Abstract
This paper examines rhetorical constructions of ‘reality’ in selected outdoor/environmental education discourses-practices.¹ Many outdoor/environmental educators privilege philosophical realism coupled with suspicion towards poststructuralism(s) and deconstruction. From a postlogographic position on language, we argue that producing texts is a method of inquiry, an experience and performance of semiosis-in-use as we sign (and de/sign) the world into existence. This re/de/signed world never represents the ‘real’ world precisely or completely, and in this paper we explore and enact modes of textual (and extratextual) production that struggle to retain a poststructuralist skepticism towards representational claims without falling into antirealist language games. We focus in particular on Deleuzean concepts of ‘rhizomatic’ inquiry and nomadic textuality as enabling dispositions for re/de/signing worlds in which realities and representations are mutually constitutive (rather than dialectically related).

Introducing…
Connections, disconnections; reality, rhetoric; discourse, practice: dualisms still dominate our discourse. Fourteen years ago one of us (Noel Gough, 1990, p. 79) presented a keynote address to Connections: A Conference for the Environment, the Outdoors and Camping titled ‘Imagining our relationships with nature’.² Gough’s paper questioned differences between how we imagine ourselves in relation to nature, and how we might effect nature within our relationships. He argued that we imagine a romantic view of nature and our relationship to it, and that effecting nature in our relationships is presently, more often than not, a distraction from reality. To explain this argument, Gough presented images that illustrated particular

¹ The discourses-practices that we choose to examine here come chiefly from sites in which outdoor and environmental education converge. This selection reflects our own particular research interests and in no way suggests a conflation of the two fields.

² Many of the ideas presented in Gough’s (1990) paper have been used and extended by a number of Australian outdoor educators in various ways. For example, Peter Martin (1996a; 1996b) adapted Gough’s framework to illustrate changing perspectives of nature and also acknowledges (pers. comm., 4 April 2004) that it formed the framework of the literature review in his PhD thesis (Martin, 2002). The Victorian Outdoor Education Association (1996) also reproduced a key illustration from Gough’s (1990) paper (see Fig. 5) in VCE Outdoor Education Teacher Resource Volume Two (pp. 4.1.3. 13).
constructions of identity and environment, and demonstrated how paradoxical these constructions can appear to be. For example, Gough’s paper begins with the following words and images (Fig. 1):

Australia has the longest history of any country in the world of successfully integrating the values and practices of environmental education, outdoor education and the kind of outdoor living that we now call camping. Unfortunately, it all started to go terribly wrong on 26 January 1788.

![Figure 1: Arthur Horner, ‘Vic[toria]’s progress, now and then: 30. Habitation’](Source: The Age (Saturday Extra) Melbourne 27 July 1985, p. 6)

Images differ from words because attention is first given to the image, then to the caption or words in the image. In part, Gough’s (1990) paper used images to disrupt the structural
linearity of conventional academic prose, which insists on a step by step presentation of thoughts towards a conclusion, much like the manner in which we relate to our constructed urban environment – home, road, shops, car park, work, elevator, train, station, and so on – in which our paths and patterns of movement are (pre)planned. However, the world is not ‘really’ constructed in this manner: only our constructions of/in it are real. Many of those constructions are injurious to ‘nature’.

When we write or speak of ‘connections’, ‘reality’, and ‘discourse’, we often are in effect referring to ‘disconnections’, ‘rhetoric’, and ‘practices’. That is, our ‘practices’ are embedded in ‘rhetorical’ representations of ‘disconnections’ – through, by and for objects that we desire, or that are desirous of us, to be connected to. This is the premise of the so-called ‘knowledge economy’, based on the interconnectivity of human beings to ‘user pays’ systems in ways that exploit what Jeremy Rifkin (2000) calls their LTV (Life Time Value): ‘In the new era, people purchase their very existence in small commercial segments’ (pp. 7-8). LTV is very evident in the images Gough (1990) presented (see Figs. 1-4).

*Figure 2: Cartoon by Michael Leunig
(Source: Michael Leunig [1985] *Ramming the Shears* [Richmond: Dynamo Press])
Figure 3: Cartoon by Michael Leunig
(Source: Michael Leunig [1985] Ramming the Shears [Richmond: Dynamo Press])

Figure 4: Cartoon by Michael Leunig
(Source: The Age Melbourne 11 July 1983, p. 11)
Richard Mochelle also represents LTV succinctly (see Fig. 5). Mochelle illustrates the objectively closed effects of instrumental ‘worth-ship’ and intrinsic ‘worship’ in the values of human relationships with nature, whereas ‘kinship’ identifies self-nature effecting subjective openings. Modern humans think of kinship as inherently human. Yet the etymology of *kin* connects it with *kind*, and to meanings of characteristics, natural, native, which in turn suggests interconnected caring concepts that embrace much more than genealogy.
The idea of extending kinship beyond human generations is the stuff of myths and fairy tales. But we only need to scratch beneath the parchment of history to find ample evidence of our kinship with the world. Gough’s (1990) paper exemplified this by referring to Ursula Le Guin’s (1987) short story, ‘She unnames them’, which mocks and subverts the biblical assertion that ‘Man [sic] gave names to all the animals’:

Assigning a name to something constructs the illusion that what has been named is genuinely distinguishable from all else. In creating these distinctions, humans can all too easily lose sight of the seamlessness of that which is signified by their words and abstractions. So, in Le Guin’s (1987, p. 195) story, Eve says:

None were left to unnamed, and yet how close I felt to them when I saw one of them swim or fly or trot or crawl across my way or over my skin, or stalk me in the night, or go along beside me for a while in the day. They seemed far closer than when their names had stood between myself and them like a clear barrier… (Gough 1990, p. 8)

Gough’s paper drew towards a closing by noting that naming is a self-ish human activity, and that an educative attitude to human-nature relationships grounded in identifying objects by their names is ‘degenerative’:

We corrupt education by naming parts – by constructing illusions which suggest that meaningful distinctions can be made between ‘facts’ and ‘values’, or between ‘perception’ and ‘cognition’, or that ‘arts’, ‘humanities’ and ‘sciences’ (or for that matter, ‘environmental education’ and ‘outdoor education’) are separate ‘subjects’ (when we treat them as objects anyway).

Following Le Guin, Gough (1990) proposed ‘unnaming… identities’ as a way towards embracing connections and continuities of human-nature relationships. He concluded that unnamings is a way of elaborating the complexities of experiences, identities and understandings of/in worlds – of disrupting and disconnecting realities and rhetoric – and thereby ‘mak[ing] it harder to explain ourselves… Without names, our conversations must be slow, new and tentative, imbued with the kind of patience, curiosity and humility with which I imagine we can achieve kinship with nature’ (Gough 1990, p. 9).

To summarise, ‘Imagining our relationships with nature’ is, in retrospect, an introduction to this paper. Gough’s (1990) paper opened a conversation about connections, reality, and rhetoric of relationships with nature. His paper questioned the primacy attached to the naming of the world (logocentricity) by a ‘Civilised…chiefly Christian patriarchy which so willingly embraced modern science and industrialism’ (p. 8) and set out a proposal for reimagining relationships with nature through complicating our conversations.

This 2004 paper adds a poststructuralising voice to the discourse, to further disrupt and disconnect the anthro/androcentric rhetoric of a globalised knowledge society that doggedly maintains ‘Order’ with its own exclusive structural logography. Complicating conversations in this paper introduce postlogographic conceptions of inquiry, which continue to question representational claims to ‘reality’. Often these claims dismiss poststructuralist approaches for their supposedly relativist and/or antirealist turns to deconstruction. In response we discuss Gilles Deleuze’s ‘rhizomatic’ concept for inquiry and textuality. For us, rhizomatics re/de/signs the grand arboreal metaphor – the tree of knowledge – with the more humble metaphor of the rhizome – meanderings of stems and shoots – for mutually constitutive worldly knowings.

See also William Pinar’s (2004) characterisation of curriculum as a ‘complicated conversation’ (p. 8).
Poststructuralism, deconstruction and the ‘real’

Many environmental philosophers, advocates, and educators appear to be antagonistic to, and/or dismissive of, poststructuralism and deconstruction (or anything they associate with postmodernism). Some, like Ariel Salleh (1997) are downright vicious: postmodernism is a ‘castrated academic philosophy’ (p. xi). Others, like Carolyn Merchant (2003), are more politely suspicious: ‘Although deconstruction is an important analytical tool, I argue that realism… is an important counter, or other, to deconstruction’s focus on language’ (p. 201).

Somewhere between these positions, Charlene Spretnak (1999) offers a characterisation (or caricature) of ‘post’ scholarship that seems designed to invite a degree of ridicule:

The critical orientation known as ‘deconstructive postmodernism,’ ‘constructionism,’ or ‘constructivism’ asserts that there is nothing but ‘social construction’ (of concepts such as language, knowledge systems, and culture) in human experience… The philosophical core of deconstructive postmodernism is the rejection of any sense of the ‘Real’ (pp. 64-5).

Spretnak (1999) discusses ‘postmodern developments’ in academia during the 1980s, and contrasts what she calls ‘the deconstructionist variety (also called “constructionism,” “constructivism,” and “poststructuralism”)’ with another perspective that (she asserts) ‘lacks a widely accepted umbrella term, but is sometimes called “constructive,” “reconstructive,” or “restructive” postmodernism’ (p. 223). In these passages, Spretnak uses several rhetorical strategies to distort the views of those she discredits.

Firstly, by asserting that the ‘deconstructionist’ position is ‘also called’ ‘constructionism’, ‘constructivism’ and ‘poststructuralism’, she infers that all three of these terms are synonymous with each other and with ‘deconstruction’. But we know of no scholars who identify themselves with any of these positions who would agree that they are congruent. The positions that these terms signify have clear affinities with one another but they are certainly not identical.

Secondly, she compounds the problem of equating these different positions with one another by applying one homogenising and inappropriate label to them all. But the critical orientation that she calls ‘deconstructive postmodernism’ is not (to the best of our knowledge) widely ‘known’ by this name among scholars who identify themselves as poststructuralists or who practice deconstruction.

Thirdly, by setting up ‘constructive’ and ‘reconstructive’ postmodernism in opposition to poststructuralism and deconstruction she implies that these latter positions are not ‘constructive’. The invented term ‘restructive’ clearly is intended to suggest that deconstruction is destructive.

Fourthly, her insinuation that poststructuralism and deconstruction rejects any sense of the ‘Real’ distorts the positions of both structuralists and poststructuralists, who share the view that the objects, elements and meanings that constitute our existential ‘reality’ are social constructions. But what is at issue here is not belief in the real but confidence in its representation. As Richard Rorty (1979) puts it, ‘to deny the power to “describe” reality is not to deny reality’ (p. 375) and ‘the world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not’ (Rorty, 1989, p. 5). Representations of the world are products, artefacts or effects of particular sets of historical and linguistic practices.

Our concern is not so much that well-intentioned environmental philosophers have ‘got it wrong’ when it comes to poststructuralism and deconstruction (although we believe that many of them misrepresent and/or oversimplify these positions – with or without intent). Rather, we worry about the effects of these rhetorical positions circulating within the discourses of outdoor/environmental education/research.
If, as Merchant suggests, we simply ‘counter’ anti-realism with realism, then our critiques will very likely tend towards a questionable dialectic between naïve realism and equally naïve constructionism. We see traces of this dialectic in Merchant’s (2003) assertion that: ‘The real physical world and the constructed mental world… exist in dialectical relation to each other’ (p. 201). Such statements imply that to resolve problems of naïve realism and naïve anti-realism we simply need to use both, selectively, at different times.

Although poststructuralist scholars problematise representation without denying the existence of a reality ‘out there’, their theorising of the real/constructed interrelationship might nevertheless leave open the space for (what we see as) inadequate understandings of this interrelationship as dialectical. When this oversimplified dialectic is applied in research, a problematic pragmatics may arise, insofar as research outcomes become a basis for deciding when and where to apply realism or constructionism. But it is not enough merely to agree that there is a material reality, and thus to add it back to our constructed (or deconstructed) representations. We need to ask ourselves how material reality fits into our theorising.4

As an alternative to Merchant’s ‘dialectic’, we argue that it might be more defensible to understand reality (whether social reality or non-human material reality) and representation as mutually constitutive, that is, the act of representing the world is not a ‘dialectical relation’ but an enabling disposition of a material subject. To borrow John Sundholm’s (2002) words, we could say that such a disposition enables us ‘to make a move, not to follow a method, not to aim at fixed systematicity, but to explore different ways of proceeding’ (p. 115).

The ‘real’ thing

Come and see the real thing, come and see the real thing, come and see
Come and see the real thing, come and see the real thing, come and see
There’s a meaning there, but the meaning there doesn’t really mean a thing
Come and see the real thing, come and see the real thing, come and see

(Johnny Young, 1969)5

‘Real’ descends from the Latin Res, thing. However, in all European languages there are associations between words for thing meaning an assembly for discourse (Martin Heidegger, 1968). Bruno Latour (2004), elaborating on Heidegger, writes: A thing is, in one sense, an object out there and, in another sense, an issue very much in there, at any rate, a gathering….the same word thing designates matters of fact and matters of concern’ (p. 233). Elaborating further on the ‘thingness’ of matters, Latour begins by quoting Alfred North Whitehead:

‘For natural philosophy everything perceived is in nature. We may not pick up and choose. For us the red glow of the sunset should be as much a part of nature as are the molecules and electric waves by which men of science would explain the phenomenon’ ([Alfred North Whitehead] CN, pp. 28-29).

All subsequent philosophies have done exactly the opposite: they have picked and chosen, and, worse, they have remained content with that limited choice. The solution to

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4 Gough and Price (in press) illustrate the dangers in Spretnak’s conflation of social constructionism and deconstruction by reference to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman’s (1966) academically influential notion of social constructionism which, they argue, is a deeply problematic example of a misleading dialectic.

5 The Real Thing was an unfinished song when Johnny Young offered it to singer Russell Morris and in its final form was more the creation of producer Ian (Molly) Meldrum than either Morris’s or Young’s. Meldrum spent unprecedented hours and money to create a seven-minute audio extravaganza that shocked radio programmers who had never before been asked to play such a long Australian single. It reached Number One nationally in June 1969.
this bifurcation is not, as phenomenologists would have it, adding to the boring electric waves the rich lived world of the glowing sun. This would simply make the bifurcation greater. The solution or, rather, the adventure, according to Whitehead is to dig much further into the realist attitude and to realize that matters of fact are totally implausible, unrealistic, unjustified definitions of what it is to deal with things...

It is not the case either that the other solution is to attack, criticize, expose, historicize those matters of fact, to show that they are made up, interpreted, flexible... the question is that matters of fact are a poor *proxy* of experience and of experimentation and, I would add, a confusing bundle of polemics, of epistemology, of modernist politics that can in no way claim to represent what is requested by a realist attitude... The solution lies, it seems to me, in this promising word *gathering* that Heidegger had introduced to account for the ‘thingness of the thing’ (pp. 244-45)


Rather than reducing, condensing, concentrating matters on a surface, this sense of ‘real’ concerns embodying matters *beyond The* surface, without dismissing notions of surfacing, whether from within or from without.

**‘Real’/Solidity**

Human concern for surfaces is pervasive. Surfaces define how we perceive the world. They reflect light and sound, they deflect touch, and they are associated with tastes and smells. When we think of the world of design we tend to think first of surface characteristics allied with contexts, whether that is interior design, landscape design, fashion design, product design – we think of colour, shape, angle, texture, and so on. Sight, closely followed by touch and sound, determines what we make of the world and our place in it. Who we are, where we are, and what we are, comes to us mainly as a consequence of what we can see, what we can touch or what we can hear.

However, we also know that ‘beauty is more than skin deep’, that ‘there’s more to it than meets the eye’, and that someone who is insensitive has ‘thick skin’. Artists know much about the significance of surfaces, but they also know that what lies beyond a surface significantly affects what happens to that surface. And, it is through the work of visual, spatial, and aural artists, that we have come to know much more about the world *beyond The* surface.

The term ‘postmodern’, which often is characterised by the plurality of interpretations it gives rise to, originates in aesthetic theory and postmodern discourses are often mapped to art and architecture. Architecture typically offers a readily understandable analogue for conceptualising the postmodern process of ‘deconstruction’. The following images of buildings that face each other across Flinders Street in Melbourne, exemplify distinctions between the symmetrical surface appeal of a modern construction (Fig. 6), and the multidimensional notions of postmodern ‘deconstruction’, which performs relationships between spaces and structures and surfaces (Figs. 7, 8).

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[6] For example, Charles Jencks credits British artist John Watkins Chapman with using ‘postmodern’ in 1870 to refer to painting after Impressionism (see Richard Appignanesi et al., 1995, p. 3).
These three images illustrate the different theoretical conceptions designers bring to the performance of ‘building’ and ‘reality’.
(Photos: Sellers)

**Tangling with ‘reality’**

Another way of discussing interrelationships of beyond and surface is through rhizomes. A conventional metaphor for knowledge is that of a tree: a central stem, roots at one end, and branches at the other, and it is assumed that tracing the branches and/or digging at the roots gets to the heart of the matter. This metaphor served several centuries of modernist science well but, as the 20th century progressed, the problem of ‘not seeing the wood for the trees’ took on more (and more complex) meanings. With the development of increasingly complicated information/communication/knowledge technologies, understanding is encountering such chaos and complexity that it invites us to generate alternative interpretative metaphors. The rhizome is such a metaphor with a chaotic and complex form that generates appropriateness. Rhizome is to a tree as the Internet is to a letter – networking that echoes the hyper-connectivity of the Internet. The structural reality of the tree and the letter appears easily apprehended: a trunk connecting two points through or over a mapped surface. But poststructural rhizomes and the Internet (Figs. 9 & 10) seem more and less real, less and more virtual, and very slippery: myriad connexions are dynamically complex and continuously changing.
In theory, a logographic writing system uses a discrete symbol to represent an idea, as in Chinese ‘writing’. By contrast, English, an alphabetic writing system comprising complicated rules for spelling characters into meaningful words, is logocentric. We use the expression *postlogographic* to convey our sense that representing ideas is moving beyond the modernist construction of *logos*, as in ‘the word’, in both the ideographic form of Chinese and the ideological form of English. *Postlogographic*, for us, concerns ideocomplexities – gatherings of manifold ways for performing-stories, with and beyond *logos*.

We derive our notion of ‘performing-stories’ from Laurel Richardson’s (2001) ‘writing-stories’, which she describes as, for example, ‘[becoming] more aware of the poststructural insistence that all readers are writers, that the text is constantly being reinvented by readers’ (p. 37). Richardson came to writing-stories through losing language. Following a serious car accident, she had to reconstitute relationships between knowing and wording: ‘A massive upheaval had cracked the strata of knowledge… the orderly strata of knowledge had been destroyed – old material collided with new material. The shards had been reshuffled’ (p. 33). Through writing, often with only a first letter, or a blank space, Richardson re-learned through herself and/about the world: ‘I wrote so I would have a life. Writing was and is how I come to know’ (p. 33).

Poststructuralism, for Richardson, affects ‘shaping’ with writing and language. She writes that poststructuralist writing generates reflexive understandings of socio-historical contexts: ‘Language does not “reflect” social reality, but produces meaning, *creates* social reality’ (p. 36, our emphasis). Thus Richardson’s writing-stories generate personal meanings through contextual complexities of placings and timings of experiences and memories that embody *thingness* in worlds of being.

Thus, postlogographic inquiry – performing-stories – is not about realising the means to an end, rather, it really (‘expressing interest, surprise, doubt, or protest’, *Concise Oxford Dictionary*) generates continuous middlings of meanings: multiple ways of getting personal about re/in/terpreting (as)signings. Such performing-stories re/turn towards disrupting linearity and hierarchy and the bi-polarity of the tree metaphor becomes undermined, overgrown, and dis/per/turbed by rhizomatic complexity (see Fig. 11).
Is deconstruction helpful for outdoor/environmental education?
As words are becoming more lost to meanings, deconstruction is a way of uncovering the multiplicity of meanings – visible and invisible, overt and covert – that have accreted in a word’s representations. Jacques Derrida (1972) emphasises that his coinage of the term deconstruction ‘has nothing to do with destruction… it is simply a question of… being alert to the implications, to the historical sedimentation of the language we use – and that is not destruction’ (p. 231).

We do not see ‘deconstruction’ and ‘outdoor’ and ‘environmental’ and ‘education’ and ‘research’ as being separate existents, but as mutually constitutive eventing occasions. Kaustuv Roy (2003) writes about an otherness of educating that resists the dialectical and opens ‘toward a pedagogy of immanence’ (p.59) by drawing upon his study of The City School. The City School is not a closed structure that separates administration from teaching, teaching from learning, and learning from contexts. Nor is it a compartmentalised environment within which packs of learners are separated and confined to undergo packaged instruction.

Rather than a factory farm where crops are regimentally administered for mass consumption, The City School is a wilderness garden where diverse plantings are nurtured and flourish alongside self-seeded shoots and mature vines and boughs. The City School is not one ‘thing’, one ‘place’, one ‘institution’, it is thingness, and placeness, and institutionish, and more. It does not search for identity, it celebrates immanence.

To approach notions of immanence, different thinking is needed – thinking that reconceptualises objects and subjects and scale… caterpillars destorying cabbages (see Fig. 12). Such different thinking seeks to disturb, upset, unsettle, the logocentric linearity of sign/signifier/signified relations that obscure and elide meaningful immanence to assure hegemony. For us deconstruction involves performing signings, which includes an experiential playfulness with words and images exemplified in the following.
The use of experiences in the outdoors for the education and development of the “whole person” (The Outdoor Institute).

‘a continual educational experience...not just one field trip, one week at outdoor school, or even a once-a-year event. It must be taught at all levels and pursued throughout life’ (Phyllis Ford, 2003)

‘an experiential method of learning with the use of all senses. It takes place primarily, but not exclusively, through exposure to the natural environment. In outdoor education, the emphasis for the subject of learning is placed on relationships concerning people and natural resources’ (Mark Lund, 1994).

‘one of a range of mediums in which to offer informal educational opportunities addressing the personal and social development of both communities and individuals’ (Outdoor Edinburgh, 2004)

‘a means of curriculum enrichment, whereby the process of learning takes place out of doors. Outdoor education broadly includes environmental education, conservation education, adventure education, school camping, wilderness therapy, and some aspects of outdoor recreation’ (James Neill, 2004)
Noel Gough and Warren Sellers: Re/de/signing the world

Figure 13. Mandelbrot Set
(http://www.jaggi.ch/informatics/fractals/mandelbrot/m12_greenblue_web.gif)

rhizoidrealities
Roy (2003) writes:
The rhizome is at the same time an analytical tool and a becoming that can help in constructing new spaces for teaching and learning. As a tool of analysis, it helps us to see the possibilities and connections in a non-Cartesian way, that is, in nonbinary modes of thinking. As a way of becoming, it allows us to conceive of linking our collectives to other assemblages for acting upon, say, the curriculum, embodying our sensibilities to extend it in unaccustomed directions. Besides, for Deleuze, concepts like the rhizome are really vectors that have a force and a direction of their own, extending the possibilities in the synaptic structures of the brain itself. In other words, thinking in this way changes the very architecture of the brain (p. 89).

Warren came to this paper via an email from Noel – a rhizomatic shoot popping up in Warren’s inbox asking if he was interested in the following idea:

Producing texts is a method of inquiry, a way of finding out about yourself and your world. When we view textual production as a method, we experience ‘semiosis-in-use’, how we ‘sign (and de/sign) the world’ into existence… And then we ‘re/de/sign’ the world, move a paragraph, resize an image, check the thesaurus, sketch a picture, add a soundbite, erase the computer screen, again and again. This ‘re/de/signed world’ never accurately, precisely, completely captures the studied world, yet we persist in trying. Textual production as a method of inquiry honours and encourages the trying, recognizing
it as emblematic of the significance of language (in its broadest, postlogographic sense) (Gough, 2003, personal communication).\(^7\)

Warren responded affirmatively, and Noel forwarded a copy of the following email from Leigh Price, a colleague from southern Africa with whom Noel was collaborating on another paper (Gough and Price, in press) to provide further context:

At 12:14 PM +0200 10/10/03, Leigh Price wrote:

I was especially excited by your criticism of the ‘dialectic’ – as exemplified by [Carolyn] Merchant. The one thing I feel certain about is that moving into this determinist-voluntarist dialectic is definitely not the way to go.

I really like your idea of ‘mutually constitutive’. I was wondering what exactly is the difference between the mutually constitutive option and the dialectic? I was wondering if you would agree that the mutually constitutive option is different because it allows the constituting to happen simultaneously; in contrast, the dialectic option implies a separation of reality and narrative in terms of time, as they interact with each other.

Thus... now reality is determining the narrative... now the narrative is determining reality... or for activists...now things are real and we can act with/against them... now things are constructed and we can deny their agency by not believing in them. And thus we don’t really get away from the problems of too much faith in ontology and too much faith in narrative, we just alternate the problems? The mutually constituting option would have both happening at once - sort of mutually dependent on each other - or sort of part of each other? And if this is the case, how does one still allow for the two parts, reality and narrative, to maintain some autonomy from each other?

Another question I have is whether or not Latour’s ‘modern constitution’ is an exploration of this dialectic and its problems; that is, when he describes how the moderns always have two irons in the fire and swap them so rapidly as to never be caught out? Because, if this is the case, then the ramifications are staggering. I mean, just about every time we talk, we are making this dialectical mistake... Latour feels that 95% of the critique in academia is based on this way of thinking, and that is why he wants to write without ‘denunciation’. It is one of the main reasons why I feel very uncomfortable with the word ‘critical’ in critical realism.

Warren replied to Noel with the following comments:

Leigh’s response is resonant, but she’s articulated it more theoretically than I could have. My reaction was more phenomenological recognition and empathy with the constitutive notion. I feel the dialectical position(s) are implosive and I instinctively react to their pull towards what I sense is a black hole (I also sense that ‘black holes’ are misconstrued as conduits between dichotomies). What excites me about your ideas is their looking for approaches to making commensurable senses of living with-in worlds, and your interest in the ‘rhizomatic’ (I prefer to think of it as rhizomous) disruption of the bipolar hierarchisation of meaning making.

[A side thought that just springs to mind is that your sense for mutually constitutive theory, Leigh’s theoretically motivated discomfort with ‘critical realism’, and my gut feel for trying towards seeing what’s happening, constitutes methodological triangulation?]\(^8\)

In the paper Noel and Leigh were working on, they quoted (and subsequently critiqued) the following valorisation of bioregionalism by Spretnak (1999):

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\(^7\) Gough is paraphrasing and expanding Richardson (2001, p. 35) here.

\(^8\) This message was accompanied by Warren’s picture (see Fig. 14)
The land masses of Earth are organized into bioregions delineated by watersheds (drainage areas) of the river systems or other natural demarcations. Everyone lives in a bioregion and in the Earth’s commons. Pollution and ecological degradation or breakdown occur in a bioregion or in the Earth’s larger systems, not some vaguely theorized realm of ‘externalities.’ Nations inhabit, and evolve with, one or more bioregions…

A new global system of coordination could begin with the realities of the Earth: Nation-states would be encouraged to redraw their internal regions to match the contours of their watersheds, as New Zealand has done, in order to help us recover from the modern error of thinking that we live on top of nature (pp. 104-5).

Warren’s response to Noel continued:

Btw that Spretnak quote about internal regions matching watersheds is an oversimplification of the ‘reality’. I assume she’s referring to our Regional Authorities, which evolved in the 1980/90s from the original Water or Catchment Boards that were formed in the late 19th century to look after flood and erosion control. These ‘Regions’ are controlled by ‘Regional Councils’ and are concerned mainly with macro environmental and transportation matters. They are quite distinct from ‘City/District Councils’, which are concerned with wider-ranging local area matters. Anyway, the ‘facts’ affirm your view that the bioregions are a convention of human convenience.

…. My mention of the Spretnak quote goes some ways towards how I’m thinking, in that the connections/disconnections of between cultural/cosmographical theories/practices are deconstructing beyond past attempts to construct answers. That is, the proposal that ‘boundaries’ be ‘redrawn’ to suit a meaning making theory that supposedly ‘matches’ understanding with ‘nature’ is neither logical nor sensible. To put it postlogographically, of course rain and terrain will contribute towards constitution of concepts for enviro-spatial meetings – water sheds down gullies into rivers towards seas. However, just as the beach I walk regularly upon continues to experience water-wind shifting its sands through time - to the consternation of some property owners who now find their foreshore boundaries under the tide - so do all laws slip slide a long (Fig. 14).

Figure 14: Generative associating—triangulation-deconstruction-environment
(Photo: Sellers)
The preceding section intends to suggest ways in which ideas, thoughts, words, images, generatively intermingle when freed to move rebus fashion…

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The following section intends to suggest othering ways in which sign/ing affects worlds of meanings…

‘[Deleuze’s multiplicity is a] qualitative multiplicity involving duration as one of its conditions. A qualitative multiplicity is not an aggregate of parts constituted by the relation of separate physical existents but an event, an actual occasion of experience. A processual pathic intensity’ (Paul Bains, 2002, p. 104), (see Fig. 15).

Figure 15. ‘processual pathic intensity’; rhizo-figure, drawn with a continuous line on a computer trackpad
(Drawing: Sellers)

Not to start from identity but from qualitative multiplicity is a very different way of relating to the world (Roy, 2003, p. 71).

Kaustuv Roy’s (2003) book, *Teachers in Nomadic Spaces: Deleuze and Curriculum* is engagement of education-research9 in what he calls ‘fieldwork in theory’ (p. 1). To help explicate this paradoxical proposition, Roy’s introduction opens with an epigraph quoting Deleuze: ‘A thing, an animal, a person are only definable by movements and rests, speeds and slowness, and by affects and intensities’ (p. 1). In other words, *towards* is often more useful for understanding than getting to, or as Roy puts it ‘[m]ost truths are less interesting than the complex and dynamic intercrossing of forces, intensities, discourses, desires, accidents, idiosyncrasies, and relations of power that produce those culminations’ (p. 1).

Roy’s readings of Deleuze and curriculum is towards what we are thinking of as postlogographic. He is deconstructing the Theness of The Sign, re-visioning signing beyond the dialectic towards conceptions for immanence. His proposal for doing this involves what he is calls ‘the apprenticeship of the sign’ (p. 147):

9 We are hyphenating education-research to emphasise that the labels refer to co-implicated concepts, that is, education is research and vice versa.
the apprenticeship of the sign involves the realization of the following: (a) every encounter generates signs; (b) the meaning of a sign is not a given; (c) signs are the result of production in which the observer and the observed are both implicated; (d) one must forsake all tendency toward nostalgia in reading signs and treat them as a fresh problematic; (e) signs are partly sheathed in a becoming that is outside history, that is they are partly Chronos [conceptual time] and partly Aion [emergent age]; (f) one must hold at bay habitual responses while observing signs, the way one would look at a piece of art; (g) signs must be freed time and again from old meanings and observed to see what they do and to whom; and (h) the apprentice must be aware of their tendency to produce the worldly sign. A four-fold framework called the apprenticeship of the sign has been advanced as praxis towards such a transformation in thought, namely adscension [gathering], the alloscension [othering], the amnioscension [fluxing], and the anascension [ignoring] (pp. 147-8).

The re-reading of sign/ing, appeals to an aesthetic approach, more than the intellectual. In an attempt to explicate our re-reading of Roy’s apprenticeship of the sign we offer four prose passages that aesthetically resonate with our interpretations of his ‘four-folds[s]’.

Adscension – gathering:

Light and shadow play upon the deeps. The spills and splashes of geographic accident serve as this world’s genes. Here woods work out the latest exchange rates. Gorse trades its stored energies with geese. Tundra warehouses whole quantities of carbon. Bottoms, morasses, moors, plateaus, and rain basins bargain in a river pidgin that keeps the dimples of microclimate in nutrients all year (Powers, 2002, p. 85).

Alloscension – othering:

All the world’s predictors, running flat out, fall back surprised by their own outcomes. Fresh winds mix, mistral on sirocco, chinook against levantar, khasmin with bise. Cusps touch off one another. Trends compound, too quick to name. Yugoslavian prices rise three thousand per cent. Drought and war destroy East Africa. Argentina heads into free fall. China comes alive, threatening to swamp the continental balance of trade. Sweeping liberalizations cascade. The median keeps to a holding pattern. Vested interests bitterly dig in (Powers, 2002, pp. 86-87).

Amnioscension – fluxing:

The kingfisher satellites swoop down, hitting their minnowed marks. They snatch the silver data aloft, flapping in blackness, before dropping the catch back down to the globe’s surface, where it replicates, shooting the rapid of broadband relays and repeaters, transmitter to transmitter, pooling ever more downstream, to school in the hatcheries of pertabyte shoals (Powers, 2002, p. 87).

Anascension – ignoring:

This sea defeats all navigation. At best, the model can say only where in this, our flood, we will drown. Walk from this diorama on a May evening and feel the earth’s persistent fact gust against your face. Sure as this disclosing spring breeze, it blows. Data survive all hope of learning. But hope must learn how to survive the data (Powers, 2002, p. 88).

To further our aesthetic re-reading, we append the following images to extratextualise notions of resonances and enfoldings alluded to in the passages above.

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10 Roy, citing Deleuze, notes that ‘language is only one aspect of assemblages of annunciation. For Deleuze, signs have as much to do with the extratextual as with text. It is through careful attention to the sign and a
The graph (Fig. 17) depicts a nonlinear Schrödinger equation illustrating how a ‘freak’ wave ‘breathes’ itself into existence by extracting energy from its neighbours. The computer generated image (Fig. 18) is an impression of a ‘freak’ wave sinking the Munchen in 1978.

![Figure 17: Graph of a ‘freak’ wave](http://www.math.uio.no/~karstent/waves/pust.gif)  
![Figure 18: Impression of a ‘freak’ wave](http://bbc.co.uk/science/horizon/2002/freakwavescreensaver.shtml)

**Tending toward**

What are we making of these servings of *other* texts? We are towarding re-readings, revisioning re-sign/ing. We are disrupting the ‘striated space’ towards feeling

‘smooth space’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 474-75). As fabric is to felt. Fabric is closely governed, has verticals and horizontalts, and is closed by the warp of the loom. It serves as a good example of regulated or administered spaces that are vertically ordered, that is, have a top and a bottom. Felt, on the other hand, is nomadic or smooth; it is produced by the entanglement of millions of microfibres oriented in every direction – it is an accumulation of proximities all at the same level, making it nonhierarchical (Roy, 2003, p. 59).

In this paper we are re-reading-writing as processual inquiry… struggling with poststructuralist scepticism against representational claims, while avoiding antirealist language games. Our intentions are towards showing ways of processing research through generative deconstruction of striations, reflecting concerning matters, and performing smoothings.

Outdoor education-researching is well suited to processual inquiry. It can be responsive to notions of felt rather than fabric. It can understand that striated is embodied in smoothness, that ‘economics… is spoken of as a branch of ecology… the ecology of the human species’ (H.G. Wells, 1932, pp. i, 29).

We need to overcome fears of fear. We are not *A* part of **The** world. We are not subjects that need to be fearful of objects; subjects are objects and vice versa, they/it are always already mutually constitutive immanence. As we understand more about beyond the surface, we can appreciate that the little we were taut/thou/ght we ‘really’ knew, is only a fraction of fractality that is. Outdoor education-research offers ubiquitous opportunities to encounter fractality!

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*persistent awareness of the generative factor that we begin to lose the sense of reality as concrete and given, and therefore change becomes possible* (p. 127).
References


Young, Johnny. (1969). The Real Thing [Song]: Chappell.