

# Rewording the world: narrative and nature after poststructuralism

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I can only answer the question ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’ ... Mythology, in its original sense, is at the heart of things.

– Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (1984, p. 216)

In this essay I address the question, ‘What am I to do?’ as an outdoor and environmental educator, by exploring some of the stories in which outdoor and environmental educators find themselves a part. I do this by critically examining some of the stories about experiencing the outdoors that outdoor and environmental educators tell to each other and to learners. Narrative and poststructuralist theorising inform my critique. Narrative theorising invites us to think of all discourse as taking the form of a story and poststructuralist theorising invites us to think of all discourse as taking the form of a text. As Kenneth Knoespel (1991) suggests, these different but complementary theoretical positions challenge scholars in a number of disciplines:

Narrative theory has challenged literary critics to recognize not only the various strategies used to configure particular texts within the literary canon, but to realize how forms of discourse in the natural and human sciences are themselves ordered as narratives. In effect narrative theory invites us to think of all discourse as taking the form of a story (pp. 100-1).

I acknowledge that many outdoor and environmental educators are suspicious of poststructuralism and deconstruction, and will examine in some detail the claims of writers who assert that these are anti-realist positions and, as such, have little to contribute to our understanding of the ‘real’ and/or ‘natural’ world. Structuralists and poststructuralists share the view that the objects, elements and meanings that constitute our perceptions and conceptions of ~~reality~~ and ~~nature~~ are social constructions<sup>1</sup> – that they cannot be presumed to exist independently of human agency and activity (see Noel Gough, 2008, 2010). Poststructuralist criticism is concerned with the extent to which analyses of narrative constructions are caught up in the processes and mechanisms they are analysing, and is therefore critical of the view that anyone can get ‘outside’ a cultural discourse or practice to describe its rules and norms. As Cleo Cherryholmes (1988) writes, structuralist thought seeks ‘rationality, linearity, progress and control by discovering, developing, and inventing metanarratives,... that define rationality, linearity, progress and control’ whereas poststructuralist thought is ‘skeptical and incredulous about the possibility of such metanarratives’ (p. 11).

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<sup>1</sup> I strike through ‘reality’ and ‘nature’ here to signify that I read such terms *sous rature* (under erasure), following Jacques Derrida’s approach to reading deconstructed signifiers as if their meanings were clear and undeconstructable, but with the understanding that this is only a strategy (see Jacques Derrida, 1985).

## Poststructuralism, deconstruction and the 'real'

Many environmental philosophers, advocates, and educators are antagonistic to, and/or dismissive of, poststructuralism and deconstruction (or anything they associate with postmodernism). Some are downright vicious, including Ariel Salleh (1997) who sees postmodernism as a 'castrated academic philosophy' (p. xi). Others, like Carolyn Merchant (2003), are more politely suspicious: 'Although deconstruction is an important analytical tool, I argue that realism... is an important counter, or other, to deconstruction's focus on language' (p. 201). Somewhere between these positions, Charlene Spretnak (1999) offers the following caricature of 'post' scholarship:

The critical orientation known as 'deconstructive postmodernism,' 'constructionism,' or 'constructivism' asserts that there is nothing but 'social construction' (of concepts such as language, knowledge systems, and culture) in human experience... The philosophical core of deconstructive postmodernism is the rejection of any sense of the 'Real' (pp. 64-5).

Spretnak (1999) discusses 'postmodern developments' in academia during the 1980s and contrasts what she calls 'the deconstructionist variety (also called "constructionism," "constructivism," and "poststructuralism")' with another perspective that (she asserts) 'lacks a widely accepted umbrella term, but is sometimes called "constructive," "reconstructive," or "restructive" postmodernism' (p. 223). In these passages, Spretnak uses at least four rhetorical strategies to distort the views of those she discredits.

Firstly, by asserting that the 'deconstructionist' position is 'also called' 'constructionism', 'constructivism' and 'poststructuralism', Spretnak infers that all three of these terms are synonymous with each other and with 'deconstruction'. But I know of no reputable scholars who identify themselves with these positions and agree that they can be conflated to this extent. The positions that these terms signify have very clear affinities with one another but they are certainly not coterminous. As already noted, structuralists and poststructuralists agree that our perceptions and conceptions of 'reality' are social constructions; incredulity towards structuralist metanarratives is variously imputed to postmodernism or poststructuralism, which may be conflated with each other and with deconstruction. Patti Lather (1992) offers a way to distinguish between postmodernism and poststructuralism that resists fixing the meanings of either concept: postmodernism is 'the code name for the crisis of confidence in western conceptual systems... borne out of our sense of the limits of Enlightenment rationality', whereas poststructuralism is 'the working out of academic theory within the culture of postmodernism' (p. 90), although she also admits to using these terms interchangeably. The word 'constructivism' is used in a variety of ways, including the assumption that mathematical concepts are 'real' only if a mathematical proof can be given (see Antony Flew, 1984) and the view that learning is an active process of constructing rather than acquiring knowledge (see Jean Piaget, 1977). The latter position has expanded to include the idea that people do not construct knowledge in a vacuum but, rather, that construction of meaning is a socio-cultural process (see, e.g., Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, 1978).

Secondly, Spretnak (1999) compounds the problem of equating 'deconstruction', 'constructionism', 'constructivism' and 'poststructuralism' with one another by applying a single homogenising label to them all. But in my experience the critical orientation that she calls 'deconstructive postmodernism' is not widely 'known' by this name among a majority of scholars who identify themselves with poststructuralism and/or deconstruction.

Thirdly, by setting up 'constructive' and 'reconstructive' postmodernism in opposition to poststructuralism and deconstruction she implies that the latter positions are not 'constructive'. The invented term 'restructive' clearly is intended to suggest that

deconstruction is destructive but, as Jacques Derrida (1972), who coined the term, insists deconstruction ‘has nothing to do with destruction... it is simply a question of (...) being alert to the implications, to the historical sedimentation of the language we use’ (p. 271). Deconstruction names a process of laying bare the structure of a discourse – of showing how a discursive system works and what it includes and excludes (see also Noel Gough, 2008).

Fourthly, her insinuation that poststructuralism and deconstruction rejects any sense of the ‘Real’ distorts the positions of many philosophers – structuralists *and* poststructuralists, constructionists *and* deconstructionists – who share the view that the objects and meanings that constitute our existential reality are social constructions. As a poststructuralist, I do not question *belief* in the real but *confidence in its representation*. As Richard Rorty (1979) puts it, ‘to deny the power to “describe” reality is not to deny reality’ (p. 375) and ‘the world is out there, but descriptions of the world are not’ (Richard Rorty, 1989, p. 5). Representations of the world are products, artefacts or effects of particular sets of historical and linguistic practices.

My concern is not so much that well-intentioned environmental philosophers have ‘got it wrong’ when it comes to poststructuralism and deconstruction, although I believe that many of them misrepresent and/or oversimplify the issues. Rather, I worry about the potentially deleterious effects of these rhetorical positions circulating within the discourses of outdoor and environmental education and research. I also worry that interminable arguments about the absence and/or presence of the real in poststructuralism and deconstruction distract us from more important concerns.

Until relatively recently, poststructuralist thought has remained something of a ‘blind spot’ (Noel Gough, 2002) in environmental education research. For example, in their otherwise comprehensive and commendable appraisal of key issues in sustainable development and learning, William Scott and Stephen Gough (2004) very largely ignore the possibilities and potentials afforded by poststructuralism and deconstruction for thinking imaginatively and creatively about socio-environmental problems. Indeed, they completely ignore deconstruction and make only two cursory references to poststructuralism, firstly in a section on ‘Language and understanding; language and action’ in which they conflate ‘post-modern’ and ‘post-structuralist’ (p. 26), and secondly in a section titled ‘Literacies: the environment as text’ in which they uncritically reproduce an assertion they attribute to Andrew Stables (1996): ‘As structuralists and post-structuralists have pointed out, one way of looking at the world is to say that *everything* is a text’ (p. 29; authors’ emphasis).<sup>2</sup> This appears to be an extension (and possibly a misinterpretation) of Jacques Derrida’s often-quoted assertion that ‘there is nothing outside the text’, which is in turn a misleading translation of ‘*Il n’y a pas de hors-texte*’ (literally, ‘there is no outside-text’). Derrida was not, as some critics insist, denying the existence of anything outside of what they (the critics) understood as texts; his claim was not that ‘*il n’y a rien hors du texte*’ – that the only reality is that of things that are inside of texts. Rather, his point was that texts are not the sorts of things that are bounded by an inside and an outside, or ‘*hors-texte*’: ‘nothing is ever outside text since nothing is ever outside language, and hence incapable of being represented in a text’ (Derrida, 1976, p. 35).<sup>3</sup>

Elsewhere (see, e.g., Noel Gough, 1993a, 1999, 2004, 2006, 2009), I deploy narrative theory, poststructuralism and deconstruction to question how the discourses of environmental education and science education are configured as stories, and query the adequacy of narrative strategies deployed in these fields. Different storytelling practices incorporate

<sup>2</sup> Scott and Gough add three other citations to Stables’ work to authorise this assertion.

<sup>3</sup> I am especially grateful to Tony Whitson (2006) for clarifying the implications of misleading translations of Derrida’s (in)famous aphorism.

particular selections of narrative strategies and conventions, the implicit or explicit knowledge of which influences the author's craft, the reader's expectations and the meanings they mutually construct. My inquiries suggest that many of the values and purposes attributed to environmental education and science education are ill served by the dominant narrative conventions of teacher-talk and textbooks in these fields. I have thus been curious to explore alternative textual practices, such as those exemplified by various forms of literary fiction and popular media.

For most of its relatively short history, environmental education has privileged modernist scientific discourses that claim to represent the way things 'really' are. These discourses assume that it is meaningful to distinguish between 'fact' or 'reality' on the one hand and 'fiction' or 'illusion' on the other. The narratives of environmental education typically include strategically positioned representations of the material world ('reality'), such as interpretations of the environmental conditions that give it educational legitimacy. For example, the need for education about global climate change usually is justified by reference to scientific research on trends in the atmospheric composition of greenhouse gases, on causal explanations for these trends, and extrapolations of their environmental and social effects. Much climate change education assumes that people need to understand environmental circumstances 'objectively' before they can be expected to respond appropriately to greenhouse issues. In short, the dominant storytelling practices of environmental education reflect what Sandra Harding (1986) calls 'the longing for "one true story" that has been the psychic motor for Western science' (p. 193).

Longing for 'one true story' drives the construction of narrative strategies in which fact and fiction are mutually exclusive categories: facts are equated with 'truth' (and fiction with lies), and 'scientific facts', especially, are privileged representations of a 'reality' that in principle is independent of human subjectivity and agency. But fact and fiction are culturally and linguistically closer than these narrative strategies imply. A fiction, from the Latin *factio*, is something fashioned by a human agent. 'Fact' also refers to human action: a fact is the thing done, 'that which actually happened', the Latin *factum* being the neuter past participle of *facere*, do. Thus, both fact and fiction refer to human experience, but 'fiction' is an active form – the act of fashioning – whereas 'fact' descends from a past participle, which disguises the generative act. In Donna Haraway's (1989) words: 'To treat a science as narrative is not to be dismissive... But neither is it to be mystified and worshipful in the face of a past participle' (p. 5). Facts are testimonies to experience. Scientific facts are testimonies to the experiences of scientists in actively *producing* facts with their specialized technologies of data generation and inscription, their rule-governed practices of interpretation, and their characteristic traditions of social relationships and organisation. The opposition of fact and fiction in modern science is itself a fiction – a story fashioned to rationalize the strategies used by scientists to produce facts.

There is little doubt that particular fictions of modern science have convinced us of the alarming extent of many environmental problems, an influential example being Rachel Carson's (1962) synthesis of the testimonies of numerous ecologists, physiologists, biochemists and geneticists to their experiences of monitoring the effects of insecticides. But a case can also be made for asserting that these same problems have resulted from modern science's construction of stories in which the storyteller is 'detached' from the earth, in which subject and object, 'culture' and 'nature', are categorically distinct, and in which the relationship of the earth to humans is instrumental. This narrative detachment of human culture from the earth that sustains it is manifested by stories that construct the 'cultivated' subject – the 'educated' person – as an individual consciousness 'dislocated' from nature. As Tony Fry and Anne-Marie Willis (1989) write:

The cultivator, as artist or critic, like the scientist, has so often regarded nature as low, as threat, as transcended origin and therefore in need of conquest and domination. The cultivated subject is seen to be the mind grown above nature and in command of it, totally separate from the baseness of body.

This discourse has self-evidently failed. Humanity has damaged its own ecosystem, its collective and interdependent body, through the alienation of self from a nature that is external, other. An ecology of survival extols neither a rationalist command of nature nor a romantic return to it – nature never went away – but a major reassessment of social and economic actions according to their effects on wellbeing within the biological and social ecology. If humanity is to survive, we must recognise that there is no ‘outside’ from which to speak or act; we must gain a new normative matrix for the conception and production of the world. Survival is the one universal value that transcends the proclamation of difference (pp. 230-1).

Fry and Willis make two points with which I must take issue. Firstly, I am deeply suspicious of approaches to problem resolution predicated on ‘universal’ or transcendental values. Secondly, even if ‘survival’ *is* a ‘universal value’, the possibility that it might transcend ‘the proclamation of difference’ is unlikely to affect the survival prospects of most of the world’s endangered organisms and habitats. The ‘proclamation of difference’ to which Fry and Willis refer is a relatively recent and predominantly Western invention. For example, the cultures represented among the world’s one billion rural poor, whose survival is unequivocally threatened (see Idriss Jazairy, Mohiuddin Alamgir, & Theresa Panuccio, 1992), have not necessarily positioned themselves outside ‘a nature that is external, other’. The precarious existence of people whom we patronizingly locate in ‘developing’ countries is less a consequence of *their* ‘alienation’ from nature than of *our* alienation from otherness. When we think of survival, we cannot speak of a unitary ‘humanity’, since it is not so much that ‘humanity has damaged its own ecosystem’ but that *some* humans have damaged *all others’* ecosystems.

These reservations notwithstanding, Fry and Willis provide a serviceable framework within which to consider alternatives to the ‘failed’ discourse of ‘the mind grown above nature’. One alternative that they identify – and peremptorily dismiss – is the discourse of a ‘romantic return’ to nature. But this discourse is mobilized too frequently in education and popular media to be dismissed lightly. For example, a number of outdoor environmental educators valorise the ‘direct experience’ of nature by reference to metaphors drawn from the language of romantic love. In what follows, I will demonstrate that romanticising human contacts with the natural world can involve indefensible representations of human relationships with one another.

### **‘Direct experience’, intertextuality, and reading the world-as-text**

The world is a text that is read, and our interpretation of our world is a function of our reading of texts.

– Peter Stoicheff, ‘The chaos of metafiction,’ (1991, p. 95)

My purpose here is to pose some questions about the educational merits of texts that exhort a ‘romantic return to nature’. I offer a critical reading of one popular text that is explicitly designed to supplement learning experiences in natural settings, paying particular attention to intertextual readings of both this text and the world-as-text. The significance of intertextuality in this context can be demonstrated by considering two readings of nature by,

respectively, William Shakespeare and William Gibson (a contemporary author of science fiction):

And this our life...finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones...

– William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* c.1599, Act II, Scene 1, ll. 15-17

The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel.

– William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (1984, p. 3)

Despite differences between the languages of Elizabethan theatre and late-twentieth century science fiction, these quotations are similar in one important respect. In each case, meaning is ascribed to experience by coding aspects of the ‘natural’ world (trees, brooks, stones, sky) in metaphors drawn from the textual and technological worlds that humans have constructed, including language itself (‘tongues’), ritual forms of speech (‘sermons’), and print and electronic media (‘books,’ ‘television’). Both passages exemplify ways in which texts mediate *and construct* experience: we not only *read* ‘sermons in stones’, but also *write* them there. The particular signs that Shakespeare and Gibson inscribe on nature are chosen from different repertoires, and each writer follows historically specific cultural patterns of constituting meaningful experience in them. For example, by construing nature as a text in which to read God’s purposes, Shakespeare continues a narrative tradition stretching back at least to the Christian Middle Ages, whereas Gibson’s television sky adds to a long line of mechanistic metaphors for nature that remain a lasting lexical legacy of Newtonian physics (note too, that the TV sky is a ‘dead channel’: no message, no God).

Both Shakespeare and Gibson encode their readings of the world in signs that reflect their readings of other texts (such as sermons and television). This mutual interreferencing of the world-as-text and other texts invites us to be critical of assuming the merits – and indeed the *possibility* – of a ‘return’ to nature enabled by ‘direct’ (unmediated) experience of it. For example, in a rationale for including experiences of solitude in the Institute for Earth Education’s programs, Steve Van Matre (1990) recommends providing opportunities for participants to ‘sharpen their *nonverbal* skills... to be out there in touch with nature, one on one, in direct contact with the elements of life... unchanneled, unfiltered, unmolded by man [sic]’ (pp. 69-70; emphasis in original). But it is naïve to assume that solitude precludes the mediation of experience by the signs and symbols with which we have learned to invest experience with meaning. The mere absence of opportunities to interact with other people or with verbal and visual media does not compel us to relinquish the meanings we have already constructed – we can leave textbooks and televisions behind, but not intertextuality. Even if we are alone in a remote wilderness, we will still *make* sense of our sensations by encoding scenery in the ‘signery’ we carry with us.

Recognising the intertextual mediation of experience is significant for outdoor and environmental educators because they influence the intertextual ‘scaffolding’ that supports the production of meaning by learners by privileging some texts and ignoring or diminishing others. Consider, for example, the frequency with which North American environmental educators refer to the texts that the editors of *The Earth Speaks* (Steve Van Matre & Bill Weiler, 1983) call ‘the writings of naturalists and natives, poets and philosophers’ (p. v). These include the oft-quoted impressions and aphorisms of authors such as Wendell Berry, Aldo Leopold, John Muir, Sigurd Olson, Gary Snyder, Henry David Thoreau and speeches spuriously attributed to the native American Chief Seattle (see Noel Gough, 1991). I do not dispute the beauty, poetry, wisdom or virtue attributed to such texts, but we also need to

consider critically how these and other texts *work* intertextually when they ‘play’ into the meaning systems of outdoor and environmental education.

For example, we can ask if some intertextual readings of the world are better or worse than others in predisposing readers to act in environmentally responsible ways. Are our transactions with the earth likely to be more or less sustainable if we read stones as sermons or the sky as television? Does reading ‘sermons in stones’ inspire reverence for nature by positioning them as evidence of the hand of God? Does visualizing the sky as ‘the color of television, tuned to a dead channel’ devalue nature by positing technology as the ground upon which to understand nature? Answers to such questions are not obvious. Although religious convictions provide many people with a deep sense of obligation for their stewardship of the earth, as an atheist I cannot comprehend nature in terms of supernatural agency, whereas I understand that reading nature as if it were continuous with technology explicitly connects it to the realm of human design and, therefore, human responsibility.<sup>4</sup>

But one does not need religious convictions to read (and write) ‘sermons in stones’. In his editorial contributions to *The Earth Speaks*, Van Matre gives the earth a secular voice – a voice quite literally ‘calling’ for a ‘romantic return to nature’. Given that his editorialising is intended to influence the reader’s interpretations of the works anthologized in *The Earth Speaks*, and given also that the book is explicitly designed to support outdoor environmental education, a critical examination of its intertextual provenance is warranted. We cannot assume that the unambiguously romantic view of human relationships with the earth that Van Matre expresses in this text will work in benign or constructive ways.

Prior to the modern era, humans sustained a sense of interdependence with the earth through metaphors of kinship. For example, a recurring theme in the stories of Australian Aborigines is that ‘earth just like mother and father and brother of you’ (Bill Neidjie, 1990, p.3). Similarly, Native American mythologies are centred on honouring propriety in one’s relationships with all of ‘the supernaturals, spirit people, animal people of all varieties, the thunders, snows, rains, rivers, lakes, hills, mountains, fire, water, rock, and plants... perceived to be members of one’s community’ (Paula Gunn Allen, 1989, pp. 10-11). Western agricultural societies reduced this broad sense of kinship to a more narrowly patriarchal concept of ‘Mother Nature’ – an all-giving, forgiving, ever-providing presence in the background (Val Plumwood, 1990, pp. 622-8). Then, as Carolyn Merchant (1980) documents, nature was again transformed metaphorically by people like Francis Bacon, the ‘father of modern science’:

Bacon developed the power of language as political instrument in reducing female nature to a resource for economic production. Female imagery became a tool in adapting scientific knowledge and method to a new form of human power over nature. The ‘controversy over women’ and the inquisition of witches – both present in Bacon’s social milieu – permeated his description of nature and his metaphorical style and were instrumental in his transformation of the earth as a nurturing mother and womb of life into a source of secrets to be extracted for economic advance (p. 165).

Metaphors matter, and as Sue Curry Jansen (1990) observes, ‘people do not treat a “mother”...the same way they treat a “bride”, “mistress”, or “common harlot”, the descriptive terms Bacon uses to name nature’ p. 239).<sup>5</sup> Clearly the feminization of nature by

<sup>4</sup> cf. Jean Baudrillard (1981), for whom ‘everything belongs to design’; the ‘designed’ universe ‘is what properly constitutes the environment (pp. 200-201).

<sup>5</sup> Jansen also points out that the men of the Royal Society who were Bacon’s intellectual heirs eventually ‘killed’ nature, via such ambiguous metaphors as Robert Boyle’s ‘great pregnant automaton’ and Newton’s unambiguously lifeless ‘world machine’.

men in Western society cannot be seen as benevolent. The following passage from Van Matre's (1983) Introduction to *The Earth Speaks* must therefore be read with incredulity:

Yes, the earth speaks, but only to those who can hear with their hearts. It speaks in a thousand, thousand small ways, but like our lovers and families and friends, it often sends its messages without words. For you see, the earth speaks in the language of love. Its voice is in the shape of a new leaf, the feel of a water-worn stone, the color of evening sky, the smell of summer rain, the sound of the night wind. The earth's whispers are everywhere, but only those who have slept with it can respond readily to its call.

...falling in love with the earth is one of life's great adventures. It is an affair of the heart like no other; a rapturous experience that remains endlessly repeatable throughout life. This is no fleeting romance, it's an uncommon affair...(p. v)

About 75 items of prose and poetry are collected in *The Earth Speaks* – and all but four of the contributors are male. In his Introduction, Van Matre (1983) writes of choosing these particular passages 'because each in some way speaks for the earth' (p. vi). On this evidence, Van Matre's standpoint towards the earth is much like Bacon's, albeit with overtones of the new-age 'sensitive man'. Although not explicitly gendered, the earth is implicitly positioned by Van Matre as a loving sexual partner who 'speaks' through chiefly male interpreters – and whom the implied reader will thus assume to be passive and female.<sup>6</sup> His stance is thus privileged, patronising and patriarchal.

I do not doubt Van Matre's good intentions or his commitment to living harmoniously with the earth. Nor am I criticizing the other contributors to *The Earth Speaks* whose celebrations of the earth and the sense of wonder it inspires have an important place in education. Rather, I am pointing out ways that Van Matre's words *can* be read that are deeply contradictory to the eco-centric values and purposes that otherwise predominate in his writing. We cannot ignore the dangers of cultivating an anthropomorphic image of the earth as an object of romantic love and affection – especially when that image is implicitly given the form of women, who have historically been oppressed, exploited, and ignored. As educators, we need to be aware of these possibilities, with their potential pedagogical pitfalls and opportunities, provided by the 'play' of indeterminate meanings across the discursive space we share with learners.

When we go 'out there in touch with nature', and invite learners to reflect on their experience, we are in effect inviting them to provide us with an intertextual reading of the world-as-text, because the ways in which they encode their interpretations of experience will reflect their prior readings of other texts. This raises important pedagogical questions for outdoor and environmental educators. What sorts of readings should we encourage or discourage? Which texts should we deliberately place in the intertextual milieu within which learners read the world-as-text? Shakespeare? The Bible? *The Earth Speaks*? *Neuromancer*? (Or perhaps more pertinently for screenage learners, the *Neuromancer* video game developed by Interplay Productions in 1988) Something else?<sup>7</sup> My purpose here has been to demonstrate that answers to such questions should not be taken for granted.

<sup>6</sup> Although other readings are possible, it is most likely that younger readers, especially, will interpret such terms as 'lovers', 'affair' and 'romance' in terms of heteronormative relationships. I should also emphasise here that the contributors to *The Earth Speaks* are not responsible for Van Matre's interpretations of their texts; indeed, I read them as speaking for themselves rather than 'for the earth'.

<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere (Noel Gough, 1993b) I argue what some readers might judge to be an extreme case, namely, that within the intertextual networks we construct in outdoor and environmental education, there may be reasons to prefer 'cyberpunk' science fiction, such as Gibson's *Neuromancer*, to the romantic nature poetry and prose of books like *The Earth Speaks*; .



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