


Publications


Abstract

This research considers a person’s ontological fabric woven from experiences of and in (trans)formative childhood and adolescent places through three conceptual frameworks: complexity theory, endogeny, and i/Indigenous ways of knowing. By re-visited the (trans)formative places of four exemplary citizens with them, creating an interactive website and iBook, and exploring ten online public participants’ posts, I gained an understanding of how childhood and adolescent outdoor places act as catalysts of community, ecological, and civic environmental engagement. To achieve this, I asked the question: Does learning that occurs in childhood and adolescent outdoor places inform civic, emotional, physical, and/or spiritual engagement or connectedness over the course of people’s lives? If so, how?

Tsartlip (Coast Salish First Nations) Elder, May Sam, Hua Foundation co-founder Claudia Li, National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence, Wade Davis, and former Lieutenant Governor of BC, Iona Campagnolo, all exemplary individuals, shared personal relationships to their childhood and adolescent places. They engaged through participatory action research by taking me to these places, contributing to the interview process, and supporting the analysis of the results. As a way to engage decolonizing methodologies and encourage authentic voice within this research, I took great care in using interview and discourse techniques that were respectful, engaging, and empowering. Each of these visits were filmed and appropriate sections were shared through online social media as a way to invite participation from the larger North American public (www.transformativeplaces.com). Ten more participants’ experiences were analyzed based on their submissions to this website. Data were explored through a hybrid of phenomenological and participatory analysis and participants were invited to help discern meaning through post-filming interviews and dialogue.

The concept (trans)formative places was defined as sites that engage humans in biophysical, emotional, spiritual, and civic engagement. Major findings included the development of a memetic group of concepts that help describe the processes, characteristics, and relationships that occur from, in, and with (trans)formative places. I found that my participants’ relationship to places were formed through family and community bonds, where learning occurs through shared stories, collective healing, and respect-building. Places transformed my participants through identity development, memory and anxiety, resiliency behaviour, nostalgia, and loss. Finally, my participants related to places through connective processes like knowing a place and being home, engendering bliss and appreciation, development of pride and hope and emotionality. The conclusions of this dissertation are articulated as a manifesto for creating, sustaining, and engaging in (trans)formative places.

Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships

2012 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Scholarship
2012 UVic President’s Graduate Research Scholarship
2011 Nomination for Trudeau Foundation Fellowship
2011 Nomination for Vanier Canada Graduate Research Scholarship
2007 Royal Roads University Founders Award
2002 Undergraduate First Class Award
2000 UBC Exchange Research Grant
2002 NSERC Undergrad Research Grant
2002 Mountain Equipment Co-op Research Grant
2002 Canadian Geographic Society Grant

Presentations


