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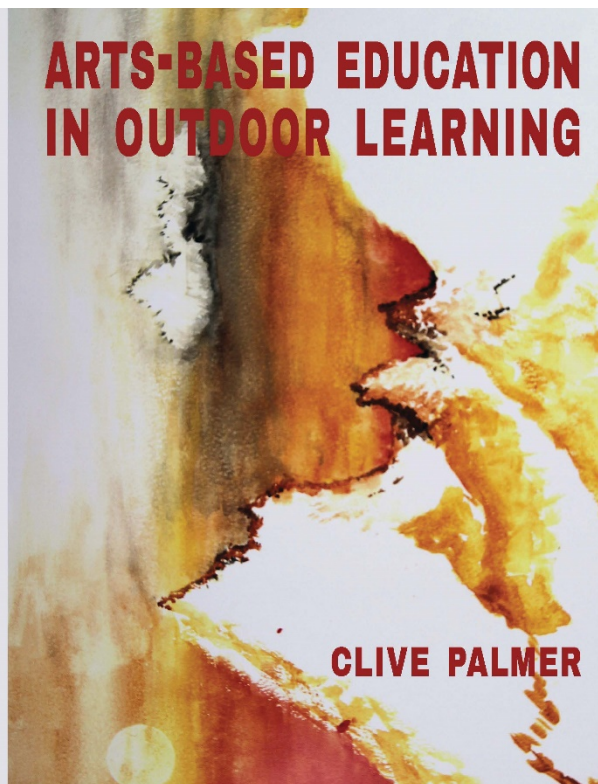
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This innovative volume for Outdoor Learning comprises 40 chapters of artworks and discussion, prompting critical thinking and reflection on issues in society, from an Outdoor perspective or with Outdoor motives at their core. From local to global concerns, the range of 'issues' chosen were put to work as stimuli for the art that would emerge, and the learning to take place, over the course of an academic year. Topics include, among others; environmental damage and pollution, impacts of modern lifestyle, personal challenge on expeditions, outdoor fashion, personal identity and the outdoors, and human attitudes on life – from extinction to rebirth.

The chapters are from a university module called The Outdoor Image. Adopting an arts-based pedagogy has allowed these students to explore their thoughts and present their ideas in a vibrant and engaging way, which they ably and confidently demonstrate in their art and in their writing. There are several contributions early in the volume which set the scene and explore some aspects of aesthetic theory, helping to establish a context for the chapters that follow. The volume closes with a chapter of 'student voices' helping to impart and confirm the pedagogical mission of this work and the impacts that this opportunity for art-based learning has had in their education.



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By Clive Palmer

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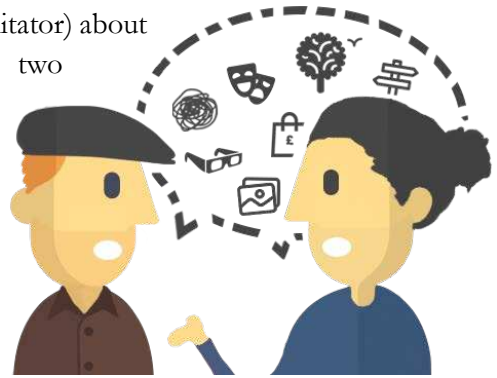
Slam poetry, giant specs and a psychogeography monopoly board: progressive directions for outdoor facilitation

Jamie Mcphie and Taylor Butler-Eldridge

(UoC: University of Cumbria)

Outdoor facilitation can be problematic. In some of its late 20th century pedagogical guises, some scholars hailed it as an effective alternative addition to mainstream education due to its possibilities as a developmental tool, for example (see Neill and Richards, 1998; Miles and Priest, 1990; Priest and Gass, 1997). Since then, other scholars have cast doubt on its varied misappropriations – yet still embraced its possibilities for participant-centred and generative place-based experiential approaches (Beames, 2006; Brookes, 2003; Loynes, 1998, 2002; Mckenzie, 2003; Nicol and Higgins, 1998). However, and more worryingly, other scholars have also exposed elements of it as a colonialist endeavour (Brinkhurst-Cuff, 2017), a fascist enterprise (Cutting, 2016), a racist initiative (Ayamba and Rotherham, 2003; Callicott, 2000; Rose and Paisley, 2012), a classist issue (Suckall, Fraser and Quinn, 2009), and a privileged supporter of romanticised nature idealism (Fletcher, 2017; Mcphie and Clarke, 2018). To counter these rather disturbing trends and directions, this chapter focuses on the role of creativity to attempt to produce more equitable and progressive directions for outdoor facilitation. More specifically, it attends to the role of creativity in outdoor learning for producing social and environmental equity. It does this by exemplifying three works of art created by one undergraduate and one postgraduate student currently studying on the Outdoor Studies programmes at the University of Cumbria (UoC). After unpacking the slam poetry produced by Kathryn Board, the rest of the chapter is an interview/discussion between

Taylor Butler-Eldridge (student) and Jamie Mcphie (facilitator) about how Taylor came to his creative productions for two assessments and how thinking with the creative components helped co-produce critical thought to aid social and environmental equity. This chapter-come-interview is itself another example of what can emerge when thinking with creative approaches. The conclusions are yours.



Slam poetry

Slam Poetry is a form of high-energy performance poetry, often performed in competitions. It can support social equity through participation by community members who may not have otherwise had the opportunities to engage in such activities. It is often political and supportive of radical agendas for social equity. As part of the post-graduate module, ‘The Reflective Practitioner’, one of the students, Kat Board, produced a wonderful and insightful piece of slam poetry: *Unperceivable value* based on her experiences of being on the undergraduate and postgraduate Outdoor Studies degree programmes at the UoC during 2017. The YouTube link shows it in full:

<https://youtu.be/zciZYvXenA4>

If you have just watched Kat’s video, hopefully you will have had a similar reaction to it as Jamie did when first watching it. If you are an outdoor lecturer or student, you will probably get the outdoor references. If not, you’ll still be aware that Kat is reflecting on her experiences of coming across plastic pollution during the many field trips on her courses. Performed as slam poetry, the message becomes more exposed – raw if you like. It holds the potential to linger in your thoughts. It packs a punch that may otherwise be gloved – a punch that’s desperately needed as we, arguably, enter a sixth mass extinction event. This is the potential of creative approaches to outdoor facilitation – a potential that has a progressive agenda. Here is an extract if you’re too busy to watch the video (but it doesn’t have the same impact...does it?).

Unperceivable value

Let me take you on a journey of unperceivable Value.

[...]

It's hard to digest

It's all a lot like Lily Allen feared

‘I am a weapon of Massive Consumption and it isn't my fault. It's how I'm
programmed to function

‘Cause just the other day, I walked into the shop and bought those new shoes,
The Retail Therapy Seduction.

When I got home my ethical moral dilemma made me sick to the stomach,
Before I knew it, I was back in that shop begging an' grovelling for my money

It don't matter because

I borrowed that money from Stately Banks
To pay for this privileged Mortlock education
Disrupting my world view, rhythmically raving in a new cave
So, I say; Morpheus you stick that pill,
where the sun doesn't shine 'cause I want back in,
This Matrix is broken
If I knew what I know now
Give it back, my ignorance, I plead!

(by Kat Board, 2017)

Giant specs

The aim of the level 5 'Environmental Aesthetics' module as part of the Outdoor Adventure and Environment undergraduate programme at the UoC is to enable students to explore relationships, both historical and contemporary, between perception, culture and the environment, and the factors that influence people's aesthetic responses to the outdoors. It is especially poignant for a critical understanding of social and environmental equity due to its focus on human-environment relations, cultural appropriation and how the cultural construction of aesthetics influences social and environmental behaviours.

Taylor decided to create a pair of giant specs as part of his creative reaction to the assessment. As the module leader, Jamie had no idea what to expect from the assessments other than what the learning outcomes provided as he gave the students free reign to interpret the assessment portfolio in their own way. Therefore, it came as no surprise when Taylor approached Jamie and said, 'meet me at this grid reference for my presentation'. He gave Jamie a time to be there and told him what to wear. It turns out that Jamie ended up on the side of a mountain overlooking Rydal Water in the Lake District when he encountered a pair of giant specs and two students desperately gripping on to the giant handles, so they (the specs and themselves) didn't blow away in the gale force winds.

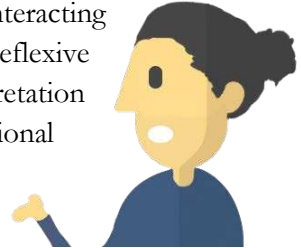
Filter your world
installed at Rydal
Water, Lake District.
Photo by Taylor
Butler-Eldridge





Jamie: Taylor, can you tell me why you decided to create these giant specs as part of the assessment and then display them on the side of a mountain in those blustery conditions?

Taylor: I wanted to critically explore how students and myself were interacting with environmental art by providing my own experiential and reflexive opportunity. To achieve this, I created *Filter Your World*; a modern interpretation based on our experience of the Claife Heights Viewing Station (National Trust, 2018) during the module. Its design and installation aimed to question the dominant impact that the sublime, Picturesque and Romantic movement had towards landscape perception and human-

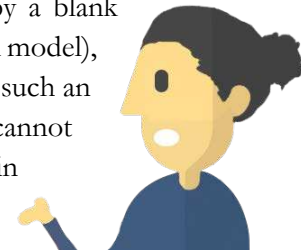


environmental relations. This new aesthetic standard for appreciating the ‘view’ arguably reframed and separated the active participant into a mere spectator, appropriating the multi-dimensional and sensory experience into a flat two-dimensional representation (Andrews, 1999; Willim, 2013). ‘Alienation’ or a crisis of perception are suggested, presenting concern as we enter this sixth mass-extinction event. Is this really how Western cultures perceive their position? A mere spectator within the world’s becoming? But how can we be separate? We are of this world and our entire existence is dependent upon the constant ‘intra-relations’ (Barad, 2003) that all living entities share.



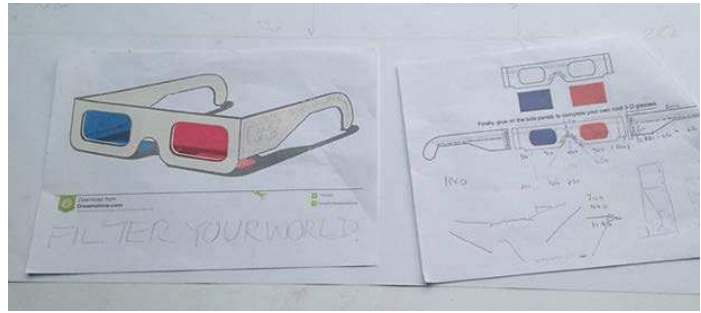
Jamie: Do you think that this sort of creative endeavour – the experiential process of doing it – can influence or add to critical thinking in general and if so, how?

Taylor: When faced with a new project, I am often overwhelmed by a blank canvas. Others may suggest producing a spider diagram (or similar visual model), beginning with one word and branching off. However, I typically avoid such an approach as it often becomes too limited. The chaos that is creativity cannot be boxed, thus I prefer to be absorbed within it and the ideas too begin to emerge. Nevertheless, I must start somewhere, thus, I began to question the socio-cultural relations, values and influences of

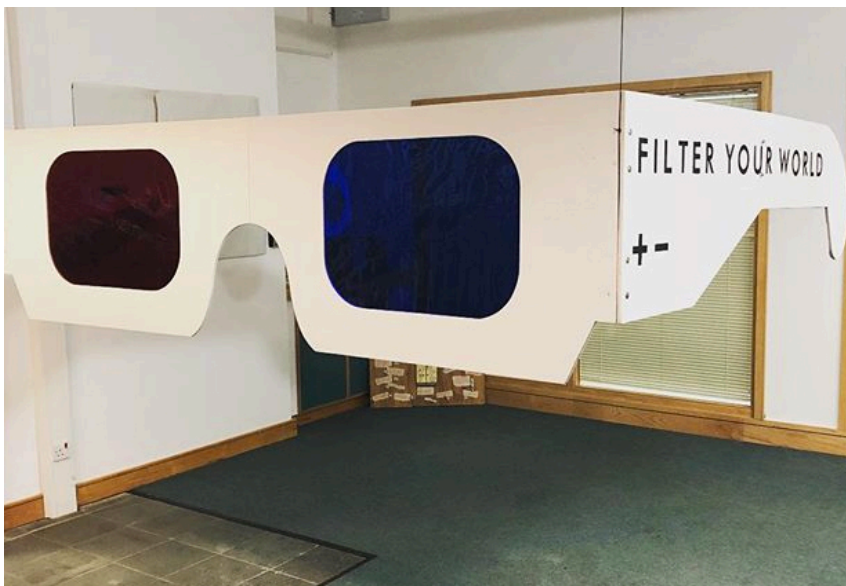


environmental aesthetics during the facilitated visits to the Rydal Grotto (Rydal Village Society, 2016) and Goldsworthy’s Wall (Grizedale Sculptures, 2014) in Grizedale Forest. But let’s not forget the literature. Together they produce the links, and the critique soon begins to flow. The ideas (and front cover) of Debord’s (1967) *Society of the Spectacle* were particularly powerful. However, I am thinking with it. The design, the construction and the installation – it’s continuous.

Taylor's initial design layouts for *Filter your world*.
Photo by Taylor Butler-Eldridge

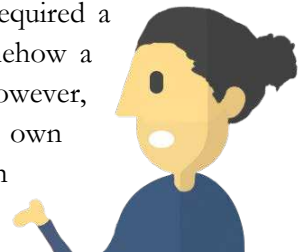


Jamie: During the creation of these giant specs, the materials are almost thinking with you. It's the relationship. The intra-relational capacity of you plus the materials. Looking above at the photo of your design layouts, it almost pushes back. Instead of you having a unidimensional and linear determined outcome, it's thinking with you. It was co-created. So, this equitable behaviour is crucial here. For me, when you produced this, I saw how this creative process might have helped you think in that way. So, can you see a role for this type of assessment in helping to create more equitable social and environmental behaviours? If so, how?



Filter your world installed at UoC, Ambleside. Photo by Taylor Butler-Eldridge

Taylor: I started this degree following the defunct narrative that I required a stronger 'connection with nature' (see Morton, 2010), that I am somehow a separate entity needing to 're-connect'. This creative assessment, however, helped me explore those dominant ideas by critically questioning my own relationship and behaviour. Students or communities may question whether modern art is accessible to them, and sure, there are still issues with elitist, classist and Eurocentric values attached with such approaches (Kastner and Wallis, 2005), yet this alternative process is not limited by giant abstract pieces. I

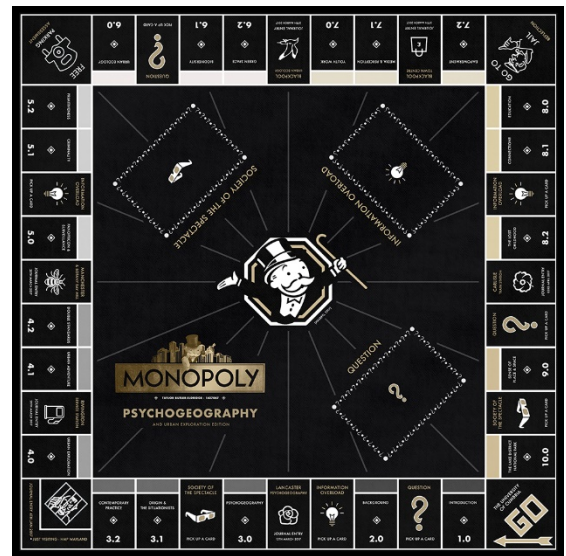


often feel unable to fully articulate myself through writing a report or essay, yet this interdisciplinary approach provides an extra layer, equipping me with the tools that can paint a thousand words.

Jamie ended up displaying the specs in the entrance to the UoC at the Ambleside campus. Alas, they were damaged. Taylor is currently fixing them.

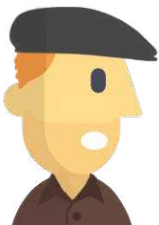
A psychogeography monopoly board

The aim of the level 4 ‘Urban’ module as part of the three outdoor undergraduate programmes at the UoC is to enable students to explore relationships between environmental, cultural and personal space in urban settings. One of the main themes of this module is to utilise psychogeography as a tool to explore urban environments because of its focus on the capitalist production of subjectivity. Largely born out of Guy Debord’s Situationist Movement, contemporary psychogeography is a playful approach to exploring the impact of the urban landscape on a person’s behaviour. But of course, it’s never that linear. Taylor decided to present his assessment as a Monopoly board!



Taylor’s psychogeography monopoly board design and layout.

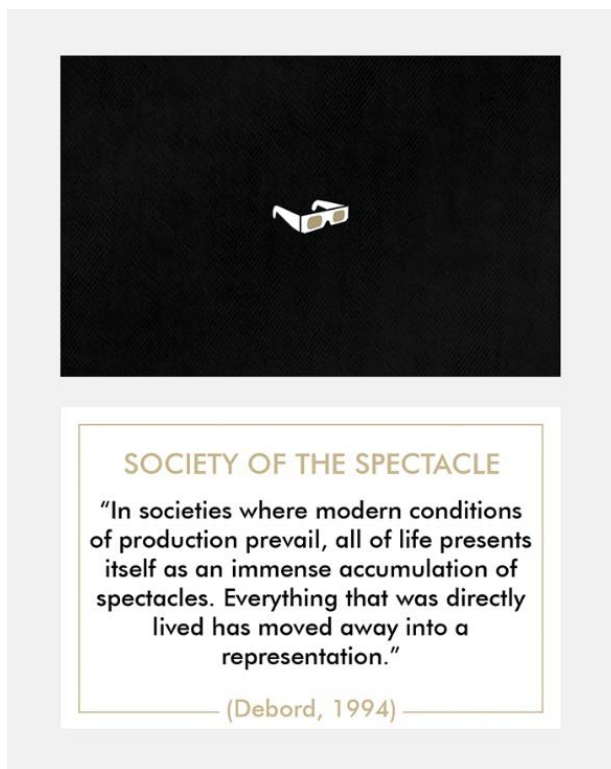
Photos by Taylor Butler-Eldridge



Jamie: Why present it as a Monopoly board? And can anyone play it? If so, what would you expect them to get from it?

Taylor: I hoped to offer an accurate interpretation of my experience during the facilitated psychogeography dérives (including the literature). It’s participatory - a hugely mass-produced game – identifiable with the capacity to pose critical questions surrounding the politics of the ‘urban’, society and capitalist consumer culture. It also plays with highly complex social issues such

as class, racism, power and political spectacle. Mr Monopoly deliberately rigs the dice, ensuring every educational card is picked up and absorbed, thus, following a linear agenda. This reflected my frustrations with the homogenised layout of urban design and bombardment of consumer culture, yet my writing couldn't quite articulate it. That's why I enjoy psychogeography. By simply walking alternatively, we can hack the route, exploring and interpreting the socio-ecological relations, whilst critiquing the impact of capitalism. Again, when I was building and designing the board, I was thinking with it – continually finding links. Whilst it's not currently multi-player and there may be issues surrounding the accessibility of the academic language, and the literature adopted, it could still be re-appropriated back into a fully functional, critical, socially and environmentally responsible game – like the original vision.

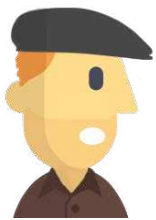
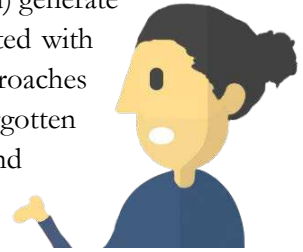


Debord's (1983:1) arguments towards the capitalist production of subjectivity.



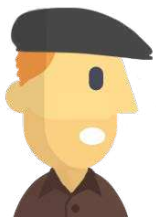
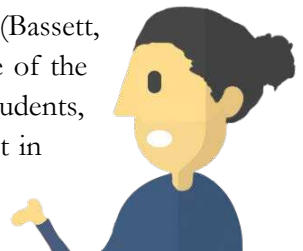
Jamie: Yes, this was a clever ploy or juxtaposition because the original board game of Monopoly, originally named *The Landlord's Game* by Elizabeth Magie in 1903, was meant as a criticism of capitalism (see Pilon, 2015). Yet, it was appropriated and has now evolved into the very thing that it fought against. But again, similar to your giant specs, the creative process helped you think in a critical manner about the assessment. It's also more embodied, isn't it? You think with your body as you move the token, rather than the artificial 'mind' (see Mcphie, 2019). So, the same question as before, can you see a role for this type of assessment in helping to create more equitable social and environmental behaviours? If so, how?

Taylor: I don't consider myself to have strong political literacy but by incorporating a playful approach, I've been able to foster a stronger sensitivity. The production of the board and the module changed my perspective on travel, and who has access to environments such as National Parks. I knew previously about the unequal power relations produced in socio-economically deprived areas (including Cumbria), but this process allowed me to obtain how the design of both 'urban' and 'rural' (although dualistic) areas (including the values attached) generate such hierarchical social and environmental inequity. I often get frustrated with objective lesson plans that involve merely walking up a hill. Creative approaches such as psychogeography, however, involves observing everyday forgotten material and spaces, developing awareness surrounding capitalism and political power. The Monopoly board critically reflects this, representing the consumer's pursuit towards accessing Mayfair (or the Lake District).



Jamie: You need a certain type of access to certain environments. Wordsworth (here in the Lake District) sent a letter to the press arguing that the working-classes wouldn't understand the romanticised landscape that he partly produced. There remains a certain type of class accessibility here. Not just class, but all types of accessibility. It's different for minority groups within certain environments such as National Parks. It's not necessarily always monetary access, but even epistemological inaccessibility. So, you must have read the literature to gain access, but also by walking in these spaces. Do you think a facilitator helps with that as well?

Taylor: Facilitated outings may shift the participant's consciousness (Bassett, 2004; Richardson, 2015). However, the broader, theoretical knowledge of the facilitator can spark those vital questions. Otherwise, you might find students, again victimised by the influences of whatever trends may be dominant in the popular press, which may be relatively ill-informed or narrowly focused.



Jamie: Yes, to avoid walking within a 'dreamless sleep' (Perec, 1973:205).

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