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HOW DEEP ECOLOGY AND CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY COME TOGETHER IN OUTDOOR TRAVEL GUIDING: ON THE DISCOVERY OF BEING A RESEARCHER

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For many years I have led travel experiences with university and high school groups. Like all "guides," I have a particular style attentive to certain questions and themes that connect or disconnect people from the land, each other, and themselves. Such questions and themes are easily distilled down to the central concerns of how do we dwell, how do we interact, and the perplexing duo "ecological" theme of where is here and who am I. These are, of course, universal questions in the relationship of culture and nature and the self and nature. Such questions influence the travel experience for guide and participant alike. I am not leading to the simple matter of "let the mountains speak for themselves." There is a great deal of guiding work necessary to draw out and nurture those latent qualities in people such that they might begin to hear the murmur of the river or roar of the mountain. Such qualities include stillness, faith, caring, imagination and revelation. No simple matter indeed.

Reading over many years the literature of eco-philosophy—deep/social ecology (Fox, 1990; Naess, 1989; Reed & Rothenberg, 1933) and the academic theorizing of critical pedagogy and emancipatory research (Fay, 1987; Lather, 1991; Shor, 1992)—I have suddenly, in an odd moment of recognition, realized I am a researcher centrally. The baggage I bring to inquiry (my ontological, epistemological and axiological foundation) is quite commonplace to emerging post-positivistic research theory and commonplace both in other guides and in students/participants, all of whom do not perceive of themselves as researchers. We rarely connect our practice to the broader literature of ecological philosophy and transformational educational theory that would make the travel guide vividly aware of her/

his role as cultural worker (Giroux & Trend, 1992), of guide as researcher and educator rooted in contemporary western thought and politics. We rarely connect our practice directly to changes rooted in self-misunderstanding towards the politics of gains in self-understanding. Deep ecology and critical social theory tell us that we have met the enemy and he (or she) is us; that environmental crisis is culture crisis. They also teach us that we are redeemable as self-interpreting beings. The outdoor travel guide confronts this attention to needed change in the experiences of cultural variance to the dominant view that the travel experience allows. The outdoor travel experience can be an opening for cultural possibilities.

With 10 years of reviewing and keeping selections from the travel journals of over 50 trips, winter and summer, it seems appropriate at this time to address an Outdoor Education Research Symposium with a story of realization and research findings that speak to a liberation from oppressive cultural forces for a radically new conception of self (of "being a researcher"). Influences of narrative inquiry, emancipatory research, feminist theory and perspectival heuristic studies are all involved in shaping the ways of knowing, ways of teaching, and ways of valuing presented here as a new approach to travel in terms of cultural theory. The research design might best be termed an inter-theoretical pragmatism combining a collection of post-positivist thought: specifically, interpretive, narrative and constructivist theories (McDermott, 1993). I plan to tell a researcher's story supported by student writings between 1982 to 1993. In 1993, a sample of 40+ students were contacted to validate or criticize my efforts to write up the particular travel experience in which we shared. These "face validity" (Lather, 1986)

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responses will also be shared. The bottom line is to capture and verify the intensity and wholeness of mind/body/spirit of the travel experience in wild places and evaluate the potential transformational goals. The spiritual dimension is most often left out or unsubstantiated in the educational realm of travel. However, it is always central, in that it is primary to the meeting of people to people, people to place. This research is ongoing, and the results will be disseminated upon completion.

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