‘Narratives Exploring Earth-based Spirituality for Transformative Outdoor and Environmental Studies’

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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Abstract

Australian Outdoor & Environmental Studies (OES), under the curriculum framework of Health and Physical Education (HPE), is influenced by dominant discourses of androcentric perspectives of wilderness. As such, inherent *adventure hegemonies* impact the type and depth of relationship that can emerge with nature. In this study, I have used narrative inquiry, through an eco-feminist lens, to draw on the stories of three adolescent students and their encounters with spiritual pedagogy, namely meditation practices, within Australian OES. These student stories, collected during a 5-day hiking expedition in a remote coastal environment, demonstrated that ideas of ‘femininity’ are subjugated and inferiorised to ideas of ‘masculinity’ in the outdoors. Therefore, as per the results of this study, I call for a uniting of gender ideologies, through an integration of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ psyches, drawing on theories regarding Merleau-Ponty’s

1 emotional embodiment. I further call for a reshaping of OES pedagogical approaches to include spiritual and emotional inquiry, in the context of global environmental challenges.

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1 Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961): A French phenomenologist, influenced by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. His philosophies abound the role perception plays in understanding the world, as well as how the mind and body interrelate to engage with the world.
For my mother, Denise.
With love and gratitude for instilling the ‘wild woman’ in me.
Wilderness is a concept imbued with contested meanings. When it comes down to it, wilderness is whatever people think it is, the ‘terra incognita of peoples’ minds.’

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**Glossary**

**Androcentrism:** is the practice, conscious or otherwise, of placing male human beings or the masculine point of view at the center of one's view of the world and its culture and history (Humberstone, 2000).

**Anthropocentrism:** distinguishes between instrumental and intrinsic values in its failure to acknowledge the intrinsic value of anything that is not human (Hoetzer, 2011). It identifies humans as the central or most significant species; everything else is valuable only as a means to promoting or enhancing human interests. Within this, humanity dominates the natural environment and is contested as the root of the ecological crisis (Greenwood, 2005).

**Bio-philia:** a deep and intimate attachment to the natural environment; as we learn to love what has become familiar and we tend to bond with what we know well (Orr, 2004).

**Bio-phobia (eco-phobia):** a strong aversion to nature; the culturally acquired urge to affiliate with technology, human artefacts, and solely with human interests regarding the natural world (Orr, 2004).

**Contemplation:** deep, reflective thought in the act of considering an experienced phenomenon (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

**Deep ecology:** an ecological philosophy advocating inherent worth of living beings regardless of their instrumental utility to human needs. Deep ecology argues that the natural world is a subtle balance of complex inter-relationships in which the existence of organisms is dependent on the existence of others within ecosystems. The ethic is not one of domination, but of respect and kinship with the natural world (Greenwood, 2005). Nature has its own separate intrinsic value (Hoetzer, 2011).

**Earth-based spirituality:** Valuing the psyche as part of nature, humans are intrinsically connected to the universe (Greenwood, 2005). Nature provides inspiration, introspection and reflection on deep personal values in an interaction with something
greater than oneself (Ashley, 2007; Heintzman, 2010; Plotkin, 2008; Seed, Macy, Fleming & Naess, 2007).

**Eco-feminism:** gives a positive connection of women and nature, and explores the idea that the male domination of women and the domination of nature are interconnected. That is, the environmental crisis is due to the control of women and nature by men (Greenwood, 2005). Eco-feminists argue that the culture over nature dichotomy that dominates Western thought is representative of dominance-sub-ordinance hierarchies (Hoetzer, 2011).

*Please note:* *The eco-feminism critique of patriarchy is not an attack on men; rather an attack on particular structural world-views that is imposed on both sexes through socialisation.*

**Eco-pedagogy:** pioneered by Paulo Freire, it is derived from critical pedagogy and grounded on the focus of sustainable environments within eco-literate societies (Freire, 1972).

**Eco-psychology:** the study of how ecology interacts with the human psyche (Louv, 2008). The key for eco-psychology is to grasp the non-duality of psyche and nature and *not* to idealise, sentimentalise or romanticise nature (Davis, 2010; Roszak, 2001).

**Environmentalism:** concerned with the preservation and conservation and takes a human-in-environment approach. Reformist rather than radical, it focusses on the serviceability of the human habitat for use by people (Greenwood, 2005).

**Experiential Education:** pedagogic process that infuses teacher and student direct experience with the learning environment and content (Ford, 1981; Higgins & Humberstone, 1999; Kolb, 1984).

**Meditation:** the practice of raising consciousness through training the mind in stillness; the emptying of thoughts (Kabat- Zinn, 1994).

**Mindfulness:** a spiritual or psychological practice of paying close attention to thoughts with curiosity, flexibility and openness (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).
Pantheism: nature is identical with divinity; everything encompasses an immanent God (Ashley, 2007).

Reflexivity: examining the cause and effect within socio-cultural dynamics, and being self-critical to position one’s self according to beliefs, values, and attitudes regardless of socio-cultural constituents (Bold, 2012; Shacklock & Smyth, 1998; Zink, 2004/2010).

Spirit: ‘The single, boundless, and eternal mystery that permeates and animates everything in the universe and yet transcends it all’ (Plotkin, 2008, p. 41).

Spirituality: spirituality is a practice that reveals an interconnectedness with nature and others (Ashley, 2007), towards a strong sense of life purpose and meaning. It involves a deep concern for commitment to greater something greater than self; a sense of wholeness in life; strong ethics and morals; love, joy, peace and fulfilment (Heintzman, 2010). A spiritual path is one that supports, develops and expands the range and depth of one’s ultimate concern - of sensitivities towards the earth, allowing a centre of identity to shift toward non-duality. A spiritual path inspires, nourishes, awakens and guides us (Davis, 2010).

Soul: ‘a ‘thing’s’ ultimate place in the world’ (Plotkin, 2008, p. 30). ‘If your soul is the ultimate place in the world and you need to live from that place to be fully yourself, then the world cannot be fully itself until you become fully yourself’ (Plotkin, 2008, p. 32).

Wellbeing: focusses on more than the absence of disease. Rather, it involves the idea of holistic health, encompassing physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, social and environmental factors within a sense of vitality and radiance (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2014).

Wilderness: terra incognita. The untrodden, untouched terrain in the universe of what throughout modern history, we have sought to know as nature (Hofmeister, 2009).

Please note: ‘Wilderness’ will be interchanged with ‘nature’ throughout this thesis. Although Outdoor and Environmental Studies pedagogy is based around ‘wilderness’ expeditions, this is actually an inaccurate premise, considering this definition of wilderness.
Prefatory Statement

Mountains holy as Sinai,
No mountains I know of are so alluring.
None so hospitable, kindly, tenderly inspiring,
It seems strange that everybody does not come at their call.
They are given, like the Gospel, without money and without price.
…Here is calm so deep, grasses cease waving…
Wonderful how completely everything in wild nature fits into us,
As if truly part and parent of us.
The sun shines not on us but in us.
The rivers flow not past, but through us, thrilling,
Tingling, vibrating every fibre and cell of the substance of our bodies,
Making them glide and sing.
The trees wave and the flowers bloom in our bodies as well as our souls,
And every bird song, wind song, and tremendous storm song of the rocks
In the heart of the mountains is our song, our very own, and sings our love.
The Song of God, sounding on forever.
John Muir (cited in Ross & Ross, 2001, p. 2)

In one way or another, we make sense of our lives through story (Clough, 2002).
I draw on the above poem by Muir², to convey a sense of his experience in the mountains through poetry. I specifically chose this poem as it illustrates how culture can revere wild places, and the interconnectedness between humans and nature. To frame my study, I will first share my story, which also emanates from the Sierra Nevadas in central California, USA.

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² John Muir (1838-1914): A Scottish-American naturalist, author and key activist to the environmental conservation of the Sierra Nevada mountains (Ibrahim & Cordes, 1993).
Background to my Research

The year was 1999 and I was 18-years old.
On a late December day, these Sierra stories unfold.
I traversed the mountain range, blanketed in pure white,
carving my way through alpine delight.
The jagged crests of gun metal grey and pine needle green,
Mountains, as far and wide as could possibly be seen.

My jacket zipped tight,
the only skin in sight,
were rosy blustered cheeks, and a smile ear to ear.
I descended the powdery trail,
fastened to my ride of choice…
the snowboard.
Nearing a rocky outcrop,
I decided there to stop.
Placing my goggles firmly on my head,
watching this mountain paradise instead.
Against the violet blue, I squinted to see,
the fluorescent white enshrouding me.
To the south, appeared a small cloud-break in the sky,
I could see the Owens valley, and mountains mile high.
The Californian interior, stretching out in meadows,
a high desert mystery…
with islands of scattered snow drifts frozen in shadows.
Whispers of descending snowflakes drifted,
dancing to meet the white carpeted earth in silences sifted.
In the distance, a resounding crash, echoing deep and low,
as tree limbs shook free from the oppressing snow.
The only other sound was a single blue-jay,
calling to her mate in this evening hour astray.
Not even the softest flutter of a breeze,
wandered through these pine green trees,
The evening mist now called in the darkness, and although alone in this mountain holding fortress... time had simply disappeared.

I had lived in this winter wonderland of Mammoth Lakes on the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevadas, for over six months before this day. Like any other outdoor adventurer, I considered this region to be an outdoor Mecca and I loved every moment I got to spend exploring the mountain trails where the likes of John Muir and Ansel Adams\(^3\) once roamed. I did not want to leave any corner of the region unexplored, and I would incessantly plan hiking and backcountry snowboarding expeditions with my ‘die-hard’ friends to uncover the secrets of the Sierra. This physical assault was impetuous, reckless and set to fuel an ever present ego that would yield no regard for the faint hearted or passive explorers ambling down the ‘bunny’ slopes and ‘green’ trails of lesser prestige.

This was until the moment on that mountain line.

What propelled me to stop quite literally in my tracks to absorb the beauty around me was an almost silent voice, ever so softly cautioning me to slow down, to recognise the truly magnificent landscape around me as a living, breathing entity. It was almost like a seamless blurring, a melting between myself and the place that I had recklessly, only moments previously, assaulted with my yearning for stimulation and adrenalin. Something greater than me had beckoned my standstill, and it was within that moment that my mind stopped racing a relentless stream of thoughts. It was in that moment that I finally stood still, long enough to truly reflect on the space, on the magnificence of the place around me.

\(^3\) Ansel Adams (1902-1984): An American photographer and environmentalist, famous for his photography of the American West, namely Yosemite National Park.
I closed my eyes. I listened to the spaciousness of silence, of nature working beside me, gently and effortlessly. I listened to my breath merge with the descending snowflakes. I listened to the distant call of mountain blue jays. I listened to my heart slow in my chest, a peaceful, resounding beat. This mountain ridge that knew no time was no longer mine to conquer, no longer an entity outside of me, and merely something to be reckoned with. Unfurling was a deep connection, a resonance with wilderness of blinding affinity. I sat in the stillness of that mountain line for a long time, until the shades of white turned to violet and dusk finally settled. I had never encountered such a phenomenon before, where an invisible witness seemed to bear testament to my thoughts and ideas, to my dreams and fears.

What followed from this moment of stillness was contemplation so wild and deep that a new chasm of inquiry burst open within me. I simply could not turn my back on such awakening. Even if I tried, the relentless silent voice cautioned my heady spin of activity to slow down. This shift in consciousness threw my world into a quest for spiritual wholeness. Being such a personal and subjective phenomenon, I needed to make sense of what spirituality meant for me. Without the impetuous desire to defeat, devour, consume, conquer or compete, I began to incorporate a regular

(This photograph was taken during my time in the Sierra Nevadas, not long after the day I stopped in my tracks to marvel at the mountain environment around me, Riley, 1999).
mindfulness, meditation and contemplation practice into my daily life, and I watched as the world around me transformed (or perhaps it was me who was transforming in a world standing still?). It was in these moments that I discovered the power of meditation and contemplation as the quintessential key to unlocking the wellspring of surrender, empathy and compassion for nature. As my perspectives shifted and continued to evolve over time, a personal truthfulness began to emerge. Within this, a rather bitter awakening within the eye of the storm, reminded me that my connections to nature weren’t always so deep, nor so pure.

The praxis of spiritual evolution towards holistic wellbeing required consistent practice, consistent reinforcement, and perhaps a more tangible medium to bear cogency. This prompted the heartfelt endeavour towards journaling, perhaps as a measure of my experiences so that they didn’t disappear and become a mere fragmented memory. Writing then became my link to preserve the meditation experiences; to channel my thoughts, my emotions onto paper; a tool to bridge the gap between this phenomenon and self; an expression bonding the etheric to reality (Aucoin, 2011; Winter, 2003). Words were almost like the manifestation of the intangible, giving the unexplainable a voice, defining the invisible with evidence, creating a companion on paper.

These newly formed worldviews transformed professional endeavours, in both educational and outdoor recreational contexts. Through such insights, I became increasingly aware, as a group leader, as a university student studying an undergraduate degree in Outdoor and Environmental Studies (OES), and, as an OES teacher in the secondary school sector, that pedagogical approaches within OE can be single-mindedly focussed on the physical pursuits of adventurous quests. By and large, this is
evident in the titles that schools give to their OE expeditions. Rarely does the expedition title reflect the location visited. More often, it reflects the particular activity that the cohort will be engaging in: ‘rock-climbing/abseiling’, ‘hiking/bushwalking’, ‘white-water rafting/canoeing/kayaking’, ‘cross-country skiing/snowsports’, ‘cycling’, or whatever activity that seemed to yield the most ‘adventure’ interest. Further, in my experiences, there is certainly less emphasis on any sense of ‘spirituality’ embedded within the pragmatic dimensions of experience. That is, in OE, I acknowledge a lack of holistic pedagogical approaches that explore the manner in which the ‘whole’ student engages with the natural environment. I can acknowledge a strong emphasis on environmentalism (as I will discuss in proceeding sections), but I question the intentions and depth of such environmental education.

What I will argue throughout this thesis is a shift in consciousness towards honouring earth-based spirituality in OES pedagogical approaches. Further, drawing from eco-feminist perspectives to invoke values of deep ecology, bound in concrete, loving actions for the natural environment, I advocate that stronger and deeper connections between humans and nature can be cultivated.

Specific examples of androcentrism within the adventure hegemonies of OES were starkly illuminated when co-leading a year-10 hiking expedition, seven-years ago. The co-ed cohort was randomly divided into two groups, walking in opposite directions around a loop trail. It was agreed on by a colleague and I, that we would lead Group A using earth-based spiritual approaches that involved meditation practices. These meditation practices were aimed to promote self-awareness and an exploration of connections with others (including nature). We also facilitated writing experiences that could work to substantiate the meditation practices. Within this, the students were able
to reflect on the psycho-emotional responses of their journeys. It was understood that we were drawing on concepts of eco-psychology - the study of how ecology interacts with the human psyche (Louv, 2008).

At the conclusion of this expedition, both groups reunited in a formal debrief. I learned that the leaders (physical education teachers) from *Group B* did not utilise such pedagogical approach. Their focus was on physical pursuits, in their attempts to arrive into camp in the quickest times possible, considering feats of stamina and endurance to be the goal. In discussing the students’ personal experiences during this debrief, it became evident that students in *Group B* were not provided with the same means to experience the natural world in which they were travelling through. And for them, the hiking component of the ‘adventure’ was the only purpose of this expedition, and therefore, a sense of physical inquiry, the only outcome.

Some students were thrilled by their demonstrations of physical efficacies, further propagating their competitive ‘wins’. Others were less enthusiastic and appeared disengaged and utterly exhausted and deflated; almost like the wilderness had been their competitor and defeated their efforts. It was then that I witnessed a dramatic divide between both groups. *Group A* gave the impression that a cohesive and strong connection had been forged, both between each other and with the environment they had traversed. Further, they appeared rejuvenated, uplifted and inspired. I saw firsthand the limitations of physical endeavours to harness wellbeing purely by itself; and, as such I came to truly acknowledge and appreciate that wilderness endeavours provide such magnificent scope to invoke a sense of spiritual connection towards reverence, love and care for ecosystems in which humans are intrinsically linked. This sense of spirituality inquiry, in my experiences, has often been the polemic key missing in OES ‘pursuits’.
Thus, my study will explore student experiences of meditation and hiking during an OES expedition, examining how earth-based spiritual approaches can foster an important sense of human-nature interconnectedness.
Chapter 1

A New Frontier:
The Research Context

Stories from the Wild

The stories that we share, when meeting out there,

They leave echoes just like footprints…

The secrets that unfold, in the secrets that are told,

They dance around ocean sands of old.

Never knowing our name, but knowing we’re the same,

this remote space called nature…

She whispers of the wild, within a manicured tame.
1.1 An Introduction to My Study

Earlier I discussed the fracturing of human-nature relationships within Australian OES. Drawing on eco-psychology, which observes that psychological, emotional, and spiritual disarray can be contributed to the ‘illusion of separation’ between humans and the natural world (Leopold, 1987; Louv, 2008; Orr, 2004; Roszak, 2001; Winter, 2003; Winter & Koger, 2004). Considering that nature does not turn people against one another, separating ideals and values (Eder, 1996), is considering that it is humans who separate themselves from nature, according to culturally-determined forms of interaction with nature (Clayton & Meyers, 2009; Eder, 1996; Vance, 2001).

My study will explore the implications of a patriarchal oriented society informing androcentric values of nature, and the cultivation of deep ecology (Hoetzer, 2011; Howell, 1997; Ilhaam, 2009; Merchant, 1980, Norlock, 2011; Vance, 2001; Warren, 2000). Such androcentric values are evident in pedagogical approaches concerning adventure hegemony, and the utilisation of wilderness for consumption (Bowers, 2004; Gray & Martin, 2012; Gruenewald, 2004/2008; Martin, 2003/2010, Martin & McCullagh, 2011; McInerney, Smyth & Down, 2011; Payne & Wattchow, 2008). Further, central to my study is the educational context of OES, located in the Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum domain. As such, I will explore applications of earth-based spirituality, namely meditation, within OES wilderness expeditions, as a means to cultivate transformative OES towards deep ecology. By transformative, I mean facilitating the opportunity in experiential OES for adolescent students to be reflexive within socio-cultural constituents of the macrocosm. This is drawing on the theory of post-structuralism.
1.1.1 A Post-structural Intersection

I will critically examine macrocosmic influences on individual meaning-making and knowledge acquisition, relating to adolescent students’ engagement with the natural environment (Russell, 2012). Despite acknowledging that the socially-constructed language of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ are essentialist, and that they reflect binaries isolated from a sense of post-structural holism, I have deliberately chosen to use these terms. Tenets within post-structural theory contend that, ‘language exists independent of reality’ (Hatch, 2006, p. 46). However, I will use these recognised social terms to create a space where I can critically explore the ‘feminine’, and such virtues like, surrender, empathy and compassion (Griessel & Kotze, 2009); and, the ‘masculine’, and such virtues like, strength, power, and control (Griessel & Kotze, 2009). As such, I will use the ‘feminine’ as a political metaphor to motion change in OES pedagogical approaches, considering that the ‘feminine’ is subjugated in OES (Humberstone, 2000).

As Alcoff (1995) states,

If we combine the concept of identity politics with a conception of the subject as positionality, we can conceive of the subject as non-essentialised and emergent from a historical experience and yet retain our political ability to take gender as an important point of departure. Thus we can say at one and the same time that gender is not natural, biological, universal, ahistorical, or essential and yet still claim that gender is relevant because we are taking gender as a position from which to act politically (p. 24).

This statement exemplifies that feminism is not about gendered essentialism, within the biology of male and female; but a question of socio-cultural positioning, emergent from historical perspectives. It further highlights how I aim to use the terms, ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, not as gendered attributes of males and females, but in relation to their positions within the OES socio-cultural milieu. The purpose of my study, therefore, is to draw attention to the lack of ‘feminine’ voice and social mobility.
in OES. Russell (2012) states, ‘the conflicting discourses of femininity and athleticism are an example of how appropriate behaviours for women (and men) have been negotiated through time’ (p. 242). I will elaborate on these points further in Chapter 6, when discussing my conceptual model, *The Eco-feminist Journey towards Deep Ecology*.

**1.2 Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to assert the power of *earth-based spirituality to create an integrated connection to nature within deep ecology*. Adopting eco-feminist epistemologies to give voice to the ‘feminine’ in OES pedagogical approaches, my narrative inquiry will examine the barriers to earth-based spirituality in wilderness, analysing the dominant patriarchal structures that influence and inform androcentric discourse in OES (Bowers, 2004; Gray & Martin, 2012; Gruenewald, 2004/2008; Martin, 2003/2010, Martin & McCullagh, 2011; McInerney, Smyth & Down, 2011; Payne & Wattchow, 2008). For example, Russell and Bell (1996) argue that the purpose of environmental education ‘is to advocate…a pedagogy which is rooted in a politicised ethic of care’ (p. 175). These authors go on to state that educating from eco-feminist perspectives,

> Helps students identify and participate in issues that are locally important and personally meaningful, while ensuring that they make connections between these issues [regarding patriarchal domination of nature] and the “big-picture” (p. 176).

In collecting adolescent student stories of their experiences during a 5-day OES expedition, I aim to illuminate the first person, subjective experiences of earth-based spirituality. This is to inform OES educators on different pedagogical approaches to
experiential OES, from eco-feminist perspectives. In using my own field observations, and interpreting the students’ understanding and meaning-making regarding the phenomenon of earth-based spirituality, I aim to highlight such phenomenon as capable of transforming adolescent ideas of environmental ethics. Final outcomes of my study are to stimulate a discussion on the influence of the HPE curriculum as a constraint to the promotion of deep ecology and environmental ethics within OES. In contributing to the body of OES literature, I subsequently aim to expand on current knowledge discourse within professional practice.

Considering that spirituality has contested meaning, in that it is understood differently by different people, I assert that interpretation of spirituality is primarily, ‘in the eye of the beholder’ (Ashley, 2007; Davis, 2010; Heintzman, 2010). As outlined in the glossary at the beginning of this thesis, I am referring to spirituality in this context to be a practice that reveals a sense of interconnectedness with nature and others (Ashley, 2007). Further, as Davis (2010) contends, spirituality involves sensitivities towards the earth in allowing a centre of identity to shift toward non-duality. To draw more specifically on earth-based spirituality, in this study I am referring to elements associated with introspection and reflection on deep personal values (Driver et al., 1996, p. 5, cited in Ashley, 2007). Therefore, as a pragmatic tool to engage in spiritual practice, I am incorporating meditation to involve deep introspection to elicit a sense of interconnectedness (with other, including nature). To frame the students’ experiences, I have designed one major research question, and three specific research questions to help guide my study.
1.3 Coming to the Research Question

In using narrative inquiry for this study, it was important that I designed my research questions to facilitate narrative-like responses relating to story-telling. In this sense, using words like *how* in the research questions, was important to maintain an open-ended approach. In also considering the tensions within OES (as I will discuss in Chapter 2), I wanted to ensure that I leave space to negotiate these tensions through the narrative, through an interpretation of *how* these students identify with such tensions. Moreover, acknowledging that narrative inquiry first begins with experience as lived and told in stories (Bold, 2012; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; White, 2011), means that the students’ stories will inform the theoretical base for my study. Therefore, I wanted to provide open scope that does not ‘corner’ any part of the narrative, and ensure that the major research question was question relatively broad. My major research question to assist me in understanding *how* adolescent students experience nature through earth-based spirituality within OES pedagogy is:

*How do adolescent stories of earth-based spirituality provide insight into their Outdoor and Environmental Studies experience?*

In order to explore this question, my narrative inquiry will examine the life stories of three adolescent students within a year-10 OES cohort. To delve deeper into the students’ lived experiences during this fieldtrip, I have designed three specific questions to assist in answering the major research question. These are listed as follows:

*How do adolescents understand meditation?*

*How do adolescents understand Outdoor and Environmental Studies in Victoria, Australia?*

*How do adolescents negotiate the tensions in Outdoor and Environmental Studies to re-create their experiences through meditation?*
These specific research questions are designed to simultaneously draw on the students’ experiences of meditation. Through these questions, I aim to interpret the students’ subjective experiences of OES, within the context of a hiking expedition; in an exploration of how they negotiate the tensions within OES pedagogies regarding *adventure hegemonies* evident within the OES ethos. Exploring the social fabric informing pedagogical processes within OES, the final question is designed to discern the explicit and implicit barriers that mar earth-based spiritual ideologies within the OES discourse.

I will now provide a justification for my study, which aims to draw attention to the human-nature divide in OES, in light of global environmental challenges (Flannery, 2005; Merchant, 1980; Orr, 2004).

### 1.4 Rationale: Locating the Study

Contemporary technologies dominate the curriculum (Louv, 2008; Payne, 2009; Postman, 1995), which presents a *Faustian bargain*\(^4\): where the patriarch and technological advancements propel economic development, often to the detriment of initiating or maintaining a kinship to land and natural environments (Leopold, 1987; Louv, 2008; Orr, 2004; Payne, 2009; Merchant, 1980; Russell & Bell, 1996; Warren, 2000). Orr\(^5\) (2004) argues that, ‘compared with earlier cultures, our distinction lies in the fact that technology now allows us to move much further toward total domination of nature than ever before’ (p. 132). The more consumer- driven a society becomes, enmeshed in utilitarian values, the further the divide that society is from nature. To emphasise this point, Leopold (1987) says that, ‘it would appear, in short, that the

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\(^4\) Faustian Bargain: an agreement in which a person abandons their spiritual values or moral principles in order to obtain other benefits (Gruenewald, 2004; Payne, 2009).

\(^5\) David Orr (1944 - ): An American distinguished professor of Environmental Studies and Politics.
rudimentary grades of outdoor recreation consume their resource-base’ (p. 176). Louv (2008) further argues that if the integrity of wilderness is demeaned, human attachment is ultimately compromised. These detachments only further entrench the human-nature divide, and as such, there will be no long term commitment to wilderness conservation, exacerbating the very conditions that created the sense of disengagement in the first place.

This human-nature detachment leads to what Orr (2004) terms, bio-phobia, which can range from discomfort in ‘natural’ places to active scorn for whatever is not human-made, or human-managed. In Orr’s (2004) words, ‘bio-phobia…is the culturally acquired urge to affiliate with technology, human artefacts, and solely with human interests regarding the natural world’ (p. 131). Louv (2008) argues that a ‘cultural autism’ is occurring reflected in popular culture’s lack of attention to direct education towards primary experience of nature. He refers to Dewey, who warned a century ago, that secondary experiences (as opposed for first-person, subjective experience) in childhood came with the risk of depersonalising human life, in making objectivity central to experience. With reference to Dewey, Louv (2008) states,

Passion does not arrive on videotape or on a CD; passion is personal. Passion is lifted from the earth itself by the muddy hands of the young; it travels along grass-stained sleeves to the heart (Louv, 2008, p. 159).

Further, Russell and Bell (1996) state, ‘if environmental education is to be truly transformative, connections must be fostered in such a way that students have both the desire and the ability to become actively involved’ (p. 179). Yet, as Orr (2004) argues, the prevailing form of education today alienates humans from wilderness, in the form of human domination; fragments instead of unifies; overemphasises success and careers;
separates feeling from intellect, and the practical from the theoretical; and unleashes on
the world minds ignorant of their ignorance.

Eco-feminism, therefore, asserts the need for ‘a reassessment of cultural and
historical attitudes toward nature and consider an analysis of the systemic oppression of
women and nature essential to social transformation’ (Russell & Bell, 1996, p.173).
According to Roszak\(^6\) (2001), ancient world alchemists proclaimed, ‘as above, so
below’, indicating connections between the macrocosm (above: the world of heavenly
spheres, angelic hosts and Dame Nature) and the microcosm (below: the human soul).
However, through the industrial revolution the realm of the macrocosm now exhibits
cultural ideologies associated with consumerism, scientific valour, and an unbridled
optimism revolving around the marketplace (Roszak, 2001; Orr, 2004). Regarding the
changing values of nature through history, I will now delve into a historical analysis,
highlighting how contemporary values of nature have been shaped through time.

1.4.1 A Historical Analysis of Western Values of Nature

According to Greenwood (2005), the Druid society\(^7\), of Western Europe,
worshipped nature and spirit, seeking the spiritual protection and mystical energy of
forests. Nearly every tribe of druids retreated to a sacred meeting place in nature, where
a local deity was believed to reside (Nadkarni, 2008). The druids would partake in
religious rituals of prayers and songs, steeped in divination and magic. Destruction of
these sacred places in nature was viewed in the same horror as the burning of a church
or mosque today and death of the instigator of such destruction would ensue (Nadkarni,

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\(^6\) Theodore Roszak (1933–2011): An American scholar, writer and pioneer in the eco-psychology
movement.

\(^7\) Druids: People of the Iron Age (1200BC-500AD) in parts of Celtic Europe; largely portrayed as
Sorcerers who opposed the coming of Christianity. In the Celtic revival of the 18\(^{th}\) and 19\(^{th}\) Centuries,
Neo-Pagan groups were founded, based on ancient Druid practices and rituals (Greenwood, 2005).
2008). As the Christian church rose to power and many of these Celtic practices were
dissembled, Pagan gods and goddesses were transformed into Christian saints and
Pagan temple sites became cathedral grounds (Greenwood, 2005).

Drawing back to Ancient Greece and Roman philosophy, nature was the essence
of a thing that made it behave the way it did, through to the 13th Century where nature
still denoted an essential quality, an innate character (Winter, 2003; Greenwood, 2005;
Merchant, 1980). By the 14th Century, nature came to mean a vital or inherent force that
directed the world of human beings (Greenwood 2005). Within this, the worldview
understood self, society, and the cosmos as interdependent, using the metaphor
nurturing mother to describe the cosmos (Merchant, 1980; cited in Howell, 1997). By
the 16th and 17th Centuries, the work of God became more omnipresent and nature was
studied as a physical power causing phenomena of the material world (Greenwood,
2005). During this time, ‘a second image of the earth as wild and uncontrollable female
described nature as violent and chaotic’ (Howell, 1997, p. 236). Additionally,
according to Greenwood (2005), a separation of the thinking mind (humans) from the
material world (nature) was championed by Descartes who advocated for men to be
lords and possessors of nature.

The appropriate response to the wild elements of ‘Feminine’ Nature was to
control and tame her. As such, mastery and control of nature replaced respect (Howell,
1997). As Roszak (2001) elaborates, ‘the writings of Francis Bacon8 bristle with
references to nature that reveal suspicion, distrust, hostility. Nature, always portrayed as
female, becomes an elusive antagonist who must be vexed, prodded, tortured into
confessing her secrets’ (p. 143). Further, because humans were considered to be made

8 Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626): An English philosopher, statesman, scientist, jurist, orator, essayist, and
author. Bacon was an advocate and practitioner of the scientific method during the scientific revolution.
in God’s image, this creates a differentiation between the creator and the created, thus nature was viewed as a separate entity of divine creation (Greenwood, 2005). Such separation was substantiated with the rise of capitalism and reflected in cultural values of prosperity and technological advancements (Plotkin, 2008; Wattchow & Payne, 2008).

The Industrial Revolution of the 18th Century significantly changed the meaning of nature, as humans became increasingly ostracised and alienated, enmeshed within scientific world-views, governed by laws (Winter, 2003; Greenwood, 2005; Howell, 1997; Merchant, 1980; Warren, 2000). With booming industry and consequent economic expansions, nature became a resource for exploitation and synonymous with the material world as something to be rationalised (Greenwood, 2005; Howell, 1997). According to Schama (1995), ‘the vitality and authority of nature religions declined precisely to the degree that cultures were shaped by scientific, empirically derived knowledge’ (p. 208). Consequently, as the anthropocentric backlash dichotomised humans and nature further, the movement of romanticism of nature became eminent; with values drawing a pastoral landscape of an entity to be revered in mysticism (Schama, 1995).

From approximately the 11th Century, the underground world of druidism once again emerged until present day (Nadkarni, 2008), forming the contemporary concept of nature religion, steeped in Neo-pagan and earth-based spirituality (Howell, 1997). This draws on the final two points of Greenwood’s (2005) four discourses of nature that have emerged through history:
In contemplating these points, as contended by Greenwood (2005), anthropocentric values of wilderness are evident in each point. However, in my study I have focussed predominantly on the final two points. As Roszak (2011) explains,

There are greater endeavours than conquering nature, more reliable forms of well-being than physical dominance; there is a greater richness than the limitless acquisition of things. Changing these perceptions at the deepest level of the personality plays as great a part in dealing with our environmental crisis as any economic reform (p. 40).

However, my arguments suggest that it is not anthropocentrism exacerbating the human-nature divide; but androcentrism, pragmatically evident in *adventure hegemonies* dominating the opportunities for spiritual inquiry in nature (Humberstone, 2000). I will explore this further in an analysis of the discourses of nature.
1.4.2 The discourses of nature

Anthropocentric views of wilderness exist within two discourses and are perceived in two mutually exclusive ways:

1. As a natural constitution of society; or,
2. As a social constitution of nature (Eder, 1996).

The first discourse, located in naturalist views, argues for the industrialisation of nature and associated exploitation. Organising the natural division of people as a patriarchal power relationship to nature, culminates in acts of domination, consumption and control over resources for survival, productive forces, technical progress and an increasing division of labour (Eder, 1996). Eder (1996), drawing on Marxist principles (Benton, 1996), opposes naturalist approaches in contending that social circumstances are not only made by people, but whose functioning can in principle become the subject of practical human action at any time. Deviating from the idea that wilderness is something ‘out there’ and ‘other’ from culture, serves patriarchal interests as it is idealised as a magnet for escaping the challenges of the human world (Vance, 2001).

Moreover, Vance (2001) argues, if the conceptual category of wilderness is understood as something apart from humans (and that humans are not a part of it); and, if wilderness is defined as pure nature, with the absence of humans, there is an inference that humans can exist independently of nature. Consequently, nature is reduced to a landscape, a backdrop. And as such, exists not for itself or by itself within eco-centric values, but as a cultural construct for the recreational, scientific, life support, aesthetic, and spiritual needs of humans. Therefore, as wilderness is revered, it is still consumed such entity for personal enrichment, and this forges wilderness to co-exist within culture, as a cultural manifestation (Vance, 2001).
The second discourse, involving wilderness viewed as a social constitution of nature steeped in cultural values, is situated in the symbolic appropriation of nature. Within this, wilderness is judged according to what it can endure, and subsequently derives an ‘environmental discourse’ (Eder, 1996). In contrast to naturalistic discourse, the ‘environmental discourse’, within cultural values of wilderness, can at least be evolutionary; as the rules of responsible action in society can be one of moral obligation when set in an environmental ethic framework (Eder, 1996). Roszak, asserts, ‘there is no question but that anthropocentrism can lead to claims of human supremacy over nature that lie at the root of our ecological problems’ (p. 201). This is also substantiated by Seed⁹, who equally presses the source of global environmental problems to lie within anthropocentrism (whether from naturalistic appropriations of wilderness, or through environmentalism). Cited in Greenwood (2005), Seed proposes,

A spiritual solution: developing an ‘ecological identity’. Deep ecology…is a powerful philosophy that transforms understanding, but it is not possible to think out of mess, the structures are deep in the psyche as well as in social institutions, and language conspires with disconnection – ‘the environment is out there’; we must feel our way out of the crisis; we must hold our breath and learn that the environment is here within us, in our breath, and in water passing through us (p. 44).

As Leopold (1987) argues, ‘we can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in’ (p. 214). This statement highlights that affinity with nature is fostered through personal morality in regards to true and valid connections. This is further supported by Louv (2008) who quotes psychologist, Erickson with reference to her attachment theory:

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⁹ John Seed: An Australian environmentalist and founder of the Rainforest Information Centre, which campaigns to save sub-tropical rainforests in Australia.
In the world of child development attachment theory posits that the creation of a deep bond between child and parent is a complex, psychological, biological, and spiritual process, and without this attachment a child is lost, vulnerable to all manner of later psychologies. I believe that a similar process can bind adults to a place and give them a sense of belonging and meaning. Without a deep attachment to place, an adult can also feel lost (p. 158).

This statement draws on the essential nature of wellbeing within a sense of connectedness to wilderness, which is a primary constituent of deep ecology in asserting that humans are not separate from nature. Figure 1a below illustrates perspectives of wilderness and the natural environment from natural constitutions and social constitutions.

This depicts outcomes of deep ecology to flow from a social construction of nature, within recreational experiences. My research is questioning OES pedagogy that focuses predominantly on recreational pursuits forming environmentalism (where nature is viewed as a resource for human use), substantiating androcentric ideologies within the OES discourse. I therefore contend that this can compromise the capacity for students to explore earth-based spirituality within the ‘feminine’ towards values of deep ecology (recreational pursuits, within adventure hegemony as the dominant discourse in Australian OES, and the influence of the HPE framework on OES pedagogy, will be
examined in greater depth in Chapter 2). It is for these reasons that I draw on the value of eco-feminism within deep ecology to bridge the human-nature divide.

1.4.3 Merging Eco-feminism with Deep Ecology

Eco-feminists argue that deep ecology is distinctly a ‘masculine’ sensibility, which is rationalist and technisist (Selleh, cited in Warren, 2000). Technisism is set objectives within actionable goal-setting, rather than ‘pure ethics’ that are organic within intrinsic motivations for environmental concern and integration. Selleh (cited in Warren, 2000) states,

Deep ecology overlooks the point that if women’s lived experience were recognised as meaningful and were given legitimation in our culture, it could provide an immediate ‘living’ social basis for the alternative consciousness which the deep ecologist is trying to formulate and introduce as an abstract ethical construct (p. 25).

Further eco-feminists are concerned that for deep ecologists, nature has become a disconnected abstraction. Sessions (2002) states, ‘although [deep ecologists] are devoted to ‘nature’, they relate to nature in a way parallel to that of the dualists they oppose – nature as a lost part of one’s self (or one’s self as a lost part of nature) that needs to be rejoined’ (p. 93). Eco-feminists argue that the relegated connection between women and nature needs to be brought to the forefront if there is going to be an ecological future (Hoetzer, 2011; Howell, 1997; Ilhaam, 2009; Merchant, 1980, Norlock, 2011; Vance, 2001; Warren, 2000). Howell (1997) further conveys the presuppositions of eco-feminism:

Social transformation is necessary for ecological survival, that intellectual transformations of dominant modes of thought must accompany social transformation, that nature teaches non-dualistic and non-hierarchical systems of
relation that are models for social transformation of values, and that human and cultural diversity are values in social transformation (p. 231).

Howell (1997) also quotes eco-feminist theologian, Primavesi (1991) in her descriptions of eco-feminism,

Eco-feminism stresses the connections between woman and Nature on the grounds that Nature, in our distanced, masculine-scientific culture, has also been made ‘other,’ something essentially different from the dominant human male who has an unlimited right to exploit ‘mother’ earth…male domination of women is a pattern repeated in scientific and technological concepts of ‘absolute mastery of matter’ (p. 232).

This is further echoed by Hoetzer (2011). She defines the eco-feminist as critiquing modern capitalism responsible for the ongoing injustices and inequalities, perpetrated by the economically powerful Western nations. The leading pioneer of the eco-feminist movement in the 1970’s, d’Eaubonne (2000), argues that,

We must first put forward the principle that the abolition of patriarchy and the establishment of a relationship with the environment that is finally balanced are not fundamentally linked, but also can only occur in post-revolutionary and self-managing society (p. 179).

Social dominations rely on dualism to create the dis-balance of power (Wilbur, 2001; Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010; Plumwood, 1993: cited in Ilhaam, 2009; Howell, 1997); and as such, the dualism questioned in eco-feminism is evident in the human-nature relationship. Further, according to Howell (1997),

When coupled with a value hierarchy, the dualism translates into attitudes and behaviours that privilege certain civilisations, intellectual worldviews, and human persons over persons who are identified with the body, emotions, non-normative worldviews, and animals – even privileging intelligent animals, such as the great apes and dolphins, over other animals (p. 234).
This quote from Howell (1997) exemplifies the intellectualisation of human-nature relationships, which can further exacerbate the human-nature divide. This is echoed within the imperatives of eco-feminism with a call, ‘for new intellectual frames of reference that integrate the false dualisms that function divisively to separate male and female, privileged persons from ‘others’ and humanity from environment’ (Howell, 1997, p.234). Such non-duality is not seen as an end to action, but as a shift in attitudes that does not place self-interest at the centre (Davis, 2010). Leopold (1987) noted that whatever ethic emerged, it would have to be internally motivated and not injected, as ethics are not associated with scientific knowledge, or the abilities to conquer mountain lines through adventurous physical feats of stamina and endurance, but with the affectionate sensibilities of empathy, compassion and surrender.

1.4.4 Meditation within Earth-based spirituality

Shifts in the ways humans interact with nature needs to combine evidence from the intellect and incentives from the heart (Nadkarni, 2008). Nadkarni (2008) further states, ‘it also seems that individuals need neither preaching nor forceful directives to make changes, if they themselves become convinced of the need to maintain trees, forests, and nature in their lives’ (p. 253). Moving away from purely intellectual engagement with nature to more affective learning inquiry and engagement, creates the scope for joyful experiences in wilderness (Louv, 2008).

Merleau-Ponty was critical of the rational Cartesian10 accounts of humanity, objecting Descartes priority of the mental above the physical and asserting that all forms of human co-existence are based on perception (Cataldi & Hamrick, 2007; Langer,

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10 Descartes (1956 – 1650): A French philosopher; one of the key figures in the Scientific Revolution. His Cartesian dualism marked the distinction between mind and body (Greenwood, 2005).
1989; Reynolds, 2004). At the forefront of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy was the reorientating of ontological dualisms within the claim that we are our bodies, and that lived experiences unite mind and body towards a *Body-subject* (Reynolds, 2004) (I will discuss theories associated with Merleau-Ponty’s *Body-subject* in more depth in Chapter 5). However, according to Wilbur\(^\text{11}\) (2001), pedagogical approaches within conventional, mainstream education soundly acknowledge the existence of matter, body and mind within tangible results, yet the higher dimensions of soul and spirit are not revered in the same light (Wilbur, 2001).

With the focus on the acquisition of knowledge, development of cognitive skills and individual achievement (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010), empirical evidence and objectivism can corner the market on truth; claiming it is the only domain in existence (Wilbur, 2001). This is evident within the favouring of physical pursuits within OES expeditions, approving tangible evidence of results in fitness strength and endurance; while personal, subjective emotional and spiritual pursuits are admonished as less significant and less substantial (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010; Wilbur, 2001). Wilbur (2001) argues that to embrace mindfulness is to arrive more closely to spirit; and as such, is the cornerstone of wellbeing. Yet, education in the West tends to regard spirituality with a degree of suspicion; as too tenuous and too speculative, as something that cannot be grasped or conceptualised (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010; Wilbur, 2001). This is further supported by Louv (2008) who argues that the spiritual necessity of immersion in nature is a topic that receives little notice. He suggests that such absence may be due to a certain institutional nervousness, perhaps because an individual’s

\(^{11}\) Ken Wilbur (1949 - ): An American writer and public speaker, lecturing and writing on mysticism, philosophy, ecology, and developmental psychology. He is the forefather of Integral Theory (to be discussed in more depth in Chapter 5), which asserts the importance of integrating subjective, objective, inter-subjective, and inter-objective ways of knowing and being.
spiritual experience in nature is beyond hierarchical social control. Moreover, Louv (2008) suggests that some religious institutions and belief systems resist the cohesion of nature and spirit. Any sense of environmentalism, associated with nature spirituality, is regarded with suspicion as a pseudo-religion and consequently further erecting barriers between individuals (particularly children who are the mercy of adult advocacy) and nature (Greenwood, 2005).

As such, overcoming the androcentric values of wilderness within OES (Hoetzer, 2011), and the consequential cultural split between humans and nature is remedied through ontologies of pantheism (Ashley, 2007; Greenwood, 2005), where nature is revealed as a luminous existence, transparent, palpable and precious (Davis, 2010). By identifying wilderness as places and processes much grander and more enduring than our individual egos (Johnson, 2002, cited in Ashley, 2007) is recognising and appreciating the interconnectedness of humans and nature (Roszak, 2001). Further, the particular way of thinking about nature from eco-feminist dimensions, acknowledges the ‘masculine’ hegemonies causing dominant-subordinate relations (Hoetzer, 2011).

Contending that nature is a place of archetypal power that teaches and challenges (Louv, 2008), there are direct links with Jungian psychological philosophy, that see the psyche as a part of nature within the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ archetypes (Griessel & Kotze, 2009). To integrate all psyches, in the development of a state of renewed reunion with our wholeness, is to find inspiration from wilderness in seeking a greater balance with nature, with Planet Earth, and with our self (Greenwood, 2005).

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12 Carl Jung (1875-1961): A Swiss psychotherapist who devoted much of his life work to exploring Eastern and Western philosophy, alchemy, astrology and sociology. His interest in the occult saw him to be viewed as a mystic. He pioneered the Masculine and Feminine archetypes and the concept of the collective unconscious.
This recognises nature as an emanation of divinity, advocated by Jung (Greenwood, 2005; Griessel & Kotze, 2009).

Linking this with an integral education paradigm and the evolution of consciousness pedagogies, as pioneered by Ken Wilbur, Rudolph Steiner\textsuperscript{13} and Jean Gebser\textsuperscript{14} (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010) is the concept of ‘shadow work’ (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010; Griessel & Kotze, 2009; Johnson, 1991). ‘Shadow work’ promotes critical self-reflection and self-scrutiny, an important transformative praxis (as also advocated by Freire [1972]); and deems that the integration of the whole self occurs through an evolutionary embodiment of both ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ psyches (Griessel & Kotze 2009). Johnson (1991) states, ‘to own one’s shadow is to reach a holy place – an inner centre – not attainable in any other way. To fail this, is to fail one’s own sainthood and to miss the purpose of life’ (p. 17). Such an approach involves the analyses of personal projections, integrating the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ perceptions of things to promote responsibility of self (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010; Griessel & Kotze, 2009; Johnson, 1991). As Griessel and Kotze (2009) contend, embracing the ‘dark side’ of our psyche, teaches the individual to nourish themselves, and act assertively in the quest for our own truth, ushering change and transformation.

In providing a rationale for this study and justifying it within broad theoretical frameworks, I will now outline the structure of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{13} Rudolph Steiner (1861-1925): an Austrian philosopher, social reformer, architect and esotericist. He founded the spiritual movement, anthroposophy. His work involved a synthesising between science and mysticism, connecting the cognitive path of Western philosophy with the inner and spiritual needs of the human being. Steiner established Waldorf education, an independent and alternative education paradigm, advocating a spiritual philosophy.

\textsuperscript{14} Jean Gebser (1905-1973): a German philosopher, linguist and poet described structures of human consciousness.
1.5 Structure of Thesis

My thesis will be broken down into six chapters. This chapter has introduced my research topic within the broader theoretical frameworks. Chapter 2 will then locate my topic within more specific Australian OES discussion, in a review of literature. I will then explore the methodology of this study, being a narrative inquiry, in Chapter 3. This discussion will delve into the theoretical aspects of methodology and narrative inquiry, and then more precise methods of how I will conduct this study. This is to provide a framework as to how I will discuss the outcomes of the expedition, in interpreting the students’ stories. Chapter 4 will provide a link to my ePortfolio, where I have displayed my research findings, before moving onto a discussion in Chapter 5, which outlines the implications of such findings. In Chapter 6, I will then provide recommendations in light of the research findings to facilitate professional applications with Australian OES.

Chapter 1: A New Frontier: The Research Context

Chapter 1 established a need for my study, discussing the aims and objectives, and identifying my major research question and supporting research questions. I then provided a rationale for my study, discussing the overarching theoretical perspectives of the discourses of nature, indicating that ‘shallow’ environmentalism can be a result of humans consuming the natural world for recreation purposes within *adventure hegemony*. In drawing on a historical analysis, outlining the discourses of nature, I proposed that the answers to contemporary environmental challenges may reside in a spiritual solution involving deep ecology, within the context of Australian OES. As such, I discussed why merging eco-feminism and deep ecology was necessary, situating
my research within eco-feminist epistemology. I also discussed the power of meditation within earth-based spirituality, before concluding the chapter with my thesis structure.

Chapter 2: Mapping the Outdoor and Environmental Studies Landscape: A Review of Literature

In Chapter 2, I will conduct a review of literature within Australian OES, in order to set the contextual tone of my narrative inquiry. I will draw on scholarly discussions associated with the position of OES within HPE frameworks, highlighting particular adventure hegemonies and androcentric dispositions within OES. Further, I will discuss the homogenisation of environmental education in OES, drawing on post-structural philosophies to dissect such tensions in the OES discipline.

Chapter 3: Mapping the Methodology Landscape

In this chapter, I will explore my research methodology, and the chosen qualitative method of narrative inquiry. I will draw on the different paradigms in social research in order to provide a justification for narrative inquiry as the theoretical framework to direct my study. I will then discuss the method by which I will collect and categorise the student stories, drawing on ethical research considerations within this process. To provide transparency into the limitations inherent in narrative inquiry, in this chapter, I will discuss relevant tensions, and provide directives as to how these can be best overcome. To conclude this chapter, I will highlight why I chose to use an ePortfolio, as the medium to collate and represent the students’ stories within my narrative.
Chapter 4: A Storied Landscape

In this chapter, I will provide instructions, and a link to access my ePortfolio.

Chapter 5: Shaping the Landscape

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the outcomes of the students’ stories, depicted through my narrative, as illustrated in my ePortfolio. I will delve deeply into the students’ stories to elicit an understanding of the socio-cultural undercurrents informing the students’ meaning-making and learning acquisition in experiential OES, and how such macrocosmic forces can inform and influence individual approaches to nature. In providing my results model in Chapter 5, I will segue this discussion to flow neatly into Chapter 6, drawing on the importance of integrating the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’ in OES, within alternate pedagogical approaches to experiential education to include emotional and spiritual learning inquiry.

Chapter 6: New Horizons: Recommendations and Conclusion

In this chapter, I will revisit the purpose, aims and objectives of my study and identify methodological challenges, limitations and weaknesses, in an exploration of how these could have been minimised. I will then provide recommendations, from the general to the specific, for policy makers, educational institutions, and the OES community respectively. Finally, considering the outcomes of this study, I will discuss directives for further research.

1.6. Conclusion

In this chapter I have aimed to provide a justification for the uniqueness of this research to illuminate the pertinence of such study, in light of contemporary
environmental challenges (Flannery, 2005; Merchant, 2005; Orr, 2004; Roszak, 2001). Underpinned by eco-feminist perspectives, I have highlighted the barriers to deep ecology and how particular discourses of nature can work to perpetuate the human-nature divide, and ‘illusion of separation’ (Roszak, 2001). I further discussed Merleau-Ponty’s ideas relating to emotional embodiment and his philosophy of Body-subject, highlighting that it is through our bodies (within emotional and spiritual inquiry) that we engage with the world. I then explored aspects of integral education, namely ‘shadow work’, and how this promotes critical self-reflection and self-scrutiny, towards an embodied integration of the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, important for holistic wellbeing.
Chapter 2

Mapping the Outdoor and Environmental Studies Landscape:

A Review of Literature

Nature in Motion
Amongst golden shaped dunes and white-washed flows,
Stands one solitary rock in grey morning glows.
Spindly fingers of the tea-tree stripped bare,
Line stormy horizons in starkness aware.
To the roar of the ocean,
with nature in motion,
A kookaburra calls in the day.

(This photograph symbolises the contradictions in nature, also evident in humans. Strong, sturdy and resilient boulders witness the rolling, thunderous and impermanent chaos of the ocean, Riley, 2013)


2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will conceptualise my study, reflecting on the specific literature relevant to Australian OES. I will first explore the tensions within OES, examining the location of OES within the HPE domain. I will then discuss the homogenisation of environmental education (as a core component within OES), analysing the sharp political agendas enmeshed within patriarchal frameworks.

2.2 Tensions within OES

My thinking has been influenced by the culture I was immersed in during my undergraduate degree, particularly during my experience undertaking the unit, *Experiencing the Australian Landscape*, in 2007. Critical reflections of this unit’s discourse were examined by Payne and Wattchow (2008), exemplifying aspects of OES to embody competitive and consumer-driven pedagogies within *adventure hegemonies*. This is highlighted by these authors’ statement, ‘places are likely to be passed through, even when the term journey is used… [place is]…treated as a space, hollowed out of the meaning offered by the place beyond the achievement of the grade’ (Payne & Wattchow, 2008). Payne and Wattchow (2008) draw on Leopold’s\(^\text{15}\) (1987) scrutiny of sportsmanship in wilderness, using the term *trophy hunter*, as the quintessential model within recreational pursuits. They call for discovery in wilderness to embody concepts of,

*Exploration, sensuality, pausing, dwelling, elemental, imagining, suspending and embodiment…a shift [in] focus on certain activities to the locus and scope*

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\(^{15}\) Aldo Leopold (1887-1948): was at the forefront of the conservation movement and widely acknowledged as the father of wildlife conservation in America. He has been named in the National Wildlife Federation’s Conservation Hall of Fame, and received awards for his lifework, and in particular, for *‘A Sand County Almanac’* (Finch, cited in Leopold, 1987, p227; Ibrahim & Cordes, 1993).
of experience as it is shaped by nature's places, time and space and their affordances and constraints or limits (Payne & Wattchow, 2008).

Considering this quote from Payne and Wattchow (2008), I will explore the implications of OES’ position in the HPE curriculum framework, drawing on movement pedagogies as the main focus within pedagogical approaches.

2.2.1 The Location of OES within the HPE Curriculum Framework

The historical roots of western Outdoor Education (OE) stem from the 1920s when German educator, Hahn, developed a learning environment in wilderness and rescue training to promote student experiential discovery towards tenacity and compassion (Powch, 1994; Klaebe, 2005). As Klaebe (2005) states, ‘Kurt Hahn’s teaching philosophy focussed on education for the whole person’ (p. 2). The Outward Bound program emerged from this in 1942, which aimed toward preparing the British Navy for sailing the North Atlantic Ocean during World War II (Powch, 1994) through vigorous OE training. The age of industrialisation and commercialisation in the late 20th Century, saw OE’s central ethos shift to draw on the eco-pedagogy movement, which seeks to reconstruct critical pedagogy in the light of disastrous ecological conditions (Powch, 1994). As part of ethical and responsible professionalism, education inevitably entails a curriculum that evolves and transforms to align with contemporary circumstances, as Martin and McCullagh (2011) state,

Professions and the specific challenges they address in society are mutable. As new social or cultural issues emerge, groups examine them and either reject, embrace or accommodate these new imperatives (p. 68).

---

16 Kurt Hahn (1886-1974): a German educator, advocating that outdoor education was a prime means to give students the opportunity for personal leadership, and to see the results of their own actions.
In 1982, OE had a dedicated professional body, the Victorian Outdoor Education Association (VOEA), and became a separate area of study within the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). Cited in Martin and McCullagh (2011), the Victorian Institute of Secondary Education (VISE) ascertains that the content of OE in the early 1980s mirrored that of the Physical Education (PE) curriculum, except that the outdoor pursuits involved different activities. Located in natural settings, examples of the different activities included ‘rock-climbing/abseiling’, ‘hiking/bushwalking’, and ‘white-water rafting/canoeing/kayaking’, ‘cross-country skiing/snowsports’, ‘cycling’, etc. Further, the VISE state,

[Outdoor Education] was…not meant to be purely academic, [but was]…designed to develop and sustain interests and abilities in an important sector of recreation – one which may become a life-long pleasure for the individual (p. 2).

Prior to the 1990s the themes congruent to the OE and PE disciplines were closely intertwined. However through environmental movements in the light of climate change (Flannery, 2005), and the acute acknowledgement of finite natural resources (Orr, 2004), outdoor education began to assert itself with a unique identity in its own right (Martin & McCullagh, 2011).

The fundamental components within this discipline shifted from a practical recreational focus towards a more reflective education for an environmentally sustainable future. Martin (2010) states, ‘outdoor adventure activities continued as the primary vehicle by which students engaged with the outdoors, but the educational intent had shifted to a more socially critical environmental agenda’ (p. 71). This is supported in a study conducted in the mid-1970s by Dunlap and Heffernan (cited in Jackson & Burton, 1989), revealing that a stronger connection between appreciative activities and
environmental concern was evident, than between consumptive activities and environmental concern (Jackson & Burton, 1989). I have highlighted the outcomes of this study in Figure 2a below. Figure 2a illuminates the idea that the type of OES experience will either foster, or hinder, environmental ethics to various degrees (Jackson & Burton, 1989).

**Figure 2a Values, Types of Society, and Characteristics of Leisure and Recreation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Values and Attitudes</th>
<th>Type of Society</th>
<th>Characteristics of &amp; Recreation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Past and Present | Dominant Social Paradigm | Consumer Society | • Centralised  
• Facility-oriented  
• Equipment-intensive  
• Mechanised  
• Standardised  
• Consumptive  
• Explorative  
• High energy use  
• Quick thrills  
• Competition with others |
| Future | New Environmental Paradigm | Conserver Society | • Decentralised  
• Environmentally – oriented  
• Low equipment intensity  
• Non-mechanised  
• Individualistic  
• Non-consumptive  
• Non-exploitive  
• Low energy use  
• Long-term self – fulfilment  
• Competition with self |
As Figure 2a highlights, these authors call for a *New Environmental Paradigm*, characterised by environmentally-oriented leisure and recreation, which is non-exploitive and non-consumptive. It is interesting to note that this study was conducted in the late 1980s. Yet it was not until 2000, that OE strengthened its environmental ethos, when it merged with Environmental Studies in 2000, becoming Outdoor and Environmental Studies (OES) (Martin, 2010). At the 2010 Outdoor Education Australia (OEA) conference, OES claimed to,

> Provide unique opportunities to develop positive relationships with the environment, others and ourselves through the interaction with the natural world. These relationships are essential for the wellbeing and sustainability of individuals, society and our environment (p. 71).

In present day, the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA) have redeveloped the national curriculum for HPE. Within this, HPE curriculum frameworks involve the traditional scope of OES to a limited and marginalised degree (Gray & Martin, 2012; Martin, 2010; Martin & McCullagh, 2011). To the extent that OES is incorporated within the learning domain of *Physical, Personal and Social Learning*, it is ultimately governed by aims and objectives within contexts of PE, which espouses learning to be, ‘in, about and through movement’ (ACARA, 2014, p.2). According to the ACARA (2014), the following list represents the aims of the Australian national curriculum, within the HPE domain:

- Access, synthesise and evaluate information to take positive action to protect, enhance and advocate own and others’ health, wellbeing, safety and physical activity across the lifespan.
- Develop and use personal, interpersonal, behavioural, social and cognitive skills and strategies to promote a sense of personal identity, wellbeing and to build and maintain positive relationships.
• Acquire, apply and evaluate movement skills, concepts and strategies to respond confidently, competently and creatively in a variety of physical activity contexts and settings.

• Engage in and enjoy regular movement-based learning experiences, and understand and appreciate their significance to personal, social, cultural, environmental and health practices and outcomes.

• Analyse how varied and changing personal and contextual factors shape understanding of, and opportunities for, health and physical activity locally, regionally and globally

Within ACARA’s (2014) aims there is certainly evidence for curriculum goals to be associated with wellbeing in a range of contexts and environments. However, as my study will explore, this could be to the detriment of igniting spiritual curiosity as an essential component to wellbeing. This is due to the focus on physical activity at the nucleus of wellbeing, with physical activity as the dominant mode of health promotion. This point is supported by the statement within the ACARA’s (2014) curriculum document that,

The curriculum recognises the unique interrelationship between movement and health. Movement and physical activity promotes wellbeing across [the] multiple dimensions of health and provides an important medium for learning (p. 3).

Despite the complementary nature of OES and PE in that they both involve physical activity, Gray and Martin (2012), Martin (2010), and Martin and McCullagh (2011) argue that they are ultimately discrete disciplines; a distinction that should be made more apparent within Australian curriculum. Valuing physical activity as central to wellbeing marginalises the scope of OES to promote authentic relationships with wilderness via other means of learning engagement (Martin, 2010; Gray & Martin,
Drawing on the curriculum guidelines as formulated by the Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority (VCAA), prior to the introduction of the national curriculum and commencing from 2013, in Table 2.1 below, I highlight the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) of OES and PE, and the similar and dissimilar nature of each discipline.

### Table 2.1 A Comparison and Contrast of OES and PE Curricula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes &amp; Focus</th>
<th>OES</th>
<th>PE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VCAA Definitions</td>
<td>OES is a study of the ways humans interact with and relate to the natural environment. The study is directed towards enabling students to make critically informed comment on questions of environmental sustainability and to understand the importance of environmental health, particularly in local contexts.</td>
<td>VCE PE examines the biological, physiological, psychological, social and cultural influences on performance and participation in physical activity. It focuses on the interrelationship between motor learning, psychological, biomechanical, physiological and sociological factors that influence physical performances, and participation in physical activity. The study of physical activity and sedentary behaviour is significant for the understanding of health, wellbeing and performance of people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional service attributes</td>
<td>Teachers are ecologically literate and have a range of knowledge and skills needed</td>
<td>Teachers have knowledge of sports coaching, physical active lifestyles,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions of self-esteem at forefront</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated theory and practice</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing on experiential knowledge gained from performance of physical activity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing on the teaching of movement and skills (although in different contexts)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seek outcomes associated with individual and social wellbeing</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positioned in the VELS learning strand of Physical Personal and Social Learning</td>
<td>By default</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned with lifelong learning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily concerned with healthy citizens (four dimensions: functional, recreational, health related and performance related physical activity)</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responds to sociocultural challenges (eg. obesity, binge drinking, internet)</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmentally driven (ACHPER)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive by nature</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responds to sociocultural challenges (seeks a deliberate critical perspective on aspects of contemporary living. Eg. environmental ethics and peoples’ relationship with nature)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic practices (ACHPER)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily concerned with individual wellbeing</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primarily focussing on self-defined success</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide students primary experiences with nature, which they can see, feel, taste, hear and smell for themselves</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches personal assessment of risk and the management of it.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Gray & Martin, 2012; Martin, 2010; Martin & McCullagh, 2011).

Table 2.1 indicates that the PE discourse is primarily concerned with the development of health, and the OES discourse encapsulates concepts of wellbeing. The structure of AusVELS, within the new national curriculum suggests that health and wellbeing is integrated with a higher awareness, highlighted in Table 2.2 below.
Table 2.2 Content structure of AusVELS HPE domain (Foundation – Year 10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strands</th>
<th>Personal, social and community health</th>
<th>Movement and Physical Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Ideas</td>
<td>• Being healthy, safe and active</td>
<td>• Moving our body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicating and interacting</td>
<td>• Understanding movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for health and wellbeing</td>
<td>• Learning through movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contributing to healthy and active</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contexts for Learning</td>
<td>• Alcohol and drugs</td>
<td>• Active play and minor games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Food and nutrition</td>
<td>• Challenge and adventure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Health benefits of physical</td>
<td>activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>activity</td>
<td>• Fundamental movement skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mental health and wellbeing</td>
<td>• Games and sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relationships and sexuality</td>
<td>• Health-related physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Safety</td>
<td>activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Rhythmic and expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ACARA, 2014)

In support of the information in this table, which highlights that health and wellbeing are central to the HPE domain, is also evident in the below statement drawn from ACARA’s (2014) aims and objectives.

The Health and Physical Education curriculum is informed by a strengths-based approach. This affirms that all children and young people, and their communities, have particular strengths and resources that can be nurtured to improve their own and others' health, wellbeing, movement competence and participation in physical activity. The Health and Physical Education curriculum encourages positive expectations of all young people as learners and assumes that all students are able to learn, develop, and succeed. The curriculum is based on the following principles, which recognise that although young people have varying access to personal and community resources, they have the capacity to:

- be healthy, safe and active and move with competence and confidence,
• enhance their own and others’ health and wellbeing and physical activity participation,
• enrich and sustain healthy and active communities

(p. 3).

These two examples of the merging of health and wellbeing within the HPE framework is a positive step forward in acknowledging the relationship between the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and social facets of the holistic nature of wellbeing. However, it is important to question the extent that spiritual dimensions of experience within OES pedagogies are compromised, diluted and marginalised, due to monopolies of physical dimensions of learning inquiry. With such a strong emphasis on movement and physical activity to be the primary objective within the HPE discourse, and because OES is incorporated within the AusVELS HPE framework, the ethos of this discipline will be ultimately dictated by the aims of PE. This is further encapsulated by ACARA’s (2014) statement outlining the OES position within the curriculum structure,

Elements of learning in outdoor education will draw on content from across the Australian Curriculum including Health and Physical Education, Geography and Science. The primary content that will be drawn from Health and Physical Education will be in the areas of outdoor recreation and the influence of connection to place and communities on health and wellbeing (p. 13).

ACARA (2014) go on to say that, ‘the activities [in OES] are an important part of learning in the Health and Physical Education curriculum as they promote lifelong physical activity’ (p. 13). Although these statements make important references to health and wellbeing, they make no mention of reflective inquiry into self, regarding intrapersonal, first-person and subjective modes of learning. Moreover, the development
of movement competence is supremely evident, further ascertaining the central theme within the discourse to be associated with physical activity as the key factor to health and wellbeing.

Of course it can be argued that this is entirely appropriate within the PE domain where physical activity is at the forefront and central to aims and objectives. However, OES, with its traditional ethos associated with wilderness expeditions and fieldtrips is well- positioned to powerfully invoke other elements of wellbeing, namely through spiritual inquiry within pedagogical approaches (Ashley, 2007; Bowers, 2004; Gray & Martin, 2012; Gruenewald, 2004, 2008; Martin, 2010, Martin & McCullagh, 2011; McInerney, Smyth & Down, 2011).

ACARA (2014) do make mention of the promotion of positive relationships and connectedness with the natural environment, stating, ‘[recreational experiences] also contribute to health and wellbeing through direct personal experiences and connections with natural environments’ (p. 13). Yet, they then refer to outdoor activities providing, ‘a valid environment for developing movement competence and enhancing interpersonal skills (p. 13). This statement, again, eludes to the idea that through movement, and the development of interpersonal skills within direct encounters with nature, that outcomes of health and wellbeing will be attributed. Again, ACARA (2014) make no mention of reflective inquiry into self.

Merging OES and PE under the HPE domain, coupled with the fact that a large proportion of OES is currently taught by PE teachers (Gray & Martin, 2012; Martin, 2010, Martin & McCullagh, 2011), impacts on the capacity for OES to effectively harness aspects of formal spiritual inquiry within pedagogical practice. Fundamentally, as Martin and McCullagh (2011) argue,
OE[S]and PE draw on different bodies of knowledge, seek different learning outcomes and are responding to different socio-cultural challenges. While they share core beliefs in promoting wellbeing for individuals and the importance of experiential learning, they apply that learning to different end points (p. 76).

Further, Martin and McCullugh (2011) ascertain that PE trained teaching staff may not always be aware of OES’s evolution and the subsequent environmental and ekistics’ themes and ethos within the discipline. As such, the focus may become orientated towards group and personal development outcomes, as opposed to first-person, subjective and spiritual evolution goals (Martin, 2010; Martin & McCullugh, 2011; Gray & Martin 2012). This idea is also supported by Humberstone (1995) in her statement,

The marginalization of outdoor education may partly be a consequence of the paradoxical and perplexing relationship between it and physical education. Both are concerned with physical activities, but their ideological underpinnings are different (p. 153).

According to Priest (1986), the classic definition for OES is, ‘education in, about and for the outdoors’ (p. 13). To elaborate on this statement, OES occurs in natural settings in an experiential manner to explore the three dimensional relationships between self, others and the environment (Ford, 1981). Further, Ford (1981) and Priest (1986) argue that the purpose of OES is not purely sensible stewardship, but to foster independent learning, free thinking, and self-reliant problem solving. That is, a critical inquiry to learning that involves more than the physical or kinaesthetic modes of experience. As Karpiak (2010) argues, ‘the challenge with experiential learning comes not in our ability to pull back the blinds and take a look, it is in our ability to look within ourselves and engage in active and critical reflection on our own and others’
experiences’ (p. 224). That is, there becomes a critical imperative for individuals to spend time contemplating the meaning of their relationships with themselves, others, and the natural world around them.

This is reflected in Leopold’s (1987) arguments, that there is undeniably value in any experience that exercises the ethical restraints collectively called ‘sportsmanship’. Further, Louv (2008) argues, ‘it takes time – loose, unstructured dreamtime – to experience nature in a meaningful way’ (p. 117). Providing the opportunity for the relationship with self, others and the environment to grow and prosper, forges essential inter-connectedness with self and wilderness. The fundamental shift in values of wilderness requires a leap from perspectives of wilderness to be a prop for physical engagement to perspectives beyond land stewardship, harbouring connections of love and reverence (Leopold, 1987; Orr, 2004).

Examining the systemic influences on ACARA’s (2014) curriculum design can provide insight as to why pedagogical approaches within OES are implemented in the manner in which has been discussed in this section. Cultural frameworks that value wilderness as an entity to be dominated and conquered, in the pursuit of sportsmanship (Leopold, 1987; Payne & Wattchow, 2008), will be reflected within the broader OES ethos, curriculum design, and pragmatic approach (Gray & Martin, 2012; Martin, 2010; Martin & McCullagh, 2011). The following analysis will explore such socio-cultural influences, in a discussion associated with the homogenisation of environmental education within OES.

2.2.2 The Homogenisation of Environmental Education within OES Pedagogy

Payne and Wattchow (2008) state,
We are unified about the problem of our increasing displacement and replacement in the abstract world of postmodernity. The chronic abstraction of the self, social and environmental relations, mostly through sophisticated technologies…corresponds with the processes of disembodying that self, disembedding from others, replacing Nature with culture and taming the wild (Payne & Wattchow, 2008).

These authors argue for an increased means to alternative styles of reflection, including the poetic and silent. In Chapter 6, I will discuss Kolb’s\(^\text{17}\) (1984) *Experiential Learning Cycle*, within *abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation, concrete experience and reflective observation* and how this applies to a more robust, holistic learning inquiry. The importance of such reflexivity within environmental education (as apparent within the objectives OES as discussed previously), segues into the current paradox that exists within contemporary environmental education.

OES discourse emphasises the ideal of promoting eco-literate citizens. However, systemic frameworks within political agendas influence such discourse and consequently skew environmental ethics towards pre-prescribed goals and objectives (Bowers, 2004; Gruenewald, 2004/2008). As such, OES pedagogy becomes marginalised within the homogenisation of standards within national curricula (Bowers, 2004; Gruenewald, 2004/2008; McInerney et al., 2010; Vance, 2001). ‘Shallow’ environmentalism is the procuring result that strengthens the destructive thrusts on wilderness (Benton, 1996; Eder, 1996).

As previously discussed within the historical analysis of OES, environmental education emerged in the late 20th Century through an acknowledgement of the techno-industrial progression and its negative impacts on the health of human and non-human

\(^{17}\) David Kolb (1939- ): An American educational theorist whose focus was on experiential learning.
communities (Gruenewald, 2004; McInerney et al., 2010; Orr, 2004). Gruenewald (2004) states, ‘[Its purpose was to] create an environmentally literate and politically engaged citizenry in local communities worldwide’ (p. 76). Yet, appropriating Foucault’s ‘lens’ on power in knowledge discourse, current processes within institutionalised environmental education serve to legitimise, rather than challenge, educational practices. Foucault’s theories assert that it is discourse, not the things in themselves which produces knowledge (Sikes & Gale, 2006). According to Bowers (2004),

Environmental education is integrated into the dominant way of thinking about educational practices, which in turn are based on the deep cultural assumptions, ensures that the cultural roots of ecological crisis will not be addressed (p. 223).

Such cultural assumptions are steeped in Foucault’s theories coined, The Regime of Truth (Sikes & Gale, 2006), and as Sikes and Gale (2006) elaborate,

The hegemonic influence of the positivist science paradigm continues to be strong and pervasive, shaping conceptualisations and expectations of what constitutes ‘proper’, ‘valid’, ‘objective’, ‘truthful’ and worthwhile’ (p. 14).

This results in a paradox to currently exist within OES, associated with the ideal of promoting eco-literate citizens that operates in submission to the power of dominant discourses. Subsequently, OES inevitably becomes marginalised within the homogenisation of content and standards. Gruenewald (2004) states, ‘the institutionalisation [of OES] has muted its potential as a transformative educational discourse practice’ (p. 72). He argues that it is for this very reason, that here is a need for actual environmental education. Further, Foucault’s disciplinary practice, which implores the examination of institutionalisation - and resulting depolitisation and co-optation - of environmental education (Bowers, 2004; Gruenewald, 2004/2008), gives
urgency for OES to provide scope for learners to critically challenge and transcend assumptions, practices, and outcomes taken for granted in dominant culture and in conventional curriculum.

A self-managing society, one that promotes individual critical awareness of self within the interconnectedness of the broader cultural influences, is best promoted by virtues of concern, care, contemplation, empathy, love and reverence (Greenwood, 2005; Leopold 1987; Orr, 2004; Warren, 2000; Wieler, 2010). Yet, these virtues stand in contrast to an educational sector whose ontology, that is, the form and nature of reality, advocates the scientific and quantifiable, associated with objectives, outcomes, standards, high-stakes testing, competition, performance and accountability (Gidley, 2010; McInerney, Smyth, Down, 2010). The pressure of conformity to accountability within institutional expectations, in an era where curriculum is being prescribed and controlled through external processes such as the national standards with the implementation of AusVELS (2014) and high-stakes testing (McInerney et al., 2010), will work to influence pedagogical movements within OES (Gruenewald, 2004/2008). Evidence of this has been witnessed first-hand within Australian OES, where I experienced the pedagogical emphasis to be on physical pursuits that can be empirically measured.

This is reflected in Wilbur’s (2001) comments stating that less attention is paid to the more personal, felt-experience impact of educational intervention, which can be measured through self-report. Rather, educational interventions are measured by the results obtained in empirical studies, including individuals and collectives. Drawing on Leopold’s (1987) statement, ‘recreation is commonly spoken of as an economic resource’ (p. 166), these culturally derived and societally saturated mindsets, or world
views, are influenced by the geographical, social and cultural attributes of the place(s) we inhabit (McInerney et al., 2010). As Gruenewald (2004) states,

Most would agree that the purpose of environmental education is to provide people with the experience and knowledge needed to care for our environments. However, what counts as knowledge and experience, what constitutes care, and even meaning of environment can differ widely among those with diverse political and personal commitments (p. 73).

Post-structuralist philosophy ascertains that in order to peel away cultural layers, the power of human agency and individualism becomes paramount. That is, to deconstruct and overturn oppositions is to question the hierarchies imminent in knowledge acquisition and experience, and reflexively challenge and transcend assumptions, practices, and outcomes taken for granted in dominant culture. Bowers (2004), Gruenewald (2004/2008) and McInerney et al. (2011), further urge OES pedagogy to implore reflexivity in promoting individuals to turn their back on socialisation in creating their own norms within the human-nature relationship. This is both drawing on Freire’s (1972) ideas associated with conscientisation, in learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality; and, Foucault’s Regimes of Truth.

Emanating from this is Foucault’s philosophies concerning the Technologies of the Self, which according to Foucault (1988),

Permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (p. 18).

In considering certain discursive practices evident in OES, as already discussed, Foucault urges a need to disengage the current self from the domination of such
institutional systems. This is not achieved through liberating one’s self from power; this is turning inwards to one’s self, to discover the ethical dimension of freedom in order to administer one’s power in a non-dominant manner (Foucault, 1988; Markula, 2004; Zink, 2010). As cited in Markula (2004), Foucault (1998) states, ‘it is the power over self which will regulate the power over others’ (p. 307). Such regulation of power is not in the form of domination, it is a conversation of power in actively constructing the self instead of searching for it within the layers of domination (Markula, 2004). In order to critically challenge and transcend dominant discourse, Technologies of the Self is further analysed by Zink (2004) in her arguments justifying why self-reflection holds such a critical place in OES. She claims that OES students encounter pleasurable experiences through the discovery of the self, in turning to the self (Zink, 2010).

Markula (2004) further discusses the role of ethical self-care to motivate political activity and transgress particular conditions, stating, ‘only through this ethical dimension can practices of self-care become practices of freedom with the potential to change the discursive, disciplinary practices of power’ (p. 311). Conversely, uncritical forms of OES can work to sustain the hegemonic curriculum by endorsing the status quo with inequitably practices and biased structural arrangements (McInerney et al., 2010). This is further echoed in Postman’s (1995) arguments in that the very purpose of schooling is to prepare children for competent entry into the economic life of a community. Postman (1995) quotes, ‘[the] vitality of any nations’ economy rests on high standards of achievement and rigorous discipline in schools’ (p. 29). It becomes evident that schools in the name of education can be dangerous melting pots of political agendas, in that they collectively enforce the never ending struggle to provide one’s self with material sustenance. Such oppressive systems of education are evident in almost
every classroom (Postman, 1995), and, subsequently ever-present in the OES context of wilderness expeditions (Gruenewald, 2004; Howell, 1997; Humberstone, 2000; Norlock, 2011).

Disputably, such vices have nothing to do with the management of schools, but with a shared narrative of inspiration (Postman, 1995). Further, when knowledge and experience is presented as a commodity to be acquired through the doctrines of achievements, rather than journeys; outcomes, rather than processes; competitive drives within interpersonal victories, rather than intrapersonal awareness of self; and, standardisation of curriculum, where students are expected to fit the mould or be left behind; there is little room left for creativity and initiative to emerge where individuals can attest their humanness (Postman, 1995).

According to Roszak (2001), ‘we begin to see how the urban-industrial reality principle represses much that is essential to the health both of person and planet: the primitive, the organic, the feminine, the child-like, the wild’ (p. 213). Drawing on the importance of the feminine as asserted in Roszak’s (2001) statement above, eco-feminists determine the ‘anthropos’ in anthropocentric as character traits depicting domination, aggressiveness, intellectual detachment, the lust to subjugate and exploit such traits existing within the ‘masculinity’. As Roszak (2001) states, ‘eco-feminists insist that a distinction needs to be made. Androcentrism, not anthropocentrism, is the cause of our environmental problem’ (p. 237). Moreover, as Humberstone (2000) argues, ‘it cannot be assumed that the outdoor industry in all its constituents has not been touched in some way by dominant ideologies’ (p. 26).

OES not only reflects such dominant values of adventure hegemony within ‘masculine’ ideologies, but is also a site of struggle over meaning and practice. Even
though care for the environment is associated with the 'feminine', there is evidence of tension within the OES subculture reifying the 'masculine' (Humberstone, 2000).

Humberstone (2000) states, ‘the critiques of sport emphasised the significant role that sport plays in conveying and legitimating ideologies and symbols of dominant forms of 'masculinity' and emphasised or inferiorised femininity' (p. 28). Aitchison (2000) supports this by contending that, 'poststructural theory moves the critical eye from structures to cultures revealing the underpinning discourses and networks of power responsible for maintaining inequity' (p. 181). Prevailing sport cultures of 'masculinity' similarly underpin the ideologies within outdoor traditions, particularly due to OES position within the HPE curriculum framework.

2.3 Conclusion

In theory, OES is underpinned by strong alternative ideologies towards the promotion of environmental ethics and holistic wellbeing for students engaging in this discipline, but it is questionable as to whether or not this is actually pragmatically implemented. And to date, through my own personal and professional experiences within OES, I have witnessed a significant gap between this theory and practice. As such, there appears to be little evidence of actual alternate ideologies within pedagogical approaches of educational experience occurring at the grassroots level within secondary school settings. Furthermore, research by Aitchison (2000/2001/2005) suggests that, ‘cultural representations of gender power relations in leisure management have remained largely untheorised’ (p. 181). Therefore, the impetus to provide evidence for the dichotomy between what is professed within the OES professional culture, and what is actually occurring pragmatically within the school context becomes supremely pertinent.
Chapter 3

Mapping the Methodology Landscape

Capturing Meaning
To capture meaning in the dark, and moments of truth,
I’ll look through my lens to the words of youth.
Steering left, then right in a luminous light,
to bring sound to the void, and sharpness to sight.

The narratives I’ll share from the stories out there
may provoke a peaceful respect of love full of care.
For nature, she does not speak, her voice become meek.
To reconnect the connection is here what I seek.

Getting to know her secrets, and the power that she holds,
may unshackle all reason from oppressive societal moulds.
It is here, in this space that words reign supreme,
To unveil the mystery of the anthropocentric scene.

(This photograph symbolises unity, yet significant difference between us It reminds me that there is no ‘one’ truth. Riley, 2013)
3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore the research methodology of narrative inquiry. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) express narrative inquiry to be a ‘multilayered and many stranded’ form of qualitative research. As such, narrative inquiry is both the phenomena of experience (what is studied) and the method used (to conduct study) (Xu & Connelly, 2010). I will draw on the different paradigms in social research in order to provide a justification for narrative inquiry informing my theoretical framework. To provide transparency into the limitations in narrative inquiry, I will discuss eight identified tensions, within an analysis as to how these can be overcome. Discussing relevant ethical procedures of my study, I will then explore how stories will be collected and categorised, in order to convey student experiences within a five-day OES hiking expedition in coastal Victoria. To conclude, I will discuss how and why I decided to present my results in an e-Portfolio. Throughout this chapter, I will also incorporate some journal entries and some poetry, written while in the field during the OES expedition. This is to exemplify the particular tones relevant to narrative inquiry.

3.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is focussed on understanding the meaning of narratives and observations in naturally occurring situations (Jurs, 2009). Considering that ‘multiple realities are rooted in subjects’ perception’ (Jurs, 2009, p. 13), qualitative research seeks to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena according to the meanings people bring to them (Clandinin, 2007). In using qualitative research for this study, I am able to explore OES phenomena in a way that affords closeness to the students and their experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, it enables me to examine how these students exchange socio-cultural meanings in a complex world (Bold, 2000; Clandinin and
Connelly, 2000; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Guba and Lincoln, 2008). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) state, ‘qualitative research involves the studied use of and collection of a variety of empirical materials…that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals lives’ (p. 4). It is interested not in prediction and control, but understanding, characterised as concern for the individual, focussing on the meaning behind particular behaviours, in order to understand and interpret phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2007).

In the attempt to make sense of the world there are three types of reasoning: deductive, inductive and a combination of inductive/deductive. Deductive reasoning, based on Aristotelian\textsuperscript{18} philosophy, consists of ‘a sequence of formal steps of logic, from the general to the particular [in which] a valid conclusion can be deducted from a valid premise’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 6). In the 1600s Bacon proposed inductive reasoning, critical of the major premises in inductive reasoning being preconceived notions biasing the conclusions. Inductive reasoning demands empirical evidence for verification ‘by means of which the study of a number of individual cases would lead to a hypothesis and eventually to a generalisation’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 6). Within the deductive/inductive approach, combining Aristotelian deduction and Baconian induction, the researcher interacts between ‘observation to hypotheses’ and ‘hypothesis to implications’ (Cohen et al., 2007). For example, within my study, I will interact between the students’ subjective meanings relating to their OES experience, and the broader objective influences that underpin such individual meaning-making and world-views (Jurs, 2009; Neuman, 2011; White, 2011; Willis, 2008). White (2011) elaborates

\textsuperscript{18} Aristotel (384 BCE - 322 BCE): Aristotelian approaches have ancient roots in the intellectual history of man (Pawlaczek, 2005).
that within the qualitative design of interpretive paradigms (as I will discuss shortly), the method and theory is explicit.

As qualitative research can encompass all phenomena in a social world, the idea that we see the world through a particular lens has become an important dimension for doing qualitative research (Kuhn, 1970; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007).

3.3 Paradigms in Qualitative Research

In 1970, Kuhn19 presented the idea of paradigms in research, arguing that the study could be conducted through a particular lens. This meant that different theoretical or philosophical perspectives, which make up our lens, could legitimately explore the nature of social phenomena (Bird, 2000). Such world-views determine the fundamental ontological and epistemological frameworks, according to the beliefs and assumptions guiding the social researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Kraus, 2005; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Moreover, paradigms within educational research use metaphor to create knowledge about the world (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). That is, the basic orientation to theory and research and how a research problem is methodologically formulated and tackled. As Husen (cited in Keeves & Lakomski, 1999) states, ‘a paradigm determines the criteria according to which one selects and defines problems for inquiry and how one approaches them theoretically and methodologically’ (p. 31).

Within educational research the normative (scientific positivism) paradigm was the first to emerge. Husen (cited in Keeves & Lakomski, 1999) describe positivism as,

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19 Thomas Kuhn (1922 – 1996): a philosophically inclined physicist; partially rejected the Cartesian (derived from Descartes) philosophy separating mind and body, and empiricist traditions of positivism. Kuhn’s work explains the incommensurability (the idea that it is possible for people to see the world in multiple ways, with no fair way to see which is right/wrong), with idea of paradigm shifts between positivism and interpretive. Kuhn proposed that the natural and social worlds work together and knowledge acquisition is a product of assimilating both (Barnes, 1982; Bird, 2000; Conant & Haugeland, 2000).
‘the making of causal explanations and the prediction of future behaviour on the basis of the student of present behaviour’ (p. 32). This paradigm strives for the construction of laws and rules of behaviour in relation to objectivity, measurability, predictability, controllability and patterning (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). White (2011) explains meaning in the normative paradigm as, ‘implicitly derived from theory and explicitly from observation, measurement and experiment’ (p. xxi). Examples of normative research in education, includes work done by the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI). The AEDI (2013), along with other key community, state and national data sources, provides an opportunity for communities to understand what risk and protective factors are present for children in their local area, examining the ecological or environmental factors that may be influencing child development (AEDI, 2013).

Kuhn (1970) challenged the normative paradigm, in his arguments that this was not the only way of approaching research. Educational researchers have taken on this idea, and subsequently, the interpretive paradigm (as I am using in this study and will be explored in proceeding discussion) and the critical theory paradigms emerged. The interpretive paradigm explores meaningful social action, to gain an in-depth understanding of the contextual details of interactions between the subject and object (Neuman, 2011; White, 2011). Neuman (2011), describes the interpretive approach as,

The systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds (p. 62).

Critical theory within, ‘its intention [to not only] give an account of society and behaviour but to realise a society that is based on equality and democracy for all its members’ (Cohen et al., 2007), is steeped in eco-feminism. As a political metaphor, eco-
feminism aims to emancipate oppressive structures regarding the male-female; human-nature; mind-body; reason-emotion duality, in a reframing of ideas and cultural norms (Merchant, 1980; Warren, 2000). Scarrf (2008) claims, ‘eco-feminism aims to address the inequity and injustice of this dominator system’ (p. 96). Eco-feminist approaches within the critical theory paradigm is evident in a study conducted by Scarrf (2008). The main focus of her work examined single gender (female) residential camps, questioning gender biases within OES. As Scarrf (2008) does elude, her ideas are generalisable to other OES and recreation settings, namely expeditions.

Table 3.1 below, summarises the normative, interpretive and critical theory paradigms.
Table 3.1 Research Paradigms in the Study of Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Interpretive Social Science</th>
<th>Critical Social Science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Society and the social system</td>
<td>The individual</td>
<td>Societies, groups and individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium/large scale</td>
<td>Small-scale</td>
<td>Small-scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impersonal, anonymous forces regulating behaviour</td>
<td>Human actions continually recreating social life</td>
<td>Political, ideological factors, power and interests shaping behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model of natural sciences</td>
<td>Non-statistical</td>
<td>Ideology critique and action research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivity</td>
<td>Subjectivity</td>
<td>Collectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research conducted from the outside</td>
<td>Personal involvement of the researcher</td>
<td>Participant researchers, researchers and facilitators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalising from the specific</td>
<td>Interpreting the specific</td>
<td>Critiquing the specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining behaviour/seeking causes</td>
<td>Understanding actions/meanings rather than causes</td>
<td>Understanding, interrogating, critiquing, transforming actions and interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assuming the taken-for-granted</td>
<td>Investigating the taken-for-granted</td>
<td>Interrogating and critiquing the taken-for-granted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macro-concepts: society, institutions, norms, positions, roles, expectations</td>
<td>Micro-concepts: individual perspectives, personal constructs, negotiated meanings, definitions of situations</td>
<td>Macro-and micro-concepts: political and ideological interests, operations of power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structuralist</td>
<td>Phenomenologists, symbolic interactionists, ethnomethodologists</td>
<td>Critical Theorists, action researchers, practitioner researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Emancipatory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Cohen et al., 2007, p. 33).
There is a comparable difference between paradigms and the ontological, epistemological and methodological basis vary between each, as I will now discuss.

3.4 Interpretive Research: Locating My Study within Ontological, Epistemological and Methodological Considerations

The agenda for interpretive research is to identify and explore the meanings that individuals and groups create through social interaction (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Cohen et al., 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 2008). However, it is also an approach that enables researchers to challenge any cultural meanings as a process of empowerment. I will draw on an example from Humberstone (1995) to exemplify this. She conducted an ethnographic study on how students of OES created meaning about their adventure experiences as a challenge on cultural forces that had formed their stereotypical gender identities. In this study Humberstone (1995) argued that interpretive research not only identified how those meanings were created, but that they were also powerful enough to create opportunities for emancipating entrenched stereotypes. This study recognises this dimension in interpretive research and the potential for positively affecting OES pedagogical approaches in Australia.

Ontological questions ask what is the form and nature of reality and what is there that can be known about it. This relates to ‘real’ existence and ‘real’ action (Guba & Lincoln; 1994ab; Neuman, 2011). In my study this relates to holism and phenomena associated with the complex human-nature relationship. Epistemological considerations question the nature of the relationship between the knower, or would-be knower, and what can be known (Guba & Lincoln; 1994ab; Neuman, 2011). For example, if a ‘real’ reality is assumed, then the posture of the knower must be one of objective detachment in order to discover ‘how things really are’, and ‘how things really work’ (Guba &
Lincoln, 1994). In my study, I am drawing from eco-feminist perspectives that convey a unity of gender ideologies within OES pedagogical approaches. According to Stanley and Wise (1993, cited in Aitchison, 2005),

The question of epistemology...is crucial, precisely fundamental, for feminism, for it is around the constitution of a feminist epistemology that feminism can most directly and far-reaching challenge non-feminist frameworks and ways of working (p. 427).

Within the methodological considerations of my study, which questions how I go about finding out what I believe to be known (Neuman, 2011), I will use interpretive approaches within a narrative inquiry. It is important to note here that although my study is located within the interpretive paradigm of narrative inquiry, there are tensions associated with researching at the ‘borders’ between the normative and critical theory paradigms. This will be discussed in much greater depth in proceeding sections. However, it is important to note the permeability of narrative inquiry, particularly into the critical theory paradigm with perspectives steeped in emancipation intents of eco-feminism.

The position of narrative inquiry within the interpretive paradigm is justified due to this methodology not seeking to control the outcomes of the research, or discover causal laws that determine patterns of external behaviour. Rather, narrative inquiry seeks to provide insights into what research participants believe to be true through a search, re-search, and a sense of continual reformulation of an inquiry (Burns, 2004; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Polkinghorne (cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), describes two forms of narrative inquiry, descriptive narrative and explanatory narrative. Descriptive narrative aims to, ‘produce an accurate description of the interpretive narrative accounts individuals or groups use to make sequences of events in
their lives or organisations meaningful’ (Polkinghorne, cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 16). Explanatory narrative aims to, ‘account for the connection between events in a causal sense and to provide the necessary narrative accounts that supply the connections’ (Polkinghorne, cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 16). This entails an ethnographic approach to research.

3.5 Ethnography within Explanatory Narratives

My study involves an exploration of socio-cultural influences, which work to inform OES institutional frameworks, which further filter through to micro-level wilderness encounters. Therefore, my research draws on ethnographic approaches within an explanatory narrative. According to Jurs (2009), ‘an ethnography is an in-depth, analytical description of a specific cultural situation, in the broad meaning of culture’ (p. 17). I am focussing on the cultural, historical and political context in which particular stories are told by the students in the OES context. As I will discuss in more depth in proceeding sections, I will observe student experiences of hiking and meditation, to garner an understanding of how they experience and interpret OES pedagogical approaches. Beach (2005, cited in Willis 2008), contends that ethnography is important to education because it is important to know,

How understandings are formed in instruction, how meanings are negotiated in classrooms, how roles and relationships are developed and maintained over time in schools, and how education policy is formulated and implemented (p. 20

To observe, describe and make qualitative judgements and interpretations of the students’ experiences (Jurs, 2009), I will incorporate eco-feminist approaches as a political metaphor. In the following discussion, I will highlight the emancipatory power
of narrative inquiry, within my intents to expand and transform OES pedagogical approaches.

3.6 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry, steeped in Dewey’s emphasis on lived experience, is stories lived and told, the study of experience as a story (Hamilton, Smith & Worthington 2008). According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative inquiry is,

A way of understanding experience; it is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An enquirer enters this matrix in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of experiences that make up peoples’ lives, both individual and social (p. 20).

Narrative inquirers study an individual’s experience in the world and, through the study, seek ways of enriching and transforming that experience for themselves and others (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry’s distinctive features lie within the conceptual framework, which proposes the commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Hamilton et al., 2008). As such, the questions posed within my research can be considered as a puzzle set within the dynamic, temporal, and contextual realm of a social and cultural milieu.

Post-modern philosophy asserts that, ‘knowledge cannot be an accurate account of Truth because meanings cannot be fixed; there is no independent reality; there are no facts, only interpretations’ (Hatch, 2006, p. 14). Within multiple realities, each individual’s worldview is derived from their own beliefs, values and attitudes.

Therefore, my narrative inquiry will seek to interpret how individuals experience OES

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20 John Dewey (1859-1952): An American educational philosopher, whose pedagogical ideas purported the philosophy of education to be based on the philosophy of experience within transformative education (Ghiloni, 2012).
wilderness expeditions. Further considering the contextual affordances of this expedition within dynamic, shifting, and temporal interactions between students and nature, I seek to interpret why these particular experiences prevail.

Narrative inquiry, as an exploration of the phenomena of experience, begins with experience as lived and told in stories (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Neuman states, narrative inquiry is, ‘an interpretive analysis of a social setting…[it] has internal coherence and is rooted in the text, which refers to the meaningful everyday experiences of the people being studied’ (p. 64). Clandinin and Connelly (1990) regard narrative inquiry as, ‘a way of thinking in which an inquiry is not clearly governed by theories, methodological tactics, and strategies’ (p. 121). I have chosen this particular methodology due to its power to expose symbolic representations of nature (Clough, 2002; Eder, 1996).

As such, through a hermeneutic reconstruction of the student stories as reminiscent of their OES experiences in wilderness, I can elicit a raw and uninhibited analysis which can reflect and reveal contradictions within micro-level and macro-level milieus (Clough, 2002). Further, due to the fictional and anonymous elements of storytelling, and an importing of relevant artefacts to create an engaging story, narrative inquiry has the capacity to speak to the heart of social consciousness (Clough, 2002). Moreover, this can work to engage emotional and moral reasoning (Eder, 1996). As cited in Sikes and Gale (2006), Denzin argues, ‘the study of narrative forces the social sciences to develop new theories, new methods and new ways of talking about self and society’ (p. 6).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe the ‘central justification’ of narrative inquiry as to the extent that it will elicit insights that work to change thinking and...
associated behaviours, through innovative modes of representation (Atkinson 2010). Atkinson (2010) states, ‘these disruptions [to the status-quo of traditional representations]…enact narrative inquiry’s transformative and interrogative purposes as they direct attention to the particulars of lived experience in unexpected ways’ (p. 92).

Assisting learners to think beyond the prescribed forms of reality (Hamilton, Smith & Worthington, 2008), narrative inquiry can subtly transpose the political agenda of institutional frameworks that may restrict or cordon deep and meaningful experiences. As stories, lived and told by individuals, are a direct product of the social confluence evident within the context of inquiry, through praxis, this study has the potential to reveal subjective and objective realities in order to generate new relations that then become part of future pedagogical approaches within OES (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006).

Narrative inquiry has potential for a real engagement of values to reveal radical, moral and political phenomena (Clough, 2002). Therefore, I have suitably chosen this methodology in its capacity to discern the particular alignment and relationship between cultural factors, institutional factors (curriculum frameworks, policies and guidelines influencing pedagogical practices), and, an individual’s experience in wilderness. However, it is important to acknowledge inherent limitations that exist within narrative inquiry, which can impede on the trustworthiness of accounts.

### 3.7 Tensions within Narrative Inquiry

To sharpen and strengthen my approaches to the methodology for this research, it was critical that I acutely acknowledged limitations with narrative inquiry. As Hamilton et al. (2008) state, ‘if methodology lacks transparency, then the value of the work can be questioned’ (p. 23). In the following discussion, I will systematically
examine the anticipated challenges; broken down into each isolated tension within narrative inquiry.

3.7.1 The first identified tension: Action

Action can be seen as a narrative sign, requiring interpretation of that sign before meaning can be attached to it (Bold, 2012; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clough, 2000).

In order to understand a particular action or behaviour, a narrative meaning has to be applied considering that one event is the cause for another (Bold, 2012). This is an interpretive mapping between the action or behaviour and the historical context of the whole situation regarding the individual (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is an understanding of actions with reference to past actions, and future potential actions, situated temporally and contextually (Bold, 2012). Within the semi-structured interviews with the students, I have consciously and deliberately designed my questions to draw on past memories as to why, and how, particular values regarding environmental conservation and sense of personal identity have, or have not, emerged (please note that action as a tension within narrative inquiry links with aspects of temporality, which I will elaborate on in further discussion).

3.7.2 The second identified tension: Certainty

Interpretations of events can always be otherwise. As such, there is a sense of tentativeness, usually expressed as a kind of uncertainty about an event’s meaning (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Cited in Bold (2012), Polkinghorne (1988) suggests that, ‘narrative is always tentative and cannot provide certainties’ (p. 17). Considering that my narrative aims to be a co-construction within the relationship between myself and the student, is to appreciate that our individual and unique values and subjectivities will interact in
complex ways due to the different interpretations that are possible (Bold, 2012; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Thus, it can be expected that ‘knowledge’ will emerge to be tentative, variable and blurred (Kearns, 2012). Echoing Guba and Lincoln (2005), Kearns (2012) recommends that,

The best possible route to this ‘knowledge’ is developed through a genuine search for the ‘voice’ of the research participants as expressed within the unique time and place and relational context of the encounter (p. 27).

This is not about ascertaining the ‘truth’ from students, but fragments of their reality towards a holistic understanding and interpretation.

When considering tensions associated with action and temporalities in narrative inquiry, it is important to acknowledge that it is not always possible to establish clear cause and effect relationships in the correlation of two events (Bold, 2012). Therefore, it is important that I recognise the limitations regarding definitive answers. Bold (2012) argues that seeking for definitive answers is perhaps a rather utopian ideal, and it is in this uncertain framework, that it’s important to accept different and varied interpretations of phenomena in order to provide a patchwork representation of ‘truth’.

3.7.3 The third identified tension: Change

As our personal, professional and researcher identities change, so does our data interpretation and our perception of how ‘honest’ we have been in the research process. From here, it is possible to begin to explore how participants’ stories overlap and interlock and examine the ways in which such accounts relate to the overarching issue under study (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007, p. 466).

Acknowledging that we are always at a point of personal change, narrative inquiry needs to be conducted in terms of process, rather than expecting a definitive outcome within definitive conclusions (Bold, 2012). Bold (2012) contends that at any
point in time, people are in the process of personal change, and from an educational point of view, it is important to locate the people within the changes. As such, I have identified the power of critical self-reflection, promoted through meditation practices (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Plotkin, 2008) and reflexivity (Zink, 2004/2010). Critical self-reflection can lead to a greater and more robust understanding of the reasons for change (Bold, 2012), as it lends towards the construction of a larger picture, which includes the whole.

According to Shacklock and Smyth (1998), it is to ‘understand the processes of change in which both parts and whole are involved’ (p. 2). Analysing reflexivity is to further acknowledge that there are no privileged views at getting to the truth due to situated social realities (Shacklock & Smyth, 1998). Shacklock and Smyth (1998) describe criticality as, ‘cutting through surface appearances by locating the issues being investigated in their historical and structural contexts’ (p. 2). These authors further elaborate stating, ‘self-reflection on the constraining conditions is the key to the empowerment ‘capacities’ of research and the fulfilment of its agenda’ (p. 2).

In considering processes of change throughout the OES expedition, and keeping within the context of an eco-feminist framework, I will bring attention to the ‘feminine’ and the ‘masculine’, highlighting the lack of ‘feminine’ voice in OES. Acknowledging the importance of context in narrative inquiry, is keeping my research questions at the forefront during this study.

3.7.4 The fourth identified tension: Context

*Context is ever present, involving the temporal, spatial and personal and social dimensions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).*
Different contexts will determine how a story unfolds (Bold, 2012). That is, the same story will be told in a different way depending on the constituents of context, termed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), as the *commonplaces* of narrative inquiry. These *commonplaces* include the metaphoric combination of three-dimensions, namely:

- Personal and social aspects (within the interaction dimension)
- Place aspects (within the situational dimension)
- Past, present and future aspects (within the continuity dimension)  
  (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

As Murphy, Ross and Huber (2012) state, ‘who we are and who we are temporally becoming is also shaped through social and place interactions’ (p. 58). For the reasons of *context* influencing the student stories, I recognise that students will not necessarily ‘perform’ in an expected way, and that their interpretations of experience will be based on contextual platforms occurring within the story collection process (Bold, 2012). Therefore, I need to pay very close attention to the contextual affordances during this OES expedition. This is considering the particular dynamics of the group and how they respond to ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ archetypes. Second, I need to pay attention to the particular environments that we pass through (coastal and/or forest). And thirdly, I need to consider how the students’ thinking and experiences have been coloured and shaped through time, as we move through the environment over the 5-days. Regarding the third aspect within the continuity dimension, I will now elaborate on the tension relating to *temporality* in narrative inquiry.

3.7.5 The fifth identified tension: Locating things in time

*When we see an event we think of it not as a thing happening at that moment but as an expression of something happening over time* (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).
To draw on an individual’s experience conveyed through story, it is my challenge as the narrative inquirer to acknowledge these stories as a derivative from past experiences that have laid the foundation to a sense of self at the present time (Murphy et al., 2012). Although the story expressed is occurring in present time, life happens over time. As such, the story is a culmination of experiences and thought processes that have occurred leading up to the present moment. Murphy et al. (2012) state, ‘given that we continue to inquire into these stories from our past and the way they live in our bodies, highlights our continued need for interaction with them’ (p. 68). These authors also quote Clandinin and Connelly (1988) in their writing associated with processes of temporality,

What we know, really, who we are, is the sum of our experiences and the meaning we made, make, and are remaking of them. In this way then, our biographical histories, our pasts, shape our presents, and together they move us into our futures (p. 66).

I aim to overcome the challenges of temporality in this study in acknowledging that life is always in the making. In the process of bringing forward past experiences that shape imagined futures, I must attend to the evolving contexts of place and social context, and elements of temporal dimensions that influence the story within the longer-term historical narrative (Murphy et al., 2012). This is further acknowledging that, regardless of what each student brings to the journey in terms of previous experiences in wilderness, I must account for this and not decontextualise their experiences, but situate them within the lives of students (Brown, 2009, cited in Ord and Leather, 2011; Seaman, 2008). Further, it is appreciating that past wilderness encounters will have a direct bearing on the quality of present encounters (Dewey, 1938; Ord and Leather,
Just as my experience while snowboarding in the Sierras positively changed my relationship with nature, it was through this past interaction with this world that still colours and shapes present encounters in wilderness. In reflecting on my current experience in the nature, my story is reconceptualised, threaded from past memories. And, it inevitably encapsulates the entire patchwork of my embodied experiences.

It is for these reasons that I will design my interview questions to elicit a story that relates to the students’ past experience in wilderness, in identifying specific values of the natural world and where these originate from. I aim to promote a sense of storytelling freedom which facilitates the insight into evolving beliefs, values and attitudes within reflections of culminating experiences. Within the temporal dimension, reconceptualisation is at the heart of narrative inquiry. Dewey (1938) notes, ‘the concept of education is a constant reorganising or reconstructing of experience’ (Ord & Leather, 2011, p. 18).

3.7.6 The sixth identified tension: Losing objectivity

There is the risk of losing objectivity in becoming too close to subjects (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Creating close, trusting relationships with students during the expedition has potential to blur the objective positioning of their stories conveyed, through a tendency to privilege the voice of the student in a silencing of my own analytic voice (Kearns, 2012). However, I identify that such relationships are inevitable in the context of OES experiential education, as particular studies have previously demonstrated. O’Connell and Cuthbertson (2009, cited in Zink, 2010) draw on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to exemplify the importance of belonging to groups, within the desire to create trusting, close relationships with other members in the group. In another study done by Cramp
(2008), this author highlights the work of Mand (1967), in his statement, ‘teachers become more human at camp and there is a chance for pupil and teacher to view each other under new conditions and a chance for teachers to take another look at children their goals and motivations without the restriction of the classroom’ (p. 174).

At the forefront of this, is wrestling with the balance of the authentic ‘voice’ of the student, without compromising my own authentic ‘voice’. Kearns (2012) warns of a superficiality that could potentially emerge as a result of the student voice taking precedence in my analysis. Conversely, there is risk in ‘smoothing’ the student ‘voice’ into overly coherent conclusions (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, cited in Kearns, 2012), aligning them with my own narrative themes already emerging. I aim to grapple with this tension in my study by maintaining the story-dialogue methods (drawing directly on the dialogue from the conversational interviews with the students), as appropriated by Clough (2002), and suggested by Bold (2012). This is to maintain a genuine and authentic quality to my narrative. However, as Clough (2002) argues, we do not, ‘come innocent to a research task, or a situation of events; rather we situate these events not merely in the institutional meanings which our profession provides, but also constitute them as an expression of ourselves’ (p. 17). I will now explore how my own lenses, and worldviews, can obscure the trustworthiness of this study.

3.7.7 The seventh identified tension: Personal lenses obscuring trustworthiness of the research stories

Kat’s Journal Entry: 3.15pm, 18th November, 2013

Packs- Off Break: Under the shade of a Eucalypt

I’ve just had a stern conversation with James. I asked him why he was throwing stones at seagulls. I reasoned with him that I get he is mucking around and burning off some adolescent energy, but it is a very poor example of caring for nature. He didn’t say
much in return. I start worrying about my role on this trip. I felt I needed to sit back in order to garner true representations from these students, but such blatant abuse of nature enrages me. I grow frustrated that the way I feel about the natural world is not necessarily shared by those around me. I don’t want to put too much of my own perceptions and ideas on these students. I just have to honour their truth, their own individual worldviews...it’s the only way I can initiate change and transformation...is to start from the truth. BUT WHOSE TRUTH?...!!!

The process of narrative inquiry firstly involves me, as the researcher, to construct meaning from the students’ story. In the next step, this process is re-enacted as I assume the role of the narrator in a re-telling of the students’ story in the context of prescribed phenomena (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). In this process, there is an inherent tension between the experiences conveyed by the students and the meaning I will interpret (Bold, 2012; Clough, 2002; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). According to Wilbur (2001),

Approaching a culture from the inside means dialoguing with a culture you belong to, approaching its meaning as a participant in their negotiation; it is about making interpretations as a member of shared community of interpretation (p. 16).

This is supremely prevalent in my study, particularly as I am angling my own narratives of experience from critical pedagogies, within sharp political and social convictions of eco-feminism, which work to shape the narrative inquiry plotlines (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) elaborate on this turning inward, watching outward scenario, stating,

The tension within narrative inquiry lies within the notion that all have their own interpretation of events and each is equally valid. Taken to this point, narrative inquiry loses its narrative quality because the tension between experience and
the meaning we make is lost. A disconnected sense of meaning replaces grounded narrative meaning (p. 85).

To overcome such narrative biases, Bold (2012) suggests that the researcher should pay attention to the dialogue being used, as it could influence the stories being told. As such, it is important that I am self-aware and reflexive. I aim to bring into consciousness hidden social forces and structures (Scotland, 2012; Shacklock and Smyth, 1998) that influence student experiences in OES, revealing new understanding derived from thickly described phenomena. It is my endeavour to yield insight and understandings of behaviour, explain the actions from the students’ perspective and to not dominate the students’ experience and interpretations of their experiences. I aim to engage with the issue of ownership of interpretation, so that there is a sense in what I am narrating is shared truths and values. In order to achieve this, strong and trusting collegial relationships will be sought with the students, aiming to minimalise any perceived ‘power relations’. Further, my research agenda and value-system will be made explicit from the outset of the expedition, to cultivate a more balanced, comprehensive and robust discussion, grasping phenomena in a holistic way (Savin-Baden and Van Niekerk, 2007).

To facilitate reflexivity, Savin-Baden and Van Niekerk (2007) suggest focussing on the individual in context in writing a personal summary of each student articulating their personal story. However, as Polkinghorne (1995, cited in Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007) argues, ‘narrative creates its meaning by noting the contributions that actions and events make to a particular outcome and then configures these parts into a whole episode’ (p. 461). I have previously explored this in discussion associated with contextual affordances with narrative inquiry.
3.7.8 The eighth identified tension: Working at the paradigmatic borders

Locating narrative inquiry is working at the borders of normative, interpretive and critical theory approaches (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state, ‘learning to think narratively at the boundaries, between narrative and other forms of inquiry is, perhaps, the single most important feature of narrative thinking’ (p. 25). Considering the identified tensions of narrative inquiry, the evidence of this methodology as, ‘a fluid, rather than stable form of inquiry’ (Craig, 2010, p. 123) becomes imminent. The narrative inquirer is positioned within the ‘human parade’, presenting narratives that are storied and re-storied due to intervening time and unfolding experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Therefore, narrative inquiry is at the mercy of other paradigmatic intellectual territories and ways of thinking (Bold, 2012, Clough, 2002; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), locating narrative inquiry within a research paradigm is a problematic task. This is chiefly due to the polarisation of a science of education, housed within the normative paradigm of observational and numerical representation of behaviour (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010; Wilbur, 2001). This led to an unquestioned way of viewing the world through the concept of a grand narrative within the normative paradigm, which is a construction of a universal set of educational objectives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Challenges therefore exist within the sociological and political analysis, as aspects of the normative paradigm, derived from the grand narrative herald formalism within objective rationalisation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) contend, ‘no matter what any particular person happens to believe [as
conveyed through story], there is a correct and true view of the world’ (p. 36), which will inevitably influence individual meaning-making and knowledge acquisition.

Looking through the normative lens of grand narrative is depolarising individual subjectivity relating to truth and meaning, in also acknowledging the existing power relations involved, drawing on particular tenets within the critical theory paradigm (Kearns, 2012). Where the normative paradigm begins from a theory base and moves outwards, narrative inquiry, in its traditional sense, begins first with experience as lived and told in stories (Bold, 2012; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; White, 2011). Therefore, it is essential to note that the student stories within this study will work to inform the theoretical base of my study. Foley (1998) discusses the dilemmas associated with this, highlighting,

[The] foregrounding of people, characters, and events over theoretical commentary... makes displaying one’s mastery of academic discourses, hence one’s cultural capital, secondary (p. 114).

Conversely, Foley (1998) argues that it is important to,

Speak from a subject position that makes situated, partial knowledge claims rather than grand universalistic knowledge claims. Conveying such a subject position helps disrupt the omniscient observer of scientific realist narratives (p. 114).

As I do have emancipatory intents within this study, my research is not carried out for students but with them (Alcoff, 1995; Scotland, 2012). Therefore, I aim to follow suggestions from Kearns (2012) in, ‘creat[ing] a protective yet empowering ‘space’ for the research dialogues in order to seek authenticity of voice, and to work through an empathic relationship without crossing the boundaries into a therapeutic one’.
Echoing this, Murphy et al. (2012) quote Dewey (1938, cited in Murphy et al., 2012) stating,

The regulative ideal for inquiry is not to generate an exclusively faithful representation of a reality independent of the knower. The regulative ideal for inquiry is to generate a new relation between a human being and his/her environment – his/her life, community, world – one that ‘makes possible a new way of dealing with them, and thus eventually creates a new kind of experienced objects, not more real than those which proceeded but more significant, and less overwhelming and oppressive’ (p. 65).

This is appreciating that establishing the meta-narrative within the shared space between the student and myself, is not my sole responsibility as the researcher, but a joint construction (Bold, 2012). This is to ascertain a rigorous methodological approach to analysis within the story re-telling.

However, given my position as an OES teacher and leader in the field, given the power differentials that naturally occur between teacher and student, it can be assumed that an equal dialogue will be virtually impossible (Scotland, 2012). Although my analysis involved the thematic interpretation of stories, it is my explicit eco-feminist framework towards deep ecology for holistic wellbeing and environmental integrity, which will rigorously inform, shape and colour these interpretations.

In exploring the broader ontological, epistemological and methodological foundations of my study, I will now discuss the specific methods I employed to collect the students’ stories.
3.8 Method: Negotiating Entry into the Field

3.8.1 Ethical Considerations

White (2011) states, ‘ethics is a broad issue in research for it incorporates both values and morals’ (p. 87). Cohen et al. (2007) also assert that there needs to be a careful balance between the demands in the pursuit of truth, and the research participants’ rights and values. According to Josselson (2007, cited in Bold, 2012), ‘narrative research engages people and places in relationships in which the researcher has the ethical duty to protect the privacy and dignity of other participants’ (p. 55). Particularly considering that qualitative research, more specifically narrative inquiry, involves small-scale research numbers within a deep, intensive, context specific inquiry; it is critical that I carefully consider ethical aspects, keeping these at the forefront of the story collection process at all times (Bold 2012). As such, it is essential to acknowledge how my independent and individual values will influence the storied responses from the students. That is, I must ascertain whose voice will be heard, and the particular roles, relationships and sensitivities apparent within the teacher-student relationships of OES fieldtrips (Bold 2012). Essential items that I have needed to consider within ethical research include, informed consent for students to participate, and aspects relating to privacy, confidentiality and data storage.

3.8.1.1 Informed Consent

In order for my research participants to make an informed decision about participating in this project, it is imperative that they are granted all the facts relating to participation. According to Cohen et al. (2007), this involves:
• **Competence:** implies that individuals participating had full capacity to make a responsible, mature and correct decision if all of the facts involved in the research are divulged. As my research involves participants under the age of 18 (considering the focus of my research project is associated with secondary school OES pedagogy), then parents/guardians were requested to competently make the decision allowing their child to participate.

• **Voluntarism:** implies that participants are free to choose whether they wish to participate in the research project. At any time that the students, parents or school felt uncomfortable taking part in my research, they could withdraw without any prejudice. A *Withdrawal from Research* form was disseminated to the students, parents and school personnel involved in the project at the commencement of data collection (a copy of this is included in Appendix C of this thesis).

• **Full information:** implies that research participants are informed fully before consenting to take part. The dissemination and return of *Plain Language Statements* and consent forms prior to the commencement of collecting research data was made (copies of these are included in Appendix C of this thesis).

• **Comprehension:** implies that participants fully comprehend and understand the nature of the research project.

‘The principle of informed consent arises from the subject’s right to freedom and self-determination’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 52), and therefore, is critical to ethical adherence within my research project. Throughout the duration of the project, it was also important that I considered participant privacy and confidentiality, which I will now discuss.
3.8.1.2 Privacy, Confidentiality and Data Storage

According to Diener and Crandall (1978, cited in Cohen et al., 2007), three different perspectives need to be considered, including, the sensitivity of the information being given, the setting being observed, and dissemination of information. My intentions were made clear and explicit to the research participants from the onset. Further, participant anonymity and confidentiality was thoroughly maintained at all times, relating to the non-identifiable nature of participation, and the coding of identities within the results collation. As such, no names are used within this thesis, or story collection processes while out in the field.

In addition, permission to record any dialogues within the interview process was sought, and participants who chose to decline were respected. Finally, participants were assured that only myself, as the researcher, will have access to the data associated with transcripts, notes and recordings relevant to the study. They were further assured that this would be locked via password encrypted software, held securely on university premises, and destroyed at the completion of this study.

3.8.2 Collecting the Student Stories

Through past professional experiences teaching OES, I had industry contacts with a secondary school located in the outer north-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Direct email and phone contact was made with this school to set up a collaborative partnership for my study (please refer to Appendix D for a copy of this correspondence). As there are different academic outcomes, designs and implementation procedures of the curriculum standards and frameworks for OES within the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) framework; in order to maintain consistency with the examination of
ACARA’s (2014) AusVELS structure of the HPE content from foundation to year-10, it is with a year-10 cohort that my research is focussed on.

I worked with three students, as indicative of small-scale research numbers appropriating a rigorous, in depth analysis within narrative inquiry. Participants were selected randomly, based on those who obtained parental consent. It is important to note here, that despite my study examining feminist epistemology, it is not gender specific, in that arguments for deep ecology apply to both males and females. To collect the student stories, I attended a mandated year-10 OES expedition in November, 2013. The parametres of this fieldtrip included:

- A five-day, four- night hiking expedition.
- The route was approximately twelve to fifteen kilometres per- day, around a series of undulating headlands that entailed moderate to steep ascents and descents.
- This OES fieldtrip was designed for a self-sufficient hiking experience, in that all equipment and food was carried in and out of the national park.
- The expedition included four female students, three male students, an OE leader, a teacher from the school, and me.
- I focussed the story collection on three students, Meg, James and Ricky.
- I commenced collecting the narratives from the beginning of the expedition, through the writing of my own field notes (journaling) from observations and casual, informal conversations held with each of the students on a regular, ongoing basis.
- The content of the conversations related to the students’ current perceptions of nature, exploring how they valued the natural world, their thoughts on meditation and hiking, and their ideas associated with the ‘feminine’ and the ‘masculine’ while experiencing an OES fieldtrip.
- Every evening, I conducted a guided meditation for approximately 20-minutes. The entire group was invited to participate in this process. However, my observations and field notes pertained only to Meg, James and Ricky. The process of this guided meditation was as follows:

\[21\] Pseudonyms; names changed for confidentiality and anonymity.
Participants were asked to close their eyes and pay close attention to their breath, mindfully following inhalations and exhalations as they breathe in and out (2-3 minutes).

Participants were then invited to pay close attention to any sensations and/or feelings within the physical body through a mindful scanning of the body from head to toe (8-10 minutes).

Participants were then invited to pay close attention to any arising thoughts (2-3 minutes).

Participants were then invited to pay close attention to the sounds and smells of the surrounding natural environment (3-4 minutes).

- For the next 10 minutes after completing the meditation practice, all students were asked to write their reflections of this experience in a journal that I had provided them with.

- On the fourth night, and on the fifth morning of the fieldtrip, I conducted formal semi-structured interviews with each of my research students (Meg, Ricky and James) independently.

- The interviews took a little over one-hour in length, and within this process I designed a set of questions to guide the interviews in a manner that would elicit storied experiences of their meditation practice, and hiking experiences, within this OES fieldtrip (please refer to Appendix E for the sample list of interview questions).

- I recorded the content from these interviews on a voice-recording device and took my own notes during the conversation.

    In order to facilitate a story-telling freedom (Clough, 2002), and narrative-like responses within the semi-structured interview (Bold, 2012), it was important that I posed my questions in an open-ended manner. Further, I posed my questions with how, and used words such as describe to encourage individual expression and reflections of their authentic experience. Bold (2012) asserts,

    The semi-structured interview provides the flexibility to detour from the planned course of action and follow a line of interest, while at the same time keeping the
original focus and purpose of the research in mind; it therefore allows for new insights to emerge (p. 100).

I will now introduce the students.

3.8.3 Meet the Students

OUT HERE,
the fields became wider,
more sparse like, a vast array of rolling deep green.
From the suburbs to the edge, and everything else in between.
The bus ambled on, along lonely and empty highways of tree lined lanes.
As I meet with new friends, and the thousand characters behind their names.
Small words were exchanged, with the student’s in frame, silence had filled the gaps.
I come with a story, meeting new truth; bridging the distance between nature and youth.
Surging, rolling, the anxieties ran deep. I’m a stranger in focus, what secrets I keep.
Looking upon me with a guarded suspicion, they’re not quite sure about me,
Holding back on their words, our conversations somehow light and unfree.
Yet, in between the dunes and sea, new landscapes they appeared,
Calling in verity, witnessing the interior space once feared.
Connections made, frayed and rediscovered in time,
In the threading of joy within nature divine.
In this moment, for a moment,
It seems she’ll never,
look the same..
again.

The above poem describes the meeting with the students on departure from the school, heading out into the field during a three-hour bus journey. The words and structure reflect a crescendo of what it meant to be a stranger amongst a cohort of year-10 students, who regarded me with creeping suspicion. It softens in the final prose,
illuminating the power of nature to connect people together, and how she works to invite people to view the world through a different lens.

At the time of this experience, all students on this expedition were finishing year-10 and were moving into the VCE in the next academic year. All students were sixteen-years of age and lived in semi-rural and rural locations in a semi-mountainous environment in the outer north-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Meg and Ricky both lived on a regular house block, and James grew up (and still resided) on a farm in a more remote location. All students claimed to have consistent and close contact with the natural world, and experienced various forms of adventure recreation regularly, namely hiking, mountain biking, quad-biking, and river swimming. Further, all students claimed (and appeared) to be physically fit and active, regularly enjoying physical activity and sporting pursuits. Meg played netball on a weekly basis, enjoyed jogging through the countryside, and practiced yoga. James and Ricky both played junior Australian Rules football on the weekend for their local club, which also involved two training sessions per week. Ricky also played basketball once a week.

In getting to know the students over the course of the five-day expedition, it became evident that Meg was a clear leader of the group, and she was particularly articulate, sharing some deep conversation with me throughout the interview process. Her journal entries were also profoundly insightful, demonstrating traits of a conscientious and diligent student who was curious to learn and develop her knowledge through active reflection and inquiry. Meg sought out a lot of time with me, and I noticed her make efforts to engage me in conversations with her and the other girls participating in the fieldtrip. Further, she was intrigued with my research ideas, and asked me many questions regarding this.
James and *Ricky* were less articulate in conversation and appeared scattered, uninterested and unengaged during the interviews. They opened up more through casual, informal conversation. However, both of these boys did not disclose much of their feelings or insights without significant prompting from me. I felt both of the boys to be sceptical of my role on this trip, as I was not a direct leader, but still as an adult (and a teacher) there was a sense of authority that they appeared to dubious of. Further, the boys were less responsive, communicative and conversational with the group leaders (including myself).

Within the group dynamics, there was a significant separation between the four girls and three boys. The manner in which the boys isolated themselves in a sub-group, fooling around, and making jokes together clearly annoyed the girls, who would often remark that they wished the group could be more integrated. As the week progressed, some integration began to occur, yet for the most part there was a distinct division between the boys and girls.

On arrival to our destination, I asked the students to provide one word, or a small statement, to define their current feelings; and one word, or a small statement, to define their current perceptions of OES expeditions. Figure 3a below, indicates the student responses.
The stories of Meg, Ricky and James will be conveyed and discussed in more depth in Chapter 4 and 5. However, I point to the words and phrases coined by Meg, particularly in comparison to those used by Ricky and James. Meg was forthcoming in her feelings of nervousness and saw this expedition as an opportunity to explore her own self on a deeper level. Ricky and James both saw this expedition as an opportunity to have fun and be stressed-free and relaxed, which I would consider are more superficial intents of engagement with nature. In order to represent the students’ stories within my narrative, I will first explore the qualitative analysis process that I will employ within this study.

3.9 The Qualitative Analysis of Narrative Inquiry

According to Bold (2012), ‘the purpose of analysis in qualitative research is to enquire deeply into the meaning of different situations and different peoples’ understandings of the world’ (p. 120). As such, Bochner (2001, cited in Bold, 2012), suggests that in order to merge my lived experience with that of the student, that I engage in open dialogue with the storyteller (student), eliciting a co-constructed story,
which is derived from my own analytical voice and the experiences narrated by the students. Figure 3b below summarises the analysis process I will employ in this narrative inquiry, before discussing these aspects in more depth.

**Figure 3b The Qualitative Analysis Process**

(Adapted from Bold, 2012).

As Figure 3b highlights, I will employ a *Thematic Experience Analysis* to explore the relationship between people and the context in which the inquiry is present (Bold, 2012); specifically, between *Meg*, *Ricky* and *James* and the natural world that they negotiate throughout the expedition. Inherent within a *Thematic Experience Analysis* was the need for a clear focus from the commencement of my project. Because I am approaching this study through an eco-feminist lens, my interview questions...
prompted the students to convey their stories relating to the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’, and ideas of earth-based spirituality in nature. I acknowledge that I needed to be open to modify such themes depending on the breadth and width of student responses and field-trip observations, but with a clear and precise focus in mind, particular themes will naturally emerge from these stories. These themes were then developed to identify issues, tensions and challenges within OES pedagogical approaches (Bold, 2012). Chase (cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) elaborates on this in her statement,

Narrators explain, entertain, inform, defend, complain, and confirm or challenge the status quo. Whatever the particular action, when someone tells a story, he or she shapes, constructs, and performs the self, experience and reality. When researchers treat narration as actively creative in this way, they emphasise the narrator’s voice. The word voice draws our attention to what the narrator communicates and how he or she communicates it as well as to the subject positions or social locations from which he or she speaks (p. 65).

As I am focussing on meaning derived from the student stories, it was important that I aimed to understand everything about each student and their situation, in an experience-centred approach (Bold, 2012). Therefore, working with the concurrent themes of the presented narrative, and to ascertain an overall picture of the situation, I worked to elicit an understanding of the family background of each student, within the macro influences that colour and shape their values of wilderness and the natural environment. Bochner (2001, cited in Bold, 2012) states, ‘working with such narratives is not a search for truth but an acknowledgment of personal experiences as recounted at the moment in time’ (p. 122). Therefore, extracts from students’ narratives will be included in my analysis, serving as examples of their encounters of meditation practice, and hiking experiences, during the fieldtrip.
In telling this story, I integrated the dialogue from the conversational interviews (Clough, 2002), forming the story-dialogue method. Within the story-dialogue method, Bold (2012) asserts the importance of strong self-reflection. She draws on Mason (1994), stating that researching from the inside is helping students to access their inner thoughts about their practices and seek to identify incidents that were significant and worthy. This is, ‘developing an inner voice, having conversations with one’s self and interrogating one’s actions’ (Bold, 2012, p. 74). Considering that the students may not draw on their capacity to elicit a strong self-reflection in conveying evocative and creative stories, it was in my jurisdiction, as the researcher, to represent such qualities in the re-telling of their stories (Sikes & Gale, 2006, cited in Bold, 2012).

Appropriating the eco-feminist lens, Chase (cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) highlights the process of feminists to incorporate postmodern influences in asking questions about voice, authenticity, interpretive authority, and representation. As my intents within this research are associated with the transformation of ecological values towards holism, it is therefore fitting that a reconstruction of student stories will be governed by my own biased meaning-making in asserting a stronger ‘feminine’ voice within the OES context. Eco-feminist approaches, as the driving focus of my research, will therefore dominate the resynthesising of stories in order to explore my research questions towards these intents. This is echoed in Bold’s (2012) statement, ‘research projects must be developed with fitness for purpose as the main tenet guiding the choice of methods’ (p. 119). I will be sharply attuned to the sub-categories (themes) beneath the student stories, while also paying close scrutiny to the limitations within narrative approaches to research. Such tensions that may skew a sense of validity and trustworthiness inherent within ethnographic studies will be discussed in subsequent
sections of this chapter. I will close this section with my own journal entry, highlighting concerns associated with story analysis.

Kat’s Journal Entry: 3am, 19th November, 2013

**Somewhere along the shorelines**

*I am awake at 3am. I listen to the sound of the surging surf break on the unsuspecting shores of this natural paradise. I can’t get to sleep. I lie here wide awake. Turning to my back, to my side, to my front, to my side again...360 degree rotations, I chuckle in desperation at the discomfort I feel, laying on my deflated thermarest and kicking off my sleeping bag, fit for arctic conditions. I was hot and uncomfortable. And I was anxious. I had initiated conversations with Meg, Ricky and James on meeting them the previous morning, and my mind was still spinning, ruminating over our conversations.*

*Particularly with Ricky and James, it feels like I can’t capture any ‘magic’. The discussions seem dull, non-existent with these boys. It lacks engagement and radiance. I simply can’t reach them. Was it a mistake involving boys in my study? Because I know my conversation with Meg was quite the opposite. She was articulate, clear, excitable.*

*She inspired me to keep going...that the voice of the earth is somehow heard in the ‘feminine’. I remind myself that perhaps the lack of candour from the boys is a signpost in itself. I now lie awake urging the morning to call so I can roll out of this small and strangling tent and start a new, fresh day. I am thinking about the trustworthiness of my story, the student stories. Out here everything is romanticised. Will it count for anything back in the ‘real world’?*

**3.10 Creating Meaning of the Stories within a Thematic Experience Analysis**

*Within the interview analysis process, according to Cohen et al. (2007),*

*There is a great tension between maintaining a sense of the holism of the interview and the tendency for analysis to atomise and fragment the data – to separate them into constituent elements, thereby losing the synergy of the whole, and in interviews often the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (p. 368).*
This is particularly relevant within narrative inquiry as student stories will inevitably convey a holistic explanation of their OES experiential education experiences that is derived historically from past experiences. In order to minimise such tensions, I aim to use my research questions as a guide to reflexively position the student stories, to establish inherent patterns and relationships with reference to such questions (Cohen et al., 2007). Further, as the research issue has been decided pre-ordinately (in advance of the fieldtrip story collection), relevant information from the student stories will be consolidated in regards to the issues in question (Bold, 2012). As Cohen et al. (2007) explain, this is presenting data relevant to a particular issue, that being the androcentric dispositions of OES under the HPE framework.

For the purpose of analysis, coding is the translation of question responses and research participant information to specific categories (Bold, 2012; Cohen et al. 2007). As such, analysing the content of the student stories will involve the coding of open-ended questions, in naming pre-existing categories and emergent themes, and identifying patterns and trends within this. Content analysis, therefore,

Involves coding, categorising (creating meaningful categories into which the units of analysis – words, phrases, sentences, etc. - can be placed), comparing (categories and making links between them), and concluding (drawing theoretical conclusions from the text (p. 476).

According to Cohen et al. (2007), ‘there is no one meaning waiting to be discovered or described in them. Indeed, the meanings in texts may be personal and are located in specific contexts, discourses, and purposes, and, hence, meanings have to be drawn in context’ (p. 476). As per these authors, content analysis:

- Describes the manifest characteristics of communication (asking who is saying what to whom, and how).
• Infers the antecedents of the communication (the reasons for, and purposes behind, the communication, and the context of communication).
• Infers the consequences of the communication (its effects).

In order to derive meaning into classified codes, the next discussion will elaborate on the process of ‘categorising’ within the Thematic Experience Analysis, discussing the actions I will take to analyse the students’ stories of their OES wilderness experience.

3.10.1 Categorising Stories

Cited in Cohen et al. (2007), Miles and Huberman (1994) outline twelve tactics for generating meaning from transcribed interviews, as the following dot-points illustrate.

1. Counting frequencies of occurrence (of ideas, themes, words).
2. Noting the patterns and themes (Gestalts), which may stem from repeated themes and causes or explanations or constructs.
4. Clustering: setting items into categories, types, behaviours and classifications.
5. Making metaphors: using figurative and connotative language, bringing data to life, thereby reducing data, making patterns, decentring the data, and connecting data with theory.
6. Splitting variables to elaborate, differentiate and ‘unpack’ ideas, i.e. to move away from the drive towards integration and the blurring of data.
7. Subsuming particulars into the general, akin to Glaser’s (1978) notion of ‘constant comparison’ – a move towards clarifying key concepts.
8. Factoring: bringing a large number of variables under a smaller number of (frequently) unobserved hypothetical variables.
9. Identifying and noting relations between variables.
10. Finding intervening variables: looking for other variables that appear to be ‘getting
in the way’ of accounting for what one would expect to be strong relationships between variables.

12. Making conceptual/theoretical coherence: moving from metaphors to constructs to theories to explain the phenomena.

(p. 368).

Considering Point 4, the clustering of categories relates to my focus within the narrative inquiry to be a *Thematic Experience Analysis*. Therefore, it is essential to highlight the inherent themes within my research project associated with eco-feminism, deep ecology, and androcentrism. In making these themes clear, I can then code the student responses (relevant to the theme explored in the interview questions), and further categorise these to draw links between the major themes. The following steps in Table 3.2 outlines the pragmatic actions I will take to analyse the content of the student responses to interview questions, the text derived from their journals, and from my own field observations.
### Table 3.2 Steps for Content Analysis within Narrative Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps for Analysis</th>
<th>My Research Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define the <strong>research questions</strong> to be addressed by the content analysis</td>
<td><strong>Major Research Question:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do adolescent stories of earth-based spirituality provide insight into their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outdoor and Environmental Studies experience?</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Supporting Research Questions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do adolescents understand meditation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do adolescents understand their Outdoor and Environmental Studies experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do adolescents negotiate the tensions in Outdoor and Environmental Studies to re-create their experiences through meditation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define the <strong>population</strong> from which units of text are to be sampled</td>
<td>• Three year-10 students experiencing OES fieldtrip (five-day hiking expedition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define the <strong>sample</strong> to be included</td>
<td>• Random sampling from the year-10 cohort (three students selected for analysis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define the <strong>context</strong> of the generation of the document</td>
<td>• <strong>Semi-structured interviews</strong> regarding student experiences of hiking and meditation while participating in a five-day hiking expedition through a mandated OES fieldtrip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>The collection of journals</strong> as a means to reflect on OES expedition (meditation and hiking experiences in-situ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Field observations and my own field notes</strong> through casual conversations with the students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Construct **units** for analysis:

**Using narrative inquiry:**

*Units of analysis will be classifiable into the same category text with the same or similar meaning in the context of the text itself.*

- **Thematic:**
  - Putting text into themes and combinations of categories.
  - Experiences will involve relationships between people and contexts.

- **Eco-feminism**
  - Cultural eco-feminism
  - Expansion of Goddess power within
  - Female-nature connections

- **Deep ecology**
  - Human-nature connections
  - Emotional embodiment
  - Expansive sense of Self
  - Introspective
  - Agency and individualism

- **Androcentrism**
  - *Adventure hegemonies* (hiking)
  - Power relations that construct and reify gender dis-balance
  - Nature detachment

Construct **codes** for analysis:

A code is a word or abbreviation sufficiently close to that which it is describing for the researcher to see at a glance what it means.

*Codes themselves derive from the stories responsively rather than being created pre-ordinately.*

- **empathy, compassion, surrender:** meditation/journaling - *eco-feminist/deep ecology themes*
- **strength, control, power:** hiking - *androcentric themes/adventure themes*

Construct **categories** for analysis:

*The links between units of analysis (themes)*

- **Feelings of empathy, compassion, surrender:** an emotional response to meditation practice, considering feminist virtues associated with restoration, renewal, healing, receptivity, openness, intuition, expansiveness, connection, harmony, nurturing, and love *Eco-feminist & deep ecology themes.*
- **Feelings of strength, control, power:** an emotional response to ardent physical activity focuses *Androcentric themes/adventure themes*
In the Thematic Experience Analysis, and in coding and categorising student stories, I was able to infer conclusive evidence regarding the effectiveness of meditation and journaling experiences to promote deep ecology from eco-feminist frameworks.

3.10.2 Trustworthiness: What makes a good narrative inquiry?

Within qualitative research, issues regarding validity becomes problematic, ‘given the emphasis on multiple realities’ (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p.280). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest that it is not about what makes a good narrative, but it is rather a question of what makes a good narrative inquiry. This implies that I attend to the whole of the narrative inquiry process within this study. According to Pawlaczek (2005) ‘conventional trustworthiness criteria, such as internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity, can be inconsistent with qualitative inquiry; hence, new criteria are used to affirm the trustworthiness of qualitative approaches’ (p. 108). Examples of new criteria to elicit trust, validity and reliability within my analysis is employing a sense of wakefulness (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I aim to employ an authentic, explanatory and invitational quality to my narrative, in order to elicit a sense of plausibility and adequacy (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This wakefulness approach will involve a conscious effort to convey the rich discussion involving the three-dimensional space of the narrative inquiry in as much candour as possible.
Further, within the ethnographic approaches of my narrative inquiry, I will focus on transferability, stemming from the work of Guba and Lincoln (1985, cited in Braun and Clarke, 2013), rather than on generalisability. Where generalisability, ‘refers to whether or not the results generated in one study can be applied to wider or different populations’ (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p. 280), transferability questions the extent to which the qualitative results can be transferred to other groups of people and contexts. As such, it is essential that within the narrative, I describe the specific contexts, participant settings and circumstances of my study in rigorous detail (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Drawing on Crites’ (1986, cited in Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) recommendation, ‘to avoid the illusion of causality’ (p. 168), I have identified tensions within the experience-centred approach within my narrative. That is, acknowledging that each individual’s story is going to be unique, according to the particular family backgrounds and histories, is appreciating that my narrative is context specific within the three-dimensional space of narrative inquiry (Bold, 2012).

My professional experiences as an OES and PE teacher, has afforded a personal sense of preparedness to conduct research of this nature within the semi-structured interview process. However, due to my inexperience as a researcher in this context, I consistently sought consultation and recommendations from my principal and associated supervisors. Further, as discussed previously in the section pertaining to ‘personal lenses obscuring validity and reliability of research data’, the significance of my existing world-view is included throughout this study, and well-supported by relevant literature. I have purposefully and deliberately asserted a strong ‘researcher voice’, combined with student stories, considering the transformational intents of this
study regarding OES pedagogical approaches and curriculum design and implementation to include a strong spiritual and emotional emphasis.

To tell a more powerful, provocative and emotive story of students’ experiences, and to harness the capacity for a creative interpretation of results, I will incorporate the use of an ePortfolio, which I will now discuss.

3.11 ePortfolio

The ePortfolio I decided to use was Pathbrite. This is a digital online ePortfolio designed to collect, track, and share professional data to demonstrate knowledge, proficiency and lifelong learning. Its online database allows the upload of video, voice recordings, photographs and text. I have chosen to use an ePortfolio to collate my results of this study, as I firmly believe the integration of Information Communication Technology (ICT) within education is an important imperative in this digital information age. It demonstrates a dynamic and innovative approach, grounded in and creative representations of content.

3.12 Conclusion

I commenced this chapter discussing qualitative research, drawing on distinctive components within the normative, interpretive and critical theory paradigms. I then positioned this project clearly within the interpretive paradigm, justifying narrative inquiry as the appropriate methodology to conduct my study. I discussed inherent challenges associated with narrative inquiry, analysing the measures that I can undertake in order to minimalise these fundamental tensions. From here I discussed ethics in research, and how I will generate OES student stories. I elaborated on ethnographic methods to achieve this to include a semi-structured interview in the field.
independently with three students, personal observations in the field during a five-day bushwalk, and through collecting student journal reflections of meditation and hiking experiences for analysis. I then explored the specific ways that I will dissect the student stories to generate meaning in the context of my research questions, explaining the Thematic Experience Analysis in detail. I completed the chapter discussing why I chose to use an ePortfolio to publish my narrative. Chapter 4 will now provide instructions and a link to access my ePortfolio page.
Chapter 4
A Storied Landscape

I collected student stories during a five-day, four-night hiking expedition in November, 2013. The route for this hike was approximately twelve to fifteen kilometres per-day, around a series of undulating headlands that entailed moderate to steep ascents and descents. This OES fieldtrip was part of the mandated curriculum for year-10 students, designed for a self-sufficient hiking experience, in that all equipment and food was carried in and out of the national park. This is my narrative in partnership with three students, *Meg, Ricky & James*, conveying their OES experiences of meditation and hiking.

To view my ePortfolio that I have designed to share my story, please follow the below steps:

1. Go to web address: [www.pathbrite.com](http://www.pathbrite.com)
2. Register for your own ePortfolio account
3. My ePortfolio for this study can then be found at: [https://pathbrite.com/portfolio/Ph6tFPxKw/chapter-4-a-storied-landscape](https://pathbrite.com/portfolio/Ph6tFPxKw/chapter-4-a-storied-landscape)
4. Please double click on the first photo and view in full screen to access my narrative, which accompanies each photograph.
Chapter 5

Shaping the Landscape

Footsteps
Of mine will
lead me to the home within,
Back to the start, where we did begin.
I’ll feel her rhythms, dance in her streams,
I will tune to her songs to replenish my dreams.
I shall accompany my dark, and seek light in all reason,

I shall bask in her glory and share in each season. In the whispers of night,
when small creatures roam, it’s amongst these dunes that I will finally find home.
As I wander her paths sky high, ‘I am bound by no-one’, came the mountain’s reply.

(This photograph symbolises the silent wisdom of the mountain. If we take just a moment to truly listen,
can our whole life not be transformed? Riley, 2013)
5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss my interpretations and meaning of the student stories, as depicted in my ePortfolio. In appropriating the *commonplaces* of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), I will weave in and out of the three-dimensional space relating to personal and social aspects (within the interaction dimension); place aspects (within the situational dimension; and, past, present and future aspects (within the continuity dimension). Drawing on theoretical perspectives relating to Merleau-Ponty’s, *Body-subject*, I will examine the emotional and spiritual dimensions of the student’s experience through meditation processes, also exploring the physical dimensions of the expedition, delving into the student’s hiking experiences.

In considering socio-cultural elements to underpin how gender archetypes in nature have been culturally constructed and historically situated, I will reflect on the saturation of hegemonic ‘masculinity’ within OES, as illuminated through the student’s stories. I will conclude this chapter by providing a conceptual model relating to my interpretations of the student stories, highlighting alternate OES pedagogical approaches within spiritual inquiry to promote stronger environmental consciousness.

5.2 What do these stories mean?

Interpreting the student’s stories relating to their five-day OES hiking expedition, it is evident that through meditation practice in wilderness, a deeper connection to nature became imminent. *Meg* and *James* tell me that,

*Meg*: The meditation helps me to create a deeper connection to embrace what is around me. It helps me create more meaning with things, and I enjoy taking the time to get back to myself.

*James*: I did feel slightly more connected to nature during the meditations. Although it was not a prolonged effect, I seemed to feel more connected at the
time of the meditation and could understand how many others would feel an extended effect.

Conversely, when involved in the adventure aspect of this expedition throughout the hiking experiences, student’s comments indicate that they were called to invoke more ‘masculine’ virtues associated with strength, control and power, resulting in a disconnection to the natural world around them. This can be explored through story, where Meg says,

_Meg_: When hiking, it feels very ‘masculine’. I am blocking out the pain and uncomfortable feelings of carrying a pack. Although it’s rewarding, it’s hard. I think the ‘masculine’ is more appropriate for this trip, it’s important to stay ‘siked’ up! I prefer to be feminine and this is how I usually feel every day, but out here I need to be ‘masculine’.

_Ricky_ also suggests a similar sentiment, in his story,

_Ricky_: ‘Masculine’ qualities are very important as I like to feel in control of things and only do the things I want. I feel a lack of empathy when wanting to be in control. To connect with others and nature you need awareness. In the bush I feel in control, and in charge. But I think that ‘masculine’ qualities have a weaker connection to nature.

Reflecting on the student’s comments relating to the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’, and the prevalence of these throughout meditation and hiking experiences, Figure 5a below, consolidates my observations and interpretations of this phenomena.
As Figure 5a highlights, the ‘masculine’ was more prevalent in the student’s experiences when hiking. And, all three students shared that they did not feel as connected to nature when hiking and/or when experiencing the ‘masculine’. The ‘feminine’, by contrast, was more prevalent in the student’s experiences when meditating. And students indicated that they felt a deeper connection to nature during the meditation. *Meg* expresses this in her journal entry,

*Meg’s Journal Entry*: The meditations that were conducted in our group, very much impacted upon the personal enjoyment of the camp. I feel that through the practice of these meditations I became more connected with the surrounding environment that we ventured through, and to the people that were accompanying me through this camp. Overall, meditations on camp greatly altered how one’s thoughts were perceived through Mother Nature, as well as giving a beautiful appreciation of the stunning landscape surrounding me.
I will now delve into a deeper analysis regarding the students’ experiences of hiking and meditation, exploring the implications of emotional embodiment towards deep ecology.

5.3 Emotional Embodiment: Owning our ‘Shadows’

To rethink the relation between self and nature, important for both males and females, is to invoke a more integrated ‘sense of self’, in the exploration of the role emotions play towards a fully embodied experience with wilderness (Roszak, 2001). Drawing on the storied responses from Meg, James and Ricky regarding the ‘walking meditation’ that the group experienced on Day 3 of the expedition, I note their negative reactions with interest. All three students indicated that they felt the discomfort of hiking more acutely when they were silent. As James states, ‘I would rather talk to distract myself. I don’t like focusing on the tiredness’. Meg also struggled during the walking meditation, in her claim, ‘I found it really hard; I need people to talk to’.

During the walking meditation, without the distraction of talking and interactive engagement with each other, the students were called to become more aware of their physiological and emotional processes that were occurring. I will use the work of Jung (cited in Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010; Griessel & Kotze, 2009; Johnson, 1991; Plotkin, 2008), to highlight the imminence of the individual’s ‘shadow’ when one does not disappear into distraction (Greenwood, 2005; Griessel & Kotze, 2009; Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Nadkarni, 2008; Plotkin, 2008). That is, we can become more attuned to the negative (shadow) aspects of our psyches when we create space and silence to listen to the rhythms of our true self. Although this may present uncomfortable feelings and emotions to bubble to the surface, in recognising our ‘shadow’ that we can transform ourselves within a stronger sense of self, towards a more robust sense of identity.
Although spontaneously actioned, I deliberately chose to facilitate the ‘walking meditation’ at the specific time due to the steep, undulating terrain that we were passing through. My reasoning in choosing this particular time related to my awareness of the physical demands that this section of the hike would entail. In experiencing the physical discomfort (bordering on painful sensations for me), emotional frustrations became evident. Within this, I argue how important it is to not distract ourselves from such frustrations (through talking in this example), in order to delve into the pure source of those frustrations, and examine them with scrutiny (Griessel & Kotze, 2009; Johnson, 1991; Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Plotkin, 2008). In doing so, we can become so much more aware of our individual selves, and create an appreciation for the emotional undercurrents that inform our attitudes and behaviours (Johnson, 1991; Kabat-Zinn, 1994).

As I discussed in the beginning of this thesis, my journeys in the Sierra Nevadas manifested my own sense of awakening within earth-based spirituality. Prior to that snowy moment on the pine-lined ridge, I distinctly remember experiencing fleeting moments of anger and frustration towards the surrounding natural world during hiking expeditions that I participated in – both as an OES student, and as a tourist to wilderness regions. This was particularly prevalent during steep uphill ascents with a heavy backpack weighing unbearable tension on my shoulders. The anger spilled over into a sense of resentment towards the rocks that I would scramble over, obstructing my path; the trees, which seemed to stand in a silent arrogance; the birds, which seemed to mock my agony in their obnoxious tweeting; and, the blazing sun, which seemed to collude
with elements of wind and rain to make me grow exceedingly impatient, physically and emotionally uncomfortable.

In close and careful observation of these experiences, I now realise that the impending anger and frustration generated in these moments, was due to a lack of self-confidence informed from a perceived poor fitness level. Moreover, because I felt socially vulnerable, like my peers might judge my incapability, I grew anxious and reacted in attempting to go harder and faster than my body could comfortably endure. I was so consumed with social acceptance and proving my strength and fitness to my peers, that I did not consider how I was truly feeling, or what the source of this discomfort could have been.

Of course to remedy this, I could increase my fitness level through training cardiovascular and muscular endurance, to ensure the hike could be more comfortably endured on a physical level. What I know now, which I didn’t know then, is that it is more important to conduct an emotional ‘tune-up’, rather than a physical ‘tune-up’. This emotional ‘tune-up’ would involve a conversion of negative self-talk to positive self-belief, in cultivating a genuine disregard for social expectations within perceived judgments. It was about listening to my own body, and moving at the pace that felt most comfortable for me, despite social pressures. However, the anger and frustration that I initially felt was an excellent motivator to delve deeper into what was actually going on in the ‘shadow’ of my psyche (Johnson, 1991; Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Engaging with my emotions, albeit confronting, unlocked these insights.

Merleau-Ponty suggests that to perceive the world, one must be perceptible within it. That is, the world is not what one thinks, but what one lives through (Kirkman, 2007). As Burns (2008) states, ‘the body is in constant dialogue with the
world’ (p. 108). Merleau-Ponty claims that seeking the essence of consciousness will consist in rediscovering one’s actual presence to them self (Langer, 1989). Further, he holds that rationality and understanding of the world is a result of the experiences in which it is disclosed (Burns, 2008). Kirkman (2007) states, ‘our inquiry, then, does not consist of changing things into their meaning but demands a different mode of access to things. We begin not with thoughts but with our body’s engagements with the earth – with the cultivating of inter-corporeal activities’ (p. 41). Reflecting on such theoretical perspectives from Merleau-Ponty, this statement from Meg highlights the capacity for nature to afford a strong emotional accessibility,

Meg: I feel like I can be more like myself out here. Especially in the meditations, I can tune into myself, as it is just me and my thoughts. Not having any distractions, I can see how my feelings really are, without external influences. I am left to find my true personality.

Merleau-Ponty’s criticisms of the Cartesian dualism, is represented in ideas of ecological selfhood. Burns (2008) explains, ‘since the radical distinction between nature and culture is rejected, the self is no longer an abstract entity separated from the physical world’ (p. 107). Self as part of the ecological community is appreciating that it is through the body that we are most connected to nature (Burns, 2008). Meg makes some insightful comments in her journal entries regarding this,

Meg’s Journal Entry: The meditations made me open my mind feel Mother Nature’s vibes beneath me. The ‘feminine’ mediation sessions gave me a better understanding of Mother Nature’s vulnerability and caring characteristics as well as making me recognise her ‘feminine’ traits that reoccur throughout her being…the curves of the landscape replicating the curves of a woman, a flowing river symbolising the forever changing, and caring nature, the light breeze being refreshing and comforting and smooth. Nature’s ‘feminine’ side is the one I perceive to be the most beautiful and memorable. The ‘masculine meditations,
however, gave me a whole new perspective of how Mother Nature can behave. Her attributes of solidity were greatly reflected through the strong sturdy rocks throughout nature, the unforgiving landscape such as the steep mountains and the harsh sun. The unforgiving power of Mother Nature even surged through me and was reflected through the pain I was feeling in my feet and back.

However, it is important that our deep, holistic awareness of the interconnectedness of humans and nature be a lived awareness, within a robust questioning of holistic philosophies that work to transcend existence in the world (Davis, 2007). This is to avoid taking advantage of our ability to surpass what we are, in order to understand our engagement with nature and prevent disassociation - against the very experience that deep ecology is actually trying to procure (Davis, 2007). As such, it is seeking a felt sense of connection to nature through concrete loving actions, bound by autonomy and rationality (Bigwood, 2007). Considering that the tenets within the ecological-self represent acting in favour of a collective (regarding humans and nature), and not a narrow set of self-interests, the motivation for such acts still must remain in ones’ concern for oneself (Diehm, 2002). This illuminates an inherent paradox within deep ecology. The very idea that deep ecology actually relies on, and reinforces an ecological self, calls for an understanding that it is, ‘only through our relationships with others [‘others’ including nature] that we develop a sense of self as an individual’ (Burns 2008). Deep ecologist, Naess\(^{22}\) (1989, cited in Diehm, 2002) argues, ‘we must see the vital needs of ecosystems and other species as our own needs: there is thus no conflict of interests’ (p. 32).

\(^{22}\)Arne Naess (1912-2009): Norwegian mountaineer, and an important intellectual and inspirational figure within the Environmental movement of the late twentieth century. He was the founder of deep ecology.
Relating these ideas to Ricky and James, who appeared to isolate themselves from the rest of the group, could indicate a reluctance to integrate with other world-views that are not aligned with their own atomistic, egotistical and self-interested motives. My journal entry on Day -3 of the expedition highlights my reflections regarding this:

Kat’s Journal Entry: 1pm, 20th November, 2013
Lunch Break: Between a rock and a hard place

*I watch the three boys run from the group and begin clamouring over the shoreline boulders. I cringe, worried that they may fall off into the turbulent ocean swell spiralling towards the lands edge. They seem completely oblivious to anything but each other and the goofing around that keeps them completely separate from the rest of us. It is as if they have created a bubble around them, wanting to protect their own ideals of what it means to be out here. Nature seems like a gymnasium for them.*

However, perhaps their concern for themselves, irrespective of the environment around them, is honouring a sense of autonomy in how they choose to engage with nature during this expedition. Further, perhaps in through such autonomy a sense of personal empowerment can be achieved that promotes a positive educational experience (Dewey, 1938). In noticing the tensions I felt regarding ‘best practice’ towards deep ecology, I began to loosen my grip on expectations from the students. I further reasoned that perhaps the experiences during this particular expedition may only ‘plant a seed’ regarding meditative practices and expansion of the ‘feminine’. Merleau-Ponty suggests our self is never separate for we exist in the interrogative mode (Bigwood, 2007).

Drawing on Warren’s eco-feminist ethics, Glazebrook (2002) ascertains,

*Spiritualities are a way to show that emotions need not be reduced to the denigrated side of the reason-emotion dichotomy, but rather, that one can reflect upon feelings, and feel strongly about reasoned convictions (Glazebrook, 2002).*
This is acknowledging that self-realisation is the making real of the self, as a relational being in an ever-renewing process of open-ended identifications moving between ourselves and others (Diehm, 2002). It is relying ‘upon having the ability to care, situated rather than transcendent, ahistorical universals, and judgement concerning the appropriateness of appeal to a particular ethical principle in any given context’ (Glazebrook, 2002, p. 20). It is a chiasmic relationship between the embodied self, the core of our identity, and the dynamic interactions in many directions within the ‘flesh’ of the world (Reynolds, 2004). Disparate to Ricky and James’ engagement with the natural world in relation to the frameworks of my study, I will draw on Meg’s story below, to highlight how she spiritually interacted with the natural world, identifying emotional connections,

_Meg_: I feel connected to nature in a spiritual and emotional sense. I feel that nature is an important part of who we are and how we live. I feel that nature is spiritual, and humans are too without realising it. We are all part of nature - it’s our home, even though we take advantage of it.

Healing the human psyche and bridging the human-nature divide, is meeting nature in all her glory. It is understanding, and appreciating, the vital interconnectedness and surrendering to empathy and compassion in care for ourselves, and all that which we are a part of (Bigwood, 2007). I will draw on Reynolds (2004), to emphasise my arguments relating to the tone of emotional engagement, as a precursor to connecting with the world around us,

Cultural variances, or more precisely, difference of behaviour, correspond to a difference in the emotions themselves. It is not only the gesture that is contingent in relation to the body’s organisation, it is the manner itself in which
we meet the situation and live it...feelings and passional conduct are invented like words (p. 10).

As this quote by Reynolds (2004) suggests, the manner in which one meets the situation will determine the associated feelings will accordingly correspond. Ricky’s story below highlights how he approached this OES expedition, sceptical of any spiritual connections from the onset,

*Ricky*: I don’t really get the aspects of spirituality and how this could be important out here because I am too focussed on ensuring I can stay strong and fit and keep pushing myself to overcome the tiredness. I also just like to have fun! And sometimes I use nature for fun!

*Kathryn*: I noticed that you and James ran off from the group at lunchtime and started throwing stones at the seagulls down the beach. How come?

*Ricky*: (laughs) Those freaking birds were really annoying! They kept trying to get our attention and eat our food...us boys were just having a joke (laughs).

If progressive education according to Dewey (1938) is a constant reorganising or reconstructing of experience, it is critical to acknowledge the interconnection between the individual and the contextual environment. This exemplifies the role of the broader social, cultural, and institutional contexts within grand narratives regarding individual experiences and meaning-making.
5.4 A Socio-cultural Analysis

Payne and Wattchow (2008) argue that the modern context of OES is a reflection of cultural and technological phenomena and can be, ‘traced to the imperial/colonial need to claim, conquer or control new lands and territories’ (Payne & Wattchow, 2008). This is further supported by Vance (2001) in her argument that, ‘wilderness recreation ‘re-creates’ more than self; it also recreates the history of the conquest of nature, the subjugation of indigenous peoples, the glorification of individualism, the triumph of human will over material reality, and the Protestant ideal of one-on-one contact with God’ (p. 71). Moreover, because the wilderness does not locate herself [sic], does not name herself [sic], the wilderness is a product of culture’s framing (Schama, 1995).

And, herein lay the challenge within the cultivation of earth-based spiritual approaches within OES. It can be considered that subjective views of wilderness as experienced by Meg, James and Ricky during the expedition will be prompted and induced by the contextual influences of broader cultural and social frameworks. As Davis’ (2010) states, ‘we do not encounter nature on its own, but through our filters (p. 91). For example, Meg indicated that her appreciation of nature originated from her family, as highlighted in the following conversation,

Kathryn: Meg, where do you think you have got this love of nature from? I mean, who, or what do you think has influenced such connection to nature?

Meg: It was my Grandpa who inspired me to be environmentally aware. He told me that the world needs to be conserved. He was always telling the family to recycle and turn off the lights and he enjoyed gardening and cooking with ingredients from his vegie patch. I think this made me appreciate the food cycle more and I understand that the food in the supermarket has to come from
somewhere. Therefore, it is really important to conserve the natural environment.

In addition, *James* expressed how growing up on a farm prompted his values regarding nature,

*James*: I live on a farm so have always been close to nature and living off the land, and I feel relaxed when I’m out here; more free away from technology and I don’t need to stress about anything.

Considering socio-cultural theories, namely Bronfenbrenner’s Eco-system model (1979, cited in Gustafsson, Szczepanski, and Nelson 2012), as depicted in Figure 5b below, it can be argued that the family backgrounds of *Meg* and *James* informed and influenced their current values of nature.
Figure 5b Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Eco-system model

Microsystem: the web of relations between the individual and its environment, and constitutes a physical setting, where the participants engage in particular activities in particular roles for a particular period of time.

Mesosystem: influencing the context of the microsystems; it is the interrelations of the major microsystem.

Exosystem: the broader formal and informal social structure not directly containing the individual.

Macrosystem: describes the general institutional patterns of the relevant culture or subculture.

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979, cited in Gustafsson et al., 2012).

Drawing on the layers of social stratification and their interconnectedness, values of nature as expressed by all these students will inevitably be influenced and informed by the wider macrocosm, within laws, culture, economic systems, and social conditions. For example, if Australian OES is currently situated within a patriarchal culture, espousing capitalist values within the economic system, these parameters...
within the macrocosm will inevitably filter through the exosystem of school boards, media influences, and the wider societal structures. At the microcosm, family and peer groups are the closest influences to individual experiences within meaning-making, and the conceptualisation of world-views.

As I described in the discussion pertaining to Chapter 3, Meg, Ricky and James all lived in semi-rural and rural locations in a semi-mountainous environment in the outer north-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Prior to this OES expedition, all students participated in regular forms of adventure recreation in nature, all asserting that they had consistent and close contact with nature. Further, Meg played netball, Ricky played basketball, and both Ricky and James played Australian Rules football.

However, what I found interesting was that Meg claimed to participate in regular yoga and meditation activities. This gives an indication that her capacity for self-reflection and self-scrutiny had already been developed prior to this expedition. Through casual conversations with the other teaching staff attending this expedition, it became known that Meg’s family were rather open to alternate lifestyles, and deemed rather consciously evolved. Although James indicated that he grew up on a farm, and as such, is thoroughly familiar with natural life-cycles, giving scope to particular values of nature to emerge; both boys had never experienced yoga or meditation. Moreover, James mentioned that one of his favourite outdoor recreation pursuits was to go quad-biking on the farm, and he grew up doing this. Ricky stated that he loved mountain-biking and would do this regularly with other boys. In contrast, Meg mentioned that she enjoyed low-impact bush-walking/hiking with her family.

Figure 5b above highlights that involvement with particular recreational endeavours will be informed by family and peer-group influences. As such, each
student will inevitably bring a vast background of beliefs, values and attitudes to this OES expedition. Whether the students’ particular beliefs, values and attitudes are conducive towards environmental ethics within ideas relating to deep ecology, or not; this model highlights that if any sense of earth-based spirituality is to be cultivated within the macrocosm that Australian OES currently occupies, it is a matter of facilitating a new relation between the individual and the environment, one that,

Makes possible a new way of dealing with [the environment], and thus eventually creates a new kind of experienced object, not more real than oppressive (Murphy, Ross and Huber 2012, p. 65).

This is promoting pedagogical approaches which aim to reflexively position the individual within socio-cultural frameworks, in order to question taken for granted ideologies within rigid social structures. In the following discussion, I will explore new ways of dealing with the environment, drawing on student dialogue to ground my arguments in critical cogency.

5.5 Uniting the ‘Masculine’ and the ‘Feminine’

In analysing interview transcripts, my own field-notes and the students’ journals, it became increasingly evident that Meg was much more open to her ‘feminine’ side, and expressed a deeper connection to the natural world, experienced through the meditations. Although she found the physical components important and challenging, she explained that during the hike she did not experience deep connections with the natural world around her due to her focus being on arriving to the next camp-site. Further, Meg explained that she felt physically uncomfortable throughout the hiking experience and this did not facilitate any sense of appreciation for the environment
around her during these times. The following conversation points between myself and Meg highlights these points,

**Meg:** I prefer to be ‘feminine’ and this is how I usually feel every day; but out here I need to be ‘masculine’.

**Kathryn:** Do you think you feel more connected to nature when you are hiking, or when you are meditating?

**Meg:** Generally I feel more ‘masculine’ on camp as it is important to be strong and resilient, but more ‘feminine’ when meditating. I can access the value of nature better through the ‘feminine’. I definitely think I would care more for the environment when feeling more ‘feminine’ because I feel kinder, more empathetic, and not as harsh as the ‘masculine’. When feeling ‘masculine’, you’re more inclined to conquer to get where you need to go. I am happier in the ‘feminine’ because ‘masculine’ is more endurance and strength based and ‘feminine’ is more connective. I am happier when I feel more empathy. In ‘masculine’ I feel huffy and unremorseful; I am just looking out for myself.

All students indicated that they needed to apprehend a ‘masculine’ approach to the expedition. I note here, the interesting observation that Meg, a female and preferring to be in her ‘feminine’, also felt comfortable appropriating a ‘masculine’ disposition in this context. Griessel and Kotze (2009) elaborate on this understanding, stating,

Most women are encouraged to express all sides of themselves, including their needs for and the necessity of integrating Masculine qualities. They find, therefore, the Masculine in men and themselves less numinous and ‘other’, and are inspired to fulfil themselves as individuals in the world of Masculine consciousness (Griessel & Kotze, 2009, Pg. 185).

**Ricky and James** indicated that they struggled with the concept of ‘feminine’ virtues and Ricky admitted that he found these as inferior to ‘masculine’ qualities of strength and power, particularly when in the outdoors.
**Kathryn:** Do you feel that the ‘feminine’ is inferior to ‘masculine’? Particularly in the outdoors?

**Ricky:** Yes, definitely! It is a weakness to be vulnerable and to express feelings and emotions. ‘Masculine’ qualities are very important as I like to feel in control of things and only do the things I want. I feel a lack of empathy when wanting to be in control. To connect with others and nature you need awareness. In the bush I feel in control, and in charge. But I think that ‘masculine’ qualities have a weaker connection to nature.

**James:** When I’m not rushing around in nature I do feel free and relaxed, and yeah, I guess more reflective. I did feel slightly more connected to nature during the meditations. But, I really enjoyed the physical elements of hiking as I like to push myself, and feel like I have achieved hard challenges on the trail.

Although when meditating both of the boys explained that they felt more ‘feminine’ and more deeply connected to nature, they did not enjoy this activity as much as the physical aspects involved with hiking. Griessel and Kotze (2009) further extend beyond this, highlighting that in a patriarchal society, men experience some prejudice against the ‘feminine’, asserting that the embodiment of ‘feminine’ virtues is left almost exclusively to women, influencing women’s development. In considering that such essentialism is not biologically but rather historically grounded (Glazebrook, 2002), the students’ experiences are therefore a direct influence of deeply rooted ideologies historically situated and culturally located within OES, which sees the ‘feminine’ as subordinate to the ‘masculine’ (Bricknell, 1999; Ferrer, Romero, Ramon & Albareda, 2010, Glazebrook, 2002; Humberstone, 2000). Bricknell (1999) states,

This gender regime is not about risking one’s emotions: being honest or open with feelings. It is not about experiencing subjectivities of vulnerability and lack of emotional control; rather, it is about maintaining a ‘masculine’ hegemony grounded in the sexual practice of ‘masculine’ bodies. The fact that sexual
stories, sexual acts, and sexual exploits are such an overt topic reflects how important it is for hegemonic masculinity to ground sexual narratives in social structures (p. 427).

Similarly, Ferrer, Romero, Ramon and Albareda (2010) state,

We strongly suspect that this deeply masculinised pedagogical container may also be behind the intense (and also masculinised) reactivity of the feminine sensibility (of both men and women), that faculty and students often witness in the classroom, even in those courses where the feminine is honoured and included in content and/or more superficial process (eg. the inclusion of feminine ritual in a masculinised pedagogical process). The true feminine is understandably in a state of paralysing despair that can easily burst into anger because it cannot understand why it still feels profoundly dishonoured when it is apparently attended to and even explicitly championed (p. 92).


The prevailing cultural messages through sport both celebrate the idealised form of masculinity at the same time as inferiorising the ‘other’; women and forms of masculinity that do not conform. This culturally idealised form of masculinity conveyed through sport to which many men may aspire, but which may not be the usual form of masculinity at all, is understood as hegemonic masculinity (p. 29).

My arguments here highlight that focusing on the physical parameters within adventure at the nucleus of OES experience will further perpetuate OES as a powerful site for challenges to hegemonic ‘masculinities’. In drawing on my observations and the students’ stories during this expedition, I have conceptualised my interpretations into a model, representing the role of meditation towards environmental ethics, and the role of
hiking towards adventure ethics. Below in Figure 5c, it is highlighted that richer environmental ethics, within the context of this study, are promoted through the ‘feminine’, approached from meditation experiences, reflective states and earth-based spirituality. Moreover, adventure ethics are claimed through physical activity and action states, namely hiking. It is important to note here, that hiking as the chosen medium in which to move through the environment within this OES particular expedition, could be transferred to other recreational pursuits (‘rock-climbing/abseiling’, ‘white-water rafting/canoeing/kayaking’, ‘cross-country skiing/snowsports’, etc.). I will discuss the implications of this in Chapter 6.
As Figure 5c represents, a holistic sense of wellbeing can be derived from an honouring of the physical, emotional and spiritual parameters within pedagogical approaches. In asserting that meditation can lead to stronger environmental ethics through the connections with ‘feminine’ virtues, via spiritual and emotional inquiry, I reflected on the students’ comments,

*Meg:* I feel more ‘masculine’ in the outdoors and I believe physical fitness is important, yet I don’t think this could link with environmental conservation.
I still respect the nature around me when we are hiking, but I feel too tired to care. I like the meditation as it helps me to de-stress, especially in the bush. I enjoy meditating on ‘feminine’ virtues like love, compassion, surrender, empathy better as it helps me feel more peaceful.

**Ricky:** I feel ‘masculine’ in nature, even when I am meditating. Yet, I do feel more connected to nature when at camp, meditating, rather than hiking. Although moving through nature helps me connect with it and a sense of adventure is very important to me as I like to feel strong. I don’t think I like to surrender in the outdoors, I feel like this is giving up and not giving it ya best shot!

**James:** In the outdoors I feel mostly ‘masculine’, although a bit ‘feminine’ when meditating, this is because I am thinking about feelings and deep stuff. I love to be physically fit and feel strong in nature through physical movement, as I am determined to overcome the challenge. But, the meditations at times made me feel relaxed and emotionally soothed. It helped me to think more deeply and feel more connected to nature; more appreciative of it all. I guess this means having more empathy and compassion for what we do to nature.

Figure 5c highlights that in giving commensurate attention to pedagogical approaches that seek reflective and action states in OES, a more balanced approach to wilderness expeditions can be established. This is not denying or devaluing a sense of adventure in OES, which is important to sustain keen interest and traditional scope within the discipline, but it is adding more value to environmental ethics in attempts to bridge the human-nature divide and heal the human-nature split. Further, embracing ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ qualities in equal measure promotes a richer OES experience, in that it reflects concern for physical fitness and concern for self, others and the natural environment.
In this particular model, I acknowledge that I have compartmentalised hiking and meditation within the context of this study, further highlighting ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ binaries. However, as I alerted to in Chapter 1, I further maintain that such essentialism is important in utilising eco-feminism as a political metaphor. Moreover, in drawing commensurate attention to the value of the ‘feminine’ towards environmental ethics and deep ecology (aspects that I argue are disproportionate in OES pedagogy), a more balanced and holistic approach can be cultivated. I will further discuss implications regarding the transferable nature of this particular mode (hiking) of interacting with the natural world in Chapter 6.

5.6 Conclusion

Although the students appeared to find the concepts associated with ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ virtues intellectually challenging, their stories from this five-day hiking expedition indicated that ‘feminine’ attributes associated with compassion, empathy and surrender, as experienced in the meditations, created stronger, deeper connections to nature, further promoting more concern for environmental conservation. All students indicated that they felt they should be more ‘masculine’ when engaging in such OES experiences, particularly when engaging in the hiking component of the expedition. Further, there was resistance from both boys in regards to embracing the ‘feminine’ aspects of meditation promoting connections with the surrounding environment, providing evidence for socio-cultural saturation of patriarchal influences towards *adventure hegemonies*.

I propose that in order to transcend common assumptions relating to androcentric values of wilderness, it is critical to ascribe the emotional and spiritual life as the basis for individuality, and the succession of feelings as chief subjects to an
individual’s story within professional OES practice. Within this, it is also essential to establish a balance within ideologies concerning the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’.

Further, perhaps rethinking the position of the OES curriculum within the HPE framework might provide impetus to approach the discipline from other pedagogical approaches not dominated by physical activity at its core. Then OES may have a chance at fostering environmental advocates towards a more sustainable future. These recommendations will be explored in more depth in Chapter 6.
The life of every river sings its own song,
but in most the song is long since marred by the discords of misuse…

[In wilderness] comes a park,
or forest with roads and tourists.
Parks are made to bring the music to the many,
but by the time many are attuned to hear it,
there is little left but noise.

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will first reflect on the purpose of my study, revisiting the aims and objectives of the research. I will then review the narrative inquiry, and limitations within methodological frameworks causing challenges within my study. I will discuss aspects associated with the vitality of student relationships, and tensions within topical learning acquisition, drawing on Kolb’s (1984) *Experiential Learning Cycle* to explore this. In reflecting on the limitations of my study, I will then provide recommendations from the findings. Recommendations will first be broadly based and designed for educational policy developers. I will then provide more specific recommendations for educational institutions, looking at the cross-disciplinary nature of OES within the Australian curriculum. My third set of recommendations will be aimed to the OES school community. These recommendations will focus on the promotion of emotional and spiritual inquiry in pedagogical approaches, in uniting ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ ideologies in OES. I will provide my own pedagogical model relating to the *Eco-feminist Journey towards Deep Ecology*, and I will conclude Chapter 6 with directives for further study.

6.2 Reflections on the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of spiritual pedagogy, namely meditation practices, within OES as a means to invoke ‘feminine’ virtues that enhance deeper connections to nature. Drawing on the narratives of three year-10 students regarding their experiences during a five-day hiking expedition, I set out to examine the role of earth-based spirituality promoting values of deep ecology, in order to link a sense of holistic wellbeing with environmental conservation integrity (environmental ethics). My study highlighted the macrocosm of patriarchal influences on androcentric
dimensions operating at the micro level within OES, identifying the homogenisation of
environmental education and the position of OES within the HPE curriculum
framework as major tensions stifling the ‘feminine’, in relation to spiritual inquiry and
emotional engagement within OES pedagogy.

Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy relating to Body- Subject was integrated into my
discussion, highlighting the role of emotional embodiment to enhance a richer and more
meaningful experience in nature. Subsequently, I devised a conceptual model pertaining
to the Eco-feminist Journey towards Deep Ecology. In this model, I integrated post-
structuralism and the dismantling of dualisms, within the power of meditation to
reflexively position an adolescent towards self-empowerment and an expansive sense of
self.

6.3 A Review of Narrative Inquiry: Limitations of the Study

I would first like to highlight the tensions I grappled with regarding the practical
integration of theoretical understanding within my study. As I have had limited
experience in research design and implementation, with this study being the first time I
have engaged in such application, I aimed to develop a robust understanding of
methodology, within the paradigmatic positioning of qualitative research, and more
specifically narrative inquiry. This was also because I valued a robust understanding of
methodology in research to be of the utmost importance to promote a credible, reliable
and valid study.

In critical reflections, I am aware that there was some incongruence between a
robust theoretical understanding of methodology and practical implementation of my
study. That is, the method in which I approached this study was not always neatly
aligned with fundamental elements within narrative inquiry, as I discussed in Chapter 3.
For example, I acknowledge that there was a lack of information regarding the students’ historical stories. This did not afford a rigorous narrative set in temporal dimensions, between past and future (I will discuss this in more depth in relation to weak, unsubstantial relationships formed with the students). For future studies, I endeavour to create a more seamless integration between theoretical perspectives within methodological approaches and practical application.

6.3.1 Methodological Challenges

I approached this study using an explanatory narrative, within ethnographic frameworks. Therefore, it was essential that I was aware of the historical background relating to the topical content of this study (Bold, 2012; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This is considering both the historical background of OES, as the context for this study, and, the student’s background regarding past interactions and engagements with nature. In this sense, my narrative became grounded in explanatory reasoning and justification, while I also grappled with my own narrative expression and validity, drawing from the student’s stories (Heikkinen, Huttunen, Syrjala & Pesonen, 2011).

This became tenuous, particularly given my transformative intents of this study. In paying attention to the principle of reflexivity, I therefore acutely acknowledge the limitations regarding a lack of student voice in this study. As Heikkinen et al. (2011) state, ‘reflexivity means that the researcher is aware of the impact of his/her personal experiences while interacting with the other participants’ (p. 8). As such, I acknowledge the ontological presumptions that I have developed in this study, within the epistemological analysis, as I explored the different ways of knowing and being in nature during this OES expedition. Although essential to give space for the student’s voice to emerge in the epistemological analysis, I felt a significant tension within this.
As such, I have identified a limitation abounding the authenticity of my reproduction of the students’ voice in the retelling of their stories.

I maintain that I found it difficult to engage a sense of authenticity from the students, particularly from the boys. That is, their comments and remarks seemed either forced, or ingenuous. I sensed that they would say particular things, according to what they thought I would want to hear. Thus, in my attempts to critically engage emotions and mental images within an evocative representation of OES experiences, within emancipatory intents of the study, my voice and interpretations are ever-present, and somewhat dominant and at the forefront of the narrative. Ideally, I would have preferred my voice to be in the background and allow the student stories to speak for themselves in a more empowering manner. Further, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue,

The contribution of narrative inquiry is more often intended to be the creation of a new sense of meaning and significance with respect to the research topic than it is to yield a set of knowledge claims that might incrementally add to knowledge in the field (p. 42).

However, I found this sense of uncertainty chaotic and uneasy, and I consequently experienced conflict within the impetus to draw a set of knowledge claims entrenched within theoretical frameworks (Heikkinen et al., 2011). As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) warn, beginners using narrative inquiry overemphasise theoretical frames to position their study.

In light of this, my approach to the narrative suggests a significant lack of deep, trusting relationships with the students in the study, as I will now explore.
6.3.2 Cultivating Student Relationships

Narrative inquiry presents limitations regarding validity of accounts within integral and honest approaches in the telling and retelling of stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This is regarding particular ethics associated with relationships between the students and myself, while in the field collecting stories during this OES expedition. Within this, I question how my role as a field leader/teacher influenced the student’s story-telling and meaning-making within their experiences. As I was a new member to this school community, and this OES expedition, the students (particularly the boys) regarded me with a degree of suspicion. It is difficult to say whether Meg’s openness to me was due to a female – female relationship; however, she was certainly more curious and friendly towards me on a personal level, and regarding my research endeavours. Conversely, the two boys, Ricky and James, were distant and remote in their dialogue. Not only did they not engage with my research inquiries, they were also defiant regarding any leadership directives from me as a leader/teacher in the field.

To cultivate a deeper and more personable relationships with all of the students involved in my study, it would have been beneficial to have spent additional time at the school in the OES classroom environment. This could have promoted two beneficial outcomes. The first, being an opportunity to engage with the students and their personal histories, unique beliefs, values and attitudes to a higher degree, as I do acknowledge a particular lack of account regarding the student’s historical background with relationship to nature. In addition, this could have provided an opportunity for the students to learn more about me and my research intentions. The second, being to create a more rigorous opportunity to ‘front-load’ the theoretical elements associated with ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ archetypes. As these students had limited (or no) prior
knowledge of such philosophy, affording the opportunity for students to grapple with such phenomena prior to the OES expedition, could have promoted a deeper engagement with them in the field.

Considering the many other constituents prevalent while engaging in OES fieldtrips, it is difficult to spend focussed attention on topics outside of the ‘normal’ day-to-day functioning. For example, logistical planning regarding bush-craft while at camp (cooking, setting up tents), navigation, risk management, managing fatigue; and, OES curriculum objectives regarding communication, leadership environmental awareness, intrapersonal reflections, interpersonal interactions (etc.) certainly needed to take precedence over aspects relating to my research endeavours. Therefore, at times, topics surrounding my research seemed like an annoying distraction to the efficient functioning of the expedition. And, with little energy to focus on new knowledge and learning acquisition associated with masculine and ‘feminine’ archetypes, I did have to intensely scaffold such understanding.

6.3.3 Frontloading ‘Masculine’ and ‘Feminine’ Archetypes

The gender archetypes relating to the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ were challenging and far-reaching concepts to the students. The student’s required considerable assistance in grappling with the dimensions of these archetypes, particularly within the relationship to nature and how such ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ attributes of nature may be interpreted. In my discussions with the students regarding this, because they were unfamiliar with the phenomena and were creating a foundation of understanding for the first time, my ‘researcher voice’ certainly dominated the conversation and inevitably skewed the student’s responses to align with my values as the inquirer. Although personal lenses obstructing, diluting, and fragmenting the
narrative is a known tension within this particular methodology, regarding the 
trustworthiness of results (as I discussed in Chapter 3), a significant limitation within 
this study was complex theoretical phenomenon in the context of a practical and 
recreational based OES experience.

Therefore, I contend that it is the curriculum regarding OES *theory* that needs to 
be first altered, expanding towards dialogue regarding deep ecology within eco-
feminism. Then, it may have a more reliable and grounded place in the OES 
*experiential* component of fieldtrips and expeditions. I also argue that within this, 
experiences in the field while immersed in nature and wilderness need to be 
theoretically explored in the classroom to create the cycle of action and reflection. This 
is drawing on Kolb’s (1984) *Experiential Learning Cycle*, as highlighted in Figure 6a, 
below.
Figure 6a goes beyond the basic dimensions of action/reflection in learning inquiry, appropriating a more thorough assimilation of knowledge acquisition processes. Drawing on this model, Kolb (1984) describes this as a cyclical process. Irrespective of where the learner commences on the cycle, it is important to enact the proceeding steps of the model to promote a deep and integrated understanding of phenomena.

Because of time constraints during this OES expedition regarding the students’ capacity to enact abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation, concrete experience and reflective observation, I was aware that a thorough understanding of ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ archetypes within earth-based spirituality was poorly integrated. The students experienced grasping via comprehension and transformation via extension, within abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation regarding
such phenomena. They also had the opportunity to accommodate this new knowledge through concrete experiences during this OES expedition, in hiking and meditation practices. Further, opportunity was provided for the students to assimilate knowledge (integrating this new knowledge as part of self within their current world-views) within reflective observation. This was primarily established through time allocated for journal writing. However, although there is evidence that each step of this learning cycle was considered and enacted during this expedition, I maintain that it was rushed, not thoroughly nor robustly challenged, and lacked cogency within this experience. As Aucoin (2011) states, ‘Kolb’s (1983) experiential learning cycle’ gives reference to the ongoing learning that may take weeks or months for students to fully grasp’ (p. 5).

I was primarily alerted to this through evidence of a saturation of discussion points, which stalled and fractured a meaningful conversation with the students. I believe that if the students were more attuned to the theories associated with ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ archetypes, and had had the opportunity to engage in the complete cycle of Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle (represented in Figure 6a), then a deeper, and more diverse discussion could have emerged. As this was not the case, inevitably my voice as the researcher became dominant in the narrative. Reflecting on this limitation of my study, it would have also been beneficial for me to meet the students earlier in the term before the commencement of the expedition. In addition to cultivating stronger, more trusting relationships with the students, this would have also provided me the opportunity to establish a theoretical dialogue with the students, before experiencing such phenomena experientially. I will now highlight the saturation of discussion points through my journal entry, nearing the end of the expedition.

Kat’s Journal Entry: 10am, 22nd November, 2013

Resting on a Grassy Spur
This morning we’ve had a gradual ascent towards the bus… and home. I have mixed feelings about this. The sense of freedom out here is incredibly rich. It is out here that I feel truly vibrant and alive. And I have sense that something has been awakened in the students too. They are less busy in their conversations, less anxious making logistical decisions. I have noticed a gentle curiosity in us… a curiosity of life, of its processes, of what it means to be human. However, I am now eager to distance myself from the group and attempt to join the puzzle pieces of conversations and observations together. I have been acutely aware that with such small sample size for this study, albeit being a narrative inquiry, I seem to have reached a point of saturation… particularly considering the boys vague, and somewhat elusive responses. This has been further highlighted in collecting their journal responses\(^{23}\), as they were rather brief. Yet, I can’t help but think that further conversations with these students would only work to antagonise them and create a negative experience… if time permitted. I wish I had a chance to know more of them.

I have identified the weaknesses within my study to include research design errors. This is largely based on temporal dimensions in not facilitating theoretical dialogues with the student pre-expedition, which also culminates with a lack of relationship cogency with the students. However, the stories that I did draw out of this expedition are insightful enough to propose specific recommendations regarding OES pedagogical approaches, as I will now explore.

### 6.4 Recommendations from the Findings

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt

\(^{23}\) A collection of students’ journals are used in my ePortfolio, and listed in Appendix A of this thesis.
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
…Therefore I am still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
and mountains; and of all that we behold
from this green earth…

Wordsworth (cited in Ross & Ross, 2001, p.8)

As I have previously discussed, within the basic tenets of earth-based spirituality, in its purest form, is viewing the relationship between humans and nature as intrinsically linked within values of deep ecology (Davis, 1998; Greenwood, 2005; Seed, Macy, Fleming & Naess, 2007). I have chosen the above poem by Wordsworth to highlight the critical affinity of the human-nature connection, as it illuminates the idea that human wellbeing is fused with sublime nature.

My study has revealed the tensions within OES that exacerbate the human-nature divide. I have equally justified the critical importance of repairing this bond – both for the sake of environmental integrity and for a holistic sense of personal wellbeing. Drawing on my conclusions derived from this study, I will now provide broad recommendations regarding education policy development, which calls for a shift in ideologies regarding the human-nature relationship. I will then provide more generalised recommendations for educational institutions, elaborating on the cross-disciplinary nature of OES, and how it is supremely placed to heal the human-nature relationship. I will conclude my recommendations with acute and specific pedagogical
approaches for the OES school community that includes promoting emotional and spiritual learning inquiry in nature, through uniting the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’.

6.4.1 Recommendations for Policy Developers: A Shift in Ideologies

I will draw on Starhawk’s\textsuperscript{24} (1982) argument that, ‘[the patriarch] and science usurped the power, healing, and spiritual wisdom of women who practiced the Old Religion [derived from Celtic traditions]’ (cited in Howell, 1997, p. 239). This deeply bonded and reciprocal communion between humans and nature is imperative for wellbeing, as I have asserted throughout this thesis. Davis (1998) states, ‘the denial of this bond is a source of suffering both for the physical environment and for the human psyche and the realisation of the connection between humans and nature is healing for both’ (p. 75). This assimilation respects the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature, and the arguments for social ecology, and layers within this pertaining to eco-feminism, that explores the interconnection between environmental health and individual wellbeing.

I also draw on Schama’s (1994) statement, ‘[wilderness encounters can cut] directly to the heart of one of our most powerful yearnings: the cravings to find in nature a consolation of our mortality’ (p. 15). Seeking a sense of spirituality within wilderness is one of the fundamental aspects of human nature (Fox, 1999, cited in Ashley, 2007). Therefore, as Leopold (1987) states, ‘recreational development is a job not of building roads into lovely country, but of building receptivity into the still unlovely human mind’ (p. 176). And as such, it is the individual who must shift their approach to wilderness for critical links between spiritual wellbeing and wilderness to emerge. Further, wilderness vitality becomes paramount. Not for the sake of

\textsuperscript{24} Starhawk (1951- ): An American Pagan, theorist of feminist Neo-paganism, and environmental activist.
anthropocentric endeavours, but because the essence of our spiritual health lies within
the interconnectedness of the humans-nature relationship in the form of harnessing
values of deep ecology. As Greenwood (2005) states,

[Deep- ecology] involves the primacy of self-realisation in identification with
the non-human world, it concerns a shift from an anthropocentric world-view to
an eco-centric or bio-centric vision whereby beings are but one component of a
complex system (p. 34).

Moreover, Howell (1997) elaborates on this, stating, ‘an eco-centric view rejects
hierarchy and the human illusion that it is possible to manage or control nature and
instead favours reciprocity in relationship with nature’ (p. 234). Nadkarni (2008)
advocates the value of nature to help find the answer to spiritual questions, quoting
German philosopher and writer, Hesse,

For me, trees have always been the most penetrating preachers. Trees are
sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them; whoever knows how to
listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts,
they preach, undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life (p. 240).

Nadkarni (2008) further asserts two fundamental lessons to be learned from
nature:

- That living things are connected to each other; food webs, ecosystems and global
  ecologies demonstrate this fact.
- That the belowground world and hidden, subtle (or gross) workings of nature is
  symbolic, in that it can represent the elements often hidden from ourselves and
  others.

Wilderness, when engaged with reverence, will promote aspects of introspection
and reflection on deep personal values, respect, wonder, awe, mystery, inspiration,
interaction with and relationship to something other and greater than oneself, sense of
humility, sense of timelessness, integration, continuity, connectedness, and community (Ashley, 2007). Such basic human yearnings are exemplified by Schama’s (1994) inflection of Ansel Adams’ photography of Yosemite National Park in California, which famously illuminates the reverence of wilderness with its spiritual and healing qualities. Adams (cited in Schama, 1994) states, ‘Half Dome is just a piece of rock…there is some deep personal distillation of spirit and concept which moulds these earthly facts into some transcendental emotional and spiritual experience’ (p. 9).

Therefore, I contend that wilderness encounters are not just important for secondary school students experiencing OES within the educational context. But, I argue that every individual seeks the opportunity to engage with wilderness and the natural world from spiritual and emotional foundations. Approaching such encounters with virtues of grace is the essence of our basic human yearnings (Schama, 1995). Therefore, for a shift in ideologies regarding nature to occur, I argue that direct experience with wilderness is required, one that it is not fervent with exploitation ideals. I will finish this discussion with a quote from Leopold (1987), which supremely summarises my arguments, ‘we can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love, or otherwise have faith in’ (p. 214).

6.4.2 Recommendations for Educational Institutions: A Cross-disciplinary Approach to OES Experiential Education

Martin and McCullagh (2011) argue that there is consolidated evidence that, ‘in the hands of a skilled outdoor educator a bushwalk becomes the experiential means to evaluate aspects of taken for granted technology and our dependence on them’ (p. 75). OES, with its experiential programs located in wilderness regions and/or remote natural environments, is uniquely positioned within the Australian curriculum to promote the
healing of the human-nature divide and combat, what Orr (2004) deems, ‘the war against the very sources of mind’ (p. 140). That is, the socio-cultural context of OES can either allow or disallow environmental virtues to imbue a sense of connection to wilderness and nature (Clayton & Meyers 2009). Louv (2008) challenges the unintended educational consequences that espouse an impending bio-phobia, arguing that pedagogies must confront such doctrine to heal the broken bond between the young and the natural world. Healing the broken bond between the humans and nature is not only in society’s anthropological self-interest – justice demands this, but ultimately our wellbeing depends on it (Louv, 2008; Roszak, 2001).

It is important to note here, that in consulting with current OES teachers in secondary school settings, I have become acutely aware that pedagogical approaches within the theoretical components of OES in the classroom are cross-disciplinary, and do indeed, draw on other topics relevant to different areas of study (examples of this are provided in the left hand column of Table 6.1 below). However, as my study does conclude, this is not evident in OES experiential endeavours when engaging in natural areas in remote locations and/or wilderness settings. It is the experiential component of OES that is markedly based on HPE discourse.

Rethinking the position of the OES curriculum within the HPE framework is considering alternate approaches to the discipline that are not dominated by physical activity at its core. This is acknowledging and appreciating the inter-disciplinary nature of OES, in that it does not solely define itself within the HPE framework. As my study has argued, to promote values of deep ecology, beyond environmental stewardship, deeper relationships to land need to be cultivated. Regarding curriculum frameworks, OES is unique in its capacity to permeate into a myriad, if not all, disciplines in varying
degrees; namely, humanities, science, arts numeracy and literacy. Drawing on the VCAA’s (2013) domains and dimensions within curriculum frameworks, I have provided an example in Table 6.1 of how this could look pragmatically.

**Table 6.1 The Interdisciplinary Nature of OES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OES Curriculum links</th>
<th>PHYSICAL, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL LEARNING</th>
<th>DISCIPLINE-BASED LEARNING</th>
<th>INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dancing, singing</td>
<td>Civils and Citizenship</td>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Bush craft</td>
<td>Civic knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>Creating and making</td>
<td>Listening, viewing and responding</td>
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<td>Media influences</td>
<td>Community engagement</td>
<td>Exploring and responding</td>
<td>Presenting</td>
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<td>(English)</td>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>English^2</td>
<td>Design, Creativity and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Movement and physical activity</td>
<td>Reading and viewing^2</td>
<td>Investigating and designing</td>
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<td>Journaling</td>
<td>Health knowledge and promotion</td>
<td>Writing^2</td>
<td>Producing</td>
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<td>(PE)</td>
<td>interpersonal Development</td>
<td>Speaking and listening^2</td>
<td>Analysing and evaluating</td>
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<td>Movement</td>
<td>Building social relationships</td>
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<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Working in teams</td>
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<td>Adventure Skills</td>
<td>Personal Learning</td>
<td>The humanities</td>
<td>Information and Communications</td>
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<td>The individual learner</td>
<td>Humanities knowledge and</td>
<td>Technology</td>
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<td>Managing personal learning</td>
<td>understanding</td>
<td>ICT for visual thinking</td>
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<td>Humanities skills</td>
<td>ICT for creating</td>
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<td>Reasoning, processing and Inquiry</td>
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<td>Reflection, evaluation and</td>
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<td>The humanities – Geography</td>
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<td>Land use of different populations</td>
<td>The humanities – History^2</td>
<td>Historical Knowledge and</td>
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<td>Topographical features</td>
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<td>Wilderness locations</td>
<td>The humanities – History^2</td>
<td>Historical Skills^2</td>
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<td>Cycles of nature</td>
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<td>Indigenous interactions with land</td>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>Communicating in a language</td>
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<td>European Settlement</td>
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<td>other than English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compass orientation and map navigation</td>
<td>Mathematics^2</td>
<td>Number and Algebra^2</td>
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<td>Science as a human Endeavour^2</td>
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<td>Science Inquiry Skills^2</td>
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(VCAA, 2013).
Curriculum design of OES is out of the scope of my particular study. However, if OES must rigidly remain within the HPE framework, then I propose that a shift in pedagogical approaches during experiential components of the unit, drawing from other disciplines, be applied. This is to appropriate integral ideas that there are different ways of knowing and being within individual worldviews. As my results model in Chapter 5 indicates, integrating a more thorough cross-curricula approach in pedagogical strategies during experiential endeavours can facilitate a more robust learning inquiry, and subsequent environmental ethics within stronger relationships with nature.

Considering the gap between OES theory and OES practice, I draw on Deweyan principles of pragmatism (Ghiloni, 2012), which asserts the importance for progressive education to bridge the gap between theory and experience (Xu & Connelly, 2010). If educators aim to facilitate experiential OES from a myriad of approaches that are cross-disciplinary by nature (as evident within the theoretical components of study), and not just from HPE framework objectives, then, OES may have a chance at fostering student advocates of deep ecology towards a more sustainably rich future, both personally and environmentally.

I have discussed the need for a shift in ideologies regarding the human-nature relationship, referring to broader cultural and societal mindsets. In addition, I have discussed how pedagogical approaches within experiential OES need to facilitate a more cross-curricula integration. Although these two recommendations are of vital importance in an effort to heal the human-nature relationship, I argue that the most fundamental constituent to fostering student advocates of deep ecology is the promotion of emotional and spiritual inquiry within any and all topical analysis within the OES.
learning inquiry. This also links to the realigning of the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’ in OES, to bring equal credibility to both gender archetypes.

This particular recommendation feeds back to section 6.4.1 (Recommendations for Policy Developers: A Shift in Ideologies), in asserting the importance of engaging with spiritual and emotional inquiry in wilderness encounters, and valuing the ‘feminine’ in equal measure to the ‘masculine’. As such, the following discussion is relevant for all individuals experiencing nature, in order for cultural ideologies to shift. However, I will keep the following discussion within the context of secondary school OES, in proposing that for shifts, regarding the human-nature relationship, to occur, it needs to begin with the individual. As Greenwood (2005) argues, ‘to find ecological consciousness, it is important to begin with the person...to work on individual consciousness and a sense of connection’ (p. 188). Therefore, I argue that the polemic key to heal the human-nature bond is spiritual and emotional inquiry through uniting the ‘feminine’ and the ‘masculine’. I state that it should take precedence, or at the very least, be given equal credibility, within OES experiential knowledge acquisition.

6.4.3 Recommendations for the OES School Community:

6.4.3.1 Promoting Emotional and Spiritual Inquiry

The evolution of consciousness pedagogies, as introduced in Chapter 1, herald transformative education, within their capacity to draw on holistic ways of being, learning, and knowing (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010). Bobilya, Akey and Mitchell (2011) assert that to neglect the learner’s inner development regarding their personal beliefs and sense of spirituality, is to encourage a lack of authenticity and fragmentation within their holistic concept of self. Further, if education is considered to have three components that include: the subject/learner (knower), the process (process of knowing)
and object (of knowing), it is essential that all three components are given
commensurate attention in progressive education. Focusing on the objective domain, or
third person paradigm, as inherent in conventional education (Sarath, 2010), drives the
learning impetus from intellectual positions to the detriment of subjective domains, or
first person paradigms.

Nadkarni (2008) contends that shifts in the ways humans interact with nature
needs to combine evidence from the intellect and incentives from the heart. She further
states, ‘it also seems that individuals need neither preaching nor forceful directives to
make changes, if they themselves become convinced of the need to maintain trees,
forests, and nature in their lives’ (p. 253). Drawing away from purely intellectual
engagement with nature to more affective learning inquiry and engagement, creates the
scope for joyful experiences in wilderness (Leopold, 1987; Louv, 2008; Payne and
Wattchow, 2008; Plotkin, 2008; Seed et al., 2007). Albeit at the far-end of affective
dimensions of learning, spiritual inquiry according to Hitzhusen (2004, cited in Bobilya
et al., 2011) ascertains such inquests can involve,

Transcendence, ineffability, mystery, feelings ‘deep in one's soul’, beauty,
goodness, contemplation, a sense of inspiration or renewal, encounter with
sublime natural settings, and intuition of the divine; it is often characterized by a
sense of awe, unity, personal balance, or inner peace (p. 41).

Therefore, in order to transcend common assumptions relating to androcentric
values of wilderness, it is critical to promote the emotional and spiritual life as the basis
for individuality, and the succession of feelings as chief subjects to an individual’s story
within professional OES practice (Greenwood, 2005; Orr, 2004; Plotkin 2008; Roszak,
2001). Orr (2004) states,
For those presuming to wear the robes of objectivity, [it] is often, a defence against being flooded by the emotions of humility, reverence, mystery, wonder and awe. Life ought to excite our passion, not our indifference. Life in jeopardy ought to cause us to take a stand, not retreat into spurious neutrality (p. 137).

Further, referring to Warren’s (2000) eco-feminist ethics, Burns (2008) states, ‘without emotion, there would be no ethics, and as a result, emotion needs to take centre stage in discussion of ethics’ (p. 106). Considering that the student stories indicate that a deeper connection to nature is promoted through the ‘feminine’, it becomes evident that an environmental ethic is best promoted through emotional and spiritual inquiries (as experienced in the ‘feminine’). Winter and Koger (2004) also argue,

Recognising our embedded role in the larger ecosphere will require a perceptual shift and experience of ourselves as wider and deeper ecological selves. This shift is more than a cognitive event – it is also a profoundly emotional and/or spiritual event (p. 207).

Therefore, in the effort to harness such environmental ethic, in addition to a cultivation of holistic wellbeing through the engagement of physical, emotional and spiritual experiences, I maintain that it is critical that commensurate attention be given to the emotional and spiritual subjective ways of knowing. Within this, it is essential that insights and truths are garnered from a myriad of perspectives and world-views, assimilating post-modern philosophies of meaning-making (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010; Wilbur, 2001).

As Louv (2008) argues, self-activated, autonomous engagement of sensory stimulation has the capacity to bolster links between the exterior, objective world with the interior, hidden and subjective world of the individual. This personal reconstruction of human culture is afforded through the freedom to explore and joyfully interact with
their environment. And if education can provide experiences for students that assist them in developing sophistication beyond the current cultural level, then education becomes transformational (Davis, 2010).

I therefore advocate for the power of meditation and the retreating into a dark, introspective solitude and isolation from the crowd (with its collective values), as quintessential for adolescents (and people in general) to discover their own truth, power and full sense of self (Greenwood, 2005; Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Plotkin, 2008, Seed et al., 2007). As Plotkin (2008) states,

The effectiveness of meditation…derives from the fact that it restores a dimension of wholeness that is ideally preserved and protected in early childhood but rarely retained by [adolescents]...namely, the capacity for present-centredness or innocence (p. 23).

I assert the importance of scaffolding and facilitating meditation practice with students to promote a sense of connectedness within universal processes. This shifting of students’ preoccupation towards a centred self (as opposed to self-centred) calls for an exploration of altruism and empathy, ‘rather than construing meditation as only an esoteric religious practice or a relaxation technique’ (Kristeller & Johnson, 2005, p. 404). Assisting the students to attune to others through opening the heart and their emotional sensibilities, it can be anticipated that feelings, behaviours and attitudes can reflect acts of compassion (Kristeller and Johnson, 2005).

I further recommend a formal approach to journaling while experiencing nature and wilderness. This can work as a means to convey meditation experiences, providing a favourable medium to integrate personal spiritual encounters (Magary, 1996, cited in Ashley, 2007). As I described in the opening section of this thesis, this was also how I personally integrated Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle, moving between
concrete experiences and active reflection. Writing can act to elicit our imagination, our soul passion, our dialogical knowing and our playfulness, promote varying roles and perspectives to navigate through phenomenon (Stack, 2010). Aucoin (2011) states, ‘[Such] integration allows [a capturing of one’s] own perceived sense of place and, through self-expression make connections with the environment as a form of art’ (p. 16). Further, it demands visualisation and the full use of the senses, evoking creativity. Wilbur (2001) advocates for the power of artistry to communicate what is felt about the environment (or object), claiming that art is a vehicle for contact with the interior dimensions of self, wrestling Spirit into matter and speaking through the medium of writing (Sarath, 2010). Moreover, merging the subjective ‘I’ with the collective ‘we’ builds resonance with others to further promote learning inquiry in a thoughtful exchange.

Including emotional and spiritual learning inquiry in equal measures to physical parametres within OES will reconnect education with a transformational movement toward human wholeness. As Ferrer et al., (2010), state, ‘it will also promote a genuine integration of ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ balance – pivotal for the creative vitality of both integral studies and educational practice (p. 99). As this statement suggests, for emotional and spiritual inquiry within OES pedagogical approaches to be given equal credibility and esteem, it is simultaneously important to unite ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ ideologies within OES.

6.4.3.2 Uniting ‘Masculine’ and ‘Feminine’ Ideologies in OES

Drawing on Dewey (1938) in his statement, ‘people are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in a social context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2). As
individual world-views, beliefs, values and attitudes are bound to differ from student to student, there requires a common ground. As such, context makes a difference, in establishing a bridge to the grand narrative informing micro social milieus.

As the results from my study highlight, formally implementing regular meditation practices and journaling opportunities in pedagogical approaches during OES experiential education, will work to reveal the ‘feminine’, necessary for deeper connections to nature in OES. My study has revealed that the ‘feminine’ is deemed inferior in the context of the OES expedition. However, because the ‘feminine’ and the ‘masculine’ are understood as archetypal aspects belonging to both sexes within all cultures, unlike biological and cultural approaches, it should not be insisted ‘that the Feminine equals, and can only equal, female (physical differences) or femininity (gender roles influenced by culture)’ (Griessel & Kotze, 2009, p. 185). I draw on Griessel and Kotze’s (2009) study associated with the ‘feminine’ and the ‘masculine’ in the development of self, to highlight that it is not the male-female duality in question, but the differences in developmental processes relevant to both genders.

As my study has identified and explored, the ‘feminine’ was devalued and not fully perceived or appreciated, particularly by James and Ricky. These students stories illuminate that the call for a radical shift in gender ideologies within OES. This is associated with restoring the balance between the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, so that males can feel comfortable, and even empowered, to expose themselves to ‘feminine’ virtues while in the outdoors. Further than this, I propose the ultimate goal is to restore ideas of the ‘feminine’, revered by both males and females. As the results of this study depict, it is through the ‘feminine’ that enhanced feelings of empathy and connection to the natural world becomes imminent. It is assuming an anthropocentric disposition in
cultivating an earth-based spirituality within the expansion of the ‘feminine’, to beget a
shared identification in assuming ethical responsibility for the cultural dualisms as
indicative in the Western patriarchal society (Diehm, 2002).

Drawing on Merchant’s (1980) descriptions of Cultural eco-feminism, I
advocate that symbols such as the Goddess are embedded within the honouring of earth-
based spirituality, which names and reclaims the female body and its cycles and

> With many spiritual feminists, eco-feminists, ecologists, antinuclear activists,
> and others, I share the conviction that the crisis that threatens the destruction of
> the Earth is not only social, political, economic, and technological, but is at root
> spiritual. We have lost the sense that this Earth is our true home…The
> preservation of the Earth requires a profound shift in consciousness: a recovery
> of more ancient and traditional views that revere the profound connection of all
> beings in the web of life and a rethinking of the relation of both humanity and
> divinity in nature (p. 232).

However, it is important to consider that when a student encounters knowledge
and experience for the first time in a new world of inquiry, they may typically meet, ‘a
layer of conflicts, fears or confusion that perpetuates the deep-seated belief that these
worlds are epistemologically barren’ (Ferrer et al., 2010, p.95). Through macrocosmic
influences, Humberstone (1995) contends that, ‘there is a highly complex
interrelationship between representation, identity construction, gender relations, and the
processes by which power at various levels is realised’ (p.145). This statement
highlights that in any given context situations may present opportunities for
emancipation and possess transformative properties. Humberstone (1995) argues that
the ideological processes shaping these contexts, and the material conditions in which
they manifest, can best be uncovered by, ‘sensitive, reflexive, naturalistic, interpretive research’ (p. 145).

Subsequently, I assert the value of a critical consciousness, as imperative to recognise the interactions of various components informing experience. That is, I ascertain the importance of weaving our own personal truthfulness and morality, within social justness and ethics (Freire, 1972; Wilbur, 2001). This is chiefly evident within Freire’s (1972) pedagogical theories, primarily highlighted in his argument that,

One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge men’s [sic] consciousness…to no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it (p. 28).

This quote from Freire (1972) highlights the essential quest for contemporary and progressive OES pedagogy to broaden horizons within the processes of educational inquiry, in order for learners to establish awareness of the dialectical relations between the dimensions of reality (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010; Freire, 1972; Wilbur, 2001).

Moreover, I argue for the value of meditation practices within OES experiential encounters in wilderness. This is because pedagogical vectors emphasising spiritual growth and awareness of own resources, focussing on intuitive powers and depth through self- agency, can act to liberate beyond given cultural influences (Esbjorn-Hargens et al., 2010)

In light of these statements, I maintain that transformational pedagogy in OES can be achieved through an acute self- inquiry into the ‘shadow’ that manifests in projection onto others. This is acknowledging that particular aspects of self, within the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, may dominate at the expense of the other, ‘leading to a
particular mode of consciousness’ (Griessel & Kotze, 2009, p. 190). It is acknowledging the importance to not overlook a primary intelligence at the nucleus within the layers of confusion, ‘which, if accessed, can heal the root of the conflict while fostering the maturation and epistemic competence of these worlds from within’ (Ferrer et al., 2010, p. 95). I contend just how critical it is to be alert to inequity, consistently maintaining a reflexive approach to disable influential structural power imbalances.

Drawing on all three levels of recommendations from wider policy shifts to individual teacher pedagogical approaches, I will now introduce my own pedagogical model.

6.4.4 The Eco-feminist Journey towards Deep Ecology: A Pedagogical Model

To overcome such dominant discourse relating to adventure hegemony and the ‘masculine’ within OES, there is an urgent need to disengage the current self from the domination of institutional systems. This is harnessing self-agency, power and control within one’s own being, aligned with one’s own beliefs, values and attitudes. To conceptualise these ideas, Figure 6b below, illuminates the processes I suggest towards the expansion of the ‘feminine’. It trails the eco-feminist journey from assumptions based on adventure hegemony in Australian OES, towards deep ecology, which, as I have argued throughout this thesis, promotes both holistic well-being, and a concerted environmental ethic in response to the well-documented and widely-researched environmental disarray of today (Flannery, 2005; Merchant, 1980; Orr, 2004; Plotkin, 2008; Seed et al., 2007; Winter, 2003).
As I suggest in Figure 6b, harnessing eco-feminism as a political metaphor, emphasises the position of the ‘feminine’, dominated by the androcentric and *adventure hegemonies* within OES. Engaging the natural world from an earth-based spirituality approach, through invoking the expansion of the ‘feminine’ (Greenwood, 2005; Grizel & Kotze, 2009; Merchant, 1980; Warren, 2000), is enacted through formal guided meditation. This promotes first-person, subjective learning inquiry to draw out a sense of independent reasoning within personal meaning-making and knowledge acquisition (Wilbur, 2001).

Within the final stages of my proposed model is a post-structural emphasis, which draws on the power of reflexivity within self-agency and individualism, derived from the practical meditation experiences. Theoretically, I am integrating Merleau-Ponty’s philosophies regarding emotional embodiment, in deconstructing meta-
narratives and human-nature; male-female; mind-body; reason-emotion dualisms. I have further highlighted that in order to situate deep ecology within pragmatic rationality, it is important to seek connection to nature (and others) through concrete loving actions, bound by autonomy (Bigwood, 2007).

The final stage of The Eco-feminist Journey towards Deep Ecology, is acknowledging the non-essentialist nature of the ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ psyches within ontologies of holism, and broadening a holistic sense of wellbeing to incorporate the integrity of the natural world, as proposed by Jung (Greenwood, 2005; Griessel & Kotze, 2009; Johnson, 1991). At this stage, there is a robust honouring of the interconnectedness of humans and nature, incorporating an expansive sense of self that acknowledges, honours and embraces the ‘shadow’ through deep introspection.

6.5 Directives for further study

There is scope for more research to be conducted in the topic area of earth-based spirituality within OES pedagogical approaches. I advocate that not only should further inquiry be based on adolescents, but perhaps also in conjunction with OES pre-service teachers, qualified educators working in the industry, outdoor recreation leaders and other community members linked with environmental conservation.

In this study, I employed an ethnographic approach to examine the macrocosm on individual meaning-making and learning acquisition. I suggest future studies of earth-based spiritual approaches within OES, to also entail a longitudinal approach to the methodology. Specifically, examining students and their particular experiences in OES as they move through secondary college from year-7 to year-12 would provide a richer inquiry regarding any shifting perspectives of nature, within evolving ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ archetypes over time.
Reflecting on the elusive and vague nature of Ricky and James’ interaction and engagement with my study, I propose that further research could also explore the reasons underpinning this. In this study I have exposed the androcentric dispositions represented in macrocosmic frameworks of OES, which work to influence and inform the boys’ reluctance to engage with the ‘feminine’ located within earth-based spiritual disposition. I have also traced current pedagogical approaches in OES to be historically located and culturally situated regarding androcentric biases. Yet, questions still abound relating to Ricky and James’ incessant desire to escape interaction with me, and subsequently with my research endeavours.

In addition, it was interesting to note the social exclusion that the three boys on this expedition promoted. Not only did they tend to disregard the wider group, they also had little regard for the natural environment around them. In contrast, I acknowledged a more prominent social interaction amongst the girls, which also extended towards more reflective states regarding the natural world around them. Therefore, further study could inquire as to why the boys isolated themselves to such degree.

Regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motivations relating to environmental ethics, I am particularly interested in perspectives relating to Self Determination Theory (see Deci, 1980, Deci & Ryan, 2000/2012). This theory can be referred to, in the exploration of the particular motivations for environmental consciousness. As such, it examines aspects of competence (mastery), relatedness (connectedness), and autonomy (directing self). Drawing on this model could direct further study, in providing an analytical framework to expose an individual’s self-efficacy and particular levels of fear and denial relating to environmental ethics, within anthropocentric and eco-centric worldviews. For example, in casual conversations with the OES trip leader on this
expedition, he mentioned that he perceived himself to be a skilled cross-country skier. As such, he felt more connected to the natural world around him because the activity seemed effortless, affording a sense of competency, relatedness, and autonomy. Conversely, he explained that he did not have this same level of skill associated with ‘white-water rafting/canoeing/kayaking’. Therefore, as it was more of a struggle to engage with the activity at hand, as his focus was on the physicality of ‘getting-through’, rather than connecting with the natural world around him. His lack of competency and autonomy within ‘white-water rafting/canoeing/kayaking’ resulted in a lack of relatedness to nature.

Therefore, further research could be conducted regarding the particular ‘mode’ of recreation under examination. Considering aspects of competence and autonomy, as the Self Determination Theory posits, students may experience different ‘modes’ of outdoor recreation pursuits (‘rock-climbing/abseiling’, ‘white-water rafting/canoeing/kayaking’, ‘cross-country skiing/snowsports’ and ‘cycling’, etc.) to varying degrees, depending on their ‘sense of self’ in relation to the particular activity. My final reflections ascertain the value of exploring other ‘modes’ of recreation, inquiring as to whether the different physical pursuits within OES, could yield different results regarding student experiences.

6.6 Conclusion

The phenomenon underpinning my research questions was initially conveyed through a narrative of personal experience within the prefatory statement of this thesis. This set the tone for my research, providing pragmatic examples as to why my study is important in the attempt to transform OES experiential pedagogies toward spiritual and emotional learning inquiry while encountering wilderness. My purpose within this study
was to give voice to the subordinate elements within the human-nature; male-female; mind-body; reason-emotion dichotomies, justifying the values of deep ecology approached from eco-feminist lenses, as critical for promoting environmental ethics and holistic wellbeing.

Providing a theoretical overview of the contemporary challenges associated with the human-nature divide, I located my research within the androcentric discourse of OES practices, drawing on ideas that the OES ethos is focused more predominantly on physical pursuits within *adventure hegemonies*. I further explored how physical health and wellbeing at the nucleus of OES experiential endeavours can mitigate the opportunity for spiritual evolutions to occur. I then discussed the methodology I would use, providing a justification for narrative inquiry within emancipatory intents of this study. As depicted in my ePortfolio, the results of this study highlight that adventure ethics became prominent when physical pursuits, within ideas associated with the ‘masculine’, are promoted. Results further demonstrate that when spiritual and emotional learning inquiry through meditation was evident, within ideas of the ‘feminine’, that an environmental ethic was imminent. As such, I argue for pedagogical approaches in OES to include the exploration of both the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’, within a richer, more robust, emotional and spiritual approach to learning. My arguments are supported in drawing on theoretical perspectives from Merleau-Ponty, in my exploration of theoretical perspectives concerning emotional embodiment.

Recommendations of my study therefore include *Rethinking Pedagogical Approaches within OES, Promoting Emotional and Spiritual Inquiry, and Uniting ‘Masculine’ and ‘Feminine’ Ideologies in OES*. Examining socio-cultural and socio-political factors underpinning OES professional practice, my research ultimately seeks
to make recommendations for pedagogies within OES experiential endeavours, to incorporate a higher degree of spiritual and emotional inquiry. Meditation, as a form of spiritual and emotional inquiry can promote a sense of reflexivity in individuals (Griessel & Kotze, 2009; Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Plotkin, 2008). In asking the question, how can OES lend itself to an exploration of self in the world, rather than just an exploration of the world, including spiritual and emotional learning inquiry more frequently and with more valour, will work to rebalance the OES ethos with current adventure hegemonies dominating the wilderness experience. As Ebjorn-Hargens et al. (2010) state,

[We] need to break away from the dichotomising tendencies and explore integrative approaches that will allow intellectual knowing and conscious awareness to be grounded in and enriched by somatic, vital, emotional, aesthetic, intuitive and spiritual knowing without losing their powers of clarity and discrimination (p. 97).

This will have two primary benefits, which are of vital importance. First, a sense of earth-based spirituality can emerge within a holistic sense of wellbeing, co-existing simultaneously with values of deep ecology. Second, embodying deep ecology at an organic and intrinsic level, in acknowledging and appreciating the interconnectedness of humans and nature, will cultivate cogent environmental consciousness within robust environmental ethics.
REFERENCES


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Scotland, J. (2012). Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive, and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching,* 5 (9), 9-16.


APPENDICES
Appendix A
Thematic Experience Analysis:
Mapping the Narrative
**Student Stories**

**Example A**

1. Prefer to be outside
2. At one with nature
3. Away from distractions
4. Not alone
5. Something to base in the self
6. Experience your thoughts
7. Not know your feeling with external influences
8. Away from noise
9. Hope to find inner peace within
10. Sense of grounded

I can connect with all of those
- Physical connection
- Environmental connection
- Feels more and feels less
- Nature

**Example B**

- Natural disposition to enjoying nature
- Meditation
- Allows a deeper connection
- Embroidey what it is
- How does it help you
- Life is meaningful
- True love is not able to be kept
- Accept nature how it is
- The cold I need

Feeling more vulnerable
- Feel more vulnerable when nature
- It becomes quiet
- How does the influence differ from
  - Other people
- Nor as a what happens.
- Nature is in charge
- Nature best after us
- I can understand because of

**Example C**

- Sense of acceptance
- Can access the value of nature
- Better through my presence

Generally, I feel more connected on
camp, but more presence when

**Example D**

1. Current connected
   - Peaceful
   - Happy
   - Adapt
   - Not as much noise
   - Think beauty
   - More mindful
   - Happy

2. Spiritually
   - Connected
   - Change emotions
   - Change attitudes
   - 12 people unique with
   - Several cheerful happy

Not sure if it here
- Challenged
Example E

Example F

Example G

Example H
Example I

Meditation is more feminine!

Masculine need. #1. 

Inappropriate for this trip.

Psyching up for next day.

Everyday life was out of life.

Example J

I care more for feminine because it's kinder and not as harsh as the masculine.

When I'm in the masculine, I want more to compete to get where you need to go.

I admired the feminine because masculine was more endurance and strong. I admired and feminine is more connected.

When I happen I feel more empathy.

In masculine I feel busy and uncomfortable, just looking out for myself.

Example K

Example L
Making sense of the narratives

Example A
Example B

Summary Statements: Hypothesis

Nature detachment is caused by androcentric dispositions of adventure based activity. CAUSE

Nature detachment can be remedied by feminist virtues associated with expanding the dynamic feminine NATURE

Androcentric dispositions of nature is derived from patriarchal orientations of consumerism; outcomes focussed education; competitive marketplace; capitalist ideals. CAUSE

Meditation in wilderness can draw an intrinsic connection between humans and nature, accessing human vulnerability and empathetic values to the broader cosmos. OUTCOME

OES position in HPE framework leads to physical health and wellbeing to be paramount. CAUSE

The homogenisation of ES leads to the status quo of nature as resource to be maintained. CAUSE

Practicing

Defensive questioning of the status quo leads the micro to question the macro. OUTCOME.

Not accessing one’s emotions and spiritual capital leads to a disharmony in holistic health. NATURE (or OUTCOME)

Handling NATURE.

> causes of stress
> nature of stress
> outcomes of stress
> handling stress

Holistic health relies on all pillars to be in harmony: balance (Spiritual, mental, emotional, physical) NATURE

The same ‘life force’ governs humans and the non-human.
Appendix B

Memos & Diagrams
Making sense of the topical links

Example A

Example B

Example C

Example D
Making sense of theoretical underpinnings

Example A

Example B

Example C
Making sense of methodology

Example A

Narrative Inquiry:
- ambiguity, complexity, difficulty & uncertainties
- temporal
- links with present-minded focus
- we meet in past, present & future

past
retarded by place

me

future (counseling ideology)


Appendix C
Ethical Considerations
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO:

Plain Language Statement

Date: 1st November, 2013

Full Project Title: Narratives Exploring Spiritual Pedagogy for Transformative Outdoor & Environmental Studies

Principal Researcher: Dr. Zofia Pawlaczek

Student Researcher: Kathryn Riley

Associate Researcher(s): Dr. Terri Anne Philpott

Purpose of the Research:
You are invited to participate in this project to share your experiences of wilderness, within the outdoor educational context, and explain how such encounters through experiences of meditation and journaling influence a sense of wellbeing within connections to nature.

Methods:
- Pre-trip and post-trip individual interviews of approximately 1-hour in length will be conducted to examine students’ perspectives and interpretation of their wilderness experience.
- The collection of student journaling as interpretations and reflections of their meditation experiences in wilderness.
- Extensive note taking during the daily group debrief and focus group interviews.

Time Commitments:
Your time in this project will take approximately 1-hour pre-expedition and post-expedition for an interview; and approximately 25-minutes per day while on expedition (guided meditation practice and journaling).

Risks:
There are no risks associated with this study.

Expected benefits of this project:
To have developed a narrative that can inform educators on different approaches to teaching outdoor education.

To have presented first-person accounts as evidence to support the idea of using different approaches to teaching outdoor education.

To have contributed to the body of literature on the meaning of spiritual wellbeing and deep ecology. And, to have provided an original thesis on how this phenomenon is capable of transforming a persons’ idea of wilderness conservation.

To have stimulated a discussion on the influence the Health and Physical Education curriculum as a constraint on the philosophies pertaining to outdoor education pedagogies.

Confidentiality:
All participants of this project will be non-identifiable (anonymous) in any published materials, unless prior permission is granted. All research material will be destroyed after the research project has been completed.

How results will be made available:
Results will be shared with the school at the completion of the study.

Monitoring of research:
The Researcher will maintain regular contact with the Principal and Associate Supervisors. Results will be published in thesis form, in peer-reviewed journals and via conference presentations.

Payment:
There is no payment for participation in this project.

Funding:
This study is self-funded. Participants will not incur any financial costs for participating in this project.

Withdrawing from the Project:
You can withdraw at any time by notifying the researcher:
Kathryn Riley
+61 0404 841 461
krile@deakin.edu.au

Complaints
If you have any complaints about any aspect of the project, the way it is being conducted or any questions about your rights as a research participant, then you may contact:

The Manager, Research Integrity, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood Victoria 3125, Telephone: 9251 7129, Facsimile: 9244 6581; research-ethics@deakin.edu.au

Please quote project number 2013-250
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO:

Consent Form

Date:

**Full Project Title:** Narratives Exploring Spiritual Pedagogy for Transformative Outdoor & Environmental Studies

**Reference Number:** 2013-250

________________________________________________________________________________

I have read, and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I freely agree to participate in this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

I have been given a copy of the Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal my identity and personal details, including where information about this project is published, or presented in any public form.

Participant’s Name (printed)

...............................................................

Signature .......................................................... Date .................
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO:

Third Party Consent Form

(To be used by parents/guardians of minor children, or carers/guardians consenting on behalf of adult participants who do not have the capacity to give informed consent)

Date:

Full Project Title: Narratives Exploring Spiritual Pedagogy for Transformative Outdoor & Environmental Studies

Reference Number: 2013-250

I have read, and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I give my permission for …………………………………………………….(name of participant) to participate in this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

I have been given a copy of Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal my identity and personal details, including where information about this project is published, or presented in any public form.

Participant’s Name (printed)

...........................................................................................................

Name of Person giving Consent (printed)

...........................................................................................................

Relationship to Participant:

...........................................................................................................

Signature ................................................................. Date............
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO:

Organisational Consent Form

(To be used by organisational Heads providing consent for staff/members/patrons to be involved in research)

Date:

Full Project Title: Narratives Exploring Spiritual Pedagogy for Transformative Outdoor & Environmental Studies

Reference Number: 2013-

I have read, and I understand the attached Plain Language Statement.

I give my permission for…………………………………………………………………………………
of…………………………participate in this project according to the conditions in the Plain Language Statement.

I have been given a copy of Plain Language Statement and Consent Form to keep.

The researcher has agreed not to reveal the participants’ identities and personal details if information about this project is published or presented in any public form.

I agree that

1. The institution/organisation MAY / MAY NOT be named in research publications or other publicity without prior agreement.

2. I / We DO / DO NOT require an opportunity to check the factual accuracy of the research findings related to the institution/organisation.

3. I / We EXPECT / DO NOT EXPECT to receive a copy of the research findings or publications.

Name of person giving consent (printed)…………………………………………………………

Signature ……………………………… Date………………………………………………
PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

TO:

Withdrawal of Consent Form

(To be used for participants who wish to withdraw from the project)

Date:

Full Project Title: Narratives Exploring Spiritual Pedagogy for Transformative Outdoor & Environmental Studies

Reference Number: 2013-250

________________________________________________________________________________

I hereby wish to WITHDRAW my consent to participate in the above research project and understand that such withdrawal WILL NOT jeopardise my relationship with Deakin University and/or the Outdoor Education Group.

Participant Name (printed) …………………………………………………………………

Signature………………………………………………………………Date: …………………

Please mail or email this form to:

Student Researcher:
Kathryn Riley
11 Brickworks Lane, Northcote, 3070
+61 404 841 461; krile@deakin.edu.au

Alternately, the Principal or associate researchers may be contacted:

Principal Supervisor: Dr. Zofia Pawlaczek
+61 (03) 924 68161
zofia.pawlaczek@deakin.edu.au

Associate Supervisor: Dr. Terri Anne Philpott
+61 (03) 990 44418
terrianephilpott@me.com
Appendix D
Correspondence with the Research School
26/06/2013

Dear (individual name),

I hope this email finds you well.

I am following up in regards to our conversation regarding the opportunity to participate in the OES fieldtrip to conduct my Masters research. At this stage, I am hoping to participate in the hike that you originally suggested in November of this year.

Please find attached my research abstract, which provides more details about this research.

I look forward to hearing from you soon to arrange a meeting.

Warm regards,

Kathryn
Appendix E

Interview Questionnaire Sample
General Questions

1. How would you describe your current level of connection to nature/wilderness?
   Prompting points:
   - As something deeply connected to: empowered sense of self (spiritual values; soulful connection)
   - As something to explore through physical pursuits: strength and fitness (physical values; sensual connection)
   - As something to protect and conserve: a sense of moral obligation (mental values; mindful connection)
   - As something to retreat to: home and sanctuary (emotional values; heartfelt connections)
   (adapted from Porteous, 1996, cited in Ashley, 2007).
      a. Why do you believe to identify with this?

2. How would you describe your perceptions of earth-based spirituality?
   a. Is this something you have been familiar with in your life?

3. How would you describe how self-aware you feel?
   a. Why do you think this?

4. How would you describe your attitudes and behaviours towards environmental conservation?
   a. Where do you think that has originated from?

5. How would you describe your experiences of hiking during this expedition?

6. How would you describe your experiences of meditation during this expedition?
   a. Has this influenced a sense of earth-based spirituality and/or sense of spiritual wellbeing?

7. How do you perceive ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine’?

8. How would you describe any shifting perspectives of self in relation to wilderness that you will incorporate into your everyday life?