PAY08156

Phenomenological deconstruction, slow pedagogy and the corporeal turn in wild environmental/outdoor education.

Phillip G. Payne and Brian Wattchow, Monash University

Australian Association for Research in Education:
International Education Research Conference, 2008.
Brisbane, Australia.

Changing Climates: Education for Sustainable Futures

Abstract:
A 'slow pedagogy of place' in (environmental/outdoor) education has been enacted by the two authors over the past three years in a third year undergraduate semester-long unit named *'Experiencing the Australian Landscape'* (*EAL*). An integrated practical and theoretical, de and reconstruction of fast pedagogies is now needed, we believe, if education is to make a positive contribution to overcoming the ecologically problematic human condition. *EAL* fosters an embodied sensory-perceptual and conceptual-theoretical 'sense' or 'possibility' of place while assisting its participants to understand the relations of their body and nature, in time and space, as they are experienced phenomenologically.

We hope the notion of a slow ecopedagogy prompts a reversal of the precarious prospects for experiential education in schooling and acts as a critique of the 'take-away' pedagogies proliferating in education.

Key words:
Body, time, phenomenology, place, wild, edge, ecopedagogy, experiential education

Notes on Contributors:
Phillip and Brian are members of the Movement, Environment and Community (MEC) Research Node in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. MEC advances two broad platforms in its research, teaching, higher degree supervision and community engagements. Our scholarly aim is to contribute to the development of active living communities and ecologically sustainable living as they occur in outdoor recreations and sports. At a pedagogical level, we develop the 'evidence-base' about the value, richness and efficacy of experiential education. At a theoretical level, we contribute to the philosophy of social-ecology. MEC's 'ecological' and 'transdisciplinary' approach to research directly informs and reflects developments in our undergraduate Sport and Outdoor Recreation programs and are an example of research-led-teaching and education-led-research.
Phillip.payne@education.monash.edu.au
Brian.Wattchow@education.monash.edu.au

Looking Back to Edge Forward

Our 'slow pedagogy of place' highlights the importance of the body in an education with various environments - as those bodies are lived in and over times in 'natural' spaces. A slow pedagogy, or ecopedagogy, allows us to pause or dwell in spaces for more than a fleeting moment and, therefore, encourages us to attach and receive meaning from that 'place.' This paper provides insights into how a slow pedagogy was conceived and constructed by the two authors, and what slowing down a bit invites us to achieve in environmental education.

Our version of slow pedagogy emphasizes the role of the body(ies) in learning experiences and, therefore, takes seriously the 'corporeal' and 'intercorporeal turns' in philosophy and nature discourses (for example, Merleau-Ponty, 1962, Grosz, 2004). That is, for any pedagogy claiming responsiveness to the ecologically problematic human condition, there needs to be a shift in emphasis from focusing primarily on the 'learning mind' to re-engaging the active, perceiving body and other bodies in 'making-meaning' in, about and for the various environments and places in which those bodies interact and relate to nature.

This pedagogical turn to an 'ecocentric intercorporeality' remains on the margins in education – even in 'critical' versions of environmental, outdoor, physical, health and sustainable educations. For example, outdoor environmental education remains trapped in a cultural logic of skilled activities and safe performance in the outdoors where the depth of learning is too often assumed to correlate with the greater amount of distance traveled and elevation gained, or challenge manufactured and risk encountered. Put differently, the organic 'primitiveness' of the body and its biological, circadian and cosmological times of existence and experience are subordinated to a socially constructed, instrumentally quantified and commodified notion and practice of Euclidean space – for example, the many kilometers to be covered in a successful bushwalk/backpack/tramp or overcoming the technical difficulty and subjective risk/challenge of the numerically graded climb, rapid or slope (Payne, 2003a). Conventional forms of environmental education suffer from similar time constructions, constraints and demands. Field trips, for example, are difficult to undertake due to a wide variety of timetabling, financial, staffing, safety and bureaucratic reasons. All too often, the alleged environmental or outdoor 'experience' is 'squeezed in' according to some pre-determined learning objectives and is unable to inform or reflect what occurs in the classroom, or school, or home, or in the everyday.

In the past, the sometimes self-proclaimed 'alternative' or 'critical' curriculum discourse of environmental education made serious claims about 'doing' and learning through a rarely articulated idea of 'experience' and, often, it was hoped that such an experience would occur in a participatory fashion and interdisciplinary mode. More recently, this same discourse has demonstrated its real vulnerability to the fast, take-away, virtual, globalized, download/uptake versions of the electronic pedagogy – a technology or technics of experience (Payne, 2003b/2006). We feel this 'fast' trajectory in environmental education constitutes yet another undermining of the prospects of experiential education and, therefore, 'dis'embodiment, 'dis'embedding, 'de'contextualizing and 'dis'placement of the many and varied qualities of face-to-face interactions and relations with others, including 'nature.' Fast, techno, virtual and abstract pedagogies in environmental education (Payne, 2003b/2006) and outdoor education (Wattchow, 2001) undermine those calls for 'immersive' experiences, 'authentic' learning, 'ecological literacy' or 'reimagining' of our relationships with nature.

And, we suspect, the increasingly popular notion of 'place pedagogy' is also vulnerable to the fast imperatives. Our slow experiential and ecopedagogy of place addresses some of the concerns outlined above. John Dewey (1938/1988, p. 31) called for an "intelligent theory…or philosophy of experience" – if, indeed, education was to move beyond the "social control" of fashionable "intellectual breezes" he detected that regularly "blow along." Place pedagogy might be a candidate for either an intelligent theory (of experiential education), or yet another fad. Dewey's call has largely met with silence, or remains invisible, in the discourses of environmental and outdoor educations, despite frequent reference to the importance of his contributions to experiential learning and education.

We worry that the power and promise of place pedagogies in environmental/outdoor and experiential education might be engulfed by the lure of the fast and, in turn, be systemically pressured to become an ambiguous or amorphous pedagogy of 's(pl)ace.' We use this unfortunate term advisedly, following Dewey, to negatively highlight the fashionable use of the term 'space' in education discourses that, upon closer scrutiny, might well reconstitute the ideology of the fast.

Edging into the wild

However, given the inevitability in education of academically-popular intellectual breezes, we also see the wild notion of (s)place in positive terms. The hybrid term splace might also make visible the concept of 'edge' - a central theme in the 'slow pedagogy' case study of *Experiencing the*

Australian Landscape (EAL) we describe below and how it, in pedagogical practices acted, indeed, in a wild, untamed and reconstructively 'other' way. To be sure, our slow, edged and splace pedagogy brought to our students' 'lived experience' a different sense of 'times.' It was also practiced over an extended period of (experiential) time in ways where participants also 'came to' geographically and culturally embody the historical anglo-Australian tension between the romanticized outback/inland/bush and the recreational/colonizing use of the otherwise threatening seas and oceans that the majority of Australians live, day-in day-out, on or near the coastal fringe/edge/margin. Herein, slow pedagogy acts as a form of phenomenological deconstruction at the personal, social, cultural and ecological 'layers' of experience – in this instance the way in which third year undergraduate students enrolled in the unit were able to excavate much of the cultural and identity 'baggage' that they brought to their 'lived' learning in and about, for example, human-nature conceptions, constructions and practices.

Given the historical and central role of experiential education in environmental, outdoor and now place pedagogies, and the nascent scholarly interest in the (inter)corporeal and ecocentric turns in various forms of contemporary theory, we feel it is timely for educators to re-turn their pedagogical gazes to the 'wild' primordiality of the body and how it is positioned and reflected in increasingly 'cultured' versions of time, space and 'nature.' Bodies and nature, are still 'other' and have yet to be fully tamed (Griffiths, 2006). For this to occur, the time(s) of the body(ies) of learners in experiential encounters in and with splaces must be attentive to or inspired by, for example, notions like 'the praise for slow' (Honore, 2004), the 'secret pulse of time' (Klein, 2006), the 'politics of silence' (Sim, 2007) and 'time geographies' (Levine, 1997).

There is a different level of inspiration, analysis and critique in this paper that might equally inform pedagogical, reflective practice and research/inquiry innovation in the ethico-political dimensions of environmental education. Elizabeth Grosz (2004) emphasized the centrality of the ontology of time to questions about ethics and politics. Her account of time informs our concluding recommendation for a revised politic and ethic of environmental and experiential education.

In what follows below in our account of an ecopedagogy of place, we outline how the corporeal and ecocentric turns, applied to experiential education, might more productively inform our curricula and research efforts to slowly introduce our students to a wilder, edgier sense of place and splace. Most importantly, we illustrate via the case study of slow pedagogy how an experientially education driven and phenomenological deconstruction of given views of place and environmental education provides a serious alternative to the acceleration of fast pedagogies in education.

***Experiencing the Australian Landscape* – A Slow Pedagogy of Wild/Edgy Discovery**

Experiencing the Australian Landscape (EAL) is a third year undergraduate unit we have taught for the past three years. For simplicity sake, following Dewey's call for an intelligent theory of experience, and experiential education, we refer to two interrelated programs in *EAL* that make up the unit's social-ecology; namely an academic learning program (*alp*) and experiential learning program (*elp*). Their slow recyclical 'conversation' throughout the semester of 12 weeks constitutes our practical definition of 'experiential education.' The unit's *alp* slowness includes 6-7 somewhat irregular (or is it planned spontaneity?) half or day-long class/indoor seminars devoted to theoretical and conceptual development, or mind learning through language and text, and associated readings and assignment work undertaken at home. These irregular but carefully sequenced 'blocks' of time depart from the conventional timetabling practices regulated by our university but retain face-to-face contact as distinct from the related pressure to up'load' units to 'flexible' electronic means and related modes of allegedly efficient 'teaching.'

The *elp* included two 3 day coastal/outdoor experiences at Bear Gully, a camping ground, on the southern Victorian Coastal edge fronting onto the wild waters of Bass Strait. The two *elp* experiences provided numerous opportunities for intensive bodily sensation and consciousness/perception 'discovery' (first *elp*) and six weeks later 'rediscovery' (second *elp*) experiences. Each is described separately below although they overlap with each other and are recycled conversationally in the *alp* seminar blocks.

'In-between' *alp* and *elp* activities included group food planning and preparation for the 2 camps, following Carlos Petrini's 'slow food' principles, including the sourcing of produce (often organic) from within a 100 kilometre radius of the Peninsula campus.

Bear Gully, the *elp* site of the two 3 day edge/splace experiences, is a small, unremarkable overused coastal camping spot in a State Park in Victoria, Australia. For some, the location Bear Gully, like the Peninsula campus of Monash from where we work, might be a place worth pausing or dwelling in and developing a sense of connection or relation; for others a space that is to be passed or surfed through; hence our deliberately ambivalent and ambiguous use of splace. The blend of culture and nature at Bear Gully is evident. So too at the Peninsula campus that lies in a densely populated urban environment and is only a few kilometers from beaches in Port Phillip Bay. Our largely mobile student population rarely visit the local bayside beaches, they being an unattractive option to many exotic others further along the bay, or Oceanside, that are filled recreationally with sun, sand and surf. Bear Gully is about two hours drive from the Peninsula campus and attracts a mix of base camping families and 'plug in,' or 'motorized ant' (Leopold, 1966) recreational vehicle/caravan retiree campers.

The timing of the seminars prior to the first Bear Gully Discovery *elp* was aimed at expanding and extending the temporal backgrounds and horizons of students. We wanted students to understand what they bring, assume or presuppose about learning and, therefore, their sense of 'self,' or identity,' including previous environmental experiences and encounters. To get at this historical/temporal 'baggage' and the idea of (ontologically) 'reassembling the self' (Rose, 1996), we focused slowly in the combination of seminars and required readings on reclaiming the past via some 'memory-work' (Kaufman et al., 2001) where students reflected on their earlier childhood (in)significant experiences of favorite places (for example, Payne, 1999). Seminar content was devoted to examining some of the assumptions they had developed in the past, but were still presenced in time, perhaps as socially-constructed/cultural preconceptions about 'being-in-the-environment' and 'nature,' or in favorite places. Various readings assigned to students early in the semester acted as probes for this environmental memory-work. Other readings leading into the first Bear Gully *EAL* focused on the coast as edge, about which we elaborate shortly. Our task in the early part of the unit was to assist students to a) 'excavate,' identify and describe and b) examine the ecological, cultural, social and personal backgrounds each brought to their university learning and took to the 'bush' or the 'beach' from the past, to the present and, as will be explained shortly, in the short-term future to Bear Gully. This indoor/*alp* pedagogy might be described as the rediscovery of various sediments of experiences and places in the body/mind. At no time was 'slow pedagogy' or 'time' mentioned given the phenomenological and deconstruction the lived experience purposes of the first *elp* of the Bear Gully Discovery.

(i) *ELP 1* - Coastal Discovery Experience

The first 3 day Discovery *elp* occurs in late Summer; the second in May, so that seasonal variation of light, dark, mood, weather and temperature, and so on, could be 'known' as a bodily perceptual/sensory response and experiential comparison. The timing of the *elp* are planned to coincide with a full moon, for a range of discovery/exploratory reasons, including intrinsic/aesthetic ones. But, somewhat strategically, the full moon experience allows students to understand high tidal contrasts and working with nature where 'nature' might "guide" some of the experiences of rock-pooling, beach-walking (Gatty, 1958).

In early *alp* seminars, students self-select into a number of groups (8-13 students in each group). Each group was given a document that introduced the experiential learning possibilities posed in three 'localising' questions (Berry, 1987, p. 146):

> What is here?
> What will nature permit us to do here?
> What will nature help us do here?

The first *elp* is, mainly, teacher-driven, designed to introduce students only to some different ways of being/knowing/researching. Nine separate experiential sessions of between 1.5 and 2.5 hours have been developed by the two authors. The experiences (we try to avoid the term activity because of its connotations) include (rock)pooling, (beach)combing, snorkelling, gnome-tracking, dwelling, edging, history, inter-tidal and macro-micro. These experiences range across a number of disciplines and approaches to inquiry and invoking of an initial 'sense' of place – scientific through to imaginary to historical to meditative, from bizarre to standard, from tamed to untamed. During this first Discovery *elp*, students explore, discover and live, albeit temporarily over three days and according to the structure and timing of the nine experiences, within the immediate 'setting' known as Bear Gully. At most, some students might wander no more than 500 metres from the camp spot.

In the *alp* seminars, and in other Discovery preparations (eg 100km. menu planning, provision), each group made choices following encouragements to also consider the 'social' nature of the *elp*/*alp* conversation. Which seven would they prefer? What 'experiencing' in activities were they planning to do, but with an openness for spontaneity and, in what sequence? Will they need to work around the tides for activities like rock pooling and beach combing? When will they program more physical activities like exploring the underwater reefs via snorkelling and more passive activities like reading a storybook? All of these decisions were made by the groups. Did they leave time and space for disappearances from their peers? How might 'in-between' times be used? Implicit to the experiences each group planned was the need for an awareness of time and its 'competition' in structuring the 3 days.

Other connections between the *alp* and *elp* are deliberately structured in the unit's design and pedagogy. For example, in the on-campus *alp* students are taken from the indoor lecture theatre outdoors to rehearse for what they might discover more wildly at Bear Gully. Pairs practiced mapping different natural and urban noises in a forested part of the campus. This could be repeated at Bear Gully in a 'solo' meditative/dwelling experience where, for, example, the politics of silence and stillness, as practices campaigned for theoretically by Sim (2007), are experienced and, indeed, lived by many students. Space/word/textual limits prevent other descriptions, so we move to a thematic summary of practice where we focus on the conversation of an abiding and recurring theme in Australian history and, more recently, cultural studies, as each relates to the *EAL* possibility for students of the 'outcome' of a sense of place, space or splace.

Bear Gully and the Australian Edge

It is easy to underestimate the significance of the interaction between the student's freshly embodied encounter with Bear Gully and their preconceived, socially constructed baggage of ideas and ideals that each brought to the coast. Indeed, it is within the experiential recycling of bodily experience, memoried and imagined ideas, that occurs repeatedly throughout the semester, and intensely so at Bear Gully, that we feel the most interesting learning, or "*becoming*," occurs (Grosz, 2004).

The coast, or edge, is a powerful metaphor and reality in Anglo-Australian culture. This is true also for the majority of our students who have grown up experiencing the coast primarily through recreational activities like swimming and surfing, holiday camping, fishing, surf lifesaving. This anthropocentric logic is reinforced elsewhere. The leisure and pleasure image is (re)presented in numerous media imageries in tourism marketing and popular television programs like 'Sea Change' and 'Home and Away' that won international audiences. These taken-for-granted lifestyle qualities and characteristics of the beach are factors that (critically) attracted us to a coastal location like Bear Gully for *EAL*. Whilst the desert in Australia may have its correlate in 'The North' in Canada (in the ways that it is remote, under populated, and experienced more in the imagination than the body for the average citizen), coastal places in Australia have the quality of the everyday. Demographically (with major environmental implications), the vast majority of Australians live near the coastal fringe/edge. Human-induced climate change's rising sea-levels are suggesting the need for an imminent 'escape' from the coast from many of those who escaped to the beach many years ago for lifestyle reasons!

Despite this deeply ingrained, popular and romantic construction of life 'on the beach' it has taken some time in Australia for the heroic image of 'the outback' and the 'bushman' to be replaced with more meaningful cultural symbols drawn from the places where most people actually live. Ambivalence and ambiguity can be found in the cultural 'identity' of many Anglo-Australians. Philip Drew (1994) argued that Australians are only just beginning to develop a significant responsiveness to the coastal edge.

> Whatever is meant by Australia as an idea, it is no longer centred in the interior empty heartland, rather, it is outside on the rind around the periphery of the continent. The persistent imagery of a dead centre will have to be replaced by the living edge if Australians are ever to come to terms with where they actually live. (p. 41)

Yet the Anglo-Australian experience of the coastal edge is a paradoxical one, as it increasingly is for our students whose everyday postmodern lives insist on the fast, the urban, the gadget, the 'choice-ridden' take-away. Despite our maritime origins, at least for those settler Australians of mainly European and Asian heritage who traveled across various oceans to arrive (and colonize) various geographies or social ecologies, Australians are not a people of the sea. For example, travel by sea is now rare while sailing, skin an SCUBA diving, and sea-kayaking are minor forms of 'modern' recreation (Broeze, 1998). The far horizon and wide expanse of the sea represents, for most, the other and wild of the unknown, archetypal, empty space stretching all the way from the southern shore lines, where we discover and then rediscover Bear Gully for six days, to Antarctica.

As a coastal people, according to the Australian author Tim Winton (1993, p. 21) "we are content on the edge of things." With the empty ocean on one side and the vast desert on the other, we cling to the edge; "the essence of Australia is the open boundary. Loose and open", concludes Drew (1994, p. 122). This comfortable edge zone is dynamic - physically (with its tides, currents, storms and shifting vegetation), socially and, evidently, culturally.

But beneath the cultural veneer of the convenience and comfort of the edge lurks a different sense and practice of what 'being' on the edge really entails. For example, recent race riots on Sydney's beaches between 'nationals' (those who saw themselves as new patriots for Australian values) and 'ethnics' (newer migrants of middle eastern heritage) saw different territorial claims being made on the (beach)place. It was a stark reminder to the Australian population that big changes remain on the edge, be it in early settler and pioneering times or now in 'settled' forms of social identification and environmental, or place, association.

The extended conversation, over time in different sites/locations, of our *alp* and *elp* brings these tensions to the surface and invites them to reconsider the significance of a coastal place such as Bear Gully. Typically, on the second *alp* students investigate some of the competing cultural/economic and indigenous histories of nearby Walkerville, a 2 hour coastal walk from Bear Gully. But, we feel, they do this by 'living' the edge and embodying some of the tensions outlined above, and not by studying it only from the displaced comfort of a textual only construction of Australian cultural studies.

At the more immediate level of a different 'way of doing/knowing,' a strongly contrasting example is offered. What seems like a fairly straight-forward experience of (rock)pooling (patiently observing, musing and learning about the ecology of a pool of water left on the reef between tides) is, we acknowledge, resisted by students – but often leads to a different edgy twist in 'becoming' that is illustrated below where we provide the reflective lyrics for a song written about the experience of pooling and toe-dipping.

Most students expect the coastal edge to be an anthropomorphized and anthropocentric 'place' of recreational action in the surf and relaxation on the beach, not an ecocentric place of patient observation and slow (re)engagement with the spatially proximal and temporally immediate of nature's qualities and characteristics. Some delight in identifying the life forms they find in the littoral zone whilst 'beachcombing,' carefully sketching them and annotating their sketches with useful information. At the end of the combing encounter Brian turns it into a simple geology lesson, using a stick to sketch in the sand the region's geology, demonstrating how the Bear Gully reef was formed, and how it provides the structure, the 'home,' for most of the life forms they have been observing. Experiences like 'Macro-Micro' have the students examine minute aspects of their immediate environment (such as a small patch of sand, or a small coastal plant) and attempt to discover how it is connected to the surrounding landscape. A larger understanding of how Bear Gully itself 'lives' begins to emerge for the students through this variety of their own 'lived' inquiries.

And another contrasting example of a 'remarkable' way of doing/knowing/becoming (Payne, in press). We offer this to illustrate the pedagogical possibility of (re)imagining and practicing a sense of place in the elp at Bear Gully. Aldo Leopold (1966) made the call to outdoor recreators and educators to take on the task of encouraging 'receptivity into the still unlovely human mind.' Phil conducts a gnome-tracking experience for closed-minded skeptics (Payne, 2006). This experience includes the on-site 'story telling' with some reading of the voyage of discovery to the 'unknown land' (Australia) of Hairy Peruvian gnomes about 500 years ago (Ingpen, 1980; Ingpen, with Mayor-Cox, 2004). This remarkable textual and corporeal experience aims to foster a more-than-human exploration of the immediate Bear Gully environment for indicators or evidence of gnome inhabitation, noting gnomes do not reveal themselves to skeptics who, invariably or always, are adult disbelievers. This surreal gnome experience is aimed at complementing but disturbing the kind of scientific certainty and rationality about coasts/oceans provided in many education settings. And which we consciously offer and model in some of the other experiences where, for example, Brian paints a geological lesson of Bear Gully, as a post-script to the pooling and combing encounters with the edge. As might be expected, students exhibit a wide variety of responses to these alternative remarkable, meditative/still and imaginary/wild experiences cued on the above. Responses to the gnome tracking experience range from persistent skepticism, to cynicism, to amusement, to confusion, to mild acceptance and to sheer delight. Irrespective, the phenomenology of the experience carries with it a high degree of 'embodied dissonance' – a key dimension of our phenomenological deconstruction.

Overall, most all of the students interpret the first *elp* at Bear Gully as a constrained and highly structured encounter. They return confused. Where they anticipated freedom and pleasure, instead they experienced a structured program of extended but still structured and constrained experiences, interdisciplinary inquiries, and multiple departures from the singular starting point: "What is here? What will nature permit us to do here? What will nature help us to do here?" (Berry, 1987, p. 146).

(ii) *- ELP 2* Coastal and Cultural Re-discovery Experience - A Conference by the Sea

In the seminar between the two Bear Gully visits we, as staff, 'loosen up' the concepts of time, edge and place and how different kinds of learners (such as artists, musicians, and creative writers) make forays into the outdoors and the kind of things they discover. The combination of the structured introduction to Bear Gully on the first *elp* and the 'licence' to be much more creative and to launch speculative inquiries seems to trigger a creative desire in the students during the second visit where large parts of the program are handed over to them to plan and teach.

This begins the process of preparing for the Rediscovery of Bear Gully Conference, noting a major change in the weather/climate is guaranteed. This time, small groups of two to three students devise a series of two hour experiences that they will 'lead' with their peers. This Rediscovery takes the form of a 'Conference by the Sea.' Non-leading students individually choose from parallel streams of experiences prepared by their peers for the three days. These experiences are, in keeping with the conference theme, nested within a larger program of meal breaks, celebratory dinner, time out, and whole group discussions about events of general, conceptual or thematic interest. This rediscovery *elp* is almost totally 'student centred' and driven. Prior to rediscovery *elp* the various self-forming groups of two to three students devise and submit an abstract of their experiential proposal. By necessity, these abstracts are sorted by Phil and Brian into the conference program that individual students 'sign up' for upon return to Bear Gully.

One mandatory requirement of the Rediscovery *elp* is that, immediately upon arrival, students 'recycle' to the same spot where they had 'felt' and 'breathed' the 'stillness' experienced on the first Discovery. 'Embodied-memory,' as already indicated, is a vital dimension of the question of how time might pedagogically be understood, and ignored in education, but is yet another key to the student deconstructive practice and idea of 'slow.' In devising their 'experiential sessions,' we did indicate to students that the geographical and activity-basis boundaries from the first *elp* no longer applied. We indicated that the phenomenologically deconstructive experiences we modeled *might* be extended in different ways to include aspects of social and cultural history, indigenous studies and contemporary ethics/politics of the 'place', noting topical issues in the area include the development of 'wind power' farms and the State government's proposal to build a massive water desalination plant nearby.

Again, some examples. Over the three years of *EAL,* groups have devised numerous experiences. A constant, presumably by word of mouth from one cohort to the next, is a beach-walk along the edge to a local heritage area at Walkerville, mentioned above. Often, the 'walk' and its three student guides introduce peers to the European cultural history of the surrounding area. Constant over the three years is the student 'temporal/historical' aim of 'revealing our settler/pioneering/colonizing past.' Impossible to walk at high tide, students venture approximately four kilometres south of Bear Gully and explore the lime kilns around the Walkerville area, some of which are being restored by volunteers and local government 'workers.' Spontaneous 'interviews' with these workers have occurred. Students often inquire about the coastal trade between Walkerville and Melbourne in the late 19thC. Restoration techniques used on the kilns are carefully examined by curious students. In some instances, student groups spend hours in a small, run down cemetery, now being restored, on the hill behind the lime kilns. They muse over the 'family' tree indicated on the grave stones – where young and old are buried. They ponder and wonder. These historical experiences of place and contested territories and purposes provides yet again another dimension of 'slow' in time, as cultural history and its forgetting and, maybe, a different take on the sense of place.

Another popular experience run by students is found in object sculpture, triggered in Brian's seminar about the question of the 'representation of place' through the viewing of some of the Scottish artist Andy Goldsworthy's works. Student's sculptures are often highly symbolic mosaics of shells, trails of coloured seaweeds, spirals of pebbles. They are a re-encountering of the kind of objects they 'studied' on the first Bear Gully *elp*, but in an aesthetically different, non-scientific way (Payne, 2005a). At the end of the session, students often talk about the work of making the sculpture and its meaning, often struggling for the kind of language needed to articulate the experience of creativity.

Numerous other experiences are devised: Writing dreaming (creation) stories in the local indigenous language, and role playing debates between tourism developers and preservationist campaigners are further examples. The above sampling is suggestive only of how each *elp* occurs and how each sequentially relates to the *alp* seminars. As might be expected, the 'change' from late Summer to early winter invokes numerous 'different/wild/other' sensory, perceptual, conceptual approaches and responses to the socio-ecological nature of the Bear Gully location and locale, or possible/potential 'sense' of place. To be sure, we concede the persistence in the overall program of linear, measurable time.

Re-presenting the Other of the Wild and Edged

But, what about the meaning-making opportunities for participants? Again, there is far too much to describe here. We focus on one 'strategy' only. We encouraged students to subjectively 'capture' embodied experiences as quickly as possible after each experience and before other social constructions or events 'washed over' the sensory, perceptual bases of the experience. We wanted to minimize in their 'conceptualization' of the meanings of the experience the influences of peer/teacher 'talk' about the experience. Richard Shusterman's (2008) *Body Consciousness* devotes a chapter to the idea of 'redeeming somatic reflection' and uses John Dewey's account of the essential body-mind unity in experiential inquiry to demonstrate how such a unity might occur. Related to that, our assumption here is that 'talk' can sometimes 'get in the way' of how the body makes somatic, intuitive, emotional meaning of experiences before they can be conceptualized via language. Language can only ever be an approximation of experience where, indeed, what is 'felt' and 'voiced' or 'written' sometimes correlates, sometimes doesn't (Payne, 2005b). We note here the problem in much experiential education of the teacher-controlled 'de-brief' and potential for its 'colonization' of the experience of the participant/subject (Brown, 2004)

On both *elp's*, students make entries (written, illustrations, poems, samples, momentary insights) into a field journal (typically a blank cartridge art journal) that, as best as possible, represents 'experiential data' (van Manen, 1997). This 'experiential theory' as a source of somatic reflection, or somaesthetics (Shusterman, 2008) and, eventually, 'memory-work' (Kaufman, et al., 2001) is used selectively by students in discussions during the *elp's* and, again, acts as a 're-presentational' bridge to later *alp's*. We encourage students to revisit the experiential data for the final reflective/memory assignment they are required to submit at semester's end. During *elp's* we recommend to students that any effort to represent the felt experience should be a possible 'add on' only and never should they be 'slaves' to that process.

As indicated earlier, we include, with permission of the student song-writer, extracts from the lyrics he wrote after the first Discovery *elp* to Bear Gully using the experiential data he jotted down about his profound 'rockpooling' experience. He sung this as part of the 'entertainment' after the 'Conference Dinner' on the first night of the second *Rediscovery – Conference by the Sea elp*. The song is called 'Dip your feet in' and written by a self-confessed initial critic of the experiential encounter of spending a few stationary hours patiently observing a rockpool. Apparently bored, he took his shoes off and put his feet in the water to, we interpret, *become* other than bored with the time now available to him through this wild, edged experience.

So, go on and dip your feet in,
Who knows what might happen once you've been,
Give your life a miss now; you make your fate,
Don't sit around thinking then it was too late.

You have a chance, should you pass it up,
Push on through and treat it as half full cup,
There are positives here to what can be drawn,
Not necessarily a decision by dawn,
Go go go on, Dip your feet in,
Go go go on, Dip your feet in.

The combination of body consciousness, somatic reflection, experiential journal and memory-work is, therefore, a crucial attempt to partially re-present the corporeal engagement in time and space. Other parts of the experience are best left to silence (Sim, 2007). The combination encourages students to document the present/now and, throughout the semester, provides an embodied/memoried means to revisit/recall what has passed. We are utterly vigilant to the ways in which textual distraction might occur and the 'colonization' and 'dispossession' by us of the experiencer's experience.

Typically, through the student's experiential journal, the final assignment often shows and tells via different forms of representation a highly personal but social and ecological meaning-making and learning journey that slowly unfolds over the extended academic time of the *alp*/*elp* 'conversation.' We often read how the predictable and the unexpected, the visible and, often previously 'invisible' are discovered while 'wild' fragments of the otherwise banal 'other' are recorded via a variety of representational means – words, sketches and even a spontaneously constructed 'play.'

The Intercorporeal/Ecocentric Turn, Phenomenology as Deconstructive Slow Experiential Education and Ecopedagogy

We recognize that, potentially and probably, we are still 'socially constructing place' in *EAL*. But, hopefully, via critical and reflexive means for ourselves and participant learners. We acknowledge that students respond in different ways to *EAL's* 'conversation' between the *elp* and *alp*. Some won't ever believe in gnomes! But there is an additional clue in this slow recyclical phenomenological deconstruction that indicates some of our politics of ecopedagogy and reflexive approaches to inquiry into practice.

In the above descriptions of different components and characteristics of the semester-long *EAL* we have stressed how time works in different ways conceptually and experientially throughout the *alp and elp* conversation. Gnoming time is different to edging time and is different to placing or splacing time that, in turn, is different to the various ways 'block' seminars were timetabled and conducted. Slow operates differently in each – longer conversational breaks over snacks in a block seminar – taking or making time to 'dip your toe in' -- but we feel slow is best presenced and understood in the 'recycling' of all of the different 'parts' of *EAL*. The sum is greater than the parts! Thus, their body-time-space or 'social ecology' is fundamental to, in this instance, our quest for an intelligent theory *and* practice of experiential education. The slowness of this social ecology gestures, critically, to the ecocentric and embodied possibility of a place sensibility. *Slow* pedagogy, therefore, is a carefully considered 'placing' and practice of the sorts of phenomenologies of education that the reconstructive Dewey and perceptive Leopold might agree with.

But, in conclusion, we do wish to comment on the 'political' nature of slow pedagogy that, in some respects, is consistent with the principles and practices of the slow food movement (Singer & Mason, 2004, Murdoch, 2006) and its ethical responses to the 'fast' and 'global' of the food industry. There are lessons to be learned in education. Time, again, is at the heart of this ethico-political renewal in various practices, be it eating slow food, or developing *EAL,* both of which aspire in different ways to a form of place/nature/cultural pedagogy. Elizabeth Grosz (2004) makes the case well for time to be central in our political efforts. Grosz's reminder to social, political, and cultural theorists, particularly those interested in feminism, antiracism and the politics of globalization, to which we add ecological politics and place ethics, is that "…they have forgotten a crucial dimension of research." Grosz notes, "We have forgotten the nature, the ontology, of the body, the conditions under which bodies are enculturated, psychologized, given identity, historical location, and agency."

An example of this forgetting about our *becoming* in postmodernity! Alberto Melucci (1996) points to the pathological consequences in physical and mental health of the phenomenon he refers to as 'time dissonance.' Today's selves simultaneously have to live the premodern cyclical rhythms of natural bodily and cosmological time. These natural rhythms they have been pressured by modernity's preoccupation with measurable, linear time that, in turn, have been further intensified by the concentrated instantaneity of postmodernity's digital, dot/blip, immediate/nano time (Griffiths, 2004). All of us can easily relate to the competing rhythms, measures and concentrations of these three broad 'types' or genres of 'lived time' and the implications they carry in a wide range of harried human endeavours, including education and pedagogy, eating, working, parenting and study. Recognizing this time dissonance and famine, we believe, helps us to work towards some sort of a reconciliation of inner, social and outer 'natures.' Time poorness, with all its consequences for the wellbeing of the body, in space, and 'nature' is an 'enemy' that can be de and reconstructed in some educational 'spaces' through and by the enactment, or praxis, of an intelligent ecocentric, intercorporeal theory of pedagogical experience.

Grosz (2004, p. 2) adds that in forgetting where we have come from we need to "return to" or "invent anew the concepts of nature, matter and life if we are to develop alternative models to those inscriptive and constructivist discourses that currently dominate." Hers, and others like Margaret Archer's (2000) critical realist notion of the 'primacy of practice' alert us to some of the limitations in postmodern 'thinking' and theory that environmental educators might grapple more earnestly and reflexively with, as we have in devising and designing a practically-driven slow pedagogy within the constraints of the university setting and its associated 'demand.' Otherwise, Grosz concludes theoretical models of subject-inscription, production, or constitution lack material force and everyday relevance. They paradoxically lack the corporeality that many of us working in and around critical versions of postmodern thinking, research and pedagogy advocate for in experiential education approaches to environmental, outdoor, physical and health educations, at least.

Grosz (2004) confesses that the elaboration of a theory of time is no easy matter. Nor is, as we have found in conceiving and practicing the semester-long unit *Experiencing the Australian Landscape*. It isn't easy to develop a Deweyan-inspired intelligent educational practice for experiencers/meaning-makers and learners who might slowly access, following Grosz and others, the ontologies of the body, time and space. Coupled with Leopold's call for building perception and receptivity into the still unlovely human mind, the ecocentric possibility of the intercorporeal turn is not only conceptually and theoretically possible but also practically plausible in curricula and pedagogical reconstruction. Of course, we still have much to do, including redeveloping a unit in the preceding semester called 'Experiential Education' that can convert slow into a year-long 'study.'

Slow pedagogy is, we feel, a candidate for this radically different approach to and lived form of educational practice, or ecopedagogy. It encourages meaning-makers to experientially and reflectively access and address their corporeality, intercorporeality, sensations and perceptions of time, space and, perhaps, the place of, for example, Bear Gully. Over the three years of *Experiencing the Australian Landscape* we are confident that many students can better sense the 'place' and conceive of their still untamed, wild bodies in and against increasingly intensified and fast pedagogical times and cultural-ecological baggages. If so, those student meaning-makers have accessed some corporeal 'consciousness,' 'embodied understanding' and 'somaesthetic,' or intercorporeal ecological subjectivity and sociability. Herein lies the promise of a phenomenological deconstruction of much of what now passes under the slogan of 'critical' in environmental education. Phenomenology's subterranean partner in this notion of a critical praxis is the offering up of, we hope, an intelligent ecocentric theory of embodied experiential education that a reconstructive Dewey might smile upon.

Moreover, our slow pedagogy works to displace numerous dualisms and disconnections that still abound in environmental education - the body and mind; I, we and world; self and other; ontology and epistemology and, in return, potentially offer some partial 'reconciliation' of inner, social and outer natures; theory and practice; indoor/class and outdoor/field; epistemology and ontology. In doing so, our intercorporeal/ecocentric inspired 'turn' via experiential education in a 'social ecology of environmental education' reflects a shift we think can expand the depth and value of educational discourse.

Finally, if we do position our selves reflexively (Archer, 2007) and somaesthetically (Schusterman, 2008) in education, as in *EAL,* as an agential form of *becoming,* then (other) formations of slow and ecopedagogy also signal a shift that might be needed more generally in education. There are the traditional/dominant epistemic and anthropocentric metaphors of learning, teaching, thinking and knowing, most of which reconstitute the authority of the mind and the sovereignty of the 'I.' We offer some 'post-traditional' or alternative eco/ontic metaphors for education of, potentially, intercorporeal and ethico-political versions *doing, meaning* and *becoming*.

References

Archer, M. (2000). *Being human*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Archer, M. (2007). *Making our way through the world: human reflexivity and social mobility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Bauman, Z. (2008). *Does ethics have a chance in a world of consumers?* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Beck, U. (1995). *Ecological politics in an age of risk*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Berry, W. (1987). *Home economics*. San Francisco: North Point Press.
Broeze, F. (1998). *Island nation: A history of Australians and the sea*. Allen and Unwin: Sydney.
Brown, M. (2004). Rethinking the role of the facilitator: What a close examination of talk reveals. In T. J. Dickson, T. Gray, & Hayllar, B. (Eds.), *Outdoor and experiential learning: Views from the top* (pp. 240-255). Dunedin: Otago University Print.
Dewey, J. (1938/1988). Experience and education. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.). *John Dewey, Volume 13: 1938-1939* (pp. 3-62). Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press.
Drew, P. (1994). *The coast dwellers*. Melbourne: Penguin.
Gatty, H. (1958). *Nature is your guide*. Sydney: William Collins.
Griffiths, J. (2004). *A sideways look at time*. New York: Penguin.
Griffiths, J. (2006). *Wild: an elemental journey*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
Grosz, E. (2004). *The nick of time: politics, evolution, and the untimely*. Durham: Duke University Press.
Honore, C. (2006). *In praise of slow*. London: Orion.
Huntsman, L. (2001). *Sand in our souls: The beach in Australian history*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
Ingpen, R. (1980). *The voyage of the poppykettle*. Melbourne: Rigby.
Ingpen, R. with Mayor-Cox, S, 2004). *Pictures telling stories: The art of Robert Ingpen*. Melbourne: Lothian.
Kaufman, J., Ewing, M., Hyle, A., Montgomery, D., and Self, P. (2001). Women and nature:using memory work to rethink our relationship to the natural world. *Environmental Education Research, 7*(4), 359-377.
Klein, S. (2006). *The secret pulse of time: making sense of life's scarcest commodity*. Melbourne: Scribe.
Leopold, A. (1966). *A sand county almanac*. New York: Ballantine.
Levine, R. (1997). *A geography of time*. New York: Basic Books.
Melucci, A. (1996). *The playing self: person and meaning in the planetary society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Murdoch, J. (2006). *Post-structuralist geography*. London: Sage.
Payne, P. (1999). The significance of experience in SLE research. *Environmental Education Research, 5*(4), 365-381.
Payne, P. (2003a). Postphenomenological enquiry and living the environmental condition. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 8,* 169-190.
Payne, P. (2003b/2006). The technics of environmental Education. In A. Reid and W. Scott (Eds.). *Environmental Education Research. Special Edition: Researching education and the environment; retrospect and prospect, 12(*3 & 4), 487-502.
Payne, P. (2005a). 'Ways of doing' learning, teaching and researching. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education, 10,* 108-124.
Payne, P. (2005b). Lifeworld and textualism: reassembling the researcher/ed and 'others,' *Environmental Education Research, 11* (4), 413-431.

Payne, P. (2006). Gnome tracking vs. the sceptics: experiential education and the early childhood setting. *Every Child, 12(*2), 10-11.

Payne, P. (in press). Remarkable tracking, experiential education of the imagination, *Environmental Education Research*. *Special Edition: Children's literature and environmental education*.

Payne, P. & Wattchow, B. (2008). Slow pedagogy and post-traditional outdoor education. *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education, 12*(1), 25-38.

Rose, N. (1996). *Inventing our selves: psychology, power and personhood*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scusterman, R. (2008). *Body consciousness: a philosophy of mindfulness and somaesthetics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sim, S. (2007). *Manifesto for silence: confronting the politics and culture of noise*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Singer, P. & Mason, J. (2006). *The ethics of what we eat*. Melbourne: Text.

van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London, Ontario: The Althouse Press.

Wattchow, B. (2001). A pedagogy of production: Craft, technology and outdoor education. *Australian Journal of Outdoor Education, 5*(2), 19-28.

Winton, T. (1993). *Land's edge*. Sydney: Macmillan.