

Urban nature:  
inclusive learning through youth work and school work

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### Author presentations

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## *Where and what is nature – today and tomorrow?*

*Klas Sandell*

### Introduction

This paper will take its point of departure in my late aunt Marianne who has taught me much about human's relation to nature. Her landscape will also be an illustration of my first statement about the fundamental integration of human and nature. This will be followed by my second point of departure concerning the historical evolvement of re-creational nature as a basic human ecological fact in the modern urban industrialized societies. Thereafter I will focus on two current themes that I believe are of special interest with regard to outdoor adventure education and experiential learning in the future: the increasing importance of ordered nature; and the 'indoorisation' of outdoor activities. The paper will be closed by two conclusions saying: "Keep up the good work" with regard to out-of-doors as a pedagogical tool for sustainable development, and the need to "Encounter nature in ordered nature".

The paper is based upon my oral presentation and therefore, with a few exceptions, no references are mentioned, but such information could be found in previous texts like e.g. Sandell & Öhman (2010 and 2013); Sandell & Fredman (2010); Sandell et al. (2005); and in Swedish e.g. Sandell & Sörlin (2008); Emmelin et al. (2010); Brügge et al. (2011); and Fredman et al. (2013).

### The fundamental integration of human and nature

My aunt Marianne has taught me much about human's relation to nature. Figure 1 shows her and the landscape where she was born and lived her whole life – a small fishing and farming community along the Swedish Baltic Sea.

Figure 1. The landscape of my aunt Marianne, small-scale fishing, husbandry, agriculture and gardening in a small fishing and farming community along the Swedish Baltic Sea.

This landscape was really a 'place' for Marianne in the academic use of the term; identity, knowledge – a 'lived' landscape. But, where was 'nature' for Marianne? Where is it possible to draw a boundary between nature and culture in this landscape? What is the location of nature here? My impression is that it was not at all reasonable for Marianne to draw such a clear territorial demarcation saying that "over there, at that place, there you have nature" – nature was in a sense everywhere, and also culture was everywhere. But, simultaneously, nature was very important, deadly important – weather, growing, storms, competition with seals, weeds and so on. And everything all the time was in change! To me this is an

illustration of the fundamental integration of human and nature that I believe must be a fundamental for all our discussions of where and what is nature!

Figure 2. A model of the city Shanghai in China together with some snapshots from the same place.

The next figure (Fig. 2) tries to summarize some impressions of the city of Shanghai in China – a city with about 20 million inhabitants. Also here of course there is still a fundamental integration of human and nature, but in an industrialised and urbanised society it is often forgotten and hidden. We have built an ‘out of the wall society’ for the affluent groups where the human-nature relation, which my aunt Marianne was so aware of, has been to a large extent forgotten. In an ‘out of the wall society’ all basic human ecological linkages go through the walls (and roofs and floors) – air, water, energy, waste and so on.

The concept of nature is obviously constructed culturally and our perception of ‘nature’ depends on the society in which we live, how we were brought up, as well as the type of general knowledge and attitudes that we create (e.g. in schools and organisations – perhaps with the help of outdoor education!). However, even though the concept of nature is culturally constructed, it does not imply that we are free to choose whether nature itself exists or not. People and society are dependent on the relationship with the environment, including those aspects that are not under human control. Everything from solar activity and the laws of gravity to the flight of migratory birds, the photosynthesis of plants, and the passage of water down the mountainsides. To me ‘nature’ is the elements and processes in the environment that are not deliberately brought under human control; or, at least at present, could not be brought under human control. Therefore, in this way nature is present and manifested in various forms and ways in our everyday life. So, my first point of departure is the fundamental integration of human and nature – everywhere, every time!

#### The evolvement of re-creational nature

With regard to my second point of departure I want to recall the tradition of creating ‘doors’ to go out from the modern urban society. It is about the re-creational nature that has evolved parallel to the industrialized and urbanized society. The ‘doors’, both physical and mental doors, that we have built to go out from the ‘out of the wall society’. Outdoor recreation, adventure education, experiential education, nature based tourism and so on. Here are some quick reminders from the Swedish history. ‘The discovery of the outdoor life landscape’ occurred at the turn of the century 1900. This was the period when organisations for outdoor recreation and nature based tourism were established by the prosperous elites of society and the pedagogical aspects were of utmost importance from the early beginning. For the 1930s we could summarize the situation as ‘the welfare state’s need for nature-based recreation’ and after the Second World War we had a fast economic growth and the material welfare increased, also with regard to leisure and tourism. It was a situation where the welfare state felt the need for planned recreational landscapes and it was a period when the authorities invested in physical structures and information for the promotion of outdoor recreation. For

this turn of the century perhaps the situation could be summarized with the following key words: 'the mobile society's medial, commercial and cultural diversity'. It is here important to note that these created doors 'out' to the re-creational nature most often lead to landscapes specially designed for human experiences of nature; often in terms of protection from human interference. We could view this as 'islands' of 'nature' in the sea of man-nature interaction, so my second point of departure is the importance of the evolvement of re-creational nature.

#### The increasing importance of ordered nature

As a point of departure I mentioned the evolvement of the re-creational nature, and a main thing with ordered nature is to give nature a location – to say *there is nature!* But what will happen in the landscape of my aunt Marianne if someone – with all the best intentions – comes and says “this is now a wilderness area for the urban population and here guides, teachers and educators will show nature to the urban people”? We could see these clashes of landscape perspectives in e.g. the current striving for ecotourism as both an important way to encounter nature for urban populations but also to do so in close relation to the local population – whose 'place' the tourists are visiting. Holden (2000, my under-linings) presents ecotourism as: "...small scale of development with high rates of local ownership [...] maximised linkages to other sectors of the local economy, such as agriculture, reducing a reliance upon imports [...] localised power sharing and involvement of people in the decision-making process" (p. 192).

The tension between landscape as a 'place' with nature, culture and development integrated vs. landscape as a protected wilderness is a result of the historical development illustrated in figure 3 showing the evolvement of modern environmentalism. From *Nature Protection* around the turn of the century 1900 (and outdoor recreation and nature based tourism is to a large extent a child of this period); via *Nature Conservation*, *Environmental Control* and strategies searching for Alternatives to the modern industrialized society. Today, the very much extensive and comprehensive key-concept is *Sustainable Development*. Obviously it is very hard to give nature a location according to the nature protection perspective in such a comprehensive concept as sustainable development that involves ecological, economical and social aspects. This could be a challenge for the outdoor education traditions rooted in the nature protection perspectives.

Figure 3. Some of the main themes in the growth of modern environmental concern and where the concept sustainability can be seen as something that includes previous discussions but also implies a continuing power struggle between sustainable development as a globalised version of environmental control and a socially critical alternative progress (Sandell & Öhman, 2013; drawing by Matz Glantz).

#### The indoorisation of outdoor activities

Another important current theme is 'indoorisation'. This concept refers to the tendency for going indoors and building special milieus for activities traditionally carried out in outdoor milieus to a large extent characterized by nature. This indoorisation of outdoor activities is also linked to the interest in ordering nature – you could say it is the extreme result of trying to command and control the context for outdoor activities. I believe that a lot of hard thinking still has to be done with regard to consequences and pedagogical strategies concerning this. It is linked to sportification of outdoor recreation, and sport activities have always built their own specialised rooms and landscapes adapted to the activities. We have a tension between the tradition of *competition-oriented physical exercise in controlled environments*, and the tradition of *nature encounters and experiences in at least to some extent uncontrolled environments*. The latter is what we often call for example: outdoor adventure education, outdoor recreation and nature based tourism. Now we have reinforced renegotiations of these borderlands. It is renegotiations about: activities, groups, motives, equipment, places and so on and this will very much influence the future framework for pedagogical ambitions out-of-doors.

#### Two conclusions

As a first conclusion with regard to where and what is nature vs. outdoor adventure education and experiential learning I want to write: "Keep up the good work". Even though researchers love 'problems' – it is part and parcel of research work – it is important also to remember all the good work that is carried out. A modern industrialised and urbanised society is an 'out of the wall' society where our human-nature interrelationships to a large extent are hidden. Therefore it is of utmost importance to keep up the good work in opening the doors in the 'out of the wall society' and remind, especially the coming generations, of nature and our relations with nature. Figure 4 illustrates one example of what I believe is the necessary work of investigating – critically but looking for the potentials – of how outdoor activities could be used for different purposes. What are strengths and what are limitations with regard to outdoor adventure education and experiential learning?

Figure 4. A model for outdoor education and environmental concern including the subtleties of "environmental concern", "landscape approaches" and "motives" as well as five main environmental educational paths (Sandell & Öhman, 2013; drawings by Matz Glantz).

Here (Fig. 4) the relation between outdoor education and environmental concern is scrutinised. A point of departure is that it is not enough only to be 'out there' to get a sustainable development. We (Sandell & Öhman, 2013) believe that it is important to discuss motives and landscape approaches in the out-of-doors. It is also important to discuss what type of effect we are looking for. What does it mean to be 'environmentally engaged'? In this illustration, five pedagogical paths are indicated as a suggestion of relationships between experiences of nature, environmentally friendly attitudes and behavioural change. Paths that at the same time respect the legitimate claims on the part of outdoor education practice for concretisation and clarity. There is no direct path from all outdoor education to sustainable development – but there are probably some very valuable roles for direct encounters with

nature that could be a viable complementary pedagogical tools to other types of environmental education.

As a second conclusion I want to stress the need to encounter nature in ordered nature. I am not saying that we must avoid 'wilderness' like areas – but I am saying that we should widen our search for nature, firstly on a personal basis, secondly as a pedagogical theme. I think we should try to go beyond the landscapes of specially designated meeting places with nature. To get a sense – everywhere and all the time – of the fundamental integration of human and nature in which humans with body and society always are both nature and culture; the presence of nature in the milieu where you are reading this text; the presence of nature in your body; the presence of nature in the food and drinks you consume; the presence of nature in the equipment you use now and in the outdoors; and the presence of nature 'out there' in nature!

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## ***Getting it off PAT: researching the use of urban nature in schools***

***Sue Waite, Rowena Passy and Martin Gilchrist***

### Introduction

We take the term ‘urban nature’ to signify a green space within or on the outskirts of towns and cities; it may include woodland, parks and other open areas, and may be managed or unmanaged. We include urban or village school grounds, which range in size and extent of green space and, depending on the individual school’s use of those grounds, can form an important part of children and young people’s connection with the natural environment.

It is this type of urban nature that forms the context for an innovative project in south-west England. Funded by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Natural England and English Heritage, and delivered by Plymouth University, the Natural Connections Demonstration Project aims to engage 200 schools and between 200-500 volunteers in learning outside the classroom in the natural environment (LINE). The project is a direct response to the Government’s White Paper *The Natural Choice* (HM Government, 2011) which pledges action to “remove barriers to learning outdoors and increase schools’ abilities to teach outdoors when they wish to do so” (p. 4). Research demonstrates that learning outdoors has a wide range of benefits for children and young people (e.g. Dillon & Dickie, 2012; Rickinson et al, 2004; Waite, 2011; Waite, 2013) and that people living in areas of high multiple deprivation have less connection with nature than those who live in more prosperous areas (Natural England, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013); accordingly, the project is targeted at schools in areas of high multiple deprivation which have little or no engagement with LINE at the time of recruitment. The overall aims of the project are to:

- stimulate the demand for LINE from schools and teachers in areas of high deprivation and that are currently inactive in LINE
- support schools in building LINE into their planning and practices
- stimulate the supply of LINE services for schools and teachers.

### The Natural Connections Demonstration Project

The approach used in the Natural Connections Demonstration Project is based on a cascaded model of responsibility within the five most deprived areas in the English south-west of Plymouth, Torbay, Cornwall, North Somerset and Bristol. Following a formal process of recruitment, a ‘hub leader’ has been appointed in each of these areas to manage project delivery in collaboration with the University-based central team; these have recruited around five ‘Beacon Schools’ in each hub, each of which are successfully engaged with LINE and

who will work with a local 'cluster' of around seven schools which have little history of teaching and learning outside as shown in Figure 1 below.

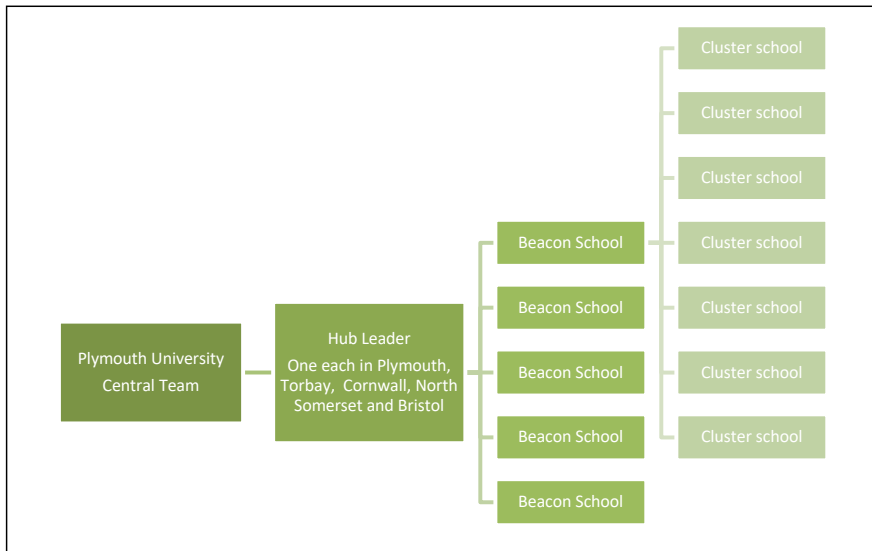


Figure 1: The Natural Connections model.

The project's objective is to support these schools in building LINE into their everyday practice so that it becomes part of 'what they do' – or, to put it another way, to stimulate a culture change within these schools so that they regard LINE as an essential, sustainable part of curriculum delivery. Project support for these schools has four elements; first, brokering relationships with specialist LINE, fundraising and continuing professional development (CPD) providers who can offer expertise in relevant areas and secondly, providing practical help and guidance on recruiting and managing the volunteers who will be invited to support lesson delivery outside. A dedicated web service hosted at Growing Schools (2014) and linked to the Times Educational Supplement's Outdoor Learning discussion forum is the third element. The fourth and final element is the evaluation, embedded from the project's inception that will provide both formative and summative assessments of processes, outputs and outcomes in order that a developed model can be adopted elsewhere.

#### Project research and evaluation

Most commissioned interventions have an evaluation component, generally undertaken by independent external agencies (Arthur & Cox, 2013) that are brought in once the project is established in its delivery. However, as Lendrum and Humphrey (2012, p. 636) argue, interventions rarely proceed precisely as planned, and a detailed understanding of process, both for programme-specific reasons and for a broader understanding of how these processes affect project outcomes, is essential. We would suggest that it is particularly important that

the evaluation for Natural Connections is embedded from the outset of the project for three reasons. First, the project is complex, partly outlined in the three aims and four delivery elements above. It also has the further complexity of five different hub delivery models, seen in the hub leaders' organisations of a City Council (responsible for local administration of public services), a social enterprise company (an organisation that uses commercial strategies to improve human and environmental well-being), a community interest company (a type of social enterprise company), a Learning Institute (a school-based learning company), and a charitable trust (an organisation set up for charitable purposes); each has designed their own hub delivery in the light of their organisation's expertise and local knowledge. Understanding the strengths and areas for development of each hub leader, how they have developed their own delivery model and the importance of local factors affecting each hub's delivery will be an essential part of evaluating the overall impact of the project.

Secondly, monitoring implementation allows us to feed back to all project participants. This feedback will have a variety of practical functions that include facilitating comparisons between hub models and allowing hub leaders to learn from each other, informing on particular challenges, sharing good practice between schools and reporting successes. These different forms of feedback can also help to generate a project environment in which participants feel part of a greater whole which, in turn, can contribute to ensuring that participants complete their evaluation data requirements. Thirdly, should the intervention be successful, the summative evaluation will provide guidance on rolling the project (or its cousin) out nationally. Here it will be particularly important to analyse the data at macro, meso and micro level (see, for example, Raffo et al., 2007) to understand the different levels of contextual conditions that affect project delivery. For this we define macro level as the national policy environment, meso level as involving the central university team, hub leaders and local environments, and micro level as referring to schools; detailed understanding of processes and outcomes at all three levels, together with their interaction, will enable us to identify factors that either hinder or enable the project's progress.

However, as might be foreseen, these different factors contribute to making the evaluation a challenging process. At the micro level, a critical focus for the evaluation is monitoring the development and impact of the project on schools – school communities are potentially the primary beneficiaries of the project and monitoring both their processes and outcomes is at the heart of the research. On the one hand we need comparable data across 200 primary, secondary and special schools, each of which will be using LINE in a way that suits their own particular priorities and local contexts; this, in turn, requires detailed information on why, how and with what result schools use LINE. On the other hand, the demands of the evaluation should be easily manageable for schools to ensure that they return all the information that is needed. Encouraging schools to participate in research and evaluation in the current English educational environment can be problematic; they are subject to multiple performative pressures and have to be convinced that there is a “low risk of interruption to the central work of the school” (Maguire et al., 2011, p. 2), defined as raising standards in external examinations. As James (2006, p. 372) comments in her reflection on the difficulties of

balancing research rigour with practical constraints, this often has the result that contributing to research “is a marginal activity for most teachers and schools”.

An equal concern, however, is that the quantity of data is manageable for the research team. Over-ambitious plans for data collection and management can threaten completion of the evaluation (see James, 2006, p. 372) and we need to be sure that we have allowed sufficient time to analyse the data collected. For this reason we are using a range of surveys with an emphasis on quantitative data that can be analysed automatically through software programmes such as SPSS; we have limited the qualitative element of the surveys to ensure that the research team can manage the necessary associated coding and analyses. We will also visit 30 case-study schools during the project’s lifetime to add richness and depth to the evaluation, and these visits are intended to provide more detailed information on a range of ways in which schools use and embed LINE into their everyday practice. Although they will be selected to reflect different age phases and geographical locations, clearly the case studies cannot be regarded as representative of schools as a whole, but they will offer valuable contextualised illustrative examples of different approaches that schools have adopted within the project.

Neither of these approaches, therefore, allows comparable qualitative data on schools’ approaches to LINE across the entire project; the numbers gained from the surveys largely answer questions related to *how many? how much? what kind?* and yield little information on *the why, how and with what result* schools are using LINE. Our innovative response has been to devise the Priorities Assessment Tool, the subject of the next section.

### The Priorities Assessment Tool<sup>1</sup>

As suggested above, a particularly interesting challenge for the evaluation is to collect comparable data across 200 schools. These schools will be using LINE in different ways, in different subjects, to meet different national and local priorities, and in teaching pupils of all abilities aged anywhere between four and sixteen. In addition the project schools will be of different sizes, be located in both rural and urban environments, and be located in catchment areas with multiple – although differing – challenges in the home and community lives of their students. Briefly put, there will be a huge range of different aspirations, activities and outcomes that need to be captured in order to enable a comprehensive evaluation.

We were sceptical about the efficacy of ‘what works’ top-down innovation (Fullan, 2009). Fundamental to our vision for the Natural Connections Demonstration project is the idea that sustainable innovation is best supported by embedding that change in local priorities; accordingly no blueprint formula has been prescribed for intended outcomes or the methods by which they are achieved in the project. The hub leaders and individual schools negotiate what will fit within their local context. As the project’s model is based on cascaded responsibility, in which each ‘layer’ of participants takes ownership of their own involvement,

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<sup>1</sup> The Priorities Assessment Tool (Waite & Gilchrist, 2013) should only be adapted with the permission and due acknowledgement of its authors. Please contact [sjwaite@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:sjwaite@plymouth.ac.uk).

stipulating that each school should use LINE in a particular way or with a particular year group would contradict this intention; rather, we wanted to encourage schools to use LINE by demonstrating its (potential) efficacy in contributing to each individual school's priorities. Just as the research team needs to know the details of each school's work for formative and summative evaluation of the whole project, so do schools need to know the extent to which their own use of LINE is 'working' to satisfy their own data requirements for school improvement; are their LINE activities helping them to address their school priorities? If so, how? We needed to find a way in which we could align the project's evaluation needs with those of participating schools.

Our solution has been to develop the Priorities Assessment Tool (PAT) (Waite & Gilchrist, 2013), a six-step process that encourages different stakeholders in the school community to discuss how different school priorities can be addressed by LINE, select particular action plans to tackle these priorities and monitor the progress of these plans over time. The six steps for each school are:

1. With a group of different school stakeholders, who might include senior leadership, teachers, governors, school volunteers and parents / carers, select up to five outcomes that using LINE could achieve. These could include, for example, improving boys' achievement in English, encouraging healthy eating or working towards a school accreditation such as Artsmark ; they are the 'priorities' of the tool.
2. Using the form provided (see Figure 2 below), write down each selected priority and score each from 5-1, with 5 for most important to 1 for the least important.
3. Through discussion, identify the most significant challenge to achieving each of these priorities. What are the internal and external factors likely to impinge on achieving these outcomes, and which do you think will have the strongest effect?
4. Assess the relevant challenge to determine how likely each priority is to be achieved, scoring 5 for very likely to 1 for not very likely.

**The Priorities Assessment Tool (PAT) Steps 1-4**

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Hub: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Planned review date: \_\_\_\_\_

Specific project (Please describe the project briefly below)

Example – Working outside with year 8 boys to improve achievement in English. Outcomes will include improved achievement, teacher assessed improved engagement and teacher assessed improved behaviour

A. Desired outcomes and B. Challenges	C Importance	D Achievability
<p><b>A. Write down the outcomes that you would like to happen as a result of your LINE project. Try to write each statement so that you can review it and say whether it has been achieved after the project ends.</b></p> <p><b>B. What do you think is the most significant challenge to achieving each outcome?</b></p>	<p>For each outcome, rate its importance with 5 as most important to 1 as least important</p>	<p>Score each outcome from 5 as highly likely to be achieved to 1 very unlikely to be achieved</p>
<p><i>A worked example of one outcome:</i></p>		
<p>A. Boys' achievement in English in year 8 will be improved by the stimulus of increased outdoor learning through the NCDP. This is important to me so I rate it 4 in Step 2</p>	<p>5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1</p>	
<p>B. The timetable is for 45 minute lessons, so would need to block double lessons to allow time to get out. However, I think it is fairly unlikely to be achieved however, so I score it 2</p>		<p>5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1</p>
<p>1A</p>	<p>5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1</p>	
<p>1B</p>		<p>5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1</p>
<p>2A</p>	<p>5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1</p>	
<p>2B</p>		<p>5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1</p>

Figure 2: The PAT form for Steps 1-4.

5. Devise and implement an action plan, using the relevant form (see Figure 3 below) to support the achievement of the priorities, addressing specific identified challenges with a date for review. The action plan should include measures of achievement (i.e. the evidence on which to base assessment of the action plan's success).

**Action Planning Template** This template can be expanded as necessary to include the actions that you intend to pursue to achieve the desired outcomes.

CPAT Priority	What specific actions will you take to address this desired outcome?  What is the rationale for this activity in terms of learning processes and outcomes?	When will they happen?	Key contributors and resources required	How will you know it's been achieved?
1				
2				
3				

Figure 3: The PAT action plan, step 5.

6. Revisit the priorities identified on in steps 1-4 on the agreed review date to assess how far the priorities have been achieved, the extent to which challenges have been overcome and the proportion of the outcome that can be primarily attributed to

participation in the Natural Connections project. Complete the form for step 6 (see Figure 4 below).

#### The development of the Priorities Assessment Tool (PAT)

The PAT builds upon earlier use of decision theoretic methodology (Edward et al., 1983; James, 1997) for formative and summative evaluation that is beneficial for stakeholders in innovation (Waite, Bromfield & McShane, 2005; Watson, 2013). Rather than imposing external criteria, Waite et al. (2005) elicited stakeholders' views of what would constitute success in inclusion of children and young people from schools for students with moderate learning difficulties in mainstream schools as a measure for success. Professionals and parents were asked to list their objectives, to prioritize these using objectives pro forma and to assess on a scale 0–100% the likelihood that each objective would be achieved. This permitted 'value judgements' from a broader base of stakeholders to be taken into account rather than imposing researchers' own values alone (Clough & Booth, 1998). Nearly 200 objectives were collected, which were thematically analysed and grouped by the evaluation team into five main categories:

1. Opportunities for included children to realize their potential.
2. Opportunities to be educated alongside mainstream peers.
3. Development of inclusive practices.
4. Benefits for mainstream school.
5. Professional development for staff.

This transparent method of structuring objectives allowed the participants' diverse priorities to be taken into account. The resultant set of prioritized objectives then formed the basis for a questionnaire of 24 statements set out in three sections: about included students, about the process and about the schools. All adult participants completed this questionnaire at the end of the project to record how far the objectives had been met in their opinion. This provided a 'measure' against amalgamated stakeholder priorities to assess the success of the project and to identify remaining challenges.

Thus the method allowed complex decisions about benefits and challenges to include different perspectives within a common set of indicators. The process also enabled the importance of certain outcomes to be tempered by how realistically they could be achieved within particular contexts, by acknowledging difficulties and limitations. Furthermore the process associated with this example of decision theoretic methodology ensures that assumptions and expectations are made visible, facilitating solution-focused action and a common vision of what success might look like. Shared ownership of innovation also increases the likelihood of its adoption and sustained use (Fullan, 2009), so the method can serve a formative purpose as well as offer summative evaluation. In this particular example, the data was analysed by University researchers and fed back to the schools that then used the common set of indicators as a measure of success.

For the Natural Connections Demonstration project, the participatory aspect has been extended to include not only the process of elicitation of priorities for schools through the use

of LINE but also subsequent stages so schools use their identified unique priorities as the basis for their action plans and to assess the degree to which they have been achieved after the LINE intervention. This provides documented management information for schools at the micro level, which we hope will encourage schools to engage with the evaluation. In the case of the Natural Connections Demonstration Project, the priorities are not being combined to arrive at a common set as in Waite et al (2005); therefore each school's set of statements of priorities will differ. However, as the PAT yields a quantitative score of relative success against these diverse priorities, it will enable us to aggregate this data at the meso level and interpret the extent to which LINE is seen as meeting schools' needs and its association with other factors.

#### Supporting schools and achieving evaluation aims

We believe that using the PAT has a number of significant benefits for both participating schools and the project itself, and that it may well contribute to an inclusive approach to LINE. In the first place, the PAT's requirement to involve a range of different stakeholders to think about and discuss their priorities for the school encourages community participation and, through these discussions, potential development of 'buy in' through a shared vision for the school. Of course this depends to a large extent on each school's leadership and management, and creation of a shared vision is not an uncomplicated process (see, for example Watson, 2013). Nonetheless encouraging the practice of opening out planning discussions may be helped by the project requirement that participating schools have a LINE team made up of senior leadership, teachers, other school staff and community members such as volunteers and parents / carers; our intention is that this LINE team takes the lead on the PAT in collaboration with other staff members, and the evaluation team will stress that community involvement is an important part of the PAT when training schools in its use.

There are, too, concrete ways in which the PAT will support schools. One is encouraging them to think of LINE as a way of addressing school priorities rather than as an 'added extra' that may or may not bring unspecified benefits to participating children and young people; this means that schools will need a coherent theory of change in which they are clear about what they are going to do, why and the expected outcome. Another is through enabling schools to have a quantitative assessment of the extent to which they have succeeded in achieving their selected priorities, using the sixth and final step of the PAT (see Figure 4 below). This encourages schools to give a numerical value between five (high level of change) and zero (no change) to the extent to which each priority has been achieved and, using the same numerical values, the extent to which the most significant challenge has been overcome. However this process of giving a numerical value to the relative success (or lack of effect) of each intervention will also allow them to reflect on their use of LINE in addressing school priorities, on the lessons they have learned and how they might develop LINE in future. This, in turn, contributes to schools re-assessing the support they might need for future LINE delivery, thereby encouraging further interaction with the project to broker these needs with relevant organisations or individuals.

**The Combined Priorities Assessment Measure** to be completed through LINE team discussion

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Hub: \_\_\_\_\_ Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 7A & B	Step 7C	Step 7D	Step 7E
<p><b>A</b> Please copy in the combined outcomes that you jointly identified as priorities to achieve through the project in the boxes below as in the Combined PAT form and Action Plan.</p> <p><b>B</b> Please copy in the main challenge to each outcome.</p>	<p>How far does the group think each outcome been achieved? 5 means it was completely achieved while 0 was not achieved at all.</p>	<p>Has the most significant challenge to achieving these outcomes been overcome? 5 means it was completely overcome while 0, it was not overcome at all.</p>	<p>What percentage contribution to the outcome does the group estimate is due to the project? (0% indicates no contribution by the project to 100% completely attributable to the project)</p>
<p><i>A worked example</i></p> <p><b>A</b> Boys' achievement in English in year 8 will be improved by the stimulus of increased outdoor learning through the NCDP. Assessments have shown that boys' literacy has improved compared to previous years but we would still like to see further improvement next year.</p>	5-4-3-2-1-0		<p>The staff reported high levels of engagement in the lessons outside and high quality writing in class after the stimulus of these lessons.</p>
<p><b>B</b> The timetable is for 45 minute lessons, so would need to block double lessons to allow time to get out We got agreement to have one double lesson per week that allowed us to get outside</p>		5-4-3-2-1-0	<p>We think a high percentage of the improvement is due to this intervention.</p> <p>80%</p>
1A	5-4-3-2-1-0		
1B		5-4-3-2-1-0	

Figure 4: The PAT form for Step 6.

From the project evaluation perspective, the PAT will enable the research team to have a range of comparable data across the project. If we convert the five-point Likert scale in Step 6c (how far has the outcome been achieved?) of quantitative values of ‘completely achieved’ (five) to ‘not achieved at all’ (zero), we will be able to obtain measurement of all schools’ perceived success with LINE; for example it will be possible to say that V per cent of schools believed that their LINE intervention was ‘completely achieved’ and X per cent believed it was ‘not at all’ achieved. Similarly, the percentage value in Step 6E will allow us to report that Y number of schools felt that project participation made a Z per cent contribution to achieving school priorities through LINE. This will contribute to filling a gap in the literature of studies about LINE involving large data sets. Finally, the qualitative element of the PAT form – which priorities? what challenges? – will enable us to report on patterns of school priorities for which LINE has provided support, together with the relative success for each priority. Further analysis of this data will allow us to see patterns within and between the different hubs, encouraging us to look at the different contextual factors that may have contributed to these patterns in each hub when undertaking the meso level analysis.

Summary and conclusion

There are always limitations to each form of data collection and, although schools’ early interest in and use of the PAT has been encouraging, we anticipate a number of potential problems. One is ensuring that all schools complete at least one PAT project; as we have seen above, it can be difficult to persuade schools to participate in research and evaluation. However the PAT’s close alignment with any school action plan, and our suggestion that schools can use their own action plan format if they prefer could be helpful in this regard. This flexibility however carries the risk that a school’s action plan may not include all the information we seek. Another limitation is that as a Likert scale, this number is not an

absolute value; one school's score of 5 cannot be equated with another school's 5 directly. This limits the sorts of analyses that we can employ. Nevertheless school-level subjective perception about the relative success of their use of LINE will be indicated and this will enable us to report percentages of schools' perceived degrees of success. Success could otherwise be only inferred from incremental increases in the levels and spread of LINE activity across subject areas; this activity data will however offer corroboration for the perceived value of the LINE derived from PAT. Furthermore it will enable us to capture information about the areas for school improvement that schools identify as most conducive and responsive to LINE interventions.

Time will tell how successful this tool will be in enriching the evaluation of this major project. Meanwhile we would welcome any feedback about our methods and suggestions about ways that this exciting opportunity to document change through LINE might be further enhanced.

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## ***A joy at being in touch with the elements of life: a practical workshop of experiential and outdoor education***

***Maija Venäläinen and Laura Kuusinen***

### Introduction

The workshop “A joy at being in touch with the elements of life”, held during the EOE seminar “Urban nature: inclusive learning through youth work and school work” in Stockholm, shared activities rising from the practices of experiential education and environmental education. The workshop was lead in form of a “Diary-walk” (Van Matre & Johnson, 1988). A Diary-walk is a method that uses a story for helping people to look at the world with somebody else’s eyes. Rising from our own experience we have seen the use of a story in a diary-walk as a good way to tie the chosen separate workshop activities together to work as a whole. Also when using a story, the role of the workshop-leader changes to the way we appreciate. The needs for leader’s own instructional and explaining talk is then more limited. The story does the trick for you as a leader and gives more space for the participants’ reactions and more self-build reason for active participation. Also, like in this case, a written story can be of help to the leader, when leading a workshop in foreign language. A diary walk is well suited to be used in urban environments. The activities and spots highlighted through a story don’t need to represent nature but, for example buildings, statues or even cultural changes can be chosen to be the focal points of a walk. This workshop took place in a city park and we used walking paths for moving from spot to spot. Ideas for the diary walk and also the activities “Web of Life”, “Theatre in the Woods” and “Y-mark for a friend of nature” shared in the workshop are originally described in a book “Earthkeepers” (Van Matre & Johnson, 1988).

### Writing the stories for the workshop

To use this method the preparations had to be made in different story levels. Firstly, we needed the “frame story level”. This level is meant to give the participants general information on what is going to happen. The second level needed was the “diary-level” telling the story needed to run the workshop in line with the frame story. The second level included the instructions of how to find the chosen routes and places, and described the activities to be shared. These first two levels could be prepared in advance and only some adjustments were needed when the workshop actually took place. The third level, the level of the story that is shared during the workshop, is a one-time only and is built by the participants and the leaders on the spot.

### Starting the workshop

The workshop was started in a classroom. When entering the room, the participants were welcomed by drawing a mysterious Y-mark on their palm and by hanging an animal or plant sign around their neck. The workshop leaders introduced themselves and the frame story. The participants were told that an old diary was found in Finland from the Hyria Education school farm, and that in the diary there was a story of a trip taken to Stockholm in the nineteen thirties by the former owners of the farm, the Kriss brothers. The participants were then invited to relive their trip. The story was told as if it were true. And to be honest, it took some time before it was clear to everybody that it was fictional. The feeling in the classroom was good-humored. We were ready and eager to start. The shared diary walk is written below. The parts in italics are text from the diary and tell us about the trip the Kriss brothers took decades ago. Other parts of the text tell us about the relived trip we took on a beautiful June day in year 2013.

### Starting the Diary-walk

To start the Diary-walk it was time to read the first chapter from the Diary, what had happened to the Kriss-brothers decades ago at this same place.

“We were standing in a classroom and waited for our field trip to start. Before saying anything about the trip our guides handed everyone a card and draw a mysterious mark on everybody’s palm. After that we followed our guides out. From the front door we turned right and walked along a path, and went through an old metal gate. Right from it we saw a cross road and a big map of the area. We stopped there.”

### Web of Life

With smiles we found out that we were equipped exactly same way and headed outdoors. The instructions the diary gave were clear and soon we were at the cross road and it was time to read more from the diary:

“In the crossroad our guides said that our next task is to find a tree where a black and white sun is shining. Near the place there are three trees growing close to each other and there is a cute birdhouse up on another tree. The sun is to be found on the left side about 20 meters from that place. We started to follow a small path leading in the forest.”

The group found easily their way to the right spot. The diary continued:

“We found the black and white sun. It was a nothing more than a piece of paper. Then the guide said: Now it is time to take a closer look into the card you have hanging around your neck. It shows what role you will have next. Are you a plant or an animal? The card also shows what you need for living. There are symbols for the four vital elements: water, soil, energy and air. For example this plant gets its water from a lake, soil from ground, energy from sun and air from animals (carbon dioxide animal exhale).

But, as you know, nothing can exist by itself; everything is connected to other things in the web of life. To get connected with each other you need something special. You need a special belt with connection cords. As you can see the connection cords have same color symbols as the lines on the card: yellow for energy, light brown for soil, blue for water and white for air. With this equipment we started to form our own web of life.”

After this we were sure this was the spot. The group took some time to study their cards to find out what kind of animal or plant they were and what were they sources for water, soil, energy and air. Then they were handed out belts with the connection cords described in the diary. Also, for the activity, some preparations were made earlier to label small trees to be used as the connection points: the sun in the middle and a lake and some rain and ground around it. After getting the belts, the participants started getting connected. After several laughs, questions and remarks, not to speak of the mosquito bites, everyone had found their place. It was time to turn back to the diary.

“Finally everybody had found what they needed, and there were no loose ropes left. We had found our places in the web of life. Then the guide did something dramatic. She took a can from her pocket and simply poisoned one of the plants. She said she just wanted to get rid of a plant she did not want to have in her garden anymore. But the result was something else; through the connections the whole web collapsed.”

We found the courage to try the same thing and proved the fact. By poisoning just one plant it was possible to get the whole web to collapse.

“Getting poisoned, even it was just sugar, was not nice, but it made me remember something important: I can never do just one thing, because everything is connected in the web of life. Then we all got disconnected and helped our guides to pack the ropes and things. After finishing the clean-up we formed a circle and heard about our next task.”

We did the same, packed up our bits and pieces and were ready to move on:

“Earnestly our guide reminded us, that even energy, water, soil and air are the elements that keep us alive, we as humans need also other things. We need art, we need beauty.

We were told that we had been invited to a theatre to join a play. The door to the theater is marked with a Welcome-sign, but in order to get in to the theater we need a ticket. Anything beautiful picked out from the park would do. So, we started to walk and look for the door and something beautiful to be used as a ticket.”

*Insert photo here*

Getting connected in the web of life. Photo: Sabine Werner, BSJ Marburg

So, without needing any other instructions we started to walk and look for something beautiful to be used as theatre tickets. The diversity was rich and made the choosing difficult, but manageable. We found the way to the theatre place and left our tickets to the right place.

In the theatre

*Insert photo here*

Welcome to the theater in the woods! Photo: Sabine Werner, BSJ Marburg

The diary told us more about the theater and ensured we had found the right door:

“We found the door with a Welcome-sign. It was on the ground. Next to it was a black square. We placed our beautiful things on it. Admired them for a while and stepped into the theatre.

But this was not an ordinary theatre. It was a theatre in the woods. The audience was sitting on the ground in a circle and enjoyed the play blindfolded. The actors were playing their role in the play without talking. Our seminar group was divided in half. The other half of the group was actors and the other half of the group made the audience. The actors had a blue mark on their hand and the audience had red marks. Both groups followed their guide to get more instructions.”

The idea of playing a role in a theatre obviously aroused suspicion among some participants, but it soon passed away when they heard from the diary how the play would be performed. The group was divided in half. The half of the group playing the audience was seated in an out facing circle. They were handed blindfolds they could cover their eyes with. While waiting for the play to start they were also given a special concert by the birds living in the “theater”. On a warm, sunny early summer day, you can just imagine how beautiful and relaxing it was. When the actors started their act, after some serious rehearsal with one of the guides of the course, they quietly walked in and took a seat in front of one member of the audience. So, each member of the audience got their own actor. The idea of the theatre was based on senses and the role of the actor was to strengthen the experiences and senses described in the story read loud by the workshop leader. For the purpose they got or collected small articles or made different sounds. For example, in this play the gentle wind was made by fanning a piece of paper close to the listener’s cheek. The odours were deepened with a

tiny branch of pine and a small amount of soil. The sounds of the lapping waves were made by rippling water in a small cup. The wild onion in the story was a clip of chive (*Allium schoenoprasum*). The play was played in two acts and for the second act, actors and audience changed roles. The manuscript of the play is written in italics below and the parts where actors are meant to strengthen are underlined in the text.

### Summer play

#### *First act*

It's a nice, sunny summer day. The warm, gentle wind blows against my face as I step into the forest. While walking along the path I hear the sound of dry branches breaking under my feet. I also notice the tender scent of the coniferous trees. Branches of leafy trees wipe quickly but softly my cheek when I move ahead the small path. I stand still for a moment and listen to the cuckoo singing somewhere little further. I reach down and touch the soft moss. It feels like silky fur in my fingers when I stroke it. The path winds its way towards the coast of the sea and I continue my walk. Beside the path I notice a familiar plant growing. I pick up a slim, green leaf from the plant and I sniff it and I taste it - nice flavor of wild onion! Cheerfully I continued my walk towards the sea shore.

#### *Second act*

The path has not been used for a while. Leaves and branches cover mostly the track. In some parts the soil is left uncovered. I bend down and take a handful of soil. The smell is fresh even though the soil is very dry. The wind feels to be stronger on the sea shore. I sit down on a rock close to the waterside and listen to the lap of the waves. I put my hand in the water. A small stone sticks by chance to my hand and I turn it in my hands. I drop the stone back to the water. A small bird is singing in the bushes nearby. The song is full of happiness and makes me smile. I take a deep breath twice and my mind is full of joy and sunshine.

The theatre play was a success. The participants really made their best in acting and the atmosphere after the play was cheerful and easygoing. For most of the participants, the experience of this theatre was totally new and the feedback was positive.

### Secret signs

The last part of the diary was read at the theatre place and it gave advice for the participants where to return. The group had had the secret Y-marks in their palms throughout the workshop. After reading the last chapter from the diary, the group began independently to search for the signs from around about. Walking back to the seminar venue, the participants were looking for the signs very intensively and actively sharing their findings with others.

“After the play we were ready to head back to the seminar venue. But then someone from the group wanted to share something: he had thought about of the marking on his hand and had noticed that the same mark could be found in nature. We started to look for our own marks and shared them with others when we slowly walked back to GIH.”

*Insert photo here*

Sign of a friend of nature. Photo: Sabine Werner, BSJ Marburg

### Closing the workshop

Before returning to the GIH buildings, the group stopped for a while to talk about the workshop. Everyone shared their feelings and experiences. The group was also briefly told about the background references of chosen methods and they got a copy of the publication “A Peak into Pikkutikka’s Nesthole” (Kettunen et al. 2005). The booklet describes in details nature school programmes where similar type of approach, as in the workshop shared here, has been used in nature educational context. The criteria for the chosen activities were:

- the activities should have a focus on sharing and doing
- the activities should be simple and should not demand expensive equipment or props
- the activities should be easily modified for different target groups
- the activities should be easily joined to different kind of programs
- the activities should wake positive feelings for nature in the urban nature
- the activities should add ecological understanding

Activities shared are used in Hyria Education in Finland in training of the professionals for Wilderness and Nature Interpretation and Social and Health Care. As for the interpreters, the aim has been to encourage them to use methods and tools created in the fields of outdoor education, experimental education and environmental education in their work. As for the social and health care professionals, the value of own experiences of activities lead in nature are seen as a source of better understanding the health effects of humans’ being and acting in nature and secondly to give them practical examples how to lead activities in outdoor environments.

Hyria Education is a multidisciplinary educational institution offering vocational education and training. The 5 main campuses are located in the Hyvinkää and Riihimäki region in southern Finland. Hyria provides high quality educational services for both young and adult students. The range of services includes basic vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications in 27 different educational sectors. Hyria also provides various training alternatives to our corporate and community customers (Hyria Education, 2014).

### Practical commentary

- The frame story and the diary-walk were written by the workshop leaders and the activities and props needed were chosen according to it.
- The story was finished on the spot after being acquainted with the neighborhood at the seminar premises on the spot.
- Special attention was paid to leaving space for creativity of the group.
- Some of the props were planted along the track in advance.
- Having two leaders made workshop reflections and evaluation easier.

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## *In Scotland a park is a field*

**David Brown**

### Introduction

The title of this paper came simply from the realisation when I moved to north-east Scotland that farmers there refer to a field as a 'park'. North-east Scotland has retained its local dialect, called 'Doric', partly because it has been relatively isolated by its location of extremity and the sea to the north and east, mountains to the west and hills to the south. Some Doric words come from Gaelic, some are 'farmers' words', like 'sterk' meaning a young bull, a term I had heard farmers use in Yorkshire and deriving from the Old Norse word for 'strong'. Other words come from archaic English, which has been spoken in the north-east from around the twelfth-century. This is what made me realise that the word 'park' throughout Britain would once have meant what we now think of as a field. 'Park' also came to be used to designate the designed Romantic landscape in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries – open grassland with specimen trees dotted about in it. These parks were still in the country, on the estates of wealthy land-owning aristocrats. It was this type of park that was emulated and transferred to the city when the first parks were made in British cities. My surprise at hearing the word in its original rural context shows how urbanised our perspective has become.

### 'De-natured Children'

I work as a Countryside Ranger for Aberdeenshire Council. Aberdeenshire has Scotland's third largest city, Aberdeen. Aside from that it is by and large a rural county and yet its children live quite urban lives; they awake in their centrally-heated homes, travelling by bus or car to a centrally-heated school, then back home to do their homework, then watch T.V. or play on their x-boxes. They are living 'boxed in' lives. As Aberdeenshire is intensively farmed, there are few places to play in the countryside; its stands of commercially planted timber are equally forbidding.

I have had experience of children who are frightened of the idea that foxes are close by and even frightened by the sight of a thistle! Yet other children respond to nature positively, one child on a school trip to Haddo Country Park told me, "This is the best day of my life!" A group of secondary school special needs children for whom I ran a Forest School, were motivated to pick up a pen and write something in class – 'What I did at Forest School' – this was the very first time the teachers had been able to get them to write anything about anything!

Now, we all know that spending time outdoors, particularly through connecting with nature and through increasing physical activity, has many benefits for our health and well-being.

This includes fostering a sense of positive self-regard through outdoor journeys and adventures, developing adaptive competence when managing risks and challenges, and strengthening resilience and confidence in new and unpredictable situations (Children and Nature Network, 2012; Moss, 2012).

But there are greater issues to be addressed here. In the desire to see our children develop into strong, healthy, capable and confident individuals, we perhaps might fall entirely into the view that nature is just the best playground and the ideal classroom and a peerless educational resource. Yes, it is all of these things. It is also all we have got; quite literally, all we have got. We live on the surface of our planet within a thin band of soil, water and gases. Once a bird, a beast, or a plant is gone, it will never return. Once an ecosystem is gone, it might return, perhaps in a different place, but not for a long, long time.

If you ask a young child, “Where does energy come from?” they will know, having been told, and reply, “The Sun.” But what does that mean to them? We perhaps cannot expect teachers to make known to children, except in a dry, abstract, intellectual way, the interrelatedness of all life. But it is the growing generations of children who as adults will be asked to make real sacrifices to either combat the consequences of previous generations' inaction over climate change or, more probably, just to adapt to its demands, demands that will be most likely to lower their standard of living and lower the quality of their lives, at least by the consumerist standards they have grown up in. They will best be able to make these sacrifices if they are emotionally connected to nature and childhood is the best time to forge such a connection.

### Urban Nature Parks

Nature in a park should not be there to be tamed, to be out of bounds; it should be for children to just be in and explore. I would advocate not cutting all the grass and letting ‘weeds’ and thistles grow; with thorns in the ground hidden by long grass nature would be more as it is the countryside and would teach valuable lessons about risk, the limits of abilities and the consequences of actions. There should be fire-pit areas, supplied with wood for fuel. There should be things for children to climb up and jump off that do not have padded, cushioned surfaces to land on; such padded landing mats only serve to give children an unrealistic perception about the hardness of reality!

Urban Nature should be as wild as possible. Parks should cease to be the trimmed, cut, manicured areas we have come to expect; they should become as diverse and natural as possible. It is such parks that, unfortunately, will be the nearest many of our children will get to the Great Outdoors. Let those parks be something that will inspire them, not because they have great skateboarding facilities but because they have huge trees, hidden, secret places for den building, that provide homes to creatures that aren't human, in short, let them inspire a sense of adventure but more importantly a sense of wonder and mystery in the natural world.

Western cultures have become very child-orientated in recent years; from the nineteenth century attitude that children should be ‘seen and not heard’, children’s charities now raise massive sums every year, education departments take the lion’s share of local government budgets, parents get themselves into debt every Christmas and seek to protect their children from ever more rarefied possibilities of conceivable harm, they would do anything for them – except perhaps take them out to the countryside; Dr. William Bird recently said “There are some children now who can’t balance on one leg, simply because they have never been on uneven ground.” (Juniper, 2013, p. 252). This kind of risk aversion is a form of child abuse! But what about when these children leave school and become adults? How much care do we put into the future that they will inherit from us? To look at the bigger picture, we need to think about ‘life-long learning’.

Where I live, in Ellon, Aberdeenshire, in Scotland, after every school lunch break the streets are covered in discarded litter from the various junk-food outlets at which secondary school children choose to buy their lunch with money given to them every day by their parents (I mention this because I think it’s important to name and shame!). Yet some schoolchildren in Britain are now growing their own vegetables and learning to cook meals as well. This has led to an increase in the popularity of school dinners. One south London school headmaster said he had even seen an improvement in the children’s exam performance. I don’t think that is just because their brains are receiving better nourishment, or because they are getting some exercise and making a connection to the soil and nature. I think it is also because they are becoming more confident. They know they can grow food and they know they can cook food. They have acquired meaningful, useful skills that they actually practise and that make them more capable and independent as human beings. Compared to so many urban people who buy oven-ready meals for a micro-wave, they will have higher self-esteem. It’s the same with being able to light a fire; basic human skills – if you have them, you feel better about yourself. But as a culture, we have systematically devalued what is most important. This incremental distancing from nature and natural activities is why people ‘switch off’ when environmental issues are raised, and precisely at a time when in order to get support for environmental policies, the natural world that supports us needs to mean something. It is not enough to present flawless scientific arguments backed by statistical analyses. It needs to mean something at a personal, emotional and – dare I say it - at a spiritual level too.

City Parks, I believe, should include areas for growing food, not just for the satisfaction of growing things or as an educational resource but to prepare us for resilience to climate change. You can grow a lot of food on a small area of land and this might be necessary if climate change brings food scarcity to those countries we currently import our food from. There are other benefits too, aside from food. The more green space we have, the greater its potential biodiversity and this also can have a beneficial impact on human well-being. A Sheffield University study showed how a correlation existed between how many habitats an area’s local green space had and local inhabitants identifying with that place as psychologically restorative; plant variety was associated with an ability to reflect and birds were associated with emotional attachment (Fuller et al., 2007).

### Examples of Good Practice

Dr. William Bird, mentioned earlier, also talks about the very small amount of evolutionary time we have spent living in cities and how we have been shaped in very profound ways by our birth and existence in nature. And this is something that I have long felt; that our natural environment is in nature and to confine ourselves to an urban environment is as unnatural as keeping cows indoors all year round. We might consciously want a city life but without access to nature this is damaging on a much deeper level. Urban Nature should be built into city planning in the way it was built into the design of the London Olympic Stadium, which is fringed with wetlands where water flows from reed-beds to storage tanks where it is then pumped back to water the gardens as required. These wetlands have already attracted sand martins and kingfishers.

The Swedish firm Skanska recently built 128 houses in Cambridge, England. As well as meeting very high standards for water and energy efficiency, all 128 dwellings have sight of green space from their windows with trees, water and open green space integral to the development's design; it has cycle lanes, mini-parks and allotments for growing vegetables. Such a shift in planning makes economic sense if we think of the improvement to health and well-being. Developments such as the one in Cambridge can in themselves become flagships of inclusive learning, not by being shown round it and told about it but by living in a city where wildflowers and insects abound, badgers pass through tunnels built under roads for them, urban foxes eat urban rabbits not discarded junk-food, where wildlife corridors are as important as motorways and children get to play outside in a city where the urban and the natural interact in a mutually beneficial way. It is ironic that cities can sometimes provide greater opportunities for habitat creation than an intensively farmed countryside.

A final point I would like to make is to do with the people who can provide this education and experience. A colleague of mine recently heard a teacher in a staff room holding up her phone and asking: "Has anyone got an app for tree identification?" That teacher was probably far too busy to actually take a walk in woodland to learn to identify trees and maybe wasn't so interested anyway. She wanted to learn about the natural world on-line! Apps on trees that take you to a website where you can learn all about the forest you are standing in is another way that, having finally got outdoors, you are guided back to staring at a tiny backlit screen. It's as if virtual reality is preferable to actual reality!

My concern is that nature is being seen as a learning resource and nothing more. That its only interest lies in its being able to provide great learning experiences for children. Teachers in Scotland are now required to provide more outdoor learning but many do not want to set foot outside because the weather is cold, because of the risk and insurance implications, because they lack confidence outdoors and even sometimes, being urban people themselves, they have little regard for the natural world itself. When my colleague pointed out that the minerals needed for I-pads, kindles and smart phones were responsible for the Congo rain forests being felled to get to the minerals underneath, he received only blank stares.

In my opinion, the ultimate reason we are, or should be, using urban nature for providing formal and informal educational experiences is not only to help children and people from

various socio-cultural backgrounds to become happy, healthy, capable and confident individuals. It is primarily to give them a love of and appreciation for nature, upon which we are all wholly dependent, so that they can see nature as something of value in itself and not just as a resource that needs to be managed sustainably. The best thing we can do to preserve ourselves is to protect and increase biodiversity for its own sake, not ours.

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## ***City Bound – a participant orientated case study***

***Katarina Seyffferth***

### Introduction

City Bound is an experiential learning method making use of the city as a learning environment. It offers a wide range of individual challenges in which everyday routines and behavioural patterns cannot be applied anymore.

Friedrich Gierer (1993, p. 20) mentioned one main reason why City Bound was developed as an alternative to Outward Bound: Nowadays citizens of most cities are confronted with several problematic constellations: Fast changing living conditions, lack of adventures in daily life (due to media), environmental pollution, consumption, violence, isolation of people and growing social contrasts. To face these social challenges, City Bound offers (similar to the nature-based Outward Bound) realms of experiences in urban areas, where the participants can leave their comfort zone and face personal challenges to grow with them. But it also uses the diversity and the different resources of cities, instead of 'escaping' into nature.

However, City Bound also uses urban nature, like parks, gardens, riversides to reflect their new experiences, to calm down and to be aware of the comforting nature in cities as well.

Since the end of the 1960's City Bound projects have been run within youth work but nowadays also in adult education and in career-building contexts. While former City Bound programmes transferred mainly classical experiential education elements like climbing or canoeing into the urban environment, recent programmes focus more on activities that are suited to the circumstances of an urban environment. E.g.: Interviews with personalities such as a city's chief of police, games involving public transport or having breakfast in an open public space are potential elements of City Bound workshops. All these activities have the function to disturb one's own patterns of perception, orientation and action. Just as in other experiential learning settings, reflections have a high importance in the concept. This is where emotions take place and where patterns of actions that lead to success or failure are analysed.

### Research design

Until now there is hardly any empirical research work which deals with City Bound. That is why this paper, which is a summary of the author's master thesis, tries to give an insight into the perspectives of City Bound participants in the city of Cologne. The focus will lie on the following questions:

1. What did the participants learn within City Bound, based on their subjective perspective?

2. Were the participants able to transfer their learning experiences to their everyday life back home?
3. What personal meaning can individuals take from City Bound? What does City Bound mean to them?

To discover the individual impressions, a qualitative research design was chosen: problem-based, structured interviews were conducted with four young educators in training, who participated in a 4-day City Bound workshop in Cologne within their vocational education one year before the interviews were arranged. In May 2012 two women, Lena (age 21) and Sophie (age 22), and two men, Lars (age 23) and Karsten (age 48), were interviewed in Marburg, Germany. Additionally, for an overview of other experiences and impressions, the whole class of 16 students was interviewed by means of a short, qualitative questionnaire including a group discussion. Since the study is interested in the transfer of the learning experiences, it seemed to be important to choose a class, which joined the programme about a year ago. That way one can narrow the short-term enthusiasm right after the programme on the one hand and notice potential long-term learning effects on the other hand.

## Results of the case study

### *Learning experiences*

This thesis is based on theories of Ulrich Oevermann (2008) and Peter Becker (2007). According to them one can assume, that an educational/formative process is initiated by the management of crises and individual challenges, in which everyday routines and behavioural patterns cannot be applied. It becomes apparent, when the interviews were analysed, that they all had to manage personal challenges within City Bound. Thus one major condition of a successful learning process is met. All of them describe that they had to leave their comfort zone and that they had to overcome their inhibitions. They also talk about great insecurities and about temporary fears they had to deal with. Especially Lars emphasizes this:

“During the trip I often thought ,Oh man, I don’t want to do this’, because you get some kind of task, which you have to do, but which is actually really awkward and then you have to jump over your own shadow (which is a German saying which means to be able to act out of your own character, to do something, what you would usually never do) again. I think I was in my ‘stretch zone’ the whole time, that’s why the trip was quite stressful for me.” (12, 63).

This makes it clear that the different activities took great effort from him, because his everyday routines of action, which normally offer him comfort and security, cannot be applied here. Instead he had to take risks while trying new/unfamiliar courses of action. Lena describes in her interview the physical symptoms of such stressful situations, by saying that she was nervous, sweaty and shivering. This makes clear that she couldn’t rely on her previous behavioural patterns (14, 24).

In the written interview many students describe what a great effort many activities took them; at the same time they always write about the positive feelings, the relief and the pride after managing a task successfully (cf. B4, 4; B4, 12; B5, 3-5), e.g.:

“I think I’ve never experienced anything before, which cost me such an effort. The task which we had to do by our own was the worst! But the feeling that you’ve actually accomplished something and overcome your fears, is just amazing!” (B5, 17).

It became clear, that each participant experienced the same situation/task differently: Some saw it as a challenge, for some others it was an everyday situation within their comfort zone. One can assume that these challenging situations enabled many different learning experiences. In the following they will be located on three levels: the individual, the group and the city related level (Deubzer/Feige 2004, p. 15f).

#### *Self-referred learning experiences*

##### Training of communication and interpersonal skills

Being asked what they think they have ‘learned’ during City Bound, most students emphasized the training of communication skills and the ability to establish contact to others. They kept on mentioning how hard it was to overcome one’s inhibitions and to manage rejections of strangers. Lars describes that it was difficult for him to approach strangers because he was afraid of rejection. But in the end he experienced that nothing can happen and rejections are only words (I2, 38). Obviously City bound offered them a ‘training field’ where they could practice and strengthen their communication skills and were able to practice their handling of rejection and failure.

##### Questioning of everyday stereotypes

Furthermore all four interviewed students used City Bound to question their opinion of others. Lars confronted himself with his own prejudices within one task by approaching and communicating only with people of whom he thought could be ‘weird or unfriendly’. It becomes clear that their experiences in Cologne offered intensive reflection, where everyday stereotypes of others can be tested and new perspectives of others can be developed. Lena describes:

“City Bound changed something in my life. I began to think differently about other people, I don’t just label them without knowing them, but instead I just say ‘Ok, I take things as they come’, I am more open minded towards others” (I6, 110).

Obviously City Bound offered the participants a chance to question their prejudices and to approach others with an open mind.

### Self-efficacy

The interviewed students often describe their surprise about what they were able to accomplish, e.g. within the 'egg-trade-activity'. Lars calls this task "impressive". He seems to be surprised about what is possible with one single egg. He didn't expect such a rich buffet, which was the final result of the 'egg-trade-activity'. This task was a good way for him to see how he can actually influence his environment. Karsten also says that: "I saw that things are possible, which I didn't expect at all" (I6, 82). He realises that he can change things. It becomes clear that in these open and unpredictable situations/activities, the individuals get the chance to achieve something and to exert influence on their environment.

### Self-confidence and courage

A stronger self-confidence comes along with the above mentioned self-efficacy. Within these extraordinary challenges the participants have to make their own, reasonable decisions, without the relieving help of their everyday routines. The outcome of this is the long-term development of a stable self-confidence, which is based on their own achievement instead of being based on the appreciative response of others. Especially Karsten describes:

"It can be worth it to be brave, to risk things, which you actually do not dare to do, things of which you think 'Oh, this won't work', where you have an inner inhibition or where you think 'this will be embarrassing', but it is going to work!" (I6, 82-84).

After a successful management of an individual crisis situation (which was to approach strangers, say hello and shake their hands), Lena stresses that she thought in the beginning, that she wouldn't be able to do it. Since she describes herself as "not really outgoing" and "shy" this cost her quite an effort to dare this challenge. It took her more than 15 minutes to give it a first try. Then she describes:

"But afterwards I was so proud of myself, that I tried it and that I (in German we say) jumped over my own shadow" (I4, 18-25).

She mentions that it has taken a load off her mind and that she saw that she was able to handle such a 'crisis' or challenge. She adds, that thereby she got the chance to feel, how far she could go, what she is able to accomplish and what kind of situations represent her personal challenge. Here, her transition from a first fear of the challenge to the pride in herself after successfully managing the crisis becomes especially clear.

### *Group-related learning experiences*

All interviewed students noticed a clear improvement of solidarity within the class after the City Bound class trip. Within the group discussion several students describe that before the trip the class was split up in several small groups and only after the trip the class actually felt as one whole 'group'. Others describe that City Bound offered a space to get to know other classmates, whom they didn't really know before. Lena points out that she finally had to deal

with classmates, she had never talked to before and the whole class mixed. After the trip the class became a little “troop” (I6, 96), she says.

Within the group discussion there might have been a little bias of the answers, since the interviewed students probably tended to mention mainly positive aspects about their own class in front of the others. That’s why written questionnaires were used as well. It becomes apparent that the answers here describe a similar positive group process. The students write about a stronger solidarity, a newly developed group identity (B12, 10) and a more constructive communication within the class (e.g.: B7, 10). However, all interviewed students agree that this positive ‘team spirit’ has been decreasing.

The development from the class with small individual groups, which didn’t really know each other via a strong coherence in the whole class as ‘one group’ through to a weakening of the solidarity again and the developing of small conflicts is a typical group process.

Matthias Witte, a German education researcher, speaks of a general “course-euphoria” right after a group trip and of an “after-course-down”, after some time has passed (Witte 2002, p. 52). Only by the use of an intensive follow-up reflection after the trip, where the participants can sit together and reflect their former experiences again, these “after-course-downs” might be avoidable. However, one essential condition for this to work is that the single student values the group as a relevant peer group. If these students aren’t really interested in a bigger cohesion within their class, since they will leave into the working world quite soon anyway, then an intensive follow-up reflection won’t help, but won’t be necessary either.

#### *City-related learning experiences*

Concerning the level of the ‘city’, a wide range of learning experiences would be possible: e.g. to orient oneself in a foreign city (including the subway system), to experience the diversity of a big city like Cologne, to recognize a responsibility for others, to get to know the infrastructure etc. However none of these is explicitly mentioned in any of the four oral interviews. Merely during the group discussion one student said that it was hard for her to orient herself in Cologne (I6, 46). Thus she was probably able to practise her orientation skills. In the written questionnaires only three students describe their positive learning experiences concerning the city. One writes that City Bound helped her/him to still her or his fears of foreign cities and that it wasn’t a problem anymore to approach strangers to ask for help (B12, 6).

One can assume that the rest of the class had very strong preconditions and already knew how to find their way in a big city one doesn’t know. Many students lived in a rural area, but they were all able to gain experiences in a big city beforehand. Some of them lived there temporarily and didn’t have any problems to orient themselves. At least on a conscious level they couldn’t gain any new experiences concerning the city-related level. Their everyday routines could be applied in Cologne as well and prevented any bigger challenges within the ‘stretch zone’. They felt comfortable, they had no problems to use the complex subway system by themselves and they loved the diversity of the city. Thus concerning the city most of them never had to leave their comfort zone.

### *Interim conclusion*

It becomes apparent that the participants were able to work on different 'learning fields', depending on their preconditions, on their character and skills. In City Bound every participant can take up such learning stimuli which have a greater meaning for him/her at the moment and which helps him/her to develop, e.g. the communication with strangers or the orientation in a foreign city.

### Transfer into everyday life

'Transfer' here means, according to Annette Reiners definition "the progression of a learner from the specific to the abstract level" (Reiners 1995, p. 59), thus discovering new perspectives and courses of action within City Bound activities and generalising these to other everyday situations afterwards. Only if the learning experiences are really transferred to other situations, the participants actually 'learned' something (Fischer/Lehmann 2009, p. 175). One can assume that due to the isomorphic structure of City Bound activities, which resemble the environment of the participants, the transfer won't be that difficult. The interviews show that some participants succeeded in transferring their learning experiences and others had difficulties.

Sophie for example describes explicitly an everyday situation in Dortmund, where she was able to apply her learning experiences. Since she didn't know the place, she dared to "ask others for help without stumbling" (13, 33). Furthermore she says: "Since City Bound I am way more confident [...] and I am not scared any more that they might say 'No, I don't have any time' [...]. Then I just tell myself to ask someone else." She stresses that in many different situation she has the courage to approach strangers, without someone having to talk her into it first. That's why one can assume that Sophie was actually able to really transfer her City Bound experiences, e.g. her communication skills and her self-confidence to her everyday life. Since she made this statement one year after her City Bound trip, a long-term transfer is probable.

In contrast to the female interviewed students, the male students were more doubtful about the success of their transfer. Lars mentions several learning experiences concerning his communication skills, his handling of rejections and his questioning of stereotypes, but he cannot describe a specific everyday situation, in which these learning experiences actually have had a visible effect. Moreover he describes a slow fading/forgetting of his learned patterns, due to the long time which has passed since the City Bound trip. Therefore it stays unclear if he was able at all to transfer any experiences. It becomes apparent that his experiences moved in the background more and more, and influence his thinking and his actions decreasingly, at least on a conscious level.

While it stays open, if Lars was able to transfer anything, Karsten was definitely not able to transfer his experiences. He said that he became more courageous, but at the same time he points out that the City Bound challenges differ a lot from his everyday life. He brings up the

fake situations within City Bound, in which every challenge resembles a fictitious and 'nonsense' task instead of a 'real' concern. That's why one can assume that Karsten wasn't able yet to 'step from the specific to the abstract'. He couldn't internalize his new experiences yet and wasn't able to transfer it to his everyday life. However one can assume that in intensive follow-up reflection of the City Bound trip might have supported a successful transfer. With the aid of different methods of documentation, like photos or learning journals, one could've remembered the gained experiences and jointly reflect on them again.

### Subjective meaning of City Bound

In the end I was wondering what the participants associate with their City Bound trip. Was it mainly the fun, or the social aspects, the getting to know a new method for their own future profession or was it the individual challenge and the learning experiences which go along with it? After analysing the interviews it is noticeable that all participants look upon City Bound very favourably. They all agree that they could gain important experiences which they can benefit from. Especially Lena and Sophie associate a very positive experience with City Bound. Sophie realized the following (described in the form of a metaphor):

“You've got a little cottage, and you are just always in there and never got the courage to come out and look around. City Bound showed me that you can come out and do way more and not only the 'normal' things” (I3, 41).

In contrast to them, Lars and Karsten do not only remember their learning experiences, when they are asked about City Bound, but they also remember the fun and the getting to know other classmates. Especially Karsten, who calls himself an “outsider” of the class, says that City Bound was his first chance to actually bond with his classmates and to have nice time with them (I5, 99). In the written questionnaires it becomes apparent, that most of them used City Bound as a 'training field', where they got to know and overcame their own weaknesses/boundaries, where they could get engaged with strange and unfamiliar situations and also felt a certain pride after managing an activity successfully. One interviewed student took a more profession-related meaning from City Bound. Since she plans to work with teenagers in the future, City Bound gave her the chance to get to know a pedagogical instrument, which she might be able to apply in her future job (B10, 12).

### Conclusion

Summing up, this interviewed class mainly gained the following learning experiences: The strengthening of their communication skills, the questioning of everyday stereotypes/prejudices, the development of new perspectives, the experiencing/overcoming of weaknesses, and the strengthening of self-confidence and self-efficacy. It becomes apparent that the participants were able to work on different 'learning fields', depending on their preconditions, on their character, their interests and skills. The question about a successful transfer of the learning experiences back into everyday life can only partly be confirmed. One

can assume that an intensive follow-up reflection of the City Bound trip might have supported a more successful transfer. City Bound offers its participants a playful access to the world, free from economical/social purposes, so that they can try different patterns of thinking and behaviour without having to fear any sanctions. City Bound embodies a “reality-simulator” (Becker, 2006).

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## ***Embodiment and adventurous activities: Learning to be in the body, in the world<sup>2</sup>***

***Barbara Humberstone***

“We are the earth, through the plants and animals that nourish us. We are the rains and the oceans that flow through our veins.” (Suzuki, 2013)

### Introduction

In this paper, I am concerned with the mindfulness of the body in the natural environment when practicing adventurous activity/nature-based sport and how the corporeal body/mind experiences oneness with nature or what is often times called spirituality. On the one hand, the dominant conceptualisation of voluntary risk-taking is through the notion of edgework (Ling, 1990) where humans ‘on the edge’, at the boundary of control and chaos, manage their emotions of fear engendered through anticipation or performance. On the other hand, I suggest that this sense of oneness or numinosity is not necessarily fostered through fear, but mindful engagement may be constituted within physical practice in a natural environment. Each may have implications for environmental awareness and action.

Much scholarship concerned with nature-based adventurous activities from the disciplines of sport, leisure and tourism that has been concerned broadly with sustainability, has highlighted a number of issues including the conflicts of peoples’ enjoyment and involvement in nature and how to keep the wilderness area pristine or the wild area protected (see Mansfield & Wheaton, 2011; Stoddart, 2011). Another interest has been the ethical dilemmas in extreme sport (Olivier, 2006). Consequently, this has spawned a wealth of research on leisure and tourism management, arguably largely taking a ‘western’ or post-industrial society perspective. Few studies have tried to understand our corporeal and sensual relations with the natural environment when we are engaged in adventurous activities from an embodied perspective. How might we understand pre-modern engagement with the natural environment, which for the most part is sustainable and maintains a close connection with the elements and the non-human world?

To contextualise this original analysis of sensorial research and connections to social and environmental justice, I begin by highlighting the recent work on embodiment in sport and physical culture and the importance of situating the corporeal, physical practice within time, place and space (elements). Research that draws attention to ‘edgework’ or voluntary risk taking is next explored. This research together with the notion of ‘flow’ is then explored in relation to people’s involvement in nature-based physical activities in order to highlight emotions and sensations experienced, on occasions, by participants. I then consider if and in

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<sup>2</sup> This paper is a version of the paper published in open access journal Motriz, Rio Claro, v.19 n.3, jul/sep. 2013. My presentation at the EOE 2013 conference was based, in part, on this paper.

what ways these knowledges may bring about greater understanding and action in relation to social and environmental justice. Finally, I consider the paradox of representation, how can these feelings be (re)-presented and shared?

Adventure is understood and experienced differently by different people and different cultures (Humberstone, 2009). What may be felt as risky for one person may not be experienced as risky by another. Variations of understanding may be due to gender, race, age, (dis)ability and so forth. Adventurous activities may pose not only physical risk to specific individuals but may also afford social or psychological risk. Nevertheless, many outdoor activities can provide for the personal and social health and wellbeing of young people, society and the environment. But there is the other side to adventure or unintended consequences: It can be taken up for mass marketing purposes or the experience provided in a package where little learning may take place and or participants may be placed in dangerous situations without the know how to render themselves safe.

One of the questions we can raise is that posed by Downey (2007) in his auto-ethnographic research on Capoeira, a Brazilian martial art form: “How does the body come to ‘know’ and what kind of biological changes might occur when learning a skill?” (p. 223) Another question is: What kind of values do participants learn and come to know when participating in adventurous activities? As cultural geographers Fincham, McGuinness, and Murray, (2010) propose, “our relationship to each other, space, time and place are mediated by our movement through the material and social world” (p. 1). The material world in outdoor adventure is the natural environment and the social the participants, teachers, instructors, social workers, young people and so forth.

Adventure education and outdoor learning has personal, social & cultural benefits including raising environmental awareness. However, the provision of outdoor experiences may have unintended consequences and there may be conflict of interest of use of the environment. The way that we understand the environment is through our senses and recently there has been a shift in research in physical cultures towards recognising the body in social research and in embodiment. This arguably is significant for understanding outdoor learning.

#### Embodiment, sensoria and place

From the early 90s the neglect of the body was identified as problematic in various disciplines such as sociology (Shilling, 1994) and feminist studies (Grosz & Probyn, 1995), and later in sociology of physical culture and sport (Denison & Markula, 2003; Sparkes, 2002, 2004, 2009, 2010), and tourism studies (Swain, 2004). This observation promoted a revival of attention to the body in sociological research, particularly on sporting embodiment and embodiment in physical culture. Initially in sport and physical culture the theoretical focus tended to be rather abstract, neglecting the actual corporeality and experiential process of engaging in physical activity. However, corporeality and embodiment are now emerging as a substantial area of research in sport and physical culture where sensory features and phenomenological perspectives are explored in a variety of ways (Allen-Collinson, 2011;

Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2011; Hockey, 2006; Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2007. Sparkes and Smith (2012) highlight this “future shift towards more sensuous forms of scholarship in sport and physical culture” (p. 170). An example of such emerging research is the Downey’s (2005) (auto) ethnographic research<sup>3</sup> within the Brazilian sporting cultures, Capoeira. His research explores the sensory lived experiences where Downey, the apprentice performer, learns through practices which involve using all the senses which provide for processes of meaning making whilst embodying understanding. Only recently, however, is this focus beginning to emerge in nature –based physical cultures or adventurous activities; for example (auto) ethnographic research studies in embodiment and windsurfing (Humberstone, 2010, 2011); the body and sensoria in sub-aqua diving (Merchant, 2011); surfing bodies and masculinity (Evers, 2004, 2009). Evers’ study typifies the significance and complexity of auto-ethnographic narrative in understanding affective embodiment and the social.

A significant dimension missing from many studies is the way in which place/space and context influence affects/emotions –that is the ways in which the body learns to ‘know’ from its environment. For nature-based sport or adventurous activities or physical cultures, the context or environment or place in which the activity takes place is significant for a variety of reasons which will be discussed later in this paper.

Central to analysis of physical culture in nature is making sense of the embodiment, senses, and practice-in-nature nexus (Humberstone, 2011; Fox & Humberstone, in press). A useful way of considering this theoretically is through the recent thinking of cultural geographers and their notion of ‘mobile methodologies’. For as Fincham et. al. maintain “our relationship to each other, space, time and place are mediated by our movement through the material and social world”. (Fincham et al. 2011, p.1, my emphasis). Through taking seriously the physical movement or practice in the environment we can begin to conceptualise a more fluid sport embodiment which is situated in time, place and space. The physical adventurous practice is thus contextualised and not isolated. I now consider this conceptualisation and how it might be developed to provide an understanding of the body/mind/ physical practice in nature nexus /junction.

Thrift (2000), Cresswell (2006), Urry (2007), and Fincham et al. (2011) all pay attention to the ways in which movement in general influences the ways in which individuals perceive and make sense of their social and material worlds and the ways in which movement through the social and material world affects human relations, space, time and place. This concern, for the most part, is largely focused upon urban and familiar contexts. I am suggesting that it is important for a number of reasons that we attend to the contexts, places and spaces, within which humans practice nature based sport or adventurous activities. The cultural geographers

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Reed-Danahay (1997) argues that autoethnography researchers may lay varying emphases on its three inter-related constituents: auto (the self), ethnos(the culture) and graphy (the research process), through the researcher’s affective self-story relations between personal experience, life-worlds and engagements with the culture may unfold’. There has been a significant turn to interpretative, phenomenological and narrative methodology in sport and physical culture research during the last decade or so. I do not intend to discuss this shift here. Suffice to say that studies referenced in this text provide examples, discussions and implications of this methodology. I do not intend to rehearse autoethnographic methodologies and associated issues and methods. This is provided elsewhere (see Humberstone 2011).

referred to earlier promote a turn to 'mobile methodologies' in research which takes seriously movement through space and time. I would argue that this is similar to many ethnographic approaches which afford significance to 'being there' to data collection but which also takes account of bodily movement through place and space. This attention to being there in nature and the corporeal, sensual experience of nature based sport is central to how we make sense of adventurous activities and our relations with the human and non-human worlds in which these practices in nature take place. As early as 1990s, cultural geographer Rodaway (1994, italics in original) sought "to offer a more integrated view of the role of the senses in geographical understanding *the senses both as a relationship to the world and the senses as themselves a kind of structuring of space and defining place*"(p.4). More recently Thrift (2006) emphasises understanding space through the affective and senses. I suggest that adventurous activities and nature based sport scholarship can be enriched by engaging with scholarship in the mobile methodology genre and the developing interdisciplinary scholarship concerned with ethnography of the senses.

A recent example of research into adventurous activity which pays attention to physical and sensual engagement with space is Merchant's (2011) research into learning [to scuba dive](#). The significance of attending to the senses in understanding the ways in which individuals and groups come to understand and make sense of their physical practice in the underwater seascape, in the natural environment is evident from her auto-ethnographic study in which she is a participant observer. Whilst drawing empirically from ethnographic methodology, theoretically she takes her direction from the wealth of inter-disciplinary scholarship including phenomenology of perception (Merleau-Ponty, 2002), sensoria scholarship [and the anthropology of the senses](#) (in particular Pink, 2009). She affirms that:

"The sensorium is the sum of a person's perceptions, or 'the seat of sensation', of their interpretation of an environment. The different 'ratios of sense' that make up the sensuous and perceptual means by which we come to understand and dwell in space are said to be dependent on shared cultural norms and consequently vary according to social context and geographical location". (Merchant, 2011, p. 57)

I would suggest that whilst the sociology of adventurous nature-based research in many cases takes seriously the social and natural environment in which it is practiced and learning takes place, there are still few examples of research in which the complex relationships through which the body 'learns' to be in the natural environment, how it 'embodies' nature and how or if environmental awareness becomes embodied. The notion of embodiment has recently become revisioned to take account not only of 'body and body work', but also the location/situatedness of the knowing body. This provides for the development of understanding and analysis of the contexts in which the adventure practices take place. For Howes (2005, p. 7) embodiment implies an integration of body-mind situating the embodiment in time and space and is suggestive of the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment. We have shown elsewhere that movement in nature, on occasion, may correspond to the interrelationship of body-mind, senses and environment in mindfulness (Fox & Humberstone, in press).

Pink (2009) expertly intertwines and explicates theories around relationships between senses, embodiment and place developing further the idea of fluidity and ethnographies of 'mind-body –environment'. She proposes, "an emplacement ethnography that attends to the question of experience by accounting for the relationships between bodies, minds and materiality and sensoriality of the environment" (Pink, 2009, p. 25). Pink is for the most part attending to [the](#) social/ cultural environment in every-day post-industrial society and only marginally engages with the natural environment and the elements through brief attention to gardening in her work. So to explore how nature or place becomes part of individuals' and groups' 'being' when practicing adventurous or nature-based sport, I suggest that we need to take account of recent scholarship, drawing upon ethnographic methodology but importantly embracing the natural environment and the elements.

#### Edgework, Flow, Mindfulness and Spirituality?

The concept edgework developed by Lyng (1990) to analyse the boundaries of control and chaos in the social exploration of risk-taking activities has been used to explore participants' perspectives in a social context of dangerous work (Kidder, 2006; Lyng, 2004) and in adventurous activities and sport (Laurendeau, 2006; Ormod & Wheaton, 2009; Humberstone, 2009) which are perceived to have dangerous dimensions, largely ignoring the natural environment. I do not intend to discuss this concept in any depth. Rather I wish to draw attention to the ways in which, whilst it mentions the significance of emotions, senses and feelings in the perceptions of participants in practice, little work has been done to explore the embodiment, senses, and practice-in-nature nexus nor how this might lead to environmental awareness and action. Kidder (2006, p. 34) drawing upon this concept makes the point that, "it is not only in tempting death that one can become 'engrossed creatively', losing all track of time and becoming completely absorbed, but also one may become absorbed in activity practices that are less hazardous, more mundane". Milovanovic (2005) argues that 'edgeworkers', those practicing/working at the boundaries, may vary in their perception of being in control and some talk of embodying 'transcendental experiences'.

These transcendental experiences are also identified by participants in a variety of nature-based sport from those perceived to be high-risk through to those appearing to be low risk. High and low risk activities depend significantly on both the material; the context, place and environment, in which they take place, but also on the embodied emotions and senses of the practitioner. For example, surfing may be high risk in big waves or low risk in small off beach waves (Olivier, 2006). Those with more experience may be less fearful in any real sense whilst engaged in the activity but may still experience being 'engrossed creatively' or what has been called 'flow' (Csikzentimihalyi, 1975). This concept, flow, has been used to describe the physiological changes and sharpened awareness occurring at times of 'peak' experience or performance in sport. It has also been used to describe the state of being that participants, on occasion, experience in a variety of nature-based, adventurous sports when they identify as being 'in the zone', 'feeling a buzz', 'stoked', 'feeling good', 'at one with nature', 'being timeless' and so forth. I have argued elsewhere that in a way the term flow may not only

mask an understanding of the affective, embodied sensations, the sentience of the experience and the ways in which the body learns to move and be in the natural environment, but also, for the most part, it does not engage with the social, environmental and political (Humberstone, 2011).

Subsumed by the moment, in this state the participant loses track of time and becomes one with their equipment, the elements and the natural environment. Whilst edgework tells us something about the boundaries of control and chaos, flow names occasions at which time stands still and there is a sense of connectedness with the elements and nature. This centredness may be a time and place when the body-mind, senses and elements are in tune and represents the coming together or nexus of senses (sensoria), embodiment, physical activity practice, all coming together in focus. The embodiment of /at this nexus may spawn the becoming of 'kinetic empathy', the affects at the junction of elements/environment-human and non- human relations.

Unravelling adventure and nature-based practitioners' expressions of flow, emerges ideas of mindfulness, spirituality and oneness with nature. One windsurfer reported in Dant and Wheaton (2007) opines, "It's almost a spiritual thing [. . .] the feel good factor is so. . . The simple physical feeling it gives you is great" (p. 11). Furthermore, narratives of nature-based or adventurous activities frequently identify transcendental or spiritual features; Taylor (2007) in surfing cultures, Atkinson (2010) in fell (cross country-mountain) running and Ralston (2005) in his autobiography on solo hiking, "A sense of mindless happiness. I think solo hiking is my own method of attaining a transcendental state, a kind of walking meditation" (p. 16-17).

Whilst reminding the reader of the turn to the body and sensoria in sport sociology scholarship, Fox and Humberstone (in press) point to the predominance of western influence and the limited attention to non-western concepts of embodiment. Drawing upon auto-ethnographies of very different outdoor activities; long distance cycling and local windsurfing, they explore phenomenologically how the body 'learns' through these activities. Fox in her daily cycling, her body and mind became one, "the balance of her bike as 'instinct' and her mind and understanding of alternative life rhythms was moulded by the daily routines and bodily limits of what could be done in any one day within a particular landscape" (Fox & Humberstone ,in press). Whilst Humberstone intermittently takes to the water to windsurf on a sea near to home, for short periods of time during different weather conditions. Despite these very different practices, Fox and Humberstone (in press) drawing on sensoria scholarship and traditional yogic concepts of exercise and the body argue that each of these practices,

“[s]hare(s) a oneness or body-mind consciousness. A predominant commonality is the engagement of mind-body moment by moment. Windsurfing is a continual awareness and presence to the minute and subtle shifts of wind, water, and balance. Given speed and constant movement of multiple forces (wind, water, body, windsurfing board), the response of the mind-body engages states of consciousness and responsiveness beyond the capabilities of cognitive

consciousness. In addition, the specific movement of the windsurfing board, the opening of senses to the environment, the vulnerability and interconnection of human body with the environment also create states of consciousness.”

For both of these activities in nature, one which is repetitive and continuous and the other which is both reactive and proactive in relation to the elements and equipment, there is a sense of, on occasion, a oneness with nature, a body-mind absorption something in the sense of spirituality. This can also be found in research which examines urban based adventure such as parkour where Atkinson (2009) argues that, “[T]hrough the public practice of Parkour across late modern cities, advocates collectively urge urban pedestrians to reconsider the role of athleticism in fostering self—other environment connections” (p. 169).

#### Kinetic empathy and environmental justice

Many interpretative studies around adventurous activities and nature-based sport as above indicate, on occasions, that these activities may provide processes and practices that are alternative or complementary to traditional sporting 'body pedagogics' (Mellor & Shilling, 2010). Outdoor alternative pedagogies whether practised in cities or outside of cities provide for 'ways of learning to be in the body'. It is arguably the values underpinning their application and the ways that they are made available and accessible to young people which are significant not only outside cities but also within urban space (see Humberstone & Stan, 2012; Stan & Humberstone, 2011). These embodied adventurous practices in nature, whether they are perceived as high or low risk, are ambiguous and fluid and may challenge dominant sporting narratives of body/mind separation and potentially afford pedagogic processes or 'techniques of the body' fostering a form of shared 'kinetic empathy'. Kinetic empathy, Thrift (2008) argues, may stimulate and engender the cultural turn to the affective and sensuous. Thorpe and Rinehart (2010) interrogate cultural geographer Thrift's social theory with the intention of checking its potentiality "for shedding new light on the lived, affective and affecting experiences of participants in contemporary sport and physical cultures (p. 1268)". Drawing upon Thrift's conceptualisations, they examine the implications of the concepts 'politics of hope' and 'politics of affect' for making sense of 'social justice movements (e.g., health, educational, environmental, anti-violence)' that they evidence are flourishing within what they term 'alternative sport' cultures. Evidence suggests that social and environmental justice movements, movements which build upon environmental awareness, are frequently spawned by people's involvement in nature-based adventure sport (see Thorpe & Rinehart, 2010; Humberstone, 2011; Taylor, 2007 and Wheaton, 2007).

We can see the material evidence of some of these movements such as SurfAid International, a non-profit humanitarian organisation dedicated to "improving the health and well-being of people living in isolated regions connected to us through surfing" (Thorpe & Rinehart, 2010, p. 1280). Taylor (2007) talks of the development of environmentalism in the surfing communities of North America and Wheaton (2007) discusses the environmental activism of

the Surfers Against Sewage organisation which emerged from surfers' and windsurfers' concern for sea pollution in UK<sup>4</sup>.

As an ethnographer, I am interested in how and if individuals and groups in nature-based physical cultures 'learn' through their bodies this 'kinetic empathy'; the significance of the process of mindfulness or spiritual experience and how this is/can be shared and understood. As Anderson asks, "Can only a surfer know the feeling?" Anderson (2012) develops an argument to explore and make available to the reader /observer his attempt to 'share' this sensory and emotional experience of surfing through visual and audio presentations.<sup>5</sup> I will not discuss his argument here suffice it to say that this 'paradox of representation' is partly attended to through providing creative tension through creative writing and imaginings as well as visual images. (see also writings in Brown & Humberstone (in press))

Outdoor educator and environmentalist Nicol (2013), who undertook an unusual solo kayak journey around part of Scotland, argues that:

"Through writing I wanted to share these experiences to explore the educational potential where mind, body and world come together in outdoor places. For the journey to be more than a self-indulgent exercise I had to find a suitable means of capturing and analysing data." (ibid, p. 4)

Attempting to balance this paradox in nature-based physical culture, Humberstone (2011); Fox and Humberstone, (in press); Fox, Humberstone and Dubnewick, (in press) have mindfully and corporeally engaged in auto-ethnographic and duo-ethnographic research and through creative writing and poetic text endeavoured to share these feelings and sensations.

### Concluding remarks

I asked in this paper as Downey, 'How does the body come to 'know'? and what is it about our relationship to each other, space, time and place (that) are mediated by our movement through', the natural environment when we engage in adventurous activities that may promote an environmental awareness and action?

I suggest that there is in many cases a oneness with nature, a body-mind absorption something in the sense of spirituality, in which practitioners experience transcendental experiences that are embodied when the senses and body nexus are in tune which may foster a greater shared environmental awareness. Such 'ways of learning to be in the body', whether made available in urban or rural spaces, are arguably afforded through particular outdoor pedagogies underpinned by principles and values which acknowledge our deep relations with human and non-human elements.

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<sup>4</sup> See special issue of Leisure Studies concerned with Leisure and the Politics of the Environment: Aall, Klepp, Engeset, Skuland & Støa (2011); Stoddart, (2011), Mansfield & Wheaton (2011); Church, & Ravenscroft, (2011).

<sup>5</sup> See 'Can only a surfer know the feeling' <http://www.spatialmanifesto.com/research-projects/surfing-places/affective-landscapes>

I have also pointed to this shared experience creating a 'kinetic empathy' which may be realised as environmental action. Finally, I draw attention to the paradox of (re)-presenting these sensorial experiences and ask us to consider how we interconnect with the environment when we participate in adventurous and nature-based activities.

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## *Non-formal Outdoor learning in leisure centres*

***Jakob F. Þorsteinsson***

Outdoor learning<sup>6</sup> has in recent year's got more professional attention in Iceland in sectors such as primary schools, leisure and universities. In late 2012, the University of Iceland and the Department of Education and Youth in Reykjavik made an agreement to work more together and one of the topics was outdoor learning. Two programs were started that had the common goal to increase outdoor learning for children and teenagers and at the same time to strengthen our understanding of different forms of outdoor learning. All the programs were based on a joint effort from the Department of Leisure Studies and Social Pedagogy at the University of Iceland and the Department of Education and Youth in the municipality of Reykjavik. Different methods were used e.g. training, lectures, mentoring and counselling. In this article, the development programme with the leisure centre Ársel will be described and the main learning that we draw from it will be discussed.

*Figure 1: The Leisure centre Ársel*

### Introduction

The origins of this project can be traced back to when the director of the leisure centre Ársel contacted the director of the Department of Leisure Studies and Social Pedagogy at the University of Iceland, where a request was voiced concerning a lecture on outdoor learning for the staff of the leisure centre. There was a sincere determination in the management to strengthen the role of outdoor learning in the activities of after-school programs and youth centres. However, the general consensus seemed to be that a brief talk on outdoor learning would not greatly affect the practice of outdoor learning. Greater efforts would be required, which called for steadfast and resolved work and the launching of a cooperative developmental project between Ársel and the department.

Work began on the project early in 2013 and was completed in the beginning of June. The aim of this report is to provide an account of the developmental project; its progression and successes, as well as including a description of the fruits that grew out from the project.

### The Goal of the Project

The project attempts to answer the following question: *How does outdoor learning and outdoor activities figure into work of leisure centres and after-school programs and how can we strengthen this part of their activities?*

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<sup>6</sup> A number of foreign terms are used for outdoor work, e.g. friluftsliv, uteskole, outdoor learning and adventure education, however, we will not pursue the meaning of these terms here.



sailing, cave exploration, rafting, skiing, and climbing; tasks that require travelling and physical activities in untouched natural environments. Many individuals who work within the field of leisure are familiar with the right side of Figure 1. And even though the tasks that fall under the heading of the former group are usually associated with research and formal school work, they nevertheless have many elements in common with adventure education. Both these groups, for instance, emphasise shared outdoor activities away from home where the focus is on an increased awareness of the landscape and nature in general (Gair, 1997, p. 2).

Outdoor education offers a host of possibilities for diverse subjects and methods. For the purpose of simplification, the tasks can be divided into three categories: an understanding of *ecological relations* of the environment; develop *physical skills* and; develop *communicational skills* and *relations toward ourselves and others* (Gilbertson et al. 2006, p. 5-6).

The scope of outdoor learning is vast, however, the discourse in Iceland that partly dominates within school and leisure work is far too narrow, vague and limited. For example, in schools, there is a tendency to refer to outdoor teaching (Icelandic: útikennsla) and outdoor classrooms (Icelandic: útikennslustofur), whereas in leisure work, the common way to describe outdoor learning is in terms of ‘outdoor stay’ (Icelandic: útivist) or being in the outdoors, or simply, going out to play. How should one define the activities that take place outdoors in leisure centres and youth centres? It seems appropriate to apply the words, or concepts, which are available and that we are used to. However, the situation becomes problematic once an attempt is made to delve deeper into the sense of the work, e.g. when we explicate our work academically or when we conduct our research into the field. There is also a risk that the terminology will get muddled if one cooperates with others or when one attempts a synthesis with a different educational “system”. Professionals who cooperate must be able to discuss their work through a shared understanding of the object under scrutiny.

Yet, is the terminology we utilize of any consequence? Is there any great danger if we use the terms ‘outdoor stay’ and ‘outdoor teaching’ since these terms have to some degree become rooted in the discourse? I do not believe so, particularly in the light of the fact that the words we apply shape our ideas in regard to our intentions and how we interpret our work. One could claim that the words ‘force us into the open’. Meaning is attached to the words we use, which structures our activities and the way in which we engage with, and reflect on, those same activities. The meaning of important terms in academic discourse must be made explicit, and terms such as ‘outdoor stay’ can therefore become a hindrance, because such terms have so many different senses in people’s minds.

Is it possible for professionals from school (part of a formal education system) and leisure centres (part of a non-formal education system) to use the same concept for activities in the outdoors that have different purpose? I think so and the word learning is a concept that is used in both professions. To be more concrete I suggest the following definition of outdoor learning:

“Outdoor learning is a formal, in formal and non-formal educational method that places emphasis on learning which takes place in the outdoors and where all the

senses are activated by means of participation in direct experiences. The aim is to facilitate the general development of the individual, and further, facilitate the relationship between the individual, nature and society.”

To face the critics that outdoor learning is more connected with formal education it could be clearer to use *non-formal outdoor learning* to describe that part of the pedagogical undertaken by work youth centres and after-school care. Mannion et al. (2007) has used formal and informal in relation to outdoor learning:

“For the report, we consider formal outdoor learning as that which takes results from formal outdoor education. This can take place outdoors (in school grounds, in local areas, in centres, wild areas etc) as a formal part of an educational programme or extended hours curriculum. Informal outdoor, in contrast, learning can occur in break time and as a part of out-of-school time and leisure time and may or may not involve adults.” (Mannion et al. 2007, p.1)

Non-formal outdoor learning is there something their between and consists of learning embedded in planned outdoor activities that are not explicitly designated as learning, but which contain an important learning element. This thoughts of concepts still needs more work, and maybe the search for an answer is in itself fruitful – like the trip is often more important than the destination.

In this chapter the concept outdoor learning is used and is recommended that is also used in the field. Here, the term ‘outdoor learning’ is used as a hypernym which carries certain meaning. However, the use of a variety of concepts to describe different aspects of outdoor learning (such as adventure education, environmental education), is also considered fruitful and neiersy.

#### Outdoor Learning, Cooperation and Relationships

The fact that outdoor learning pertains to a broad field, means, among other things, that individuals can, and I would say *must*, approach the field with a certain aim of facilitating the particular possibilities which outdoor education offers. Outdoor learning is a multidisciplinary field that provides many opportunities of relationship-building among parents and guardians, and anyone connected to the upbringing of children. In practice, managing the cooperation of children, the staff in leisure centres, parents and organisations can be difficult. A meaningful cooperation, on the other hand, is the foundation of so many aspects of upbringing and it is imperative to establish relations between these individuals. A discussion of relations is particularly important in regard to outdoor learning because the latter revolves, in one way or the other, around *relations*, as has already been mentioned; the understanding of *ecological relations*; developing *physical skills* and; develop *communicational skills* and *relations toward ourselves and others*. As a result, outdoor learning concerns itself with relations in the broad sense of that term and its successful execution simultaneously calls for relations based on cooperation.

### The Fruits of Outdoor Learning

A number of books and articles show that nature and the natural environment has considerable impact on the wellbeing of both adults and children, and leads to increased mental wellbeing, increased physical abilities, improved cognitive development, fewer physical ailments, and faster recovery following illness (Wells, 2003, Faber Taylor og Kuo, 2009; Fjortoft, 2004; Kaplan, 1995; Louv, 2005; Taylor, Kuo og Sullivan, 2001; Wells, 2000). Scholars around the world have observed the positive effects of outdoor learning, and furthermore, many researches describe the same thing. They bring to light how outdoor learning can result in, among other things, an increased ecological awareness, improved memory, improved view toward one's abilities, increased solidarity, the strengthening of bonds in groups, along with strengthening the self-image of individuals (Mygind, 2005; American Institutes for Research, 2005; Rickinson et al., 2004; Higgins & Nicol, 2002, Jakob F. Porsteinsson, 2011).

Research also indicates that children spend more time indoors than before. Mannion et al. (2007, p. 15) arrive to the conclusion, after reviewing a variety of studies on children's outdoor activities, that this migration to the indoors is due to four 'moves':

1. The move indoors. Children are playing indoors more now than ever before, and they are cycling and walking less than in the 1970s.
2. The move away from casual outdoor experience. There is a trend away from unsupervised and non-formal activity in the outdoors.
3. The move towards commercialized and supervised access to outdoor activity.
4. The move towards informal learning and the blurring of leisure and learning domains.

Research on the conditions and scope of outdoor learning in Iceland's schools and leisure centres is scarce, and it is therefore difficult to assert the extent of outdoor learning in relation to the activities of schools and leisure centres. There is a need for such research because children cannot enjoy the fruits of outdoor learning unless it is actually being practiced. This developmental project attempts to evaluate the scope and nature of outdoor education in one district. I will argue that currently there is wide interest concerning outdoor learning and many things suggest that there exists a will to pave the way for outdoor learning and to strengthen its position in a variety of activities.

### Leisure and Outdoor Learning

Figure 3 indicates three domains that are decisive in the lives of children: home, school and leisure. Therefore it becomes imperative that these domains form an intimate cooperation and that they create a space in which children and young people can fruitfully develop. Children and young people spend a lot of time with organised leisure work which means that those who work within the field have great responsibilities in relation to upbringing. For instance, children's attendance at after-school care (which is a part of a leisure centre's work) can equal

the time they spend in school, of around 1000 hours per year (assuming that each child spends three hours per day at the after-school care, takes the long days, and also attends leisure centres over the summer).

Outdoor learning and outdoor recreation has been an important part of their activities across the leisure sector in Iceland. At times, remarkable developmental work has been achieved, which has established a professional academic basis that is good to build upon. Leisure work, unlike traditional school work, takes place around the year where rich emphasis placed upon diverse summer activities through which opportunities of learning in the outdoors are actively utilized and promoted. Consequently, leisure centres possess years of experience in regard to developmental work which is important to recognize and learn from. These experiences are connected to several aspects, e.g. practice, knowledge, views and specific tools. In the last analysis, these experiences are held by the staff and contained within the culture they have created – resolute and committed work is thus required, that draws on these experiences and facilitates them in the field.

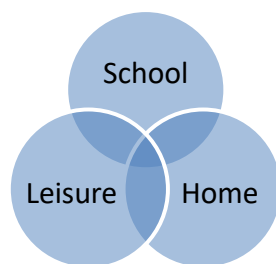


Figure 3: The domains of a child's live

#### The Execution of the Project

The project is a cooperation between the leisure centre Ársel and the Department of Leisure Studies and Social Pedagogy at the University of Iceland. The role of those who represented the department was to provide advice, instruction and guidance in regard to outdoor learning, as well as assisting the leisure centres in researching outdoor learning. Furthermore, the part played by the management of Ársel consisted in detecting the need for instruction and education, communicating with leisure centre's employees, providing guidance, and generally facilitating the progress of the project. The director of Ársel assumed a leading position in the project and led the way when needed.

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21. January	Workshop I
4. - 22. February	Documentation 1
11. - 16. March	Guidance

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2. - 20. April	Documentation 2
13. May	Workshop II
5. - 9. June	EOE Seminar in Stockholm

Table 1. Time Table

Table 1 shows a few milestones of the project. Additionally, four meetings were held during the process, attended by the managers of Ársel, representatives from the Department of Leisure Studies and Social Pedagogy, and members of the Reykjavík school and leisure council. In these meetings, the project was shaped and developed by actively making use of available experiences regarding the matter at hand – and they became an important space in which the issues of outdoor learning could be discussed in relation to the content, goals and the ways in which it was connected to work in the field. In June 2013, at the end of the project, some of the key staff participants of the project attended the 13th European Institute for Outdoor Adventure Education and Experiential Learning (EOE) Seminar: "Urban nature: inclusive learning through youth work and school work". Their part of the outcome of the project was introduced with posters and a presentation.

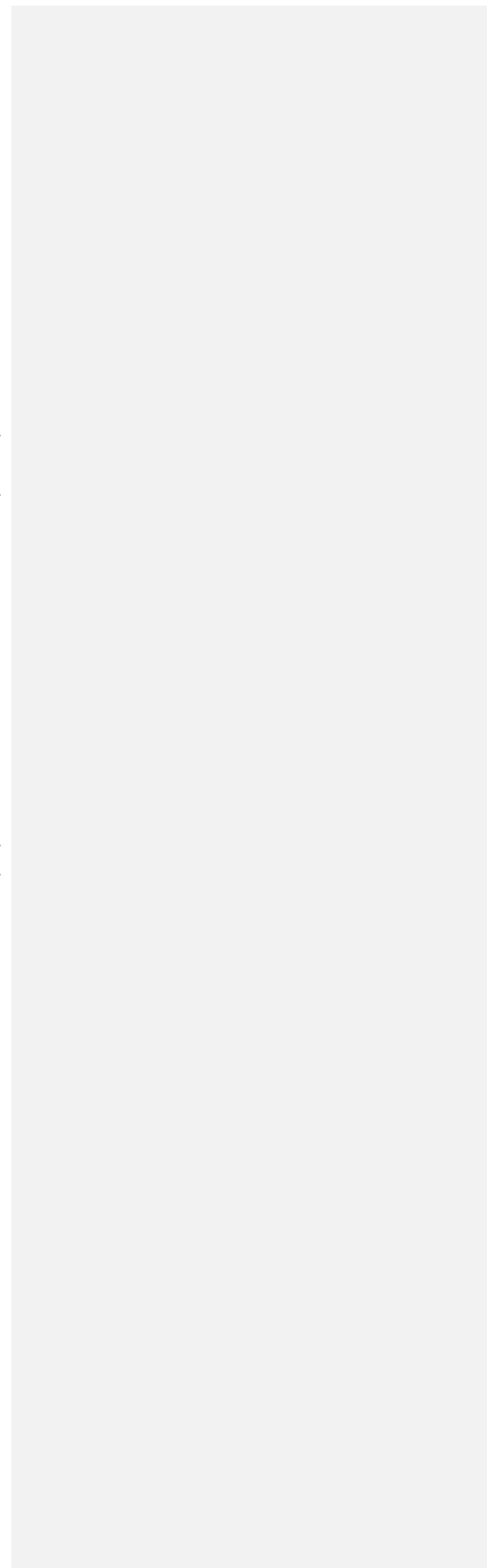
#### Staff Instruction

Two workshops were held, the first one on the 21st of January, and the second, on the 13th of May. The aim of the project was to strengthen the role of outdoor learning in the activities of the leisure centre Ársel and in the field of leisure work in general. In order to achieve the project's goal, we wanted to explore the way in which it was possible to increase the staff's awareness of the values and qualities entailed in outdoor learning. We also wanted to strengthen the staff's own interests in the outdoors, and how they could find ways to broaden the scope of outdoor learning within the leisure centre's activities.

From the commencement of the project, the guiding light was to approach the work group on their own premise, in how they experienced the outdoors, as well as instructing them concerning other means through which open air activities can be engaged with. The locations available to Ársel, in Grafarholt and Árbær, are particularly well suited for outdoor activities; to the south of the district, a stone's throw away, one can find Elliðaárdalur, Árbæjarsafn, Elliðaár, Elliðavatn and Heiðmörk. To the north, there is easy access to small forested areas and dingles, along with Reynisvatn, Rauðavatn, Úlfarsfell, and countless other places well suited for outdoor activities of all kinds.

*Figure 2: Part of the Árbær-district where the leisure centre Ársel is located.*

*Workshop, January 21st 2013*



In the workshop we presented a variety of research concerning outdoor activity and its value in relation to the education and development of children and adolescents. In addition, we presented a number of general facts regarding our outdoor activities and how we can utilize the conditions that face us as we peer outside. We agreed on approaching the 'being outdoors' in terms of the opportunities that awaited us, rather than being critical or judgmental of the work group. The goal was to spend more time outdoors with the children and young people, and to enjoy the outdoors in their company. We contended that this goal was not attainable by means of accusations and scolding.

As a result, in the workshop, specific emphasis was placed on positive instruction that functioned as support and encouragement for the staff, especially in the light of the fact that when it comes to the execution of such a project, it is imperative that they also feel comfortable in the open air. Thus, we also believed that the outdoor activities began with the staff themselves, i.e. what kind of outdoor activity did the employee enjoy, and what lured him/her into the wilderness? The staff's ideas were gathered and documented, where the intention was to put the ideas into practice in each work station and where to discuss them during the guidance sessions. The latter part of the workshop was spent outside where all kinds of outdoor cooking were offered, and developmental and educational games were played.

#### *Workshop, May 13th 2013*

This particular workshop session was organised in order to celebrate the successes of the project up to that point in time. Firstly, we scrutinised the results of the documentations and the conclusions were placed into the appropriate context. It must be kept in mind, that this process entailed documenting, in batches, all information regarding the outdoor learning and outdoor activities that took place in each location. Before the documentation had begun and during the instruction period, we had emphasised mainly two elements. First, this was not a documentation competition, neither inside each work station, nor among different work stations. Second, we advised against any attempt to feign outdoor activities for the purpose of looking good on paper, because the aim was to document only the outdoor activities that actually took place. For this reason, we wanted to honestly document and recognise what was achieved and where it took place. The situation could then be explored in a rigorous and lucid manner, and fresh decisions and new objectives set in light of that information.

All the staff members brought short videos that explained their approach to the outdoor activities, both as documentation but no less to present their approach to the other work stations, and in that way, inspire the group as a whole. Obviously, the practice differed between the work stations and between the staff, along with the specific traditions that characterised each station.

#### Reflection about the guidance

The consultants in the project were experts in the field of outdoor learning. After the first documentation of the outdoor learning and the activities was completed, the consultants and the director of Ársel visited each work station. These included four leisure centres and three youth community centres. When the guidance was prepared, the intention was to discuss the following points:

- Note the memorable outdoor activities.
- Scrutinise the documentation forms – work through them.
- Discuss the staff's ideas concerning outdoor activities / outdoor learning during the next month.
- Discuss practical problems that arose and potential solutions.
- Draft a brief plan regarding outdoor activities and the outdoors in the following weeks.
- Everyone must make a short video

#### *The after-school care centres*

Four after-school care centres were visited after the documentation had begun. We met and conversed with the staff of each leisure centre, and where most of the above mentioned aspects were touched on. It is worth mentioning here, that the after-school cares are very different from one another, with varying conditions characterising the operation of each, both in relation to the housing itself and staff culture. The interest in the project differed from one place to the next. However, the employees were, in general, positive about increasing the role of outdoor learning in their activities, as well willing to contribute to the discussions surrounding the issue.

Through the discussions it came to light that outdoor activities were in fact a regular part of daily work within most after-school care centres. In some places, the activity was more rigorously organised than in others, although, one could generally claim that children who attend after-school care centres, enjoy daily outdoor activities in some shape or form. The staff mentioned that the outdoor activities in the after-school care centres were not systematically organised. In most cases it was the children's initiative, and often the outdoor activities were a continuation of work that they had already begun during school recess, such as, football or other games that took their fancy. Furthermore, the staff noted that they had not given much thought to the purpose of outdoor activities nor how they themselves could become active participants in enriching the substance of the activities.

During the guidance-meetings, a number of problems associated with the organisation and execution of increased outdoor activities were voiced. Most commonly, the staff mentioned problems connected with the children's attendance, differing durations of attendance, and overlap with other leisure work, such as sports. Moreover, the staff requested support in informing parents about the project, in order to clarify in case these overlaps were to occur.

The staff brought a host of fruitful ideas to the table in regard to the ways in which children's outdoor activities could be increased, and how to make the latter more substantial and purposeful. Many mentioned the idea of establishing a bank of games with the aid of the children, so as to diversify the possibilities of outdoor games, which, by the same token,

would increase availability for a larger number of children and staff. In addition, many ideas were voiced concerning science, various kinds of hiking, the exploration of nature, etc. It was clear that staff's experience of outdoor activities varied, and similarly, their level of interest in the matter greatly differed.

This diversity of the staff's ideas regarding the potential of children's outdoor activities in leisure work, and how these ideas can be put into practice, indicated that. Following the workshop discussions and the documentations of the outdoor activities, the staff members were more aware of the importance of outdoor learning and their own role in creating positive conditions that encourage children's outdoor activities. Ultimately, one could claim that this was the biggest achievement of the project.

#### *The Youth Centres*

It came to our attention, following the visits to the youth centres, that a certain cultural difference characterised their operation. The cultural difference partly resides in the staff, their personal connection to nature and the outdoors, and the given tradition concerning outdoor activities that dominated in each youth centre.

During our discussions with the youth centre staff, two things in particular were brought to light: 1. All of the staff members recognised the importance of outdoor activities, and were more aware of its practical value, both in their own work, and in general. 2. There emerged great interest and determined will toward widening the space for open air education and related activities, and their interest and determination had significantly increased throughout the process of the project. Furthermore, it was obvious that the staff now viewed their environment through a different prism – they showed interest in utilising neighbouring facilities, such as the ones in Gufunesbæ.

It seemed to us that our approach, i.e. being, on the one hand, very positive and supportive towards the activities in question, and on the other, by using the staff's own outdoor experiences as a starting point in the project, was proving to be successful. The atmosphere in the group was characterised by positivity, excitement and interest toward further developing these views, and further, there was no shortage of great ideas concerning how to broaden this aspect of the work.

#### Documentation of Outdoor Learning and Outdoors Activities

An analysis was drafted by means of the documentation of outdoor learning and outdoor activities, which was conducted twice: 4th - 22nd of February and 2nd - 20th of April. The documentation form was based on a Scottish research project (Mannion et al. 2007).

The documentation gathered information about outdoor education concerning three elements:

1. When, how long, and the number of participants by age and gender.

2. Where the outdoor learning and the outdoor activities took place, and whether it was elective or mandatory.
3. The purpose of the outdoor learning, what was emphasised.

We consider the documentation during spring 2013 as an experimental documentation, or as a pilot study, and this has to be kept in mind when the conclusions are assessed. A pilot study, such as this one, is very useful for evaluating preparation, work methods and the process of the documentation itself. We hope that similar documentations will be carried out in the near future, and in that case, the following points are worth considering:

- Reconsider the documentation form, in light of the experiences of those who filled out the form.
- Create a shared understanding of that which is being measured and documented.
- Discuss what is useful to measure, document and explore, and whether it would be appropriate to remove certain elements for the purpose of simplification.
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### Findings

An account of the findings will be presented with particular emphasis on the above mentioned categorisation. The researchers were provided with 119 lists that were marked and then returned, both electronically and on paper. All information was typed into tables and explicative statistics presented. During both periods, the documentations lasted for two weeks: First, from the 4th until 22nd of February, where 42 documentations were made, and second, from the 2nd until 20th of April, where 77 documentations were made.

#### *When, How Long and Number of Participants*

Boys went outside in a total of 1954 times, whereas, girls went out 1448 times. On average, the total time spent outdoors was 94 minutes, ranging from 30 to 120 minutes. The time spent during the first period was on average 82 minutes, and 101 minutes during the second period.

	Total documentations	Av. Time	Number of boys	Number of girls
Documentation 1 (4.-22. February)	42	83	887	678
Documentation 2 (2.-20. April)	77	101	1067	770
	119		1954	1448

Table 2. Total Number of Documentations, Average Time and Number of Boys and Girls

Boys went outside more often than girls but there were no information about the total number of girls and boys attending the after-school care, so we do not know if they were more likely to go out, or just more of them. The average time outside was higher than expected. In the notes from the guidance meeting, and is mentioned above, then often the outdoor activities

were a continuation of work that they had already begun during school recess. Also there was some kind of mandatory system to start to play outside when the children came from school.

The documentation of numbers by age was unclear. When documented some listed age range and other what classes the children were in, some did not list age. However, here is an attempt to extract some figures, and to look at the big picture.

	Boys	Girls
Grade 1	50%	46%
Grade 2	16%	16%
Grade 3-4	8%	12%
Grade 5-7	2%	3%
Grade 8-10	9%	6%
Unknown	2%	3%
Total		

Table 3. Percentage of being outdoor by grade

The table 3 shows us that children attending the after school care (grade 1-4) were documented being much more time outside than the teenager in the youth clubs. Outdoor activity seems not to be great embraced in the youth clubs programme. There was one youth club that held a special outdoor month and that had a positive impact. Children in grade one were documented about half of the total documentation. Boys were in general more outside, but in grade 3-4 the girls were more outside than boys. These figures raise questions such as: are outdoor activities more appealing to boys or do we need to encourage girls and boys to go out more? Most of the children attending after-school care are in 1-2 grades. We cannot say that higher numbers in grade 1 and 2 reflect a greater interest of being outside but it could indicate that or that the reason lays in more attendance of children at that age and maybe in who decides if the children go out or not.

#### *Where and who decides*

Let's look at where the outdoor learning or the outdoor activities took place, and whether it was elective, mandatory or the childrens' own initiatives. In the documentations there were two squares checked; which explains both elective/mandatory and elective/initiative.

	Total	Doc. 1	Doc. 2
Mandatory	40	20	20
Elective	23	1	22
Children's initiative	6	1	5
Both mandatory and elective	2	0	2
Both elective and own initiative	29	15	14

Table 4. Mandatory, Elective and Own Initiative

In table 4 we can see that mandatory was most common and in the documentation in April more children elective, or self had the initiative, to go out. In our visits to the after school care centres and in discussion with the staff we found out that in many cases it was part of the

program, and mandatory, to be outside when the children came from school. In April, closer to spring, the children asked more to go outside. We can also see from the table that often it is unclear whether it is mandatory, elective or own initiative. As a result, a few times the staff sometimes marked in two boxes. In non-formal leisure work there is a strong culture for letting the children have more to say about what they do and maybe it is not so obvious on who decides. In winter time it is likely that to make the children to go out more, the staff need to support it more and put more effort into exiting outdoor activities that attract girls and boys.

The premises / grounds	88
Local Area	22
Field Work and Visits	2
Outdoor Adventure	0

Table 5. Location of Outdoor Learning and Outdoor Activities

In general the outdoor activities took place on the premises of the after-school centre. There were few instances of going further in to the local area. A youth club went on the field visits.

We can see that the premises are the *main field* for the outdoor learning at each of the workstations of the leisure centre. It is therefore of vital importance that the close environment of the workstation (e.g. youth club or an after school care) is exiting and interesting for the children.

*What was the Purpose of the Outdoor Learning, what was the Emphasis?*

In the documentation form there was a list of *main focus of outdoor event*, and it was possible to nominate no more than three in order of priority. The list was made with inspiration from a Scottish research project (Mannion et.al 2007). Due to the fact that this was leisure based outdoor events, two choices were added (*Democracy and Play / enjoyment*). These options were added after a dialogue with the leaders of the leisure centre Årsel.

*Documentation 1*

	Nature	Society / community	Nature-society interactions	Oneself / personal development	Health or fitness	Working with others, developing groups	Practical activities or skills	Conservation	Influencing change / advancing a cause	Celebration / enjoyment / leisure / play	Democracy	Play / enjoyment
First place	1	0	0	0	8	1	0	0	0	27	0	6
Second place	0	0	0	1	10	1	0	0	0	10	1	18
Third place	0	0	0	0	19	1	1	0	0	2	0	16
Total	1	0	0	1	37	3	1	0	0	39	1	40

Table 6. Main Emphasis in the Outdoor Learning and the Activities of the Day

*Documentation 2*

	Nature	Society / community	Nature-society interactions	Oneself / personal development	Health or fitness	Working with others, developing groups	Practical activities or skills	Conservation	Influencing change / advancing a cause	Celebration / enjoyment / leisure / play	Democracy	Play / enjoyment
First place	3	0	1	1	13	4	2	0	0	31	0	23
Second place	1	3	1	0	30	6	1	0	1	9	0	25
Third place	0	0	4	1	19	6	2	0	2	13	0	21
Total	4	3	6	2	62	16	5	0	3	53	0	69

Table 7. Main Emphasis in the Outdoor Learning and the Activities of the Day

Table 6 shows that the main purposes of outdoor learning in Documentation 1 and 2 are on *play/enjoyment and health and physical exercise*. The central purpose of outdoor learning in leisure work revolves around playing and general enjoyment, health and physical exercise, and fun and leisure. More factors were noted in secondary documentation; Nature - Nature-society interactions - Working with others, developing groups - Practical activities or skills. This indicates that the employees were more aware of the possibilities entailed in non-formal outdoor learning.

### Conclusions

As previously noted, one should be careful in drawing conclusions from the documentations of the outdoor learning. Here, an attempt will be made to summarize the information presented in the above tables, along with the evaluation of the consultants and the discussion which took place during meetings with project leaders and during presentations of the project. The findings will be summarised in terms of the threefold categorisation of the documentation form.

#### *When, How Long and Number of Participants by Age and Gender.*

- Boys generally spend more time outdoors than girls, though exceptions do occur.
- The children spent more time on average outdoors during the second period of documentation, and the documentations significantly increased.
- Outdoor activities took place on a daily basis in all leisure centres.
- In the youth centres there were fewer events, but they lasted longer and were more organised.

#### *Where Outdoor Learning and Outdoor Activities took place and whether it was Mandatory or Elective.*

- Outdoor learning mainly took place on the premises (79%) but also slightly in the local area (20%).

- There is much greater participation of outdoor learning when it is mandatory and when it takes place in after school centres.
- Children's elected outdoor activities increased during the second period of documentation.

*What was the Purpose of the Outdoor Learning, what was the Emphasis?*

- The central purpose of outdoor learning in leisure work revolved around playing and general enjoyment, health and physical exercise.
- In the process of the project the employees were more aware of the possibilities entailed in non-formal outdoor learning.

*Conclusions in general*

These conclusions are drawn from notes and the discussion between the participants from the workshops, the guidance at the workplace, in meetings during the projects and also at the EOE Seminar in Stockholm.

- Staff awareness of outdoor learning and outdoor activities increased during the project, the staff members were more able to express themselves about this aspect of their work and were better prepared in developing it.
- Many ideas regarding outdoor learning arose. Tasks were set, such as: Outdoor games, long and short walks, sports, outdoor cooking, theme month in relation to outdoor activities, orienteering games, cooperation of the work stations concerning the communication of knowledge, and outdoors club.
- Tangible interest and will is in place. Skills, knowledge and experiences must be increased by means of peer-education and courses on the subject.
- It is important to place emphasis on increasing the staff knowledge regarding near-environment, equipment, facilities and specialised knowledge.
- It is important to work further with work groups inside the youth clubs, on the one hand, and in the after school care centres, on the other.
- It is imperative to view this project as a longitudinal programme because children's outdoor learning will not be increased through temporary solutions.

Final word

This development project has been a good learning experience. It was an opportunity to support an important element of leisure work - outdoor learning - and at the same time learn more about the work in the field. I am thankful for that.

I think it is very important to harness the power of the non-formal and informal systems in order to foster the connection between children and nature. There are great opportunities in the field of leisure to do so. In Reykjavík there is a need to recover the creative and diverse outdoor culture that once existed in the leisure sector, and utilize it to strengthen outdoor learning. Opportunities are there and it is our responsibility to make it happen.

Go out and have fun!

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## ***On becoming outdoors and the implications for working with young people - a journey of reflection***

***Diane Collins***

### Introduction

My starting supposition is that when people identify themselves as ‘outdoor’, they will have a greater affinity with the environment and nature compared to people who feel alienated from the outdoors. If this is the case, what might be the consequences of sections of populations disassociating themselves from contact with the outdoors and nature? What might be done to enable people to form or re-form associations with the outdoors? What might be the consequences of this for our work with young people, so that we can motivate young people to experience and, hopefully, come to love the outdoors?

### Should I worry? The Context

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has published a report, *The State of Nature* (2013). It finds that climate change is having an increasing impact on nature in the United Kingdom. Rising average temperatures are known to be driving range expansion in some species, and there is evidence that the harmful impacts of this are mounting. Concerns include:

- 30% out of the 54 butterfly species assessed have decreased in England;
- 60% of England’s flowering plants are decreasing;
- Over the last 200 years, about 80% of the UK’s lowland heathland has been lost.

The *Natural Childhood Report* (Moss, 2012) found that children and young people’s interactions with the outdoors are reduced.

“Fewer than a quarter of children (and young people) regularly use their local ‘patch of nature’, compared to over half of all adults when they were children. Fewer than one in ten children regularly play in wild places; compared to almost half a generation ago. Children (and young people) spend so little time outdoors that they are unfamiliar with some of our commonest wild creatures.” (ibid, p. 5)

These reductions in the numbers of children and young people engaging with the environment are likely to be having wider societal consequences. Increasing obesity is causing concern. Learning about the environment is more likely to be through second hand experiences, such as the television, which may have a reduced impact. Children and young people risk becoming alienated from their wider community. There is a reduction in knowledge about the environment, suggesting a reduction in an ethic of caring for the environment (ibid, p. 7-11).

## Reflections on my research findings

### *Women youth workers and an outdoor learning experience*

I define myself as an outdoor person. If prevented from venturing outdoors I become restless and irritable. My outdoor identity has developed through childhood and family experiences. Important have been challenges and associations with friends, places and activities. A strong thread has been my membership of semi-structured outdoor clubs, holding club meets, and informal gatherings of like-minded outdoor people. My career has been concerned with inspiring and enabling people to develop the necessary skills and awarenesses so that they can become outdoor people. My hope is that they will then introduce others to the outdoors, in a positive manner, creating a new global generation of outdoor people.

During my earlier career, I worked with women youth workers for whom going outdoors and connecting with nature was not an essential element of their personal identity or family culture. During this earlier research, I came to realise that these women participants had to overcome self- and societal-imposed barriers. The importance of the outdoor educator being sensitive to the insecurities and needs of their learners as they create outdoor and environmental experiences for their participants, enabling them to move beyond previously held negative views of the outdoors, outdoor educators and outdoor activities, was critical in creating positive experiences.

A number of the women youth workers, with whom I have worked, have lacked an outdoor habit. I was slow to realise the huge steps some people had to take, in order to take part in an outdoor experience. My post-experience questionnaire research into outdoor education and women youth workers (Ayland/ Collins, 1991) found that traditional caring roles presented a challenging obstacle, acting as a constraining feature, for many women who wanted to engage in an outdoor experience:

“It was very difficult (to join in), even when my children were in their teens. Other people thought I was mad, to even attempt such an exercise (hill walking in Wales), but I was determined to go.” (ibid. p. 98)

“I had to arrange childcare facilities. Mother and mother-in-law took it in turns. ‘Never again’, they said. My children scarcely missed me. (I came home to an empty food cupboard.) My husband and others did not believe that I would leave them to do outdoor activities, even for such a short time. My husband said, ‘You’ll be cold all the time. It will rain. You won’t go.’ That final comment was the challenge that made up my mind’. I would go.” (Ibid. p. 99)

For others it was a combination of their perceptions of what might be entailed in going outdoors. Some were constrained by the assumptions that the outdoor activity would, by definition, be physically challenging and competitive. Frequent fears were expressed as “I wouldn’t be able to keep up with everyone else” (ibid. p. 88). This lack of confidence in physical abilities could be made more frightening with the possibility of the outdoor activity necessitating some rock climbing (ibid. p. 92). As a relatively inexperienced outdoor educator

at the time of this research, and by offering an outdoor experience mirroring those provided by my male colleagues, I may have contributed unwittingly to the fears and negativity of at least one participant:

“... physical and mental limitations .... I didn’t enjoy edging along a narrow, high path in dim light. I couldn’t muster the courage to do Maggot’s Crawl (in a cave), though I didn’t feel low about that .... being very frightened under the stars at night ....” (Ibid. p. 115)

It is also easy to underestimate the possible consequences of being a member of a group. As an outdoor person, I am used to being a member of a group or club. However, not all participants regarded this as a potentially positive aspect of being outdoors. There were concerns about whether people would be friendly, or whether they would make judgments about fitness levels, walking speeds, or the ability to grasp the technicalities of navigation. One woman described this concern as “exposing myself to the weaknesses that others may pick upon and could use against me” (ibid. p. 105).

As a club member, I am used to cooperative decision-making and a readiness to share our skills and knowledge. However, participants suggested that they had expected an aggressively competitive environment (ibid. p. 11). Over half of the respondents indicated that the learning environment created by the group facilitators, in partnership with the participants, was a critical feature for them ultimately having a positive experience. Included in this was the selection of a locality appropriate to their interests, needs and abilities. They also stressed the importance of having confidence in their facilitator’s knowledge and outdoor skills. The benefit of facilitators being able to manage a holistic learning environment was noted. One woman recorded this in a positive manner, as “new experiences, offered by non-threatening people – (I had) never been in the mountains before” (ibid, p. 113). Some sought feedback from previous participants about their perceptions of the quality of the outdoor experience. For some people it was positive comments about group cohesiveness that became a significant factor in enabling them to decide whether to attend (ibid. p. 109). For the women youth workers, the potential to step outside traditional roles with their associated expectations, to “feel a person in my own right, not a mum, sister’s wife, dog’s body” (ibid. p. 111) was highlighted. I recognise that being outdoors also has the potential to provide personal reflective and recreative space. Some participants also acknowledged this factor. One woman explained, “I was looking forwards to the space. I would get away from the pressures of life at home, to take stock of myself – where I was going and what I wanted to do” (ibid. p. 111).

#### *Community development workers and youth workers and their connections with nature and the outdoors*

My more recent research (Collins, 2005) developed as I sought to gain insights into why people chose to define themselves as non-outdoors. It comprised an analysis of in depth interviews, with community development worker and youth worker colleagues. In fact, I found that the majority of my colleagues, who had initially said that they were non-outdoor, did have connections with nature and the outdoors. It was mainly their perceptions of the

outdoor world that led them to regard themselves as outsiders. When thinking of the outdoors and nature, they felt physically, culturally and/or economically excluded.

A common feature of this non-outdoor perspective of the outdoors is that a physical connection is required. One colleague stated, "I think it is about climbing mountains for some people, and I think that's alright .... and for me it's not" (ibid. p. 152). Another, born with a dislocated hip, explained, "... the parental attitude of cotton wool .... I couldn't climb a tree without fearing that I would fall out and really hurt myself .... and I got ridiculed" (ibid. p. 155). Another thought that she could not engage with the outdoors because she could not afford the right fleeces with their logos or walking boots. As an asthmatic, she was cautious about her physical abilities and did not want to 'ruin' her friends' day (ibid. p. 156). A male colleague, who is gay, associated the outdoors with being bullied. At school, he had faced homophobic bullying. The outdoors, with a perceived macho atmosphere and reduced adult supervision, presented greater opportunities for abusive behaviour. However, although he did not enjoy an intense physical relationship with the outdoors through physical activities, he became an enthusiastic gardener (ibid. p. 159). It also became clear that there are cultural reasons why some people do not want to connect with the outdoors. One colleague was brought up in Ireland during the Troubles<sup>8</sup>. As a Catholic, she did not feel she could venture onto the large tracts of open country owned by Protestants. She reflected also that her Pakistani neighbours did not venture into the surrounding countryside, partly because they did not know where they were legally allowed to go, but also because they associated it with the poverty from which they had escaped (ibid. p. 158).

Although my colleagues initially defined themselves as non-outdoor, it became clear that all had connections with nature and the outdoors. Some spoke of camping with the Guides, others of walks along the sea front or riverbank, others of tending a small garden patch of their own. One became a keen ornithologist, others enthusiastic gardeners and others regular walkers. Despite this, at first they argued that they were not outdoor people because they did not fit in with their stereotyped perceptions of what it means to be outdoor people.

An analysis of collective poems, written after an outdoor experience revealed the importance of the senses in making connections:

The sound of raindrops over my head, the sight of the rainbow across the waterfall, howling wind against the body (ibid. p. 164)

Observations were made about the power of nature:

The thirsty ferns sipped the thundering water, droplets of water transformed into a solid mass, sheer power and energy – why can't we use and not abuse it? (ibid. p. 165)

And,

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<sup>8</sup> The Troubles occurred in Northern Ireland in the late twentieth century. In the conflict between the Protestant majority and Catholic minority over 3,600 people were killed and thousands were injured.

To see the sheer beauty of a land untouched or spoilt, to hear sound never heard in cities, the force of the wild unknown to city dwellers, to think of life in pace with nature's rhythms, small humans in vast country ... but they will survive (ibid. p. 167)

The writers wrote of feelings of peace, being alone with nature, seeking support from their co-walkers and facing personal challenges. They wrote of mythical beasts. They wrote of a reflective space:

Reflecting on my own, solitude is not being lonely, it's a powerful silence, the answers are there (ibid. p. 176)

Through the participants' involvement in these research processes, it seemed that they were able to give themselves permission to recognize the legitimacy of their involvements with nature and the outdoors and to consider re-defining themselves as outdoor.

Further analysis revealed that people developed a connection with nature through a combination of factors:

- their family had a tradition and habit of going outdoors;
- they were members of friendship groups which went outdoors;
- they had developed a love of nature, generally from childhood;
- they had an enthusiasm for outdoor activities ranging from sailing and climbing to wildlife watching and gardening;
- they had been inspired by someone or something; and,
- they had been given opportunities to engage with the outdoors.

A critical factor for many people was having a friend or mentor who would persuade them to go on trips outdoors.

#### *My recent practical work and observations*

I have recently facilitated courses aimed at increasing the confidence of youth and community development workers to take their client groups outdoors. At the end of the courses, an increase in confidence and ideas has been reported. However, a recurring theme has been that there has not been enough information about activities that they could lead with the children, young people or adults. This is a cause for concern as it appears to replicate the traditional view of the outdoors being concerned with leading activities, rather than facilitating outdoor experiences, so that people can extract from these the things that they are initially comfortable with, and having control over defining their own personal challenges. There was still an interest in taking people to more remote places, rather than on appreciating the nature that surrounds us. Yet the nature that surrounds us is accessible and generally free from some of the activity, economic and cultural considerations that impact on going further afield. Bond (2013) argues:

“Nature needs passionate naturalists, who care for the plant and animal species struggling to maintain their positions in rapidly changing habitats. Where do

these people come from? They grow up in family gardens and spend time in local parks, woodlands and seashores. They care about the environment because they experience it. They have a sense of oneness with nature and as the relationship grows they start to develop a feeling of responsibility for its welfare.” (ibid, p.1)

I am drawn to wild and remote outdoor environments. However, as a youth worker, I have learned to work within the parameters presented by the contexts of the young people. Often there is not the funding to take young people distances from their urban environments. In addition, the countryside may appear tame compared with the excitements presented by rough ground in cities. Alternatively, it can appear alien and frightening, as the darkness of the countryside encroaches and unfamiliar owl sounds are heard. How then can young people be supported to develop outdoor aspects of their identities?

By developing activities in urban areas that are adventurous (and legal), young people may develop the skills, confidence and desire to explore further afield. For example in my city, Portsmouth, a trail can be followed avoiding many of the areas of dense housing. There are places for scrambling. At night, there are places to experience comparative darkness. There are opportunities for watching wildlife. The urban fox is a regular feature of this urban landscape. There are also opportunities for responding to the environment in creative ways. The urban outdoor environment may be more accessible to urban young people. Its exploration can have a smaller carbon footprint. Developing an appreciation of urban nature may play an important role in the development of sustainable living for the future. As Bond (2013) suggests, it is an affinity with the local that may lead to a sense of oneness with nature. Moreover, in the UK, fewer qualifications are required when working with young people in an urban environment, than when taking them to more remote locations.

I recognize that more time must be devoted to supporting colleagues so that they can become outdoor people, so that they can understand on a personal level what it means to be connected with nature and the outdoors. This involves mentoring, developing creative means for connecting through photography, art, story-telling and poetry, and giving time to explore and reflect on the intricacies and marvels of nature. Many courses merely replicate what has gone before with an emphasis on physical activities.

My hope is that outdoor educators will support the development of a much broader definition of the outdoors and outdoor activities. Some national organisations are drawing the public’s attention to options. The Royal Horticultural Society is promoting gardening in schools. The National Trust (2013) offers a list of 50 ‘must do’ activities, ranging from holding a scary beast to making a trail with sticks. The Woodland Trust has downloadable sheets for children and young people. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has an activity wall, which includes such ideas as feeding garden birds or planting some seeds.

Does a connection with nature and the outdoors matter? Cooper (2010) argues that engaging with the outdoors provides opportunities to confront real issues. These may be critical to the development of an ethic of care. Ultimately, future reports on the state of the nation’s nature might paint a more positive picture, because of actions taken to bring about change and caring

for the environment. The snapshots from the collective poems, noted earlier, reflect some of these concerns as well as a sense of wonder.

### Conclusions

People may initially define those who are outdoor people as having a mainly physical connection with the outdoors. By encouraging the legitimization of a broader range of connections we may be encouraging more people to identify themselves as outdoor. This may result in an attitudinal shift so that people are more open to considering some of the major environmental issues that we face. This applies as much to our work with adults as to our work with young people.

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## ***Tillsammans – empowering young women from diverse backgrounds to explore Swedish nature and culture***

***Elizabeth Nasimbwa***

### Introduction

Some years ago I had a blog that encouraged greater use and appreciation for vintage clothing and furniture. In 2009 when my blog got a nomination for a sustainability award, I was contacted by a reporter from *Göteborgs-Posten*, one of Sweden's largest newspapers. The reporter wanted to write an article about me on my interest in vintage objects. Since I was 21 years at the time, I guess the reporter assumed I was a retro nostalgic, so the first question I got was in what era I would choose to live, if I got the chance to live in another era. I asked a counter-question:

"Would I in that case live as a wealthy white man, or as myself?"

"As yourself", the reporter replied, while in that instance understanding my reasoning.

I explained the complexity of the question referring to black history of oppression and racism and came to the conclusion that I would prefer to live in the present. I noticed that the reporter looked uncomfortable and I realized that the question was meant to be an ice breaker, as a way to warm up the conversation before we started with the interview. I was studying sociology at that time so I was used to discuss subjects such as ethnicity and class. Therefore, I answered the question according to research I had read on the subject. I noticed too late that the reporter was not looking for an answer from me as a sociology student. The only expectations I was supposed to live up to were those of a young woman with an interest in vintage fashion, not those of a social scientist with relevant social criticism. My answer was therefore not included in the published article (Alfredsson 2009).

I was disappointed about this, but was not expecting much since I rarely read about young women's opinions of this matter in my daily news paper. I find that young women are more likely expected to discuss fashion and beauty than politics. I have met many young women, in particularly those with foreign background, who share my experience. Many feel that they are never taken seriously and that their opinions are irrelevant. This concerns me deeply. I would say that the most dangerous future development is young women losing interest in important social issues. Studies on countries' economic growth have shown that ethnic diversity alone is not enough for economic efficiency, an equal distribution between men and women in managerial positions is also important (Perkins et al. 2013). Therefore engaging young women in public issues such as politics, the environment, education etc. is not only an important democratic purpose, it is also a necessity for the country's growth.

### Tillsammans is born

The spirit of *Tillsammans (Together)*, a girl's association of Svenska Turistföreningen (STF, The Swedish Tourist Organization), is to empower young women from diverse background to explore Swedish nature and culture. *Tillsammans* is an association born out of the enthusiasm of the young women we serve. In 2002 STF offered a pilot of our summer camps for girls aged 15-25 years. Approximately 20 girls participated at the camp. Some girls were brought up in Sweden and some girls had just lived here for a couple of years. STF wanted to grant access to a neutral place for girls with diverse backgrounds and at the same time provide the opportunity for young women to discover Swedish nature and culture. The activities empowered the girls in self-esteem and self-confidence. The pilot was so successful that the girls who participated at the camp got together to form a girls association. They called it *Tillsammans*. They chose the tagline "*Känn dig själv, känn ditt land, känn världen*" which roughly can be translated into "get to know yourself, get to know your country, get to know the world". *Tillsammans's* activities are based in this sense and spirit. The quote is by Dag Hammarskjöld, former UN Secretary General and the posthumous recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1961. Hammarskjöld was also a board member in STF for many years. The quote is from a speech in which he explained the foundations of an individual's sympathy for their community. He said that one must start with understanding and finding sympathy for oneself before one can sympathize with the society or even the world (Hammarskjöld 2005).

### Local activities and summer camps

Since the start in 2002, *Tillsammans* has provided local activities in Gothenburg and Stockholm and summer camps for girls across Sweden. The most recent summer camp in 2013, was held in the archipelago of Stockholm. The structure of the camp was similar to our previous camps, but we change the location from one year to another. We take considerable care as to where to host a summer camp. We only have shared rooms within the group. We reserve separate study rooms for the whole camp and we lock the reserved room when we are outside so no one can interfere. Drugs and alcohol are strictly forbidden on our camps and local activities are available for all members. We strive to have the same rules for both leaders and participants to maintain equality in the group.

For each summer camp *Tillsammans* strives for a mixture in which half of the participants have a Swedish background and the other half to have foreign background. The girls also represent a variety of family, sexual orientation, religious, political, and educational backgrounds. We want the participants to the greatest extent possible to represent young women in Sweden today. This combination also promotes a cultural mix that enriches the discussions and exercises. The discussions and exercises we do in *Tillsammans* result in the girls getting a greater understanding of themselves, Swedish culture and traditions and increased knowledge in various foreign cultures and traditions.

In addition, the locations for the summer camps also provide the girls to discover Swedish nature and outdoor life on our stays in the alpine wilderness or in the archipelagos where STF

have accommodations. Whether the girls have lived in Sweden all their lives or if they have lived here for just some years, they explore Swedish outdoor life with excitement and curiosity. We want to communicate that integration means to meet in the middle. Girls with Swedish background have as much to learn about Swedish nature and culture as well as girls of foreign origin. When they discover and experience new places in Sweden that they did not know before they feel a special connection in group. This is why girls who did not know each other before the camp have become best friends at camp's end. Prejudices and suspicion disappear when they all meet in a neutral place that no one owns nor is excluded from.

#### Outdoor education and urban nature

When the girls get to know each other from a summer camp, we want to empower them to use their collective strength for the benefit of their community. We did an outdoor education event with the group in Gothenburg to address the city's segregation issue. Studies on housing segregation in Gothenburg show that increased class differences form neighbourhoods where different communities are centred (Andersson 2007). This results in some areas to get high status while other areas receive low status. This phenomenon creates prejudice and resentment between different areas.

To increase the girls' understanding and sympathy for their society we did city tours. We hired a tour guide that lectured us on Gothenburg's culture, history and future perspectives. Girls that had lived in Gothenburg their entire life got to discover new places only 20 minutes from their neighbourhood along with girls that only had lived there for a few years. They promised each other to visit different areas in the city that they usually did not visit. They understood what it would take for them to really get to know their own city. Gothenburg's major class differences were clearly visible on our city tours. The girls analyzed their own areas and related it to the rest of the city. They saw that some areas were more equipped than others and they discussed ways to re-establish the low-equipped areas. They wrote a letter to the City Council with their thoughts.

An area that many girls found low equipped and disadvantaged was Angered, in the north east of Gothenburg. The proportion of children is much greater than average Gothenburg. The area is characterized by many residents with foreign backgrounds (born abroad or born in Sweden and both parents born abroad), a large proportion of public housing and low-middle income (Angered 2014). The girls admitted that they rarely socialize in Angered, instead they go in to town. Some girls even admitted that they sometimes lie about living in another area because they don't want to be associated with Angered. They felt ashamed to admit this. The girls were used to hear about the area's bad reputation in the media and the girls that lived there were frustrated that the media only portrayed the area as unsafe and disorderly (Stockholm News 2014). They felt that the media should not only portray the bad things, for it is a one-sided view on a very diverse area. In the letter to the City Council they wrote that they wanted to be ambassadors for a safe and open urban nature in Angered. They wanted to show the benefits of the area's international character and create an interest in exploiting the large green spaces and beautiful walking paths not far from Angered Centre. They wanted to

promote the great variety within the area by providing free of charge walking tours and outdoor activities in the *Tillsammans* association. They used their experience in *Tillsammans* as an inspiration for young women in Gothenburg to get involved in urban development and urban nature. The purpose of the activities was to increase young women's perception of their own neighbourhood and the city as a whole.

### Female leaders

To gain confidence from the girls and their parents the leaders in *Tillsammans* must reflect the participants. It helps us to get in touch with the girls when they can relate to us. This is also why we only have female leaders. Also, some girls have restrictions from their parents on associating with boys. These girls had not been allowed to go on camp if we had had male leaders in the association. Because we focus on the girls' needs, we felt it was not necessary arguing with the parents on this matter. However, we discuss this subject on every camp with the new girls. We ask them about their parents' influence on their friends. Some girls get to hang out with whoever they want and be out as late they want, while some girls have strict guidelines on who they get to hang out with and what time they are expected to get home in the evening. They discuss the pros and cons of having strict or free upbringing and share experiences. They also discuss boys' influence on girls in mixed groups. Many girls feel that in mixed groups boys tend to take more space and the girls get sidelined. Not having mixed groups in *Tillsammans* is therefore a way to further the girls' empowerment.

We encourage girls between 20-25 years to attend leader camp to develop their leadership and influence in *Tillsammans*. By this time they are already role models for the younger girls and are very missed if they choose to leave the association. *Tillsammans* wants to listen to the youth we serve, so we continually reshape our exercises and activities based upon the girls' feedback. The leader camps also endorse long-lasting friendships and "positive girl-culture" in the association. However, not becoming a leader is not the end of the girls' connection with *Tillsammans*. Many girls stay in touch by joining *Tillsammans*' group on the social network Facebook. Girls who do not become leaders are invited to reunions and other contexts where they can meet old and new members. This is very much appreciated and shows that they are always welcome back even if only temporary.

### Social benefits of *Tillsammans*

When STF held the pilot summer camp in 2002, the purpose was also to introduce outdoor activities to a new audience that is underrepresented in the organization. Young women in Sweden are rarely encouraged to spend time in nature or to practice outdoor adventure sports such as rock climbing, canoeing, etc. This excludes the girls from discovering and experiencing Swedish nature, though it is so close to them and is as much theirs as anyone else's. By introducing the girls to close nature experiences, their knowledge of their country and their surroundings is increased. This in turn increases the care of their society and makes

them more aware of how they can participate in important social issues. Empowering young women to become leaders with social influence is not only a benefit for STF as an organisation, it is a benefit for the whole Swedish society (Perkins et al. 2013).

I have observed that young boys are early in their lives encouraged to adopt characteristics that later benefit them in the workplace, for example, to be goal motivated, to believe in their own ability, to deal with setbacks, etc. Girls rarely have this upbringing and are later on to develop these characteristics. This gives the girls a disadvantage when it comes to entering the labour market. The leader camps include young women in organizational leadership and development. The leaders in *Tillsammans* get to make organizational decisions, plan, implement and evaluate camps and activities, manage work-related conflicts, etc. Many girls write about their involvement in *Tillsammans* in job applications and often use the project manager of *Tillsammans* as a reference. In Sweden voluntary involvement in non-governmental organizations are greatly appreciated when applying for a new job. It indicates that you show sympathy to your community and that you are passionate about something with social favouring. In this way becoming a leader in *Tillsammans* also serve the girls for working life (Volontärbyrån 2014).

Through the years *Tillsammans* has collaborated with other organizations to share knowledge and resources. We have made many visits to other female empowerment organizations, such as United Sisters (2014), Gutz (2014), Mötesplatsen Simone (2014), etc. Unites Sisters' vision is that every girl should be able to be herself and develop without being restricted by norms, gender roles, the opinions of others or oneself. They have groups in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Gutz is a girl's recreation centre in Gothenburg. The girls plan and lead courses, discussion evenings, movie nights, etc. Simone is a feminist girl's association in Gothenburg. They have lectures and discussion evenings on gender, female empowerment, norms, etc. It is important to collaborate with other girl's associations. This shows that we support and encourage each other. It is said that women are not good at supporting each other, and thus opposes all efforts to empower women. All organizations we have met want to change this and have agreed to always speak well of each other and work together instead of competing. We all have the same goals, empowering women as leaders and important voices in public issues. To achieve this, we must recognize our own part in the oppression of women and change our own behaviour. Then we can process and challenge the society to create change.

#### How *Tillsammans* has influenced me

It was a beautiful spring day in 2003, when my best friend Emma told me about a girl's summer camp that her mother had been told about it from a female friend. It was a girl's association called *Tillsammans* from Gothenburg that organized the camp to be held at the mountain station Grövelsjön in the Dalarna province. Emma wanted to go to the camp, but only if I came with her. We were 15 years old and did everything together so I agreed to go with her to the camp. Emma's mom called my foster mom and told her about the camp and then she notified us. Summer came and it was time for us to go to the camp. The association accounted for all expenses, travel, lodging and food during the camp. For insurance reasons,

we needed to become members of the STF, which cost 150 SEK for youth membership. Our nearest big city was Uppsala so we had to get on the train from Gothenburg at Uppsala Station. Many in the group had got on in Gothenburg, but just like us some girls got on along the journey towards Dalarna.

At the camp, we made teamwork exercises and outdoor activities such as swamp soccer, hiking and outings. Everything we did was new and exciting for me. We were approximately 20 girls between 15 and 20 years with diverse background and from a number of cities. It was an appreciated experience for me to hang out with girls from such diverse backgrounds. I and my siblings were the only ones from our little town that had African origin. There were not many other backgrounds represented, than the Swedish, at my school. But here I was not a minority, since there was no majority to compare with. Each represented only herself. This does not mean that I instantly became friends with everyone or even got along with everyone, but I was grateful that we were all there together.

After the camp Emma and I got invitations to local activities in Gothenburg and new camps. Emma had liked our first camp, but would rather spend time on other activities so she chose to leave *Tillsammans*. I wanted to continue to meet the other girls and continued as a member of the association. This was probably the first independent decision I took without Emma. I do not know if it was the exercises we did to increase our independence, if so, they worked on Emma and me. For the first time we realized that we had different needs. We continued to be friends, but with different interests. We are still good friends today.

As a member of *Tillsammans* I went to Gothenburg for the major activities and went on the summer camps across Sweden. I made friends from diverse backgrounds and got to see new parts of Sweden. Many of my female friends are girls I have met from *Tillsammans*. *Tillsammans* has probably influenced my life more than I can really understand. After high school I moved to Gothenburg to study project management and my first job was as a project manager for *Tillsammans* from 2008-2010. I still live in Gothenburg and I am still a member of the association. I volunteer as a leader when I can. My biggest lesson in *Tillsammans* is that it is not your skin color or your background that determines if you are Swedish or not. It is your understanding of yourself as part of the Swedish society. No matter how you participate or what you look like. You represent Swedish nature, culture, history and future.

#### About STF

STF was founded in 1885 by a group of scholars in Uppsala. STF was born from the idea that it needed to be easier to discover and experience Sweden. Over its 125-years history, the association has taken that idea further, firstly under the banner of "Get to know your country" and then for the past few years "Discover Sweden". STF is one of the largest popular movements in Sweden boasting a membership of roughly 300,000 members. STF work hard to facilitate tourists on their journeys across Sweden so that more and more can discover all the beautiful and exciting experiences our country has to offer.

Since 1885, STF has developed a network of alpine facilities spread along the trails over large portions of the mountain range. The ten mountain stations serve as hubs where, in addition to finding accommodations, you will have a chance to take part in courses and guided tours, dine at a restaurant, shop at a store and make use of other services. The 43 alpine huts offer simpler accommodation and are situated along the trails, spaced about one day's journey from each other. By means of these alpine facilities, STF keeps the mountain region open both for those looking for a great adventure and those looking more for a somewhat smaller diversion.

1933 saw the founding of STF's first Swedish youth hostel. These early hostels were situated at a bicycle-ride's distance from each other, and it was not until the 1950's that the motorcar became the most common way to get to the youth hostel. This practical concept took root and the number of youth hostels in the STF family quickly grew to the current level of 320 facilities. Certain youth hostels are run by STF in its own right; however most of them are run by independent businessmen sharing common values with STF. This way, STF combines the large association's network and goals with the drive of many enthusiasts in order to do the best one can with one's own facility.

STF and the environmental movement have developed side by side. Right from the start, our desire to make the alpine world accessible to people was absolutely crucial. A few years later, STF took part in discussions when the first national parks came about in 1909 and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation was founded in the same year. The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation's former chairman, Louis Améen, was also one of the founders of STF and was in turn its chairman between 1912 and 1926.

When people experience nature for themselves, their enthusiasm for preserving it is reinforced. With that fundamental idea, STF guide our guests and members to new nature experiences in national parks and other sensitive nature areas, all with great respect. STF also strives to be a clear voice for certain important environmental issues which would otherwise risk being pushed to the sidelines, among them the right of public access and shoreline protection. STF works in many ways in order to reach the goal of making Sweden easily accessible, for example, through the association's many accommodation facilities, a clear voice in the debate in the community and particular and special investments in the *Tillsammans* integration project.

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## *Dropping-Out Peradventure – An Exploration with Other-ways Towards Being*

*Steve Bowles*

I want to write, as close as possible, as if I were a skateboarder or climber. I want to try and stay true to that which is essential to such adventurous activities as they work their wonders and give kinds of pleasure and Being to that which can be called a lived-life that senses ambience. To do this seems to involve some kind of dropping-out, away and from formal over-rationalised and well programmed systems that tend to dominate official versions of Adventure Education and the writings that support such officialdoms. I seek that devil in the details of domesticated programmes. In fact I feel the need to 'feed my own rat' and through that 'rat' thrive and stay true to that which is the happening peradventure. This remains true even if writing and climbing or skateboarding are quite different in themselves. But such is but one other adventure added on to this basic theme. I seek out the beast in a world of over-beautiful images and the mundane ordering of 'things'. I try to stay true to the beastly rats in a world that tries to programme these radical rats away from all social and political-economic adventurous alternatives. In fact, as it seems to me, raw-meat skateboarding and mountaineering not only refuses the mundane worlds of official programmes and social orderings it also enters into a more sacred realm of Being whereby the beast itself and the rat itself finds favour with some elemental spirit of life.

The mountain becomes an 'outdoor' sanctuary where refuge is provided in the midst of a world turned upside down. The skateboarder's urban city-nature becomes a shrine and a sacred place too amidst the world that is somehow sensed but usually forbidden or privatised. This is all a theology of revolt through personal action, sense and feeling. Revolutionary it may not be, in the political sense of that word, but revolting it certainly is. Climbers and skateboarders love the rat as that rat is also revolting. The rat is always a little bit dirty and deviant. Here deviance finds a sacred place to be in contrast to that profane programmed milieu which feels all so far away and distant, alienated, from Being as Being. Climbers of the raw meat variety, like raw meat skateboarders, thrive on the wildness and the beastly 'out-of-place' activities. In this theology of the beastly-wild the mundane official worlds are confronted and condemned and all official cleanliness of thought, word and deed is denied. To feed the rat is to act as an elementary form of religious life in a Modern world of mundane absurdity.

The raw meat climbers and skateboarders refuse to merely consume happiness and well being as the raw meat sense of Being kicks-in and gives hope and authenticity to a living of the real life for real. In an alienated world of casino and consumer capitalism ideology this is, indeed, quite revolting. I write here as a dirty writer thriving on that which is forbidden and disallowed by officialdoms. Like the dirty places I do. Theological I am. Find an ambient

home we will. That is when we act out our lives in raw-meat ways that are quite contrasting to any consumer-capitalism ideology disguised as an adventure programme that requires the successful client to worship an idle self-esteem system. We can say that raw meat climbers and skateboarders seek to create an ambience that feels like a sacred home. They often choreograph an environment or milieu so that it becomes a place of home and future pilgrimages. Private alien places become ambient public places-for-Being to be then worshipped in ways that are expressing community action. Yet these ways are typically deviant ways of protest. It is the sacred protesting, through action, against the mundane, the absurd, the profane and alienating aspects of a system-world. Long live the sacred life-world.

#### Can we balance on the Modernity fence?

For this I am led into classifying as an act of crucifixion. This due to some recent heavy trends in adventure-based education for a pseudo-scientific status as shown in official programmed books. So I am led quickly into mentioning social theory and the likes of Emile Durkheim (1915), Mary Douglas (1966) and Zygmunt Bauman (1991). For the interested reader these names may well bring both pleasure and learning as they can illuminate my own words here above and below in expert systems. But I am loathe to follow up this style of writing here. Yet social and anthropological bits do get aired here. The raw meat climbers and skateboarders would avoid such delicate and disciplined social theorists and make their homes through their actions that can best be linked through such medium as the arts and crafts, poetry and video, music and painting. Academic books and well programmed systems are not sacred, not ambient and not authentic unless, of course, one is a professional social theorist that never skateboards or climbs his or herself. Raw meat climbers and skateboarders refuse to be officially processed through alien programmes that destroy the very essence of the adventure. However, a few examples from these skateboarders and climbers can be given here without my feeling too guilty and without me destroying that which makes it all good and ambient and sacred. I can gently try to stay true to those adventures into-with ambient states of consciousness and Being.

#### Bad for Insurance Policies but good for health and wellbeing

In 1988 Al Alvarez wrote a little book as a 'portrait of a climber' which was really a discussion with another climber Mo Anthoine about the need for "Feeding The Rat" (Alvarez, 1988). The reader will find within a kindly but ruthless critique of parts of Modern Times and even an almost Freudian critique of civilization itself. Modernity itself was maybe necessary but it was not sufficient for authentic action. So this leaves a rat waiting and even demanding to be fed. The wild-side needed attention as this was denied through over-programmed rational and often absurd ordering of things social. For Mo Anthoine (Alvarez, 1988): "The rat is you really. It is the other you..." (p. 152). For both Alvarez and Anthoine climbing was something of an escape away from everyday life in terms of well organised systems that were but 'soft options' and without real challenges to keep us alert and awake. To feed the rat was

like 'an annual check up' in terms of real health and safety in a world where health and safety were but miserable absurdities more in tune with insurance policies than human being. Indeed the adventure has been a kind of dropping out happening. To find a kind of completeness and Being it was necessary to feed that rat which was that 'other you' denied through the system-worlds of Modern Times. Charlie Chaplin might have agreed.

Skateboarders have seemed to agree with this approach to the understanding of why we do this kind of adventurous activity. If you wish to see this for yourself just visit skateboarding places and check it out. You will find that skateboarders refuse the fancy health and safety guidelines so beloved of adventure programmes. Indeed no safety helmets, no knee or elbow protections and no insurance policy will be found in such sacred places of skateboarding. It is only during official competitions or on TV programmes that such health and safety measures are seen as essential. In my research with skateboarding shops I found out that it was only parents that bought helmets and elbow and knee protections for their young kids just starting out. Soon, as the skateboarder became a real skateboarder, such non-essentials were quickly thrown away. Shops sell very little health and safety equipment to well practised skateboarders. Learn how to fall is the song sung.

#### Freedom, pain and pleasure principles at your own leisure?

Mo Anthoine and Al Alvarez were successful in terms of both business and friendly communities and the sense of alienation and/or authenticity issues were not those of this variety. Indeed not. The 'other'-self that was lacking in the rational everyday and well ordered social world was attached to something before and beyond such profane easy options. It was, in a big way, quite elemental. As I think about such wonderful refusals of Modern Times I am thrown into another kind of world where books do matter. Climbers have often enjoyed reading Nietzsche during their 'waiting times' before or after a climb. I am thrown again into a kind of Dionysos rebelling against Apollonian orders for well ordered crucifixions and Dionysos rebelling for a re-valuation of all value so as to move away from mere tragedy. I am also thrown again into the worlds that an Albert Camus dramatized in the public domains. I am thrust into that 'Myth of Sisyphus' whereby we may be condemned to rolling that stone up the mountain forever and ever because it rolls down again from the top after we laboured to get that stone to the summit. But in those times as the stone rolls back downwards and demanding then to be rolled up yet again – in that time our descent – we have freedom. We have time to really BE.

In one real sense both skateboarders and climbers of the raw meat variety find that freedom in those times away from condemnations to labouring in absurd ways. Then they feed the rat. The Dionysos comes out to sing and play and party. Then a meaningful ambience is created and a world that is lost becomes gained again – for awhile at least. A sacred place is created where ambience is 'we' and we together expressed through our ways of the rebel and our ways of peaceful revolt. In this sense to act peradventure is always to rebel and revolt vis-a-vis that which is sensed to be lost or in need of finding. In this such adventures become a kind of explorative and recovery operation. This recover(ed) and open(ed)-up lost worlds is active

even when such a recovery is always condemned to repeat itself as our 'things' do have a habit of alienating such adventurous quests towards Being. Even my own writing here will become much less than I hoped for or intended as our very conceptual orders face, forever, absurdity and new alienation just when we thought that we had just about got it right. Bring on the rat again I say. As I will and must say again and again with hope and freedom to be always just around the corner in a forever maybe-sense as both pain and pleasure work their magic.

### Take back the streets and forget sport

Let us take a quick look at a recent skateboarding event in London. The Southbank event that even reached the big newspapers and was hot on the internet pages. This event has become quite a public event in both business and political senses. Even the Mayor of London felt the need to step in to try and add his voice to the conflict. The issue, in a nutshell, is quite clear. The Southbank underground area has been a skateboarding place for many years. Skateboarders call it a their place for 'pilgrimage' and a 'Sanctuary' and the skateboarders also want this underground arena of adventure to be protected as a special public place where a kind of 'common ownership' law is activated to save their sacred place from the claws of big business and capital gains thieves who would sell their own grandmothers if they could. Such is the story in a nutshell and easily found through the skateboarders' magazines and the internet. Therefore this adventure activity has become quite political as it begins to challenge the very systems that have lost both heart and soul in favour of the money God.

Here the skateboarders refuse official alternatives. As political and business leaders, as a kind of 'Power Elite', join together to offer well planned and organised, safe and clean and tidy, alternative places for this skateboarding so the skateboarders refuse. Skateboarders do not want official places that are fake and ready-made and alien. Skateboarders want to make their own place of worship through their action peradventure as a public lived experience and place. They wish to build their very own totem poles to worship that which is good and special within their own lived-community. This battle has been going on for quite some time. The political and business elite are doing everything they can to change this traditional skateboarding 'shrine' into a business and retail centre. The skateboarders protest this and through this protest move into a protest against the very core of capitalism and its ideological images. Private land ownership is critiqued too. This just as it was in the climbing and mountaineering days before consumer capitalism won over the minds of people that would soon take up pseudo-adventures and privatised self-esteeming humbug.

The point here is that these skateboarders have not only questioned alienation and authenticity in a cultural or personal mode they have also linked this to everyday political-economic rationalities. It is again a raw-meat event as climbers, before consumer-selves, will easily recall. However, all this skateboarding revolt may be only the kind of 'identity-politics' that those like Richard Rorty might record and write about. Yet it might also be a small beginning to what those like Herbert Marcuse would see as a refusal of that kind of 'happy consciousness' which is firmly attached to the consumer side of capitalism itself. This

alienation/authenticity debate is now firmly attached to both political-economic and social structures as it is attached to personal feelings and any humanistic elemental ideal of well-Being. It is just here that a critical theory approach might shed some more light on these events. Even bits of social theory might find a link to skateboarders and climbers although I doubt this would happen for too long because social theory usually ignores the good rat within and merely plays the safe games of officialdom and career promotions.

By the summer of 2013 over 50,000 people had signed an on-line petition to save this skateboarding site of pilgrimage from the business overlords. International support was also shown. Even big time lawyers offered their expensive services for nothing to save skateboarding from Modern monsters of the cash-nexus variety. The 'outdoor adventure' of skateboarding at the Southbank in London was shown not to be a big sport, in contemporary times. Skateboarding was never to become a 'Prison of Measured Time'. In fact this skateboarding finds more links with the European explorers of the sixteenth century where they made their own maps for the navigation with life itself. I do not talk sport here at all. Heaven forbid that I make such a basic error. We are talking about a way of life here not sport or technique. This was quite an eventfulness taking place. Usually the adventure activists deny politics and big business as they prefer to feed their rat and somehow escape the humbug of Modernity-Capitalism. It is quite usual for climbers and skateboarders to somehow agree to be in voluntary servitude and slave-like for some of the time (Mo Anthoine was a successful businessman) and then take their rat out to play during those essential adventurous times where the wild-side is opened up again and the real sense of a wholesome-self is realised. Usually adventurers volunteer their servitude during their everyday life situations and just wait and hope and dream of those times when they can 'get away' and 'get real' and feed the rat which is their 'other self'. Such has been adventure in this sense and in Modern capitalist times. An example of this might be useful.

#### Is "Voluntary Servitude" sometimes a "will to power"?

The wonderful book named "No Picnic On Mount Kenya" (Benuzzi, 1989), tells this story too and well. Let me try to say something about that book which was an adventure experience moved into writing words. If there was ever a better climber or writer doing his stuff as a "voluntary servitude" then I have yet to read it or witness it. Felice Benuzzi (1910-1988) wrote his book as a prisoner who escaped to climb a mountain and then returned to prison to suffer again as his own choice or predisposition. But he forced through his 'other-self', escaped and climbed and then returned to a life in chains. He fed his rat and then returned to his servitude. He escaped prison, climbed a very difficult mountain and then returned and 'gave himself up' to official versions of his everyday life. Albert Camus understood.

The American adventurer, climber and film-maker, Rick Ridgeway (Benuzzi, 1989) had this to say about the Felice Benuzzi episode after film-making just that:

"I wrote my screenplay realizing this contrast of the freedom of the mountains against the oppression of man was the leitmotif of Benuzzi's book. I realized too

that perhaps more than any other climbing story, "No Picnic on Mount Kenya" captures the strong underpinning of revolt common to most mountaineers. The men and the women I know drawn to the hills are mavericks whose principal loyalty is to an individual's right to take his own risks and discover his own truths..."(Benuzzi, 1989, introduction).

The mountaineer, like the raw meat skateboarder, seems to sing the same kinds of songs 'against oppression'. The rat here that seems to be hungry is that of a kind of authentic human being vis-a-vis an oppressive world. Surely this could be educational. Surely this could be edifying peradventure vis-a-vis the big programme(s). Ah dunno. Time will tell. Maybe. No easy picnic ahead.

#### To praise social outcasts not to bury them

Let us return to skateboarding again. Let us weave a tapestry as a patchwork quilt. Let us stay as true as possible to acts peradventure and voluntary servitude and our Civilization and its Discontents. My latest edition of the big skateboarding magazine "Sidewalk" (June 2013) has this to say in its pages (I paraphrase):

"It's time to pick a side. Southbank and the Undercroft is under threat from the dread hand of retail redevelopment... Southbank Undercroft is rich in history and culture and has evolved organically without the need for regulations, overseers or capitalization (pun intended). ... The recently politicised youth must now pick a side. We have and it is not Starbucks. It is time to pick a side. The Long Live Southbank organisation comprised of skateboarders and supporters think of the Southbank Undercroft as their second home and urgently work towards making this skateboarding place a protected village green and public space and thereby deny those that will privatise it and destroy it – now is the time to make a stand against those that will try to run roughshod over the reality of this significant public space and also try to act as the self-appointed guardians of culture..." (Sidewalk, p. 24 editorial)

Then in the same magazine (p. 34-35) up pops an advertisement towards protest and called "Long Live Southbank". People are asked to join the protest via electronic media and nearly 50,000 have already done so. The interesting words used are: "Join the Long Live Southbank Campaign, support culture over commerce and community over capital...". The skateboarding magazine from the UK displays many a good sense of that which maybe. It has supported the 'radicals' who have tried to keep skateboarding free and creating public places and spaces. They have done this through acting anew upon privatised land and capital. In one big sense they have 'taken back the streets'. This magazine has published posters for "Save South Bank". Has raw meat skateboarding become political?

At the same time this magazine displays and advert from the company that is called "Pariah" (May, 2013). The advertisement goes like this:

- a rejected member of society
- a social outcast
- a UK skateboarding Company

The words I use above are exactly the words used by that advertisement. Now with this piece of the market and advertising we can sense much of the scene even if we may like or dislike the advertising wiz-kids. Here is a business selling skateboarding stuff but, at the same time, selling the image of a 'rejected member of society' and a 'social outcast'. Before we jump to any quick conclusions let us assume that these advertising folk know their market and selling job quite well. After all they are in business and doing well.

#### It all becomes Psycho sometimes unless.....

The skateboarders and the climbers show a sometimes subtle way of protest and revolt but a kind of revolt it is. The social and political-economic orderings of things are critiqued. The alienation aspect and the authenticity aspects are equally subtle as they are both structural and personal. To feed the damned rat involves a Civilization and its Discontents as it involves any pleasure principle that is not a mere happy consciousness of consumer capitalism.

#### Let's get higher and away from "me"

Let us return a little to some traditional mountaineers from all over Europe. By so doing we may deepen the evidence and allow future research to reach those that act peradventure rather than ivory tower promotion stakes. Let me repeat a few things from my Prague lecture in 1994 (Bowles, 1996). Lionel Terray (1963) painfully sensed that "progress in technique, training and equipment had made the climber too efficient; as in many other fields, this technique was in the process of killing adventure" (p. 312). Walter Bonatti was from Italy and wrote even more strongly about these issues that bothered Lionel Terray so much. Bonatti (1974) attacked these aspects of Modernity with a vigour and with the hope that a basic humanity might yet find its way again back to some authentic act of living and Being. Both Bonatti and Terray also wrote and climbed against the increasing trends towards both competition and over-organisation. They felt that they climbed towards a special kind of humanity in action. They climbed for authenticity. It is here that we can see the 'raw meat' skateboarding and climbing finding a common thread. This raw meat stage of climbing was to be overtaken by the shallow and banal worlds of Modernity and it was to this that Bonatti and Terray wrote and worked against. Skateboarders will already know and feel this same tension today as some of the skateboarding becomes capitalised and sportified as official prisons of measured time, distance, speed and place. Reading "The Great Days" we find Walter Bonatti recalling his experience one night when sleeping high up on a mountain and looking down to the valley. He wrote:

"It was strange to think that there below me, growing more distant everyday, life was going on, perhaps easy and alluring to one who like me was now suspended between heaven and earth, yet so banal and so disappointing that a man would climb up here in order to escape it.... (but)... from here on there could be no other way" (Bonatti 1974, p. 170).

An earlier mountain climber, this time from the UK, wrote in much the same way as Bonatti and Terray. John Menlove Edwards climbed and wrote and studied his worlds with an intensity that his worlds deserved. This Menlove Edwards explored and tried to discover what was around there on the dark sides of the moon that was also dark around his own inner-moons too. There but for the grace of something other walk I? Let us all dream we are there? Let us step back a little down from our academic ladder rungs and let us try to sense life as really lived peradventure rather than through "programmes". Let us try at least. Menlove Edwards, back in 1937, wrote that:

"...we draw ourselves out, and educate and climbing has come to be part of our education. We naturally make a mess of the things that we educate ourselves on, and that is naturally the world...(but)... these things from the outside help us to keep our little spark glowing" (Edwards 1937, p. 28-37).

Menlove Edwards carried on writing as an 'aesthete at one end and vulgarian at the other' (ibid) by saying:

"...education will not worry its head too much in practice about high places of our feelings ... the mountains are likely, sooner or later, to be placed upon the alter of education. (but) ...one must keep clear of the crowd even to be in touch with it ... a struggle for individuality..." (ibid)

To get a wider and deeper inner-moon experience concerning adventure and Menlove Edwards, with his rat and dark side of the Romantic moon, Perrin (1985/1993) helps us to attempt a harmony within the conflict – a moral unity within an alienation divide. Why bother? Good question, usually. Why therefore an Adventure Education? Why indeed. The pages from Perrin (1983, p. 28-37) are worth much more than a fashionable formality and any person studious of such pages will find more than any mere "Mirrors in the Cliffs". The deeper raw meat is not available in quick and easy references. Live a dream at your peril?

#### Thanks to deviants, fools, vagabonds and banjo players

Perhaps my main point in this essaying is simple. I am trying to encourage a different perspective for our work and trying to encourage that which is already there to unfold and re-emerge. Why? Because I feel that alienation in all its many life-experiences might be handled a little bit better through and with this way. It is also a creative leap away from the happy consciousness of sporty adventures that are mere puppeteering on the capitalist strings of false Gods in so well self-esteemed consumer, professional and official minds. I can already hear those loud voices from the lowly hills and Satanic Mills calling out like Sirens: What about

your results? What about your targeted and accountable results? All I can do to reply to these comments is to say in the most simple way possible, this – your results and accountabilities baffle me, I admit. However there is more to real life peradventure than your well defined measurements and easily programmed outcomes can live by well. My adventure here has been, in a sense, to write that what is denied by your prisons of measured results that mirror management training manuals. I am thus accountable only to deviants, fools, vagabonds and banjo players. I needed to feed my own rat and IT'S All RAT baby, it is all rat. All you need is to put some music to those good words and it is alright until the next time. Let us smile too peradventure. Such a smile may not take away the sins of the world but such a smile peradventure might, just maybe, help to kick the arse of those false Gods that all too often play covert party games to programme us in a way that tries to paint our colourful worlds through their numbers games. No adventure by numbers please. The Price is too much.

#### Postscript

To be accepted and at the same time to be adventurous is quite a heavy Postmodern demand. Can we "be" both optimistic and pessimistic at the same time concerning the Big Issues? If I have used a "Feeding of the Rat" and "The Myth of Sisyphus", as many skateboarders and old fashioned climbers seem to feel and act upon, then I know I have recorded something for real. No matter how small something that really exists. But I am not satisfied. It is the writing that does this I guess. As I write with "things" I am less then content. So maybe a short word from Zygmunt Bauman helps me find that kind of balance that I so often refuse. Bauman (1995) writes:

"From the peak there is nowhere to climb.... after all .... all roads lead down the slope....after\_all the ultimate sensation can be attained : but attaining it will be the death by proxy..." (Ibid, p. 120)

To consider Albert Camus and Zygmunt Bauman together is quite an adventure. Is it not? Such is the kind of conflict that an adventure thrives upon - is it not?

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## *Enriching Student Learning: More than activities*

*Mark Leather and Fiona Nicholls*

### Introduction

In this paper we consider the experiences of university students who were learning to sail as part of a Bachelor of Art's degree programme in Outdoor Adventure Education. The University of St Mark & St John is located in the south west of England close to the sea. Established in 1840, Marjon as we are known has a rich tradition and long heritage of teacher education and sport, including those associated with outdoor adventurous activities. Dinghy (small boat) sailing has been taught at the University for the last thirty years as part of an outdoor education programme. This has always been located in the faculty of physical education and sport, and as such the current degree evolved from this heritage.<sup>9</sup> The basic skills of sailing and 'seamanship' competency was the focus and in recent years the theoretical aspects of degree study were concerned with two areas; a) group leadership and management in the context of journeys and expeditions and b) the impact on, or of, the dynamic natural coastal environment. The response of students had always been positive for the practical sailing aspects of the module, but disappointing when assessing the standard of their work for the written theoretical assessments. This lack of student engagement with the theoretical aspects of the sailing module could have been attributed to the curriculum content, pedagogical approach, personality or the combination of all or none of these three factors.

The sailing module was regularly reviewed as in all good reflective processes in higher education. With a change of teaching staff and an opportunity to re-structure the whole programme, this allowed us to modify and address the factors detailed above. Our approach was more outdoor education than physical education i.e. less skill focussed with a greater awareness of the teaching location and environment, or more simply an holistic outdoor education approach. For a fuller exploration of this conceptual difference see Martin & McCullagh (2011) who discuss how outdoor education is a discipline that is complementary yet a discrete one when compared to physical education. As a teaching team we had discussed developments in contemporary outdoor education discourse on place based education and were influenced by the work of Gruenewald (2003), Stewart (2008), Harrison (2010) and Wattchow & Brown (2011) as well as the work of eminent geographer Tuan (1977). Whilst we realised that our shared outdoor practice had been place based for years, with stories of people, places and events, this had never been formalised in the sailing module as part of the student learning experience.

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<sup>9</sup> See Leather & Porter (2006) for a fuller discussion on the evolution of outdoor education degrees at the university

### What kind of Place?

The base where we keep our sailing boats is itself rich in history (Potts & Wilson 2006). The British Seamen's (Orphans) Boys' Home in Brixham, Devon is nowadays a busy charitable-commercial traditional outdoor education centre (Grenville House Outdoor Education Centre, 2014) that specialises in multi-activity residential visits for school children, typically in the last years of their primary schooling generally aged 10 and 11. The British Seamen's Boys' Home is an imposing gothic styled granite building built on the side of the harbour in 1863 by William Gibbs for the orphan sons<sup>10</sup> of deceased British seamen. On his death in 1875 the Home was placed in trust to the Bishop of Exeter, with the object of providing for the orphan sons of British seaman which it did until it closed in 1988 after 125 years. As such the very start of sailing for our students is in a place full of history, as is the town of Brixham.

#### Plate 1: British Seamen's Boys' Home

Reproduced with kind permission of Grenville House Outdoor Education Centre, Brixham, Devon.

In preparation for teaching about 'the place' we visited the Brixham Heritage Museum (Brixham Heritage Museum, 2014). Here we researched the sailing related 'place' and met with the museum's curator to discuss our students undertaking their own research. Brixham is rich in history, dating back to at least Anglo-Saxon times since it is a natural harbour. It remains a small fishing town and port at the southern end of Torbay, across the bay from Torquay. The town is hilly and built around the harbour which remains in use as a dock for fishing trawlers. It has a focal tourist attraction in the replica of the Golden Hind, the ship of one of England's most famous men, Sir Francis Drake<sup>11</sup>.

On 5th November 1688 William of Orange landed in Brixham and this invasion of England ultimately deposed the catholic King James II and won him the crowns of England, Scotland and Ireland and the protestant legacy lives on. To the south of Brixham lies Berry Head, where a Napoleonic Fort is currently being excavated by local archaeologists, and thought to be on the site of an Iron Age fort. Brixham's military naval significance continued into the 20th century. The wide concrete embarkation ramps are still evident for the troops, armour and fleet who sailed for the D-Day landings in France in June 1944. Fishing remains an integral part of Brixham's history. The great storm of 1866 that killed so many fishermen and prompted the people of The City of Exeter to raise funds for a lifeboat (Salsbury, 2002) still sees the RNLI Torbay Lifeboat 'on station' in Brixham with an average of 103 launches per year (Royal National Lifeboat Institution, 2014).

#### Plate 2: RNLI Torbay Lifeboat

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<sup>10</sup> No mention was made of orphaned daughters!

<sup>11</sup> Sir Francis Drake, Vice Admiral of the Royal Navy was an English sea captain, privateer, slaver and politician of the Elizabethan era. Drake carried out the second recorded circumnavigation of the world, and in 1580 the Golden Hind sailed into Plymouth with Drake and 59 remaining crew aboard, along with a rich cargo of spices and captured Spanish treasures. The Queen's half-share of the cargo surpassed the rest of the crown's income for that entire year. He was second-in-command of the English fleet against the Spanish Armada in 1588.

Picture taken on 17 April 2008 and reproduced with kind permission of RNLI/David E Ham.

Fishing and tourism are the major industries in Brixham, with recreational sailing and power-boating a feature of the harbour. Of particular note in maritime heritage are the traditional tall ships<sup>12</sup> operated by The Trinity Sailing Foundation (Trinity Sailing Foundation, 2014) who sail these ships primarily for personal development courses in the area of youth welfare. These traditional Brixham trawlers, with their ochre red sails, are living working connections with the cultural past of England and Brixham, where in their heyday there were as many as 200 in Brixham.

Plate 3: The Brixham Trawler Provident

Reproduced with kind permission of The Trinity Sailing Foundation, Brixham, Devon.

For us, based in the UK, our cultural heritage is firmly rooted in living, trading and fighting on and near the sea. Viking invasions, Sir Francis Drake, the Royal Navy and colonial British Empire, the Pilgrim Fathers leaving the Mayflower steps in Plymouth bound for the ‘new world’ or Charles Darwin on his seminal journey on HMS Beagle, our history and heritage is firmly rooted in adventure and seafaring. As a result, the prevalence of nautical terms in the English language (e.g. ‘not enough room to swing a cat’, ‘by and large’, ‘slush fund’, ‘get under way’ and ‘all above board’)<sup>13</sup> demonstrates how the sea inhabits our national psyche. The furthest point from the coastline in England and Wales is only 110 km, and about one third of the UK population lives within 10 km of it (Environment Agency 1999). So with this strong cultural heritage, quintessentially encapsulated in Brixham, we believed that the stories to be discovered by our students through their own research would engage them enough to evoke a ‘sense of place’.

### Enriching Student Learning

With this extensive historical connection to the sea and sailing, Brixham as a ‘place’ provided a wonderful opportunity to engage students with all their senses so that their development of sailing skills were directly related to their socio-cultural historical setting and we hoped that as Tuan (1977, p.18) suggested, “a place [Brixham] achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is, through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind”.

Indeed Tuan (1977) has been influential in allowing us to conceptualise how we connect with a place through experiential engagement. He believes that “while it takes time to form an attachment to place, the quality and intensity of experience matters more than simple

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<sup>12</sup> Tall ships - A tall ship is not a strictly defined type of sailing vessel. The term is widely used to mean a large traditionally rigged sailing vessel; traditional-rigged vessels are defined as those vessels whose sail-plan has a predominance of gaff sails and a number of masts constructed in sections.

<sup>13</sup> There are too many to list here - try Jolly R (2000) Jackspeak: A Guide to British Naval Slang & Usage. Maritime Books or Robinson, R (2008) Not Enough Room to Swing a Cat: Naval Slang and Its Everyday Usage. Conway.

duration” (Tuan 1977, p.198). Consequently, we ensured there would be ample opportunity for informal learning during and around the planned ‘sailing activity’. The hour long journey to and from Brixham, along with changing, rigging, sailing in groups and end of day reflection all contributed to opportunities for “chat, conversation and dialogue” (Batsleer 2008).

In addition, the students were required to undertake an individual research project, as part of their assessed work. They were given freedom to choose one socio-historical cultural theme about Brixham as a ‘place’ that has been influenced by sailing. Examples of topics chosen included Brixham Trawlers, the Great Storm of 1866, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), the British Seamen's Boys' Home, Brixham's strategic importance in World War 2 and the Berry Head Fort from the Napoleonic War. Two visits to the local museum were organised; the first as visitors to enable students to explore the wealth of possible topics, and to spark their interest. The second visit was to the museum archive, which was supported by the curator and volunteers (archaeologists and historians from the local area and community). Although people do not usually go to museums to talk, conversations in museums “reflect and change a visitor's identity, discipline specific knowledge, and engagement with an informal learning environment” (Leinhardt et al 2011: ix).

Initially we were apprehensive as to how the students would react to the module. Outdoor Adventure Education students typically describe themselves as pragmatists and kinaesthetic learners, typically ‘learning by doing’ or ‘hands on’. We were concerned about them struggling with this pedagogical approach. Their practical experiences at school and college prior to those at our University would have been skill focused with little or no consideration for where the activity took place. However, as we discuss below we found their enthusiasm, both during the module and when relaying their experiences afterwards, provided a strong indication that they had enjoyed this approach and in particular researching relevant topics and meeting local people.

#### Researching the student experience

We employed three methods to gather the students' experiences at the end of their sailing module. We used photo-elicitation based interviews (Harper 2002, Porr et al 2011) and focus groups in order to allow the students to verbally express their experience. Additionally, the students' written assessments (one research project and associated piece of reflective writing) were analysed.

Throughout the module students were encouraged to take photographs if they wished, but we consciously made no attempt to influence their content. Loeffler (2005, p.346) found that her participants “exhibited a strong desire to capture every nuance of the excitement, intensity, and learning of the new activity or environment” and we suspected that our students would be similar. We asked them to select three images that they thought would have “a long lasting meaning to them related to their experience on this module”. We asked them not to try and guess why we were interested in seeing their photographs, in other words, not to select the

images that they thought we wanted to see. We were aware of how some students wish to please their lecturers and desperately try to 'get it right'. Consequently, we emphasised that we were genuinely interested in seeing what was meaningful to them and that as an ethical piece of research they had the right to withdraw and that importantly what they presented would remain anonymous and confidential.<sup>14</sup>

### Research Findings & Discussion

The images were aggregated into categories (as Stake 1995) based on student's 'stories', in order for us to consider the emergent patterns. As these photographs were categorised on our interpretations, we sought peer review as verification, which involved discussing our findings with critical colleagues (Merriam 1988 cited in Beames & Ross 2010). Photographs were grouped into one of four categories; place, sailing, team or individual. There is an interesting yet unsurprising bias towards a greater number of photographs linked to 'place' given that this was the explicit theoretical focus of the module. Additionally, it may have been because it was difficult to take photographs whilst actually sailing but the presence of other sailing photographs and evidence from the supporting interviews, indicated a real attachment to the place of Brixham as a location for the module. The photographs connected by place, as their theme, were mostly views of Brixham although the Brixham lifeboat appeared twice and two of the students brought pictures downloaded from the internet to talk about instead of photographs. One depicted a Georgian Naval ship, whilst the other was of the iconic Brixham trawlers under sail in the bay at Brixham. In the focus group interviews, each participant was asked the same question, which was; "Why is this photograph significant to you?"

Our findings were that students are able to discover significance in the meaningful relationship between the socio-cultural history of where an activity takes place and the activity itself. Further to this, the research evidence and personal observations of the students on the module strongly suggests that in provoking a 'sense of place' we greatly enriched students learning experience.

The learning experience for the students was enriched because;

1. In developing a greater understanding of how the socio-cultural history of a place can be directly related to an activity, such as sailing, students were able to shape their own learning experience and explore interests that satisfied their own personal curiosities.
2. By imagining and sometimes experiencing the lives of the people of Brixham (past and present), enabled the students to develop an empathy with them and their relationship with the sea and sailing. The result has been deeper understanding and engagement with the physical, cognitive and emotional aspects of learning to sail.
3. The informal learning opportunities afforded by the module enabled student relationships to flourish both with other students and lecturers. Early research

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<sup>14</sup> Consent has been given for all images that are presented within this paper.

indications are that relationships may be the key to increasing student engagement and motivation for study (Loynes 2012).

Our findings are evidenced below with some of the students' chosen photographs, examples of dialogue from the focus group interviews and student's writing from reflective essays focused on their 'sailing experience' and their 'sense of place' related to their chosen theme. Here are a few examples:

"The day which we spent in Brixham but didn't go sailing was probably the day I was able to get a larger sense of Brixham as a place and experience all what it had to offer. This session was full of different events that made me experience Brixham and get to know the people who live there. I was introduced to many people who live and work in Brixham and who can relate to it as a 'place' and 'home'" (Female student 1)

This particular day, described above, has become known affectionately by the students as 'The best day ever', which is interesting in its self – because we didn't sail. On this occasion when we arrived in Brixham the wind was blowing hard easterly straight into the harbour so unable to sail we set off into Brixham to explore. Luckily we were able to arrange a visit aboard Trinity Sailing's Brixham Trawlers and the RNLI Lifeboat in addition to our visit to the town museum. The students were like excited children all day and their photographs told the same tale (see Plates 4 & 5).

Plate 4: 'The Best Day Ever' – Student Photograph

Plate 5: The teaching family – student cartoon

Other students chose images which related more closely to their research topics and wrote engagingly in their assignments about how their research had led to meaningful connections with the place of Brixham (see plate 6).

Plate 6: Brixham Trawlers

Reproduced with kind permission of The Trinity Sailing Foundation, Brixham, Devon.

"When I was on the water at Brixham or at the Sailing Centre, I would look out at the harbour and imagine the 300 vessels overpowering the area with their red sails." (Female student 2)

"I like the fact that it's been there for such a long time ... Like when I was reading up on Brixham for that essay ... like it was so interesting to see that you can get all the way back to the Neolithic Period and people have gone "Er...that's a good spot actually ... I like that ..." and it's still exactly the same and you can imagine they must had had exactly the same feeling as we do now sailing in and out of it." (Male student 1)

Some students really enjoyed telling us about their experiences and made a real effort to include as many different stories as possible in the images they brought along (see plate 7).

#### Plate 7: Student Montage

Whilst these findings have focussed upon the non-practical aspects of a sailing module, it is important to emphasise that this was not to the detriment of practical sailing. For example, at the end of four full days on the water, one novice sailor, who was extremely nervous on the first day and wished she had not chosen to go sailing, was performing a 'dry-capsize' manoeuvre as evidenced in plate 8 below, posting this on Facebook as a major 'sense of achievement'.

#### Plate 8: Dry capsizes

Finally in the words of our students from their assessed pieces of writing,

"I feel this is the main aspect for me to take away from this module; the deeper understanding of what gives somewhere its sense of place and how that affects you and you then start to notice nice things about the place, and it becomes a stronger memory than just somewhere you went, you develop a connection which you always relate to that experience of that place. You then pass on the story and add new meaning to someone else's expectations of that place." (Male student 1)

#### Plate 9: Thoughtful contemplation

"I think the impact of having a unique and challenging experience in [a] place with a sense of immense historical and cultural presence, especially if it is relevant to your experience can be a lot more sensory and you discover more about yourself and those others in your group. Sometimes it feels real education can be lost in the speed of modern life..." (Male student 2)

#### Implications for practice and research

The findings from this action research lead us to several related conclusions about our practice, in general terms as well as specifically related to our place based sailing module.

Specifically, on the next cycle of our action research we have planned to locate all of our teaching of the sailing module, both indoor and outdoor, in the town of Brixham, and as such hope to help blur the line for students between indoor and outdoor, formal and informal and what Quay and Seaman (2013, p.2) describe as "the persistent dichotomy between method and subject matter... child and curriculum". As Knapp (in Quay & Seaman, 2013) proposes:

"Perhaps the time will soon arrive when [all] educators drop the many prefixes (... outdoor, experiential, adventure...) to describe the type of education they think is important... Maybe the only prefixes that will be used will be good or effective" (Quay & Seaman 2013, p.xiv).

Once again, we will evaluate the student's experience of learning to sail and a sense of place as an integrated theoretical and practical experience for as we understand this process, in all experience doing and thinking are dialectically related: doing one necessarily involves and transforms the other.

Generally, across other aspects of our Bachelor's degree programme, we are looking to develop further opportunities for student led and instigated research projects and other assessments as a means of increasing student engagement. As Harper & Quaye (2009) highlight, student engagement is about developing empathy and rapport; with peers, professors [lecturers] as well as the institution itself. They also argue that it is necessary to adapt traditional inflexible pedagogical, environmental, and curricular approaches and "revise the curriculum, contextual factors, pedagogical strategies, and learning philosophies" (2009, p.51) in order to promote engagement, and from our work, we have found this helps with greater levels of student engagement.

In terms of specific areas for further research with which we are currently engaged, we are interested in the role that informal learning has in the development of relationships, the rapport building and the consequential increase in levels of attainment through a rise in motivation and engagement. In particular, the general talk that surrounds our pedagogy that is an experiential immersion in sailing and place. This allowed us to engage deeply with students. Batsleer (2008) highlights that the act of talking incorporates "chat, conversation and dialogue". She discusses the importance of learning through conversation and dialogue and how conversation is a vehicle of inquiry and education as dialogue, as a critical dialogue, "is the paradigm to understand all the discussions" of informal outdoor education (Batsleer 2008, p.7). Chat allows engagement between us and our students at a basic level, for example the rituals of group interaction, safety briefings and social niceties. Chat leads to conversation which allows a deeper level of engagement and the development of meanings to be made, and then if we are skilled facilitators of learning (teachers?) the deeper dialogue can be explored; issues of social and eco-justice, a critical pedagogy of place, or relationships between people and their environment.

In addition, we are curious as how to enable communities to develop a sustainable socio-cultural and historical relationship with their 'places' through engagement in outdoor adventurous activities. Gruenewald's (2003) Critical Pedagogy of Place is useful here since it attempts to contribute to the development of educational discourses and practices that explicitly "examine the place-specific nexus between environment, culture, and education" (p.10). It is a pedagogy linked to cultural and ecological politics that is influenced "by an ethic of eco-justice and other socio-ecological traditions that interrogate the intersection between cultures and ecosystems" (Gruenewald, 2003, p.10). The principal implication of a critical pedagogy of place to our research is the challenge it presents to expand the scope of our theory, inquiry, and practice to include the social and ecological contexts of our own, and others', inhabitation, even if this inhabitation is a temporary one when sailing at university.

The paper we present here has been the first iteration of an action research cycle that for us is highly illuminative and professionally stimulating. We trust that our experiences may have some resonance with reader's own contexts, places and professional practice.

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*City and Nature - Cultural, anthropological and pedagogical aspects  
of a delicate relationship*

*Peter Becker*

*Sous les pavés, la plage*

I

I am not joking if I tell you that at night furtive foxes meet in Germany's inner cities and wild boars regularly take their young into the well-tended front gardens in the suburbs. In search of food they plough the rich soils of the allotments, leaving back heavy devastations among the flowers. It seems that the urban living space is so attractive that even the agile martens and the cute racoons feel at home there and leave clear indications of their presence. The former take cars out of action by gnawing through their essential cables, the latter loosen roof tiles of pretty detached houses in order to find safe places to have their young. The Peregrine Falcon, which normally nests on steep cliff edges has developed into a City Falcon, which starts on its pigeon hunt from urban television towers or high-rises. The same goes for the Black Bird, which until not long ago used to be a rather shy bird of the woods but has become a quite dominant town and city dweller. Or look at the Lesser Redpoll, which is now twittering its song in cities instead of in mountain woodlands. Berlin has become the capital city of Nightingales, which sing their songs of old times particularly loudly at times when the level of traffic noise rises. What is sauce for the fauna is sauce for the flora. Flora also proliferates in the urban sphere. The abundance of species in towns is up by about 20% on their rural surroundings.

German urban ecologist Bernhard Kegel estimates that there are about 1000 different wild species in towns that fill every nook and cranny in walls, concrete surfaces, asphalt and between stone slabs. Munich biologist Josef Reichholf described large cities as exotic gardens, whose structural diversity and rich food supply keeps increasing the range of urban species. Many, including a number of invasive plants and animals that attack indigenous species, are introduced through the global goods traffic of large cities and their airports and sea ports. According to Kegel, the same can be observed on all continents.

So what is the meaning of these border transgressions? Is wild nature recapturing the terrain it has lost? Are we witnesses of a gradual change that is destabilising the functional logic of urban settlements and the way we see it? Originally, human beings freed themselves from their direct dependence on and exposure to an overpowering nature through creating settlements. Protected by town walls they got rid of their fear of the dark wilderness of the woods, its lawlessness, its wild animals and its other, imaginary inhabitants. From the perspective of anthropogenesis towns are hiding places and protection born from fear. The

term 'panic' still betrays its reference to Pan, the Greek god of the wild, where there is no path that can be trodden, where no plough can be used and which does not follow a time line and thus has no history. The wild is the realm of wild animals. (see also Walter 2001)

But let's take one step at a time.

## II

Before towns could be founded, the nomadic lifestyle had to be transformed to a settled one. The ancient Greeks described the form of human existence before polis culture - town culture - as ephemeral, as short-lived. It was at the mercy of lawless nature (Böhme 1996). Nature did not have the positive connotation it has with Rousseau, one of the forefathers of outdoor education, but it was wild and violent. Our term 'culture', which goes back to the Latin 'colere', is a reminder of this original situation when the wildness of nature was tamed. It embraces a large range of agricultural practices such as cultivating, growing, ploughing, sowing, improving, refining and grafting, forming, but also practices such as preserving, practicing and cherishing (ibid.). As every gardener knows, nature will uncompromisingly reclaim all territory it lost if it is not looked after any more. Thus, culture cannot be reduced to a once-and-for-all result - as the canonisation of cultural artefacts might suggest - but it is a continuous process of care that seeks to keep the wilderness, which never ceases to push in, at bay. This enormous effort that the wild forces us to make is also contained in the comment Freud makes on his statement of "Wo Es war, soll Ich werden" (Where Id was, there shall Ego be). The transformation of wild lawlessness, driven by physical urges, into a constantly reliable order - according to Freud - "is a cultivational effort that is on the scale of that of draining the Zuiderzee" (Freud 1990, p. 86).

The result of this taming effort is regarded as so important that a clear border is established between cultivated land and uncultivated nature, between order and chaos, between lawfulness and lawlessness, between inside and outside or between *inmark* and *utmark*, as it is put so clearly in Scandinavian languages. Forever after the division of this bipolarity has been made visible through walls, ditches or fences. The English word 'town', transmitted through the Anglosaxon word 'tun', contains the German 'Zaun' (fence), which denotes an enclosed space. 'tun' combines fence, yard, garden and village. This is where the English 'tine', meaning 'to enclose', comes from (Kluge 1975).

How important this fencing-off of lawless wilderness once was for the organisation of everyday life can be seen by how much importance the Romans attached not only to the border but also to their passages through them. Each threshold of a door or gateway was protected by no less than four guardian deities, of which Limentinus had the most important task. He had to make sure that Silvanus, the God of grottoes, woods and fields, who constantly tried to gain entry, could not cross the threshold and create havoc.

Towns could only be built after nature, especially the woods, had been pushed back. According to the myths of Jewish-Christian cultural tradition, the first town was founded after

Cain killed his brother Abel. This fratricide can also be interpreted as the liberation from the natural rustic traditions of tilling the soil, which was still dependent on nature, and livestock breeding. God's punishment after this fratricide forces Cain to give up his roots, his connection with his land. Together with the break in traditions these were good prerequisites to found the first town, the town of Chanoch. Although Cain has burdened himself with sin by committing murder and breaking with tradition, he had, at the same time, gained sovereignty over his own life, could decide himself who and what he wanted to be (Mattenklott 1997). But this stigma of Cain's the town can never get rid of. This break with the God-given order forever clings to it. And the townspeople, living within the town walls, are Cain's heirs, whose busy and industrious lifestyle can be seen as recompense for their disruption of divine order (Borst 1984).

Independent from these interpretations, urban lifestyle is developing on a determined course away from its origins. The cultus agrorum is losing its meaning and along with this loss of meaning the other, secondary derivation of origin of towns is forgotten. Town walls do not only give protection, but they also mark the line of demarcation between two lifestyles. Homo urbanus leads a different life from Homo rusticus.

Already the building style that reaches upwards, which is reminiscent of the tower the conceited Babylonians tried to build, is representative of the human desire not to be bound to the earth any more, which is also represented in the upright posture of human beings that makes them different from animals (Borst 1984, Mattenklott 1991). While the rural area cultivates the earth-bound creation of God, the town cultivates the mind. The agri cultura is followed by the anima cultura; it is only when survival has been ensured, when the necessities of everyday life are organised, that attention can be directed towards science and art. Thus, the town is also the place where theories are created and developed. Universities and academies provided the time that is the time free from other demands, for people to dedicate themselves to the disinterested observation of the world, or to describing and interpreting it. The Age of Enlightenment with its reading societies, salons, foundations of newspapers and publishing presses, critical forums, which were designed to cultivate the mind, is a phenomenon of the town. We should not overlook that it is this tradition that has made it possible in the first place for us to come together here in Stockholm for the anniversary celebrations of the university and that we can spend days - freed from the pressures of everyday day life as if it was the most natural thing - to think about and to discuss what exactly the relationship between town and nature is and what consequences might follow from the results of this reflection for education and youth work.

### III

From the beginning, urban relationship with nature has been ambivalent. On the one hand, the town has freed its people from the fear of nature and from the dependence on nature. On the other hand, it needs this freedom to be able to recognize this dependence on nature. I would like to give an example each for the two aspects of this seemingly contradictory relationship. Freedom from the fear of nature can be demonstrated very nicely with the example of the

changing perception of thunder and lightning. This example is also particularly relevant as in a certain way it is connected with the origins of outdoor education.

As we know from many sources, the destructive force of the dazzling, fleeting flashes of lightning, which may suddenly, without any warning, light up the sky, followed by the rumbling and crashing noises of thunder, used to fill people with fear and terror in former times - say before the Enlightenment. In their fear people thought they could hear the voice of God in the thunder, that it was the warning of God reminding them of their sins and announcing the Day of Judgement. The rain that often followed thunder storms was perceived as the mercy God showed to the people. People had an extensive catalogue of efforts designed to appease the divine wrath and keep their own fears under control. It ranged from candles to holy water, from weather prayers, for which there were special pews, to weather hymns and hymns asking saints for intercession, from vows of repentance and penance to bell ringing during the storm, the intention of which was that the sound of the bells should drown out the sound of the thunder to make God hear them (Schmenner 1998).

It was only the discovery of electricity and the invention of the lightning conductor that demystified the evil spirits through which the enraged God had caused such havoc. Through these technical discoveries and inventions weather episodes lost their terror. In 1795 experimental physicist and philosopher Lichtenberg wrote reassuringly:

"If, for example, the whole town was completely covered by lead and copper, so that not even a single shed was without such a roof, and if all these roofs were solidly connected to the earth by metal, one would never again hear about the destructive effects of lightning in this place. (...) A generation later thunder storms would have completely lost all terror; people would listen to the thunder (...) in the same way as they listen to the sound of the canons during a military inspection and they would watch the flash of lightning as they do a signal light." (Lichtenberg quoted in Schmenner 1998, p. 16)

Lichtenberg's prophecy did indeed come true. Protected by such technical security town dwellers began to change their relationship to nature. This technology that divests nature of its power also changed their position from one of inferiority to that of superiority. Without fear they could turn towards nature openly and willingly. Thunder - formerly the expression of the angry voice of God - could now become a sound of nature and thus become an aesthetic phenomenon. What was true for thunderstorms was also true for other natural objects. Abysses, steep rock faces, dark forests, the endless sea, raging currents, which people used to avoid, they began to seek out. A new, distinctive feeling of nature developed, which townspeople just had to experience. It was marked by a peculiar duality, a mixture that combined the domesticated residue of fear, of loss of self and feeling of awe with a component of pleasure. What used to be pure fear had mutated into the pleasure of fear. Locus classicus for this deep-reaching change in our relationship with nature is the letter of John Dennis, an Englishman, who describes his experiences and feelings during his crossing of the Alpine mountain landscape of Savoy. In it he says that he felt "a delightful Horror, a terrible Joy, and at the same time, that I was infinitely pleas'd, I trembled."

The development of this feeling, which in the following was described as sublime by contemporaries and was discussed intensively, together with the urge to actually experience it, is what outdoor education takes its origin from. Its practices of walking, sailing, climbing, canoeing, rowing, swimming, may have been taken from everyday life, but since this act of liberation happened they have served as somatic and aesthetic engagement with nature, which have become sources of quite different educational experiences. Outdoor education has been born out of the spirit of the town, a spirit which was concerned neither with the love of nature nor with the care for nature but it was rather a matter of liberation from the fear of nature and the experience of gaining superiority based on technical rationality.

#### IV

This change of emotional response to nature was not brought about by the tradition of schools and academies of the town but first and foremost by its tradition of workshops. This second, engineering tradition of a town was not content with passively observing the world, its representatives wanted to use their technical competence to change the world. As the invention of the lightning conductor shows, they de-mystified nature through systematic observation of its laws and through using them in experiments. They did not bother to learn Latin nor worry about traditions and thus they provoked, among other things, the never-ending quarrel between theory and practice. Full of self-confidence and without respect they interfered with nature and its natural processes. On the basis of empirical experience they regulated water levels and diverted the course of rivers, they built dykes, dams and canals, they drained whole areas or reclaimed land from the sea, they compressed and reinforced, they constructed machines and apparatuses that facilitated these acts of interference.

One of these acts of interference which was directed against nature and which fundamentally changed the forms of life in towns was the discovery of electricity and, following it, the invention of electric light. Light powered by electricity, which in contrast to natural sunlight, is always available and does not take seven minutes to unfold its effect, drove away the town's fear of the dark. As daughter of the primeval chaos, the night gave particular protection to the dark sides of life. It was the time of secrecy and eeriness. In the dark of night or in the dim light of the moon the animal nature of man shows itself, as is expressed in the opening lines of a poem by the probably best-known urban poet Charles Baudelaire.

"Behold the sweet evening, friend of the criminal;  
It comes like an accomplice, stealthily; the sky  
Closes slowly like an immense alcove,  
And impatient man turns into a beast of prey."

[Baudelaire in Aggeler, *The Flowers of Evil* (Fresno, CA: Academy Library Guild, 1954)]

The night is the time of the shady characters. How much people feared them can be seen by the fact that at night the town gates were closed and the people locked their doors. There were

times, like for example in Paris in late Medieval times, when the door keys were even collected by the town authorities (Schivelbusch 1986).

And the times when a night watchman was patrolling the streets at night have not yet long gone. The time of the night watchman began to run out when the electrification of the towns began and thus darkness was driven out of towns. Today towns at night-time are flooded by an uncountable number of artificial light sources. This opulence of light does not only conquer the fears night arouses but it also gains independence from nature. By eliminating the night and de-mystifying the natural cosmic rhythm of light, it seems to be gaining a practically unlimited amount of time that it can put to good use by pursuing all kinds of business.

As with the invention of the lightning conductor, the creation of artificial light - by the way when it was first introduced townspeople used sunshades because they worried they might get sunburn - it had consequences for people's perception of natural phenomena. When the town switches on the lights, the twilight is switched off for the people. They lose this in-between time between day and night. This is the time when the physiognomy of the environment is gradually changing, clear definitions are disappearing and things are becoming indistinct. The gradual loss of edge definition of things activates people's imagination to create new and different contours. In the same way as noises and light fade when it gets dark, as nature is preparing to take a rest, people in traditional society used to wind down from the activities of the day; they took stock of the day that had passed. Dawn is the time when Minerva's owl, which is also a stock-taking bird, begins its flight. This link and parallel rhythm between natural event and human behaviour does not exist in the town. For the town it is this very disconnection from natural rhythms that constitutes gain and profit. It is only this separation that makes the way of life of the town, which is on the move round the clock, possible. For the town the natural phases of every day of dawn and night, of remembering and forgetting, are actually a nuisance. If townspeople feel like a bit of twilight they just flick on the dimmer switch, (Böhme 1998).

## V

This de-chronization of the cyclical natural rhythm is both curse and blessing at the same time. On the one hand, one can get a lot more done in a day; but, on the other hand, these things actually have to be done as well. Although the objective time to fulfil all these demands or take up all these opportunities has increased through this disconnection, the volume of what has to be realised has risen accordingly. It seems that the to-do lists are getting longer and longer. Although the widening rift between continuously increasing demands for action and the stagnating amount of subjective time that is available to fulfil these demands cannot be healed any more, the town continues to increase its pace in order to try and stay in control of the floods of demands. The quickening of pace mobilizes the town dwellers.

In order to escape the fear that they are not able to realise all demands and opportunities, the time that is spent on things must be shortened or a number of things must be done at the same time, in the form of multi-tasking. To illustrate this flighty attention to the matters of the world I would like to make a few anecdotal comments. Acceleration does not only apply to the way things are dealt with but also to social relationships. Thus, in the face of the rather large number of people in the town or city, not only the already existing feeling of anonymity is reinforced, but also relationship forms such as the one-night-stand or that of the temporary

partner. A colourful assembly of time-saving quick activities can be put together consisting of take-aways, short breaks, fast food and convenience food, of quickies, taster courses, speed dating, or even drive-through funerals. What is disliked intensely and must be avoided at all cost is time wasting, taking breaks, journeys to get to places, waiting times, hesitant behaviour, detours (Rosa 2013).

Education also follows this general trend. It has become stingy with time, although “Bildung” cannot be had without time for contemplation. An educational development in which the body takes part with all its senses, or put in another way, the acquisition of knowledge that is rich in illustration and experience - something that we outdoor pedagogues have written on our flags, but which we also forget all too easily, is made impossible. What takes the place of experience is the random encounter with incidents one has no control over. Where this exchange gets out of hand, no solid basis for a person's ability to form judgement can be founded and the often-lamented disorientation of young people follows on its heels.

In order to save time, the country I come from has simply replaced “Bildung” with competences and has shortened secondary education to the tertiary level by one year. The labour market has set the direction with its demand for employability, which has now become the 'idée directrice' of the educational system. Effortless quick-learning paths and teaching to the test are meant to ensure success, bite-sized portions increasing from easy to difficult are provided as a method of choice and material cases with totally superfluous didactic tools are pushed by the educational materials industry. Electronic presentation weighs more than contents. Pupils learn to present their meagre results on Power Point, which even provides the final 'thank you for your attention' automatically at the end. At the university this formula is then replaced by the trivial humble 'further research is needed'.

## VI

These examples may suffice as documentation of the increasing acceleration processes that by now have reached beyond the town and city. This development is not without negative consequences. According to sociological prognoses of our times there seem to be growing indications that this ever-increasing acceleration of acceleration gnaws at people's strength, that it is depleting the human resources of vitality. Often the reproduction of this vitality can only be achieved through medical aid. There is one thing that all these various forms of exhaustion demonstrate very clearly. The displacement of or disconnection from nature that town life wants to achieve remains a utopian endeavour. What initially seemed to be a successful and forward-looking process of de-chronologization is finally turning back to the point it had all started from. The way of life, that is the cultural shell that people have created for themselves, quite obviously rests on a natural basis from which we cannot separate ourselves deliberately and which, however durable it may be, cannot be endlessly stretched. It is our body that connects us to the natural surroundings, a connection which we can somewhat modulate but which we cannot break off at will. This is the very human dilemma, we need to separate from nature in order to become human beings, but we cannot escape nature altogether. Both the exhausted town or city and the exhausted city dwellers are longing to return to nature, from which they have consciously or unconsciously wanted to separate themselves and have done so. This is why they create oases of temporary deceleration by re-importing the nature they had fenced so much off. However, on its return wild nature has to undergo disciplinary manipulation. This can be seen especially in the way the natural element of water is used. If it is to be used for recreational purposes it has to give up its shapeless,

chaotic nature on entering the town. Poseidon, who resides on many a fountain, complete with his trident, has been deprived of his power. Fountains and water basins impose discipline on his well-known excitability that is so easily provoked; his emblem has lost its meaning. He has been degraded to the caretaker of city water displays, which have long lost all memory of what it is like to roar and gush; all that fountains and overflows allow are gentle ripples. These waters murmur, trickle, run, gurgle and bubble. Their sound does not excite, provokes no resistance. On the contrary, it is soothing, invites people to dream, it offers recreation and peace, people can recharge their batteries.

In the context of trying to recapture lost control over time, more importance is attached to the many activities surrounding municipal gardens than to the soothing waters in parks. In contrast to parks, which come from an aristocratic tradition, gardens go back to a bourgeois tradition focused on usefulness. It seems as if the natural cycle of time that determines the work in the garden, namely that of preparing the soil, sowing, growing, tending and harvesting resists all pressure of acceleration. These inherent properties of gardens and gardening may be the reason for the virtually explosive proliferation of the urban or community gardening movement, whose most prominent supporter, Michelle Obama, courts favour with the fact that on assignments abroad she is asked about the state of her vegetable garden at the White House before she is asked questions about the state of the country (Müller 2012).

I have found evidence of women's gardens, of municipal children's farm gardens, of window gardens, vertical gardens, herb gardens, generation gardens, roof gardens, adventure gardens or international gardens, or even of mobile gardens in which "food safe rice sacks, bakery boxes and opened up tetrapacks", are used to grow plants in and which are transported to various places in towns (Müller 2012, 38). Maybe the funniest version of municipal gardening is Guerrilla Gardening. With their spectacular night-time planting assaults on tree stumps or traffic islands or with their seed bombings on municipal waste grounds these flower guerrillas want to draw attention to the coldness and emptiness of the concrete functionality of towns and cities. Their weapons are seed sachets and flower bulbs (Reynolds 2009).

By means of these variations of the gardening scene the country, together with all its living conditions that tend to quickly take on an idyllic quality, which the town has actually always striven to rid itself of, gets back in touch, in the true sense of that word. The direction of criticism has been reversed. Where in former times the town was critical of the backwardness of the country - namely its nature-bound, slow pace - it is now this very nature-boundness that has evolved into the guarantor of renewal. However, the expectation that the kind of nature-taming order that a garden presents, that submitting to seasonal changes, to the local harvest times or the natural chain of events, will also be able to tame the town's intoxication with acceleration is not likely to be fulfilled. The time of the garden is not that of the stock exchange. Its time structure is similar to that of libraries and museums. So it can probably be assumed that the garden will remain a beautiful, decelerated dream oasis full of the scent of flowers.

## VII

I am afraid that youth work that works with the mediums of body and movement will have little use for nature in the town and the town's longings for nature. Youth culture of movement or rather the body cultures in metropolis do not seek out natural oases, but they respond to the

urban conditions they are confronted with. In Baudelaire's sense, they are 'absolument moderne'. While adult joggers go to the green zones of the towns, movement cultures of young people take possession of the whole town. While the former, from fear of losing control, treat their bodies as an asset which they make well-measured demands on and well-planned investments in in order to achieve profit in the form of health and good shape, the latter waste their brimming-over delight in moving and showing off in very risky situations.

Even if there is no direct connection to nature, to the mountains, rivers and seas, some of these activities that use the urban space, such as skateboarding, which has been imported from the west coast of California, cannot disown their origin of having been designed to tackle nature. The skateboard is the urban replacement of the surfboard of wave riders. Those who do not want to do without their wave rides on the roaring surf will at least accept its simulation. Hookipa Beach has come to town.

But skateboarding has long lost its quality of just being compensation for lost opportunities. The same as in other areas the town has freed itself from its dependence on nature here as well. In keeping with its spirit of life it has transformed the skateboard into the centre-piece of a whole body culture with its own fashions, language and music. Skateboarders do not need any waves anymore. Turbo-cool is how they pick up speed on asphalt and stone tiles or perform risky feats on steps, curbs and planting boxes - always in front of an amazed if hurried urban public audience. Quite effortlessly the town succeeds in translating the thrill of confrontation with risky natural situations into their nature-less form of life.

The same is true for BMX-riding, inline skating and climbing in towns, they do not need any mountains, nor natural obstacles. Steps, fences, benches, fountains, monuments, facades of houses, walls, concrete blocks - the whole range of town furniture offers opportunities of youthful conquest of the town. This is particularly true in the Parisian suburb of Lisses, where *parcours* has been invented that is especially known for its acrobatic variation of free running. On their runs, the young people, who call themselves *traceurs*, are not looking for the most comfortable route but for the shortest one to get to their destination. Everything that the town places in their way, whether it be buildings, telephone booths, cars, railings, scaffolding, advertising pillars, etc., they tackle with jumps, somersaults, twists and turns, rolls and balancing acts. You may perhaps remember the opening scenes set in an African town of the James Bond film *Casino Royale*, which are an impressive illustration of this form of taking the most direct route, in which James Bond pursues a terrorist - played by one of the most famous *traceurs*, Sébastien Foucan.

If the language of the skateboarders with their nose-picker, ollie one twenty, backside stalefish, air to fakie was English, the language of the *traceurs* with their *Passes muraille*, *Demitours*, *Sauts de chat* and *Roulades* is French. The banlieues of Paris have superseded the zero drag culture of California.

In the face of the extraordinarily cohesive and authentic quality of these scenes the only recommendation one can give to pedagogy and youth work is, quoting Pink Floyd, "Let them kids alone". Any kind of pedagogical attention, which of course always also exerts control, would be misplaced here, would destroy the authenticity and self-organisation of these young people and would surely also be rejected. Trying to transfer this body cultural life style to other youth groups would also only be possible at the cost of loss of authenticity to a large degree, as many examples from the past show. If children and youth work is concerned with giving children and young people support in developing a reflectional approach to the living

conditions they find themselves in their everyday life, here for example to the urban living conditions, this work should not try to copy existing practices but should make there its projects and learning opportunities available that engage with urban space and with residual nature in urban space. I would like to give you two examples of this kind of work - one from the area of children work and one from the area of youth work.

## VIII

I will leave the green zones of the town to the grown-up, jogging health-seekers and self-loving body-shapers and turn to my first example of gardening practice which is currently booming in towns and cities all over the globe. Right from the beginning of bourgeois schooling and the Kindergarten movement gardening has been a popular educational tool. Especially the philanthropists, but also Fröbel, who coined the word “Kindergarten” did not prefer the garden because of a sentimental yearning for nature but they liked it because of the disciplinary effects that the garden can have. The hard work in the garden, in those days starting at the unearthly hour of five in the morning, was meant to toughen the body and to drive out foolish ideas. The order of the garden contained the virtuous message of early bourgeois society. Tending the plants required planning, orderliness, regularity, patience and diligence. By engaging with nature through gardening the pupils and children tended their own nature. By gardening they acquired these bourgeois virtues. Bourgeois usefulness, garden and education go together very well.

This is not so in the adventure garden in Marburg, which was started in 2006 originating from the intercultural gardening movement, which had also taken a foothold in Marburg. Here children learn that they can experience civilised nature in a town not only through gardening (Presenza). On a site of about 1,500 square metres, which has trees and bushes and a pond, some gardening is also done, but the focus is on playful natural history and adventure activities stimulated by the garden. Children do not only climb trees when it is harvesting time, but they also use them to build tree houses. Such a tree house is a wonderful place to stimulate the children's imagination and to send them on imaginary trips. The bushes offer hiding places and a slack\_line hanging between the arbour and a tree or a beam across the pond provoke children to balance on them. They can dig and burrow to their heart's content and also build a fire place where they can roast the freshly harvested vegetables. They can investigate pond life, beetles, butterflies, caterpillars, spiders and earth worms. As in every garden, if one knows how to use it, children can smell the scent of herbs and flowers, of freshly dug earth and the biting smoke of the fire, they can hear the leaves rustling, the birds singing, the rain falling or the mosquitoes buzzing, they can run barefoot over the earth and through the grass, feel with their hands the bark of the trees, the water of the pond, the frog in their hands, can see the colours of the flowers, the glistening of the raindrops or taste the difference between carrots, celeriac or red beet or the juice of sour apples. The adventure garden of Marburg is both playground and useful at the same time. It offers children who come from and live in a socially deprived town environment access to a tamed form of nature whose domestication, however, leaves enough leeway to give plenty of nurture to the childish curiosity that wants to leave behind the familiar, secure and visible in order to expose itself to the unfamiliar, uncertain and hidden.

My second example of activities with which youth work can follow the intrinsic logic of the urban life form stands in stark contrast to the childlike activities in the adventure garden. It borrows from a historical social character of the city, which was the flâneur. The flâneur was a master of slowness, an anti-hero of acceleration and speed. In 19th century Paris he walked at a provocatively slow pace along the great boulevards between the Bastille and Madeleine. While city life had already speeded up enormously, the flâneurs would adjust their pace to that of the tortoise which they were taking for a walk on a lead - as it was the fashion for a while. Through this demonstrative reduction of their pace in a hurrying city the flâneurs were different from bourgeois walkers who escaped the rush of the city they were causing themselves by going out and enjoying the beautiful landscape outside the city walls (König 1996). The citizen only becomes human outside the city, the flâneur, on the other hand, defends his humanity inside the city.

But to what end can this slow kind of walking of the flâneur be used as a method in youth work? The conscious reduction of the walking speed is designed to foster the willingness in these young flâneurs to break through the urban regime of acceleration. The time gained this way is meant to invite them to linger, to foster an attitude of composure, to allow hesitation and to introduce an idea of duration to them. Through slowing down significance is given to the here and now, rather than to the there. He who is hurrying to get there does not take in what is happening in his immediate surroundings and he feels disturbed and annoyed by any sudden intrusions on the way. The flâneur, on the other hand, welcomes such events as opportunities for closer contemplation.

Since outdoor education is always also the education of sensory awareness, it finds a rich field of possibilities in the near urban environment to bring together the idea of the flâneur and sensory awareness.

This revaluation of the immediate surroundings brings especially the sense of smell into play, which quite unjustly is rather neglected in the hierarchy of the senses and ranges way down the list, and which in the course of the acceleration lost its value, along with some of the other senses too, in favour of the sense of sight. So now, the nose could lead the young flâneurs through the scents and stinks of the urban world of smells. When they linger on markets, near kebab take-aways, in a linden avenue, in cosmetics and coffee shops, in a pharmacy, outside cake shops, in a port, in local authority offices, near waste containers, in rush hour traffic, squeezed in between people on crowded buses, suburban or underground trains, the time they spend there will take on quite different smells, delicate, diffuse, pungent, bewitching, sharp, provocative, exciting, disgusting, sweet, fragrant ones. The nose needs this slowness, it takes time for smells to register properly. Only if they take the time young people can immerse themselves in the many different odours of the town and through the nose they can gain a new perception of their town, of the quarter they live in. Their nose can tell the difference between familiar and strange smells, will give them pleasant or repugnant messages. When the nose identifies something as strange, it may be an opportunity to think about it. The nose is particularly suitable to look into irritations and prejudices as it is impregnated with emotions as no other of the senses. The German sociologist Simmel even thought that "the social question {is} not only an ethical one, but also a question of the nose" (Simmel 1968, 489).

But other senses, such as that of hearing, can also guide the flâneurs through the town along a course of sounds. On these listening expeditions the soundscapes of the town quarters or certain streets, locations or places can be recorded at different times of day. These sounds can also later give rise to reflection or be turned into aesthetic sound compositions. If one also had video recordings of these tours one could later superimpose one sequence over the other, one could allow sounds and pictures to drift apart and thus achieve estranging effects that might lead to interesting insights.

## IX

In the face of my already stretched time budget I will refrain from presenting more educational activities designed to help young people make their town their own. Finally it is not a duty but a great pleasure for me to thank our hosts, "The Swedish School of Sport and Health Services", and in particular Erik Backman, very much for organising this conference in cooperation with the EOE. As the number of participants proves, Erik has hit the nail on the head with his decision of choosing "Urban Nature" as its topic. For too long outdoor education has let the topic of the city rest. I hope this will be different after this conference.

Translated by Gudrun Vill-Debney

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