole cause of the current children and nature movement, it has in every sense unleashed a force of nature.

One of the goals of the Brandwein Institute, shared and supported by C&NN, is to nourish and support the non-partisan, inclusive, pro-active worldwide efforts to reconnect children with nature. Many individuals, organizations, and nations are actively involved. One small measure of the growth of the movement in the more than 10 years since the founding of C&NN is that people from more than 200 nations have visited C&NN's website (www.childrenandnature.org), more than 70 nations are represented in its online directory, and people from more than 100 nations have downloaded its free publications and other online resources. The reasons for this interest are many, beginning with the evidence that supports the benefits to children's health and well-being, and that of the Earth itself, from children's connections to nature. Generations who have had little or no personal connection to nature are unlikely to produce passionate, informed, and responsible citizens of the Earth.

Natural Guides to Leading from the Heart of Nature

I personally have been guided and informed throughout my life by my lifelong experiences in direct contact with nature, beginning with formative childhood experiences through my teens and as the primary focus of my work throughout my adult career. I can personally testify to my own sense of purpose, vitality, and conscience as being nourished in large part through my connections with the world of nature. For our purposes in this publication, I want to emphasize what I call "natural guides." As I have stated, I have applied these guides to the development of leading environment education programmes, to the movement to reconnect children with nature, and, most recently, to a new effort to coalesce this thinking into the emerging field of nature-based leadership.

For perspective, the title of my 1998 Brandwein lecture given at the US National Science Teachers Association annual conference was "Natural Guides to Community Building." Here is a quote from my talk in 1998:

> Let me start with a worry I have. This is a worry I have had for 25 years—and it is getting more intense, not less. I worry about children, youth, and adults living

> lives so immersed in technology that we forget to directly experience the living world itself—we forget nature, the first classroom. For the long term, I believe that we have to remember how the living world works from direct experience, from intimacy, from the loving respect and substantive knowledge that cannot be obtained vicariously or virtually. (Cited in Charles, 2009a, pp. 467–475)

In that talk nearly 20 years ago, and subsequently in many other places including in our book *Coming Home* (Charles & Samples, 2004), I describe what Bob and I learned from observing natural systems and applying those insights to human relationships, from families to schools to businesses to whole communities. To state the obvious, nature has been establishing and sustaining successful models of living systems for about 15 billion years. Nature has a track record of success. Principles of contemporary ecological perspectives can help us detect some of the attributes that are central to the health of living systems. We need to draw on nature's successes and lessons to re-right the relationship between people and nature.

In 2006, when a group of us founded the C&NN, I thought about how the principles I applied to the healthy development of both Project Learning Tree and Project WILD could be applied on a larger scale. That is, how could the natural guides to community building be applied to nourishing this worldwide movement to reconnect people, especially children, with nature? I thought about it, talked about it, wrote about it, and consciously put the ideas to work.

In this spirit, here are seven illustrative characteristics of natural systems that I have used for decades to help guide my life and my work. Whilst my emphasis here is specific to the new nature movement, these natural guides apply within family settings, amongst friends, with colleagues, and with people we do not know. They apply at home, at work, in our communities, and throughout the world. These are only examples of what we can learn from nature that I personally find to be powerfully useful and transforming and not a comprehensive list:

- diversity
- niche
- cooperation
- self-regulation
- optimization
- connectedness
- community

Diversity

Diversity tends to be an indicator of health in ecosystems. Diversity assures resilience. Monocultures, in contrast, are vulnerable. From an educator's perspective, we want to provide for the many ways of knowing that are inherent within learners. Respect the varied learning styles and modalities that children and youth use to learn and grow. Within a community, we must cherish and celebrate our differences, for from those we can create a healthy whole. When we think about the importance of reconnecting people with nature, beginning with children, this reminds us to think in terms of the many ways in which people can choose to participate in this movement—in their daily lives, in their priorities, where and how they live, learn, work, and play. From individual children and their families to whole communities, this movement to reconnect children and nature will be inherently resilient to the extent that we embrace the many ways in which people can help to heal this broken relationship. There is no one right way to reconnect with nature. One size does not fit all.

Niche

A niche, in the ecological definition of the word, is how an organism makes a living. Every organism has a niche and is therefore inherently important. Used to indicate a role, the word is alive with possibilities—each person can have multiple niches and various niches over time. A niche requires action. An organism has something to do. Every organism warrants respect. It is important that we recognize this concept as educators, citizens, community participants, and members of a world community. Everyone has a contribution to make; everyone can help re-right this balance. From the perspective of C&NN, we think this movement is taking form at every level—in individual children's choices to play outside and take their friends; in families starting nature clubs for families; amongst grassroots leaders starting children and nature initiatives in communities throughout the world; in whole communities; and at state, provincial, and federal levels. This movement is not just bottom up or top down. It is everywhere, and everyone has a niche, a role, a way to make a difference.

Cooperation

Although competition exists in natural systems, its role has been overemphasized. Cooperation is prevalent and actually more pervasive than the role of competition in the natural world. An effective movement to create social change is epitomized by cooperation. Most of history's major social movements are characterized by people of all walks of life and all political persuasions coming together with a common purpose. Through C&NN, we are consciously fostering and encouraging community-based collaborations to build the children and nature movement. The *C&NN Community Action Guide*, downloadable from C&NN's website, is a tried-and-true guide to implementing social change through respectful cooperative efforts—a process honed for decades by Dr John Gardner and John Parr and others, and applied, for the first time, to building this movement.

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is one of the most provocative natural guides to building a social movement. Contemporary views of ecology and ecosystems hold that the natural world is a self-regulating system, arguably the most successful management system in the world. It has persisted through immense spans of time and is still here and functioning.

Fundamental to the children and nature movement, families and individuals are taking responsibility in their own lives for reconnecting with the natural world. This is a form of self-regulation. We published the *C&NN Nature Clubs for Families Tool Kit: Do It Yourself! Do It Now!* (Charles, 2009b/2013). The response is evidence that the self-organizing, self-regulating dimension of this movement can be nourished and supported. The result is happier, healthier families, beginning with their children, who are learning once again how to go outside and how to make it a priority to invent, explore, play, and learn in the natural world. Another manifestation of this self-regulating influence is our approach to encouraging grass-roots efforts to build children and nature initiatives—from neighbourhoods to towns and cities to states, provinces, and larger regions. We spread the word, provide tools such as the *C&NN Community Action Guide*, offer encouragement, and then get out of the way—believing that a self-regulating approach to building a movement to reconnect children and nature is inherently resilient, adaptive, and more likely to succeed over time than if it were proscribed from and by a top-down model and infrastructure.

Optimization

There is an unfortunate tendency in contemporary Western culture to think that most is best. The popular sayings, "He who dies with the most toys wins" and "Everything to the max," reflect this tendency. Perhaps at no time in human history has this attitude of "maximizing everything" created such tragic and avoidable consequences. The excess in the human economic system has manifested in recession, foreclosures, debt, and economic losses that have children and families on the streets, dreams dashed, and a worldwide economic system in more imbalance than might ever have been imagined. And perhaps nothing more represents the threat from maximizing, rather than optimizing, than the persistent loss of species diversity, habitat destruction, and overexploitation through fracking and other acts of violence against the Earth and all its life forms and the result we are seeing in global climate change. We humans clearly need to pay attention to how nature stays resilient and healthy and model that approach in all of our relationships, beginning with the Earth itself.

The resource base for nearly all things in nature is balanced, abundant, and even redundant by design. Nature keeps energy and resources in reserve. Rather than maximizing everything, nature tends to optimize its use of resources and make sure that there is sufficient redundancy to assure continuity. The human idea of "saving for a rainy day" is a form of keeping energy in reserve. When we pace ourselves and avoid burnout, we are acting optimally. Classic burnout is working to the max. Nature reminds us to be moderate rather than excessive. This does not mean we don't work hard or that we don't strive for excellence. It does mean that we take care to nourish ourselves and others along the way.

Connectedness

In nature's ecologies, every part is connected to every other. The ripples of any action affect whole living communities, sometimes in ways not seen. Echoing others before him, the naturalist John Muir (1917) observed, "One touch of nature makes all the world kin." When we apply the concept to growing a movement to reconnect children and nature, it helps us to remember to respect all the parts and foster ways in which people of every age are nourished by the refreshing benefits of nature in our daily lives.

Building a shared awareness of the indicators of the nature-deficit disorder helps to build a bond that connects us all to the importance of re-righting the balance for children and for us all. *Last Child in the Woods* (Louv, 2005/2008) serves as a powerful voice to connect increasing numbers of people: hear the message, and you get it, and you can help spread it to others. Building a shared awareness of the benefits to us all through the human-nature connection is equally, if not more, important. All of us can help disseminate the key messages of this movement to help reconnect children and nature.

In this movement, this reminds us to create opportunities for all people, of all ages, incomes, and ethnic groups, and in communities of all sizes and locations, to feel a sense of shared purpose with one another, to be mutually supportive of one another. Everyone in a community has a vested interest in the health and well-being of children. It helps when whole communities work together on a mission and goals, when there is agreement and shared commitment to make tangible steps and take action to create places, spaces, opportunities, and experiences by which children in their everyday lives are connected to nature for their healthy development and well-being.

The media can help, and are beginning to do so, with stories like the one about Nature Clubs for Families that appeared on the Today Show; front-page stories in the *Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Boston Globe*; and a full feature in the weekend edition of *USA Today*. Communications tools such as websites, texting, online communities of interest, blogs, electronic newsletters, and other forms of outreach and inclusion are all serving as powerful ways to nourish and support this sense of connectedness—this sense of being a part of something purposeful, inspiring, healthy, and common sense—that is at the heart of this movement to reconnect children and nature.

We also need gathering places—some can be designed and enhanced. And a great many already exist, often in the form of neighbourhood, city, and regional parks within easy reach of many children and families. Neighbourhoods can be more children and nature friendly. Some places are taking down backyard fences and designing commons areas for children to play safely with an appropriate amount of supervision. Rooftops are being turned into gardens and play areas, safe above what can be dangerous streets below.

In addition to places and spaces in which children can freely explore and connect with the natural world, we thrive and the movement grows through shared experiences. Many young families find it inspiring and confidence building to plan and share outings in nature with others. They often don't know where or how to start and can use the free downloadable resource, the *C&NN Nature Clubs for Families Tool Kit: Do It Yourself! Do It Now!* People are forming these nature clubs, inviting friends, family, and whole communities to join them and having weekly or monthly outdoor adventures in natural areas.

Building a movement by paying attention to the importance of connectedness—in this case, a movement that is based on hope, health, and well-being—is grounded in laughter, play, wonder, shared adventures, and appropriate risks. The results are exhilarating, inspiring, stress reducing, and good for everyone.

At the neighbourhood and community level, nationally and beyond, one way to foster connectedness is to bring people together in various forms of celebration and activity. Work together to accomplish tangible results. That is the model we are encouraging through our *C&NN Community Action Guide*. There are many approaches to cultivating a movement in which people of all ages recognize that they are genuinely connected to each other.

Community

In many ways, the single most important concept of the natural guides is that of community. Key to any successful movement is creating and sustaining a powerful sense of community. People feel a part of something that matters and are inspired, nourished, and supported in the process. Communities in nature are living and nonliving parts, all connected into a cohesive whole. Communities can grow and change whilst providing a sense of place and comfort. All in all, the movement to reconnect people and nature stands on a belief that healthy children are the heart and foundation for healthy communities. All of the other natural guides—diversity, niche, cooperation, self-regulation, optimization, and connectedness—fit together within the organizing principle of community. Communities begin with their individual members—in this case, in home and families, with friends and neighbours. To the extent that we consider this movement to reconnect children and nature to be place based and in our hearts, we will succeed in re-righting the natural balance for children in their daily lives.

The Ecology of Hope

Each of these natural guides to creating cultural change by building a movement to reconnect children and nature, in combination with the others, helps to form what I call the ecology of hope. By applying these natural guides, I believe we will successfully create the kind of social change in a living ecology that is necessary for children's health and well-being and their likelihood of living fulfilled, productive, and healthy lives as adults. Hope is fundamental to children's health and well-being. Children need to have successful experiences, every day, of making choices and learning from those results in positive ways. We do a disservice to children if we take away their opportunities to explore, learn, and experience the joy and wonder in their immediate natural world—rather than overwhelming childhood with the calamities of scale affecting people and the planet.

Hope is derived from the exercise of will. Success in exercising will, on whatever scale, develops a sense of efficacy—that is, a perceived belief that I or you can make a difference. Combine the exercise of will with the experience of efficacy and hope is the result. To a large extent, today's children live within a culture of depression, not an ecology of hope. The children and nature movement are building an ecology of hope.

For young children, efficacy and hope are nourished by playing in wild and semi-wild places outdoors—turning over a rock and feeling connected to all of life; climbing a tree and feeling a surge of confidence and exhilaration, peace, and perspective; having an adult share a place so special that the child feels valued and develops a lifelong connection to the power and the beauty of the natural world. For learners of all ages, we are nourished and inspired by our grounding connections with nature in our everyday lives. From the perspective of a world in stress, people disconnected from each other and the Earth, there is an accessible and healing alternative—looking to nature.

Nourishing a Planetary Perspective

Change is a result of consciousness. If consciousness is what we pay attention to, as neuroscientist Karl Pribram has said (cited in Charles & Samples, 2004), then creating a shift in consciousness requires paying attention to different things. It is up to each of us and begins within each of us. Bob Samples said, "Consciousness is the dance of the spirit, the song that connects, the hope for the future" (Charles & Samples, 2004, pp. 246–247). Bob was a champion of the spirit and consistently urged all who would listen to turn to natural systems, to nature, for perspective and inspiration. He said, "We need to reground ourselves in the ways of wild ecologies … It is nature that will guide us to the kind of realistic, dynamic equilibrium that we need in order to heal the rifts between culture and nature" (Charles & Samples, 2004, p. 246). I would add, to heal the rifts between children and nature, between communities and nature, from our homes and neighbourhoods to the planet as a whole.

There are enormous opportunities available in cultivating a world consciousness in right balance with nature. We need to create a whole new level of cooperation. We have to figure out how to bring together the many diverse people who see and sense these problems and, if given the right opportunities and encouragement, could work together to help address them. In the end, and for the future, we need a new common sense—and, I believe, a collective consciousness—about the big issues that will sustain us all, and the planet itself, for future generations. We need, I believe, to lead from the heart of nature.

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Travel Play Live: Inspiring Adventurous Women Towards an Inclusive Future in Outdoor Learning Environments

Amy Heague and Kerryann Hayes

Introduction

One would assume, upon hearing that iconic magazines for women such as *Dolly* and *Cleo* were closing their doors after decades in print, that print itself was a slow-dying medium. However, the authors of this chapter questioned that statement and instead asked, "Is it the medium that has become obsolete or the content?" Deciding it was the content that was obsolete, in 2015 they launched *Travel Play Live*, Australia's first women's adventure lifestyle magazine and company.

Travel Play Live embodies the heartbeat of women's adventure and shares a new narrative, one of diversity, passion, triumph, and change. It represents the everyday women who are out there at the coalface of life—at home, at work, and at play. They are women who are courageously taking life by the horns, climbing mountains, smashing stereotypes, exploring new territories, and inspiring a new generation of active women to find their true north.

Our Mission

The vision is for the magazine to be a voice for the growing interest in an adventure lifestyle, to not only build and support but also empower, inspire, and champion a healthy, active community of women from all walks of life

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A. Heague (✉) • K. Hayes
Travel Play Live, Tuncurry, NSW, Australia

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with a passion to dream big, challenge themselves, and expand their horizons no matter what their preferred "choice of adventure" is. It is to believe that women of all body shapes, sizes, colours, fitness levels, and ages can embrace their desire to live a full and abundant life outdoors.

The five key pillars that support our company are adventure, inspiration, empowerment, dream, and change. These pillars help define the intelligent, informative, and empowering female-inspired adventure and travel content that is included in the magazine—content that connects with the feminine desire to engage thoughtfully with nature, live a big life outdoors, and make a difference where we can, all whilst embracing our inner wild.

One could ask—does such a magazine have value in the current market?

Our readers and followers certainly think so; this is what real women in the marketplace are saying:

> So imagine a magazine brave enough to fill its pages with real women. More than just models, with no Photoshop and rebels against the manufactured stereotypical T&A [tits and ass] advertising. Imagine a magazine that appeals to a woman's desire to explore, connect to nature, and discover adventure without selling its soul to the commercialised agenda … Imagine. (Emma Chalmers, Rebelology Founder and Speaker)
>
> I live and breathe adventure every day. I have touched all continents except Antarctica, and adventure travel is my number 1 love. I'm an active outdoorswoman enjoying camping, hiking, trekking, boating, cycling, kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding, scuba diving, and more. I'm always looking for new trails and unpaved memories to carve. I dream big, work hard, and play harder. Your magazine is my true north! Your vision is my true north. (E. Larsen, Social Media Follower)
>
> Your magazine is a true representation of real women doing amazing things … This is EXACTLY why I subscribe to it. As a very active member of the outdoor community and an avid traveller, your magazine is right on target. (S. Whitehead, Reader and Subscriber)

The magazine's success is a perfect indication that our society, particularly women, is now demanding more authentic and realistic ideals of health and beauty and along with it, a true representation of themselves in the media. Women are rebelling against the manufactured ideals and marketing strategies once presented through mainstream channels and want to see an authentic representation of themselves before they invest their money and loyalty to industries, companies, and brands. They are rejecting the messages of perfection and replacing them with ones of pro-diversity. When it comes to the outdoors and the current representation of adventure, it is no different.

Ambrose Bierce (1996) wrote, "To men a man is but a mind. Who cares what face he carries or what he wears? But woman's body is the woman." Despite the societal changes achieved since Bierce's time, his statement unfortunately remains true. Let's face it: beauty and societal fitness norms can limit the opportunities of women who can't or won't meet them, whether or not they are real or perceived. When it comes to getting outdoors and participating in active adventure, it's no different.

We believe there are very practical reasons why the outdoors is no longer purely a man's world, and government organizations, companies, and outdoor brands need to take note that the time of the female "adventurepreneur" has well and truly arrived.

Across continents, women from all walks of life—female entrepreneurs, activists, sportswomen, and weekend athletes—are getting outdoors and using it as a platform to address the societal issues affecting women and communities worldwide. They are there in greater numbers than ever before, creating awareness and admiration and inspiring others to further break down the barriers to adventure experienced by many women. These women are also spending increased amounts of money on experiences and the outdoor equipment and gear needed to participate at all levels. They are challenging themselves with feats once deemed "for men only," such as the extreme Himalayan accents and desert and polar expeditions, so much so that the bottom line of associated outdoor businesses has huge growth potential predicted in the coming years.

Smart marketers are finally realizing that 50 per cent of the possible market—women—are finding and accessing outdoor adventure/travel faster than ever before, especially with the growth of digital media, and they just aren't being catered for appropriately considering that these women control much of the decision-making around family spending and travel. We believe it would be wise for brands to acknowledge the changing landscape of adventure and the current trends. Once this happens, we will see more women acknowledged as leaders in the adventure and travel market and more women-friendly, adventure-related businesses spring up within the market.

Travel Play Live recognizes that mainstream adventure marketing needs some tweaking to accommodate this growing trend of women in the outdoors, hence the magazine's "softer style" adventure approach. Current adventure media has its roots firmly in a male-dominant militaristic style of wilderness travel, with an emphasis on taming and conquering plus the notion that taking on the outdoors is a test of strength, courage, and discipline. We saw this approach as a constraint and major hurdle that has kept many women from engaging in the outdoors as active participants or successfully as outdoor leaders.

Unfortunately, the heroic myth is deeply ingrained in our perception of the outdoors, and a subtle or not-so-subtle message is present: that women should either act in a supporting role when it comes to adventure or be more like men in having both heroic quests and/or a masculine leadership-type style.

Although the above attributes of strength, courage, discipline, and competitiveness are readily sought and achieved by women featured in the pages of *Travel Play Live*, these qualities do not generally resonate with females and their connection to or relationship with nature nor with many of a woman's sensibilities. Women seeking adventure are more often than not using the outdoors to look inwards, to reconnect, and to make a difference in their worlds. The heroine's quest is primarily an inner journey with attributes like compassion, collaboration, connection, and inclusion being essential to the enjoyment of her experience. The valuable growth lessons women receive from adventure are endless and relatable primarily to the changes seen predominately in our mindset. The personal growth received and earned once we choose to overcome the barriers of our own personal comfort zone is very powerful for women and easily translates to confidence in everyday life.

To give a simple example, prior to a weekend of hiking, our female participants shared their concerns about the trip. One woman was unsure if she was strong enough to carry the 20-kg pack, whilst another was fearful of spending the night outdoors, having grown up in a foreign country where it was unheard of for a woman to pitch a tent and camp overnight. As it turned out, the first woman was able to carry the full weight of her pack down the long, steep stairs and shared the load on the uphill day, whilst the other woman slept with her headlight on all night. Both felt they had mastered all aspects of the trek and very much enjoyed its challenges. These instances could be construed as heroic, having conquered a fear, but the women did not express their growth in heroic or conquering terms. They expressed their growth in spiritual terms: that a greater inner confidence resulted from their experience and through the support of nature and their trip comrades.

Within the pages of the magazine, many of the more epic-style stories involve women and their outdoor endeavours, which contain a humanitarian purpose beyond the adventure itself. This further confirms that the transcendent aspect of adventure, so readily missed by brands marketing the outdoor adventure lifestyle to women, is what resonates with us as opposed to our male counterparts. Women readily use adventures as societal statements, as fundraisers for charities we care deeply about, and as precursors to positive change. We do it not only for the betterment of ourselves but also for the betterment of those within our own communities and, if given the chance, the world.

Travel Play Live magazine was born, so to speak, on one such adventure. In 2013, we cycled with 19 other women almost 400 km across Cambodia to raise awareness of human trafficking. Together the team raised over $30,000 to support grass-roots projects, making a very real difference to the lives of young girls, women, and their families. In the effort to change the lives of others, our lives were changed. By way of seeing the personal impact that preparing for and participating in this style of adventure had on the team as we followed their journey to Cambodia, and with Amy's background in media and Kerryann's primarily as a fitness coach—both with a passion to "make a difference"—*Travel Play Live* was born.

Another area of demand that we and other similarly female-inspired travel companies have identified is the growing popularity of female-only adventure and travel experiences.

The statistics show that in 2014:

- Sixty-three per cent of over 100,000 bookings through Intrepid Travel were made by women;
- Fifty-four per cent of travellers considered affluent by an MMGY global study were women;
- Sixty-five per cent of clients who booked adventure trips on TourRadar.com were women; and
- Sixty-six per cent of US women polled by Booking.com had vacationed without their partners.

We have well and truly entered the era of the female adventurer, and over the past few years, women have tipped the scales to become the majority of travellers in a number of categories. This contingency is another change that this growing industry cannot ignore. Many women prefer to adventure and travel with and be guided by other women. The primary reason for this is the opportunity to learn and practise new skills in an inclusive, nonthreatening, and less competitive environment. In addition, many select women-only outdoor tours to feel empowered, to relax, have fun, gain a sense of renewal, and to network and find spiritual healing in nature alongside a community of like-minded women.

When it comes to leadership, it is no secret that women face more cultural and societal obstacles then men. The pool of female outdoor leaders in Australia and indeed the world is small, and female guides are in high demand.

> I have found female guides are often more in tune with the client's needs. They have subtleness in the way they assist people who are having difficulty completing

> something like a physically challenging hike and make strong early risk management calls to avoid a minor issue becoming a major concern, as women are often instinctively thinking a step or two ahead of their male counterparts. There are lot of female instructors who make great mentors and many in the guiding scene have extra talents, like running a morning yoga session for clients or go the extra mile to make sure mealtime is really special, while their male counterparts don't have the same eye for detail. (Tim, Wilderness Adventures, Blue Mountains Australia)

This growth and rising popularity in the past decade of women-only adventure initiatives, outdoor programming, and travel options indicate that it would be wise to invest in programmes that encourage the long-term establishment of outdoor leadership adventure programmes for girls and women in Australia—programmes that understand the similarities but also the major differences between male and female adventure experiences and expectations. As yet, there are no "best" practices for accommodating this new majority, but companies, brands, and operators who pay attention to their needs will likely see rewards when "she" speaks favourably about them to her cohorts.

Having tracked this growth and interest in the outdoors from women across the globe, we identified and recognized the potential growth in Australia early on. We see the importance of assisting the development of the industry and its aspiring female outdoor industry professionals and athletes as we do with their male counterparts—hence the launch of our magazine in 2015 (Fig. 61.1).

This recognition can also be seen in the development of Australia's first Women's Adventure Expo held in November 2016, of which *Travel Play Live* was a major supporter. We also hosted Australia's first Women's Outdoor Adventure Summit in September 2017 (see http://www.travelplaylive.com.au/).

Conclusion

When it comes to adventure, there is an ongoing need for community-focused programmes served locally through grass-roots teams and globally through collaborations with professional athletes, like-minded organizations, brands, and online channels which connect women to the outdoors. It is within such programmes that we will build the leadership qualities and confidence in individuals, increase recognition for the athletic abilities of women in adventure sports, and promote and welcome women to an active outdoor lifestyle they

TRAVEL PLAY LIVE
WOMAN?
TRAVEL PLAY LIVE

Fig. 61.1 Photos from TLP

may never have considered as an option for their improved health, happiness, and overall well-being. You can be sure that *Travel Play Live* will remain at the cutting edge of this adventure.

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Pathways Forward to a More Inclusive Future Whilst Honouring the Past

Denise Mitten and Tonia Gray

It was hard to stop. In our book we would like to mention more women who pioneered in the recent women in the outdoors movement—some are still in outdoor learning environments (OLEs), some have moved on to other endeavours, and some are no longer with us. Here are two vignettes as examples:

> Raised in The Bronx, NY, Arlene Ustin was born loving "nature" and still has her "collection" from nature hunts with her mum at the local park. Whilst an art teacher at a junior high school, she spent her 1970 summer vacation as a student on the first women's course at the Minnesota Outward Bound School (MOBS). She was 26. For her next summer vacation, she wanted to be an instructor at MOBS, but she couldn't swim! However, she discovered she was a good rock climber, and the North Carolina Outward Bound School (NCOBS) featured several days of rock climbing in its courses. During the summer of 1971, Arlene was an assistant instructor for two courses at NCOBS: its first girls' course and its first educators' course. She returned in 1972 as the first woman in Outward Bound (OB) USA to hold a permanent programme position as a programme

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D. Mitten (✉)
Adventure Education & Sustainability Education, Prescott College,
Prescott, AZ, USA

T. Gray
Centre for Educational Research, Western Sydney University,
Penrith, NSW, Australia

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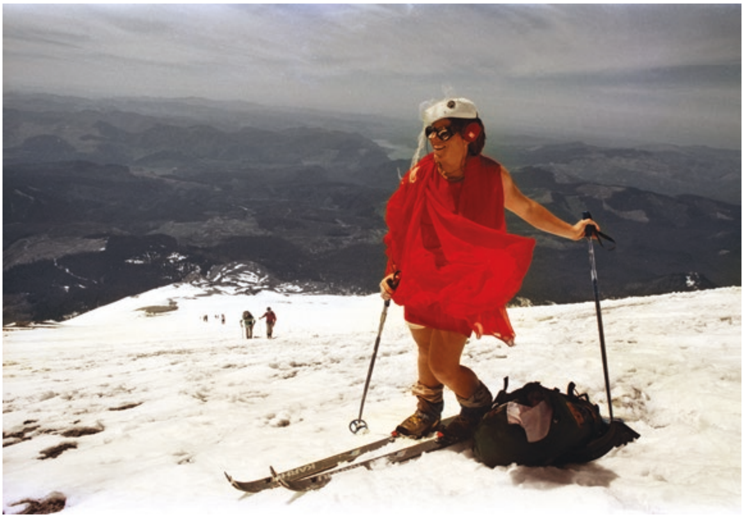

Fig. 62.1 Kathy Phibbs (1958–1991), founding mother of the Mt St Helens Mother's Day ski party, a tradition that continues 30 years later with people climbing Mt St Helens in a dress, and often with pink flamingos, to honour mothers (with permission: Benjamin Benschneider / The Seattle Times, 1987). See http://kristinatravels.blogspot.jp/2017/03/climbing-mount-st-helens-for-moms-pnw.html for a story with a 2017 perspective or http://cassandraoverby.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/MountStHelensArticle.pdf

specialist and course director. Arlene spent 28 years of her career at the Athenian School in Danville, CA, in several capacities including directing two graduation requirements: the Athenian Wilderness Experience (AWE), and the Community Service Program (which she created). AWE, modelled after OB, was a choice between 28 days in the High Sierra or 28 days in Death Valley. Retired now, Arlene is an activist and advocate for social, political, and economic justice and environmental protection in Florida.

Kathy Phibbs (Fig. 62.1), 33, died in 1991. She and Hope Barnes,[1] 32, were killed in a fall from Triple Couloir, an ice climb in the Cascades in Washington state. At Pomona College in 1980, Kathy formed the Cucamonga Rambling Company to apply for a Vera Watson-Alison Chadwick-Onyszkiewicz grant. The resulting 1981 expedition made several first women ascents in Peru and Bolivia, including the West Ridge of Huayna Potosi (Bolivia) (Women Climbers Northwest, 1992). In 1983, Kathy organized the first meeting of Women Climbers Northwest. She worked as a messenger, window-washer, chimney sweep, and part-time climbing guide until 1985, when she opened the Northwest office of Woodswomen, Inc. As its director, Kathy developed numerous rock climbing, mountaineering, and skiing trips and led trips to Ecuador and Denali. In 1989, she was a member of a successful all-women expedition on the Southwest Ridge of Pumori in the Nepal Himalaya. In 1990, she led 33 women on a Woodswomen sponsored climb to the top of

> Mt. Rainier (4,392 meters; 14,411 feet) to commemorate the centennial of its first known ascent by a woman, Tacoma schoolteacher Fay Fuller. A commemorative t-shirt from that climb and other gear from Kathy are at the Women's Rights National Historic Park in Seneca Falls, NY.

Honouring the past has been a trip down memory lane. Editing this book has been a time to reconnect with old friends and colleagues and to meet new ones. As we read the manuscripts coming in, we could surmise who had read what literature, leading us to hope that this book could be a place to share resources. We intend for this book to be the beginning of conversations and rigorous debate about a profession steeped with male hegemony. These stories and studies demonstrate that much has changed over more than 50 years that some of us have been involved in OLEs, and some things have not changed. We have learnt lots. We are troubled by the continuing dearth of women represented in OLEs and by the concept of gender. We now understand more about colonization and domination and are unsettled by the use of the word wilderness. Whether women's contributions have been disregarded or overlooked because social structures have confined and restricted opportunities for women to engage (Wilson & Little, 2008), or because of blatant sexism in our culture, we can support each other and make a difference going forwards. We know there are women who made significant contributions to OLEs that we still do not know about, and others that we know, about whom we would like to learn more. This handbook has mostly stories from dominant Western countries and therefore privileges these voices. As feminists committed to inclusivity, we know that more stories from women of colour and women not part of mainstream OLEs are out there that women and others involved in OLEs and the general public would benefit from knowing about. We acknowledge this shortcoming of the book.

For example, African American woman Rahawa Haile (2017), who through-hiked the Appalachian Trail in 2016, noted, "Harriet Tubman is rarely celebrated as one of the most important outdoor figures in American history, despite traversing thousands of miles over the same mountains I walked this year" (para. 35). Harriet Tubman was an accomplished outdoors woman, as well as an Underground Railroad[2] conductor. She was born Araminta Ross, circa 1820, in Dorchester County, Maryland, on the plantation where her parents were enslaved. This area is relatively unchanged since 200 years ago that Tubman was there. The Harriet Tubman State Park, established in 2016, the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument established in 2013, and the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge highlight this area. As a slave child in Maryland's Eastern Shore, she navigated terrain that combined open fields, marshes, slave build canals, and thick woodlands. She waded into swamps during cold winters to haul muskrat traps, even when ill. She learned to forage for food, walk without making very much noise, and survive in the woods alone at night. In 1849, at the age of 27, she escaped to freedom and used the North Star to navigate as she travelled alone and by foot 90 miles to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1851, after establishing a homestead near the Canadian border, Tubman (who suffered epileptic seizures, dizziness, pain, and hypersomnia from a traumatic brain injury caused by being hit by a metal object thrown by an irate slave owner) exercised immense courage and skill by returning south 13–19 times to free hundreds of enslaved African Americans. While working hard to leave no footprints or other signs that would betray them to slave catchers and their dogs, and travelling mostly at night and without protective gear, or even footwear, they walked and ran through mountains and swamps, and on rock and thorny ground. There was little protection from frostbite, parasites, and other environmental hazards as these African Americans made their way over 500 miles to the last Underground Railroad stop in St Catharines, Ontario, Canada.

Tubman was a proficient guide as she motivated the freedom seekers, varied her routes each trip, and mostly worked in the dark. Because of her outdoor skills and before the US government agreed to enlist African Americans to fight for the Union, she was recruited to join the Union Army to engage in covert operations behind confederate lines. In 1868 civil rights leader Frederick Douglas wrote to Tubman:

> while the most that you have done has been witnessed by a few trembling, scarred, and footsore bondmen and women, whom you have led out of house of the bondage, and whose heartfelt "God bless you" has been your only reward. The midnight sky and the silent stars have been witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism. (Cited in Obama, 2013, para. 3)

Countless women lead and participate in OLEs, and many volunteer to help get more women outdoors. As an example, Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW), started in 1991 by Dr Christine Thomas when she was an associate professor of resource management (now the Dean of the College of Natural Resources) at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, WI, currently has 80 camps across Canada and the USA. By 1999, 15,000 women annually attended a weekend programme (Crippens, 2003). Peggy Farrell (2017, personal communication) from the national office said that 15,000 new women annually continue to participate in BOW today with about 5000 women returning to BOW from previous years. Most BOW offices are housed in State Wildlife or Department of Natural Resources, and many instructors are volunteers. Echoing the research and experience of women's outdoor programmes, Arizona coordinator Linda Dightmon talks about the safe, supportive environments that are created for women learning outdoor skills. Sharon Pitz, BOW programme coordinator in Marquette, said, "Becoming an Outdoors Woman is a program where each individual is encouraged to learn at her own pace. The emphasis is on the enjoyment, fun and camaraderie of outdoor activities and sharing in the success of one another" (Peterson, 2017, p. 1). One could estimate that over 200,000 women have participated in BOW programmes and yet few mainstream writings about OLEs mention BOW.

Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) claimed, "In 2017, REI is putting women front and center. Let's make outside the largest playing field on earth." They promised to have 1000 classes especially for women. Stritzke (2017) said that REI commissioned a survey and found that more than 85% of the women surveyed believed that the outdoors positively affects mental health, physical health, happiness, and overall well-being, and 70% reported that being outdoors is liberating. However, 63% of them said they could not think of a female role model and six out of ten women said that men's interests in outdoor activities are taken more seriously than women's. As part of its 2017 campaign, REI planned to help remove obstacles to women going outdoors. Mary Anderson, who died in 2017 at the age 107, co-founded REI in 1938 sharing her love of the outdoors with literally millions of people, many of them women.

Sporadically, stories are posted about women being outdoors. A recent news article titled "80-Year-Old Identical Twin Sisters Achieve Their Goal of Hiking the Appalachian Trail" said that over 13 years, Elrose Couric and Sue Hollinger completed the 3525-kilometre (2190 miles) trail (Collie, 2016). Another news post highlighted Jacki Hill-Murphy from the UK who retraces the steps of and creates films about early and almost-forgotten women explorers, such as Isabella Bird who, amongst other adventures, crossed the Digar La Pass in Ladakh on a yak in 1889; Isabel Godin, the first known Western woman down the Amazon in 1769; and Mary Kingsley who climbed Mount Cameroon in Africa in 1894 by a new route (Bussey, 2016). A current project for Hill-Murphy is a story about British missionary and explorer Kate Marsden's 3219-kilometre (2000 miles) journey riding across Siberia to bring aid to lepers. Hill-Murphy said that Marsden, who secured the support of Queen Victoria and the Empress of Russia, was assassinated by the media for working with the ill and died in poverty in the outback.

Knowing about these women, in part, depends on someone passing the information on. Through media, useful information is shared, women and people in other nondominate groups may find validation, and people are exposed to new ideas. In addition to oral stories, information sharing in the late 1980s included Woodswomen's 14-page bibliography of books written by women about women's outdoor adventures. In the 1990s through today, there seems to be an upsurge in books about women in the outdoors, such as *Leading Out: Women Climbers Reaching for the Top*, stories about women climbers, edited by Rachel da Silva (1992, 1998). Using current technology, Tonia Gray, TA Loeffler, Clare Dallat, and others do an excellent job of connecting people in their networks to stories about women in OLEs through Twitter and Facebook.

As described in this book, through OLEs, countless women, including many authors in this handbook, are helping to change Western culture from a compete-and-consume story to one of care, compassion, and inclusivity. They do so through Family Nature Clubs, early childhood and elementary education in classrooms or on farms and other outdoor places, place-based learning and Girl Scouts and Guides, as well as organizations such as OutdoorAfro and LatinoOutdoors meeting the needs of cultural groups to have learning opportunities and time in natural environments together. Whilst these efforts are excellent, there is still work to be done.

It Is Not Over Yet

What does this mean for women starting out or having been in OLEs for some time? For sure, we need to continue to advocate for ourselves. We need to find support amongst women and reach out to men and other allies. In Western cultures people are socialized to see women as lesser than, just as they are socialized to see the environment as lesser than. As Sheryl Sandberg (2013) pointed out in *Lean In*, and Hillary Clinton experienced, there is a stark difference between men and women when it comes to success and likability. Across every sector of society, the more successful a man is, the more likable he is. Conversely, the more successful a woman is, the less likable she is. Women are caught in many such catch-22s. We believe that it is useful to embrace feminist and eco-feminist understandings of the socioecological approach to health, namely, that the environment around us (including our work environments) impacts spiritual, social, intellectual, emotional, and physical aspects of our well-being.

Women sometimes hold themselves back, though it is a complex system of socialization that encourages both men and women to limit women. Women in general are socialized to be modest about their achievements and can suffer from the imposter syndrome or not being able to internalize accomplishments (Clance & Imes, 1978; Joyce, 2016), which can lead to lack of self-confidence and reluctance to put themselves on centre stage (Punnett, 2016). Motherhood and the resultant struggles for longevity in the field affect women's career trajectories (Frohlick, 2006; Kiewa, 2018; Lotz, 2018; Wright & Gray, 2013). For those interested in a further analysis of gender systems, a more comprehensive coverage is provided by Gray (2016).

In a book about women, it is hard not to appear to essentualize women and men and create a duality. However, this section aims to contextualize that talking about the way that certain genders are privileged is thoroughly mixed with our acculturation. It is useful to note that if we counter the socialization, we may find more similarities amongst all genders and people defining themselves as agender than differences. However, there is a movement for the theory of biological determinism to regain favour (Fine, 2010). Biological determinism essentualizes women and men, concluding that men and women are biologically different, which makes their behaviours gendered. It is important to question biological determinism because if it prevails, it is easier to see women (or any person) engaging in something not considered appropriate for their gender as odd or wrong. This sort of misuse of science supports people using lesbian baiting to keep women out of OLEs as discussed in Chap. 2.

Lise Eliot (2009) decided to write a book about gender differences, believing the many popular books (some written by scientists) saying that research shows men and women's brains are different, causing gender differences. As she looked closely at the literature, she became uncomfortable with the hypothesis that men and women are hardwired differently and ended up writing a different book than she thought she would. She looked at over 1000 studies and found that most studies showed no difference between men and women's brains. What she found was a strong publishing bias; publishers do not want to publish a paper that says "lack of sex difference in the brain." She found the *file drawer effect*; if there is no difference found, then scientists tend to leave those data in their file drawers. It may be comforting for some people to pin gender differences on biological causes because it gets them off the hook in personal relationships and culture. For example, we can say that it is silly to spend money on trying to get more women in science, mathematics, and OLEs since women are not hardwired for these subjects. Or, say that men are better suited to work in or supervise OLE programmes. Eliot said that whilst published studies show differences, such as boys are more object oriented and girls are people oriented, there are usually greater differences within each sex—amongst girls and amongst boys—than the gaps between these two genders (Eliot, 2009). Defending biological determinism, Brizendine

(2006) used science from the selectively published articles to support her views that women are hardwired to be mothers. Magnetic brain imaging (MRI) has been used recently to show that different things happen in the brains of women and men. Whilst usually discounting the cultural effect there since the child was in the womb and not taking into account the effects of socialization on how people see results and translate data, many researchers extend biases into their research and reach erroneous conclusions about what these differences in brain scans mean.

A number of books from the 1990s, such as John Gray's (1992, 2012a) *Men Are from Mars and Women Are from Venus*, which persists in popularity, claim that biology directs gender, and the biological differences between genders are supported by science (Brizendine, 2006; Fine, 2010). As demonstrated in *Mars and Venus in Love: Inspiring and Heartfelt Stories of Relationships That Work*, Gray (2012b) continued to publish from his initial hypothesis that men and women are hardwired differently, even though his work is not based on accurate and current science. Conclusions from brain research change over time. Now, most people believe (supported by science) that race is not connected to intelligence and that gender is not connected to brain size. However, many people continue to believe that women and men are hardwired differently, which is not supported by research.

In countries where there is support for people stepping outside normed gender roles, women do so. In Iceland and Sweden, where the cultures are supportive of mothers, 49% and 44% of the elected officials are women, respectively, compared to 19% in the USA and 29% in Australia (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017). In the USA, there continues to be the prevailing opinion that women are not as good as men at leading, mathematics, finances, and standing up to the pressure of politics, which influences choices women have and the way voters vote (Fine, 2010).

As long as most of the OLE text books and publications are written by men, who do not critically examine the past, women will continue to be overlooked and invisible. History is a perspective. Facts are shaped to tell a story from a person's point of view, which includes, by design or accidentally, leaving out certain facts and highlighting others. In the March/April issue of *Mother Jones*, Pauly (2017), through her timeline of the lowlights of women, demonstrated the long history of women being denied credit. She started with pre-European cave paintings being unconsciously attributed to male hunters, though scientists know through hand tracings that the art from at least ten famous sites were likely done by women. There are many examples from science, such as the injustices unveiled in the recent movie *Hidden Figures* or of Dr Chien-Shiung Wu's story, a Manhattan Project scientist who was passed over by the Nobel Committee for Physics in 1957 in favour of two male scientists who had recruited her to work with them. It was Wu who had the knowledge and skill and completed the necessary experiments to disprove the parity law of physics though the men received the prize. A 2016 example of leaving a woman in the lowlight was when immediately after Hungarian swimmer Katinka Hosszú shattered a world record at the Rio Olympics, a male commentator at NBC cut to her volatile coach/husband in the stands, proclaiming "And there's the man responsible!"

Lhakpa Sherpa, 44, who, in 2017, stood atop the summit of the world's highest mountain for her eighth time, was caught in the Wikipedia void. According to Chesney (2006), Wikipedia is considered a reliable place to begin a search and is the fifth most-visited website in the world. However, it is staffed by between 85% and 91% men. According to Wikipedia, there are far fewer articles about women and those about women are more likely to be taken down (Wikipedia, 2017a). At least three sites list Everest firsts and accomplishments. One site lists Melissa Arnot's fifth summit in 2013, breaking her own record for the most successful summits by any non-Sherpa woman (Wikipedia, 2017c). There is a racist slight here and not necessarily from Arnot. Nepali Sherpas are expected to summit and are stereotyped out of the records.

Lhakpa, a mother of three and a Sherpa, plans to climb Everest (Sagarmāthā is the name from the Nepali people) a total of ten times. She grew up with 11 siblings and survived domestic abuse from her European ex-husband (Schaffer, 2016). She has summited from both the Nepali and Tibetan sides. She has no formal climbing training and started carrying loads when she was 15 years old, summiting the first time in 2000. We know these details because of the Internet, including a news release from Banff and an *Outside* article (Bouchard, 2017). In May 2017 someone put up a Wikipedia site about Lhakpa Sherpa: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lhakpa_Sherpa (Wikipedia, 2017b), which demonstrates the power of taking the time to put information on the Internet, including building a Wikipedia site.

Remember Our History Whilst Moving Forwards

We have *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Outdoor Learning* because more than 80 women authors and other supporters care about recording their experiences and knowledge. It is important for young people to see women as role models and, of course, to see role models who are not the typical heterosexual white cis-male images that dominate OLEs. We need more stories that talk about women's experiences and inspire a cultural shift in the ways Western societies portray women and the environment.

Mitten and Woodruff (2010) found that frequently, women who have engaged in outdoor adventures and expeditions, including OLEs, do not write about their experiences or they do so many years later. Sometimes, women have other responsibilities and cannot take the time to write about their adventures, or they do not see them as anything other people want to hear about. A comment repeatedly heard is "if I can do it then anyone can and it is not worth writing about." This thinking can be true for feminists, too, as noted by Denise Mitten:

> In 1984 I led a climb on Pasang Peak (6,091 meters or 19,984 feet) in the Himalayas (Mitten, 1992). Even though my first 10 years of outdoor education were through the Girl Scouts and I knew women belonged in OLEs, on that Nepal trip it took me a while to become used to being referred to as the American team. I can understand being acculturated not to see women's trips as real or to identify as a *real* mountaineer.

In part, we have information about Kathy Phibbs and Hope Barns because women cared and put information about these two women on the Internet. Though it is uneven, the Internet can help share information. For example, when we searched Kathy Phibbs, several pieces talking about her immediately came up, though when we searched for Phyllis Ford, an influential OLE professor and writer whose career was 30 years before Phibbs, nothing was found straightaway. However, scrolling down to the third page of the Google results revealed a story about Camp Tamarack (founded in 1935 by Donna Gill of Lebanon, OR, and Lucille Murphy of Portland, OR) that said Ford became one of three women owners in 1980. This is a lead we can follow to find more information. Ford was a past Oregon State University faculty who defined outdoor education as "education in, about, and for the out-of-doors" (p. 12) that has been an OLE mantra for over 30 years. Perhaps people who have the time can do more research and writing to unearth more information about women in OLEs.

Marina Ewald, a German woman, born in 1887, is another case in point. Marina Ewald was virtually unknown to the outside world until Veevers and Allison (2011) went to Salem School and found, through reading Hahn's personal papers, that Ewald was Hahn's partner in planning and the co-director at Salem School. Kurt Hahn is the much celebrated and revered founder of the Outward Bound movement. In 1904, at the age of 18, Hahn suffered from sunstroke that left him with a recurring disability for the remainder of his life. When he was a boy, he had walked in the Dolomites and saw value in students spending time outdoors. However, Hahn never completed a major expedition and had to regulate for the remainder of his life, how much time he spent outside and under what conditions.

At Salem, Ewald encouraged sailing for girls and boys while Hahn, according to accounts, did not seem interested in sailing. In 1925 Ewald, a geographer, initiated the school's first sailing expedition to Finland and Iceland. After this, she was an advocate for the educative value of expeditions and incorporated them into the curriculum. As a result, Hahn embedded expeditions into his future endeavours, too, and today we thank him for his vision. Notably, Ewald was a key player and instrumental to the inception of the Outward Bound expeditionary model. Ironically, this piece of history has been completely subjugated, and we have a "gender washed" asymmetrical (his)story.

When Hahn fled to the UK during the Nazi regime, Ewald remained as a Salem School director (totalling 50 years). If you search Kurt Hahn on the Internet, you will find a number of schools that he founded, including the Salam School in 1920. In no record was a co-founder named for the Salam School. Though Prince Max von Baden is named as Hahn's benefactor.

In 2011, nothing came up on the Internet about Marina Ewald. This year, however, a couple of Internet results include a lead on a paper she probably wrote. Ewald died in 1976. Fortunately, Veevers and Allison (2011) increased the information in the records. They have a Facebook page highlighting the limited, though crucial, information about Ewald. We encourage others to continue to put together bits and pieces to gain more complete pictures of Ewald, Phyllis Ford, and others. As championed by Ahmed (2017) and Gray, Mitten, Loeffler, Allen-Craig, and Carpenter (2017), when we accumulate information, we can influence the accessibility of the information. In this manner we continue pathways forward to a more inclusive future whilst honouring the past.

Attributing accolades to Ewald does not take away from Hahn's work; it reinforces an ecological model Mitten (2013) suggested of changing the conversation from a genealogical point of view where fathers or mothers of fields or professions are named to that of an ecological system. Thinking in terms of systems encourages people to look in more niches to find complementary contributions and question dominant paradigms. It emphasizes that practitioners from a number of intellectual and practical niches contributed from their perspectives in their respective areas. In an ecological system, seemingly small contributions may be crucial for the whole ecosystem to thrive. A systems perspective may help open our capacity to value and include more works of women and other underrepresented groups in our scholarly discussions (Mitten, 2013).

Looking back to the 1980s and 1990s, we said hello and goodbye to many women's tripping organizations and resorts. China Galland (1980) wrote *Women in the Wilderness*, which provides her perspective on the early history of women in OLEs. This classic is an early recount of women travelling together in the outdoors. She has moved on from OLEs, and here are some more oldies—advertisements and women's programmes—recorded during the 1980s and 1990s: Canoeing in Canada for Women, Britta, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada; Bushwise Women, Christchurch, New Zealand; Wilderness Way Resort and Campground Wascott, WI; Wildwise, Australia; Women Climbers Northwest, Seattle, WA; San Juan Islands with women, Off the Beaten Path, OR; Mountain Mama Packing and Riding, Harpy, Santa Fe, NM; Women Outdoors, Medford, MA; Adventure Associates, Seattle, WA (Sandy Braun and Cris Miller); New Dawn's Caribbean Retreat & Guest House, Puerto Rico; Inn At Pine Ridge a B&B especially for women near Eau Claire, WI; Bicycle tour of Zion National Park and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon, Gloria Smith, Driggs, ID; Alaska Wilderness for Women, Anchorage AK; Rim Tours' Mountain Bike Adventures for Women by Jacquie Phelan creator of WOMBATS (women's mountain bike and tea society); Alaska Women of the Wilderness, Eagle River, AK; Adventure Travel for Women, Hood River, OR; Lois Lane Expeditions, Inc., Seattle, WA (Rachel da Silva and Priscilla McKenny); Rainbow Adventures (Susan Eckert); Mariah Wilderness Expeditions, Point Richmond, CA; New Routes, ME (Ruthie Rohde), Woodswomen, Inc., Minneapolis, MN, Free catalogue by women for women, Guidebooks for travel in the west, Windspirit Fresno, CA. These women's organizations have come and gone, though they touched the lives of many women, and their legacies live on. Publishing helps preserve information; these names were in old magazines and Woodswomen newsletters and now can be put into alternative media. We encourage women to help by believing that their stories are valid and worthwhile and considering publishing them in any media.

Some cultures teach people to only look at the exceptional, we encourage more looking at the ordinary and the everyday and realizing how exceptional that is. We need everyday stories. Hearing stories from women who have been leaders in OLEs for many years and those who are participants, for example, Christy Smith in Chap. 25 who describes her pathway to be an outdoor woman, demonstrates the importance of maintaining women's access to OLEs. Looking forward, there ought to be many more stories on Twitter, in the popular press, and academia. There is hope. Arlene, Kathy, Hope, Harriet Tubman, and so many women have embodied much of what we all strive for:

enthusiasm, joy, perseverance, competence, integrity, and passion. Women and allies can continue to influence OLEs, and we can continue to learn about our history.

Notes

1. Hope was known nationally as a two-time Olympic rower and locally as a serious ski mountaineer and climber. She was awarded her medicinal chemistry doctoral degree posthumously on 8 February 1991.
2. The Underground Railroad was a secret humanitarian resistance movement of African American and white abolitionists who helped thousands of African Americans escape from bondage.

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