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Parallel 1. Wednesday 2.00-2.30. 20min plus 10 min questions.

The entangled rhythms of a canoe journey: Rhythmanalysis, speculative fabulation and a tidal microadventure.

Abstract

Our conception of the topology of time and space shapes our relationships with ourselves and others including the other-than-human world. Despite accelerating transport systems, ease of access to information and ubiquitous fast food, a conceived/perceived lack of time in modern Western lifestyles has become trope, with adventurous journeys seen as an escape from the everyday and the linear rhythm of the 9 to 5. The perception of being time poor contributes to a number of responses including impatience with the potential to fuel interpersonal conflict, degrading relationships at a number of levels. At the same time the pace of life impairs the reflexivity that might promote awareness concerning our spacio-temporal conceptions and how these influence our wider relationships.

Adopting an ethnographic approach this study explores the rhythms associated with an informal canoe trip in a tidal loch and presents data emerging from a four-day canoe journey based at Loch Sween, a location within four hours' drive of the participants' hometown. Such micro-adventures might offer increased access to those excluded from longer, more expensive experiences by a lack of time, money, mobility and other constraints. Reporting on some recent experiences Goodnow goes on to suggest that such trips foster "increased 'place attachment', health, happiness and community." (2018 p.23)

Arguing the case for ethnography in outdoor journeys Nicol (2013, p.14) centralises the importance of finding sustainable lifestyles in response to the challenge of climate change and goes on to justify the small scale, individualised nature of such work in the context of global issues by emphasising the role of personal power and influence in effecting wider change.

Data was collected through contemporaneous note taking, a group interview and photographs. The reflexive process involved speculative fabulation, an exercise of 'thinking with' fiction which adopts a pragmatist epistemology where reality is under continual construction and whose indeterminacy "can be alleviated, only partially, in concrete situations, and with the help of a thinking agent." (Shalin, 1986 in Strubing 2007 p.555).

While reading my field notes and the interview transcript I felt strongly the presence of my socio-cultural lens, various forms of personal experiences and (often ill considered) received views. I came to realise that I conceived clock time as an invading force in some ways resonant with H.G. Wells' Martians in his classic science fiction novel, War of the Worlds. Troubled by the messy, flawed and partial nature of these ideas I sought to surface and capture these semiotic entanglements of fact, fiction and fable by writing in the creative third space offered by speculative fabulation (Haraway 2013 in Salazar, 2016 p.154) leading to a piece titled War of the Time Worlds. This conceptualisation is presented and grounded in my own practice through vignettes from the canoe trip demonstrating some ways in which

event and clock time were viewed as warring for control over the trip agenda with each advance and retreat accompanied by a hardening and softening of relations.

Conclusions include the importance of conceptions/perceptions of clock and event time in shaping relationships with self, others and the other than human during an informal canoe trip.

The entangled rhythms of a canoe journey: Rhythmanalysis, speculative fabulation and a tidal microadventure.

References

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