What I talk about when I talk about kayaking.

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> "Wherever there is a channel for water, there is a *road* for the canoe" (Thoreau, 1864: VII 14).
>
> "A week on the *road* is enough to confirm my instinct that th[ese channels], with [their] climatic and ecological shifts, [produce] a different consciousness. Our west is their east. …There are new orthodoxies..." (Sinclair, 2012: no page).

Introduction.

As Thoreau suggests, the practice of kayaking can be undertaken in many ways and on many bodies of water. Indeed, simply the presence of any 'channel' of water is enough to let you float your kayak-boat. The (relatively) straightforward act of flotation and subsequent self-propelled movement across a body of water can occur on lakes, in rivers, or on the sea, as well as on specially constructed pools or water courses, and even on unplanned routes over flooded land. This act of buoyancy, balance, and propulsion is scientifically similar in all these various water worlds.

Beyond this similarity, however, kayaking is a many and varied pursuit. In general the activity is split into three main disciplines: kayaking, sea kayaking and open canoeing. Whilst canoeing involves a single paddle and an open seating area or cockpit, "kayaking refers to those canoes where you're secured in with a waterproof seal and use a double-bladed paddle" (Cooper, 2002). In terms of kayaking and sea kayaking (as opposed to canoeing), each of these activities is very different too. As Rowe states:

> "The cynic might say that modern kayaking has become a collection of totally unrelated sports – that the flat water sprinter has nothing whatsoever in common with the white water freestyle star, and the rambling sea kayaker shares nothing at all with the competitive slalom racer" (2002:3).

Kayaking is therefore not an essentialist activity in its form, purpose, or location. It can be practiced for competitive sport on rivers or artificial courses, as a leisure pursuit on the sea or other water channel (see Hanson, 2001), and remains a key means of transport and survival in many water-dependent indigenous societies (see Walls, 2012). In many ways therefore, how kayaking is experienced and understood is an 'actor-centred activity' (Jones, 2009; Anderson, 2012a), in theory at least there are as many ways to codify and frame the activity as there are paddlers. Even in terms of kayaking in coastal and sea waters there are a multitude of experiences available. As Goodman states:

> "Sea kayaking is about taking journeys: trips around the bay on a sparkling summer's day; exposed passages along lines of cliffs with dark sea caves to explore; around promontories that spawn tide races where ten-knot currents can kick up huge waves on the calmest of days; gruelling crossings when settled weather and trained muscles are essential; crossings accompanied by dolphins and broaching whales; journeys in foul weather when the hiss of spray sets the adrenaline racing and the final landfall to safety through the surf is exhilarating and chilling to both mind and body. The physical list is endless" (Goodman, in Duff, 1999; XI).

Despite these necessary caveats, this chapter seeks to outline some experiential understandings of the practice of kayaking on the coastal ocean. Rather than focusing on a particular watery world – a specific geographical *place in the sea* (perhaps one coastline, one current, or one tidal flow for example); it rather draws our attention to the *space of the sea* itself, and the experience of kayaking upon it. With apologies to Murakami (2009), this chapter outlines what kayakers 'talk about when they talk about sea kayaking'. It discusses what it feels like to be buoyant on the ocean, balanced only by a combination of kayak-hull and appropriately-positioned body weight, and propelled across the water surface solely by double-oared paddles. The chapter achieves this by drawing on the experiences of coastal and sea kayaking from three key sources: from a survey conducted with 395 kayakers based in South Wales, UK[i], the autobiographical writings of Chris Duff (who has paddled over 12,000 miles on the sea and completed circumnavigations of the UK, Ireland, and South Island New Zealand), as well as my own experiences of over ten years coastal kayaking. From these sources, the chapter will make a number of points. Firstly, that sea kayaking can be understood as part of the family of extreme sports; it is at once sociable, adrenalin-fuelled, and full of risk. This search for thrill and risk makes it an addictive pursuit, and as a consequence, sea kayaking becomes part of many participants' embodied identity. Secondly, the chapter argues that although kayaking may be similar to other extreme sports in many ways, there is something about the water that makes this practice different from land-based pursuits. Due to the influence of the water world, the chapter explores how sea kayaking can be considered not just as an extreme sport, but also a form of artistic performance. As a consequence, and following Sinclair (above), kayaking on the ocean 'road' can generate a 'different consciousness' and a 'new orthodoxy' among participants. In short, I argue that sea kayaking can offer participants a new way of looking at the world; in the words of paddle-maker Werner Furrer, kayakers "find themselves with a new paradigm" (in Duff 2003: IV) with which to understand their relations to both water and terrestrial worlds.

The sea as viewed from the land.

I used to look out from my window and see the vast horizon of Cardigan Bay, Wales. On many occasions this view was filled with the ocean churning, with sets of waves breaking in angry and vicious multitudes. On other occasions, the same sea was stilled, the oceanic expanse as calm as a windless pond. Many people, from Melville's Ishmael (1992) to modern day surfing nomads (Brownley, 2010), tell how they are 'called to the sea'; they are summoned to view the sea not solely from their window on the land, but to

engage directly with its varying moods and rhythms. I am no different; however, unlike Ishmael or surfing nomads my preferred mode of engagement is through a kayak and a paddle. The call to kayak is heard by a growing number of individuals (see Cooper, 2002) and the ease of the activity (see Hanson, 2001:9) has garnered a wide following[ii]. Despite the simplicity with which a newcomer to the sport can pick up the basics in calm conditions, sea kayaking has many of the characteristics of an extreme sport. Extreme or 'whizz sports' (see Wheaton, 2004, Midol, 1993) include activities such as rock climbing, sky-diving, skateboarding, surfing, and kite-surfing, and all share a degree of 'family resemblance' in the Wittgensteinian sense of the term (see Tomlinson, Ravenscroft, Wheaton, & Gilchrist, 2005; van Bottenburg & Salome, 2010)). Extreme sports are individualistic in nature (as opposed to team-oriented); they are non-aggressive; participatory rather than spectator-focused; consuming of new technologies; centred on skill, risk, and hedonism; resistant to regulation and institutionalisation; and ambiguous in their relationship to competition (see Wheaton, 2004:12). These aspects of 'whizz' sports resonate with the thrills, spills and bellyaches of coastal kayaking that render it an activity that attracts adrenaline junkies and fitness enthusiasts. Kayakers share common interests and passion for getting involved in the sea beyond the perspective that can be gained from the land, and this passion helps form a common identity through their activities. As the following respondent puts it:

> "Kayaking is the most enjoyable sport I have ever tried, I get to see places that I wouldn't normally see and it gets me out of my daily routine and in an environment where I have to focus completely and rely on my skills and those of people around me. It's one of the most sociable sports I've tried, the people I enjoy being around most are paddlers and I love being able to bump into someone [on the water] and be able to chat to them no problem at all."

Kayakers refer to the enjoyment and excitement of engaging in this practice, of "the buzz of being able to do something active and exciting". A crucial aspect of this enjoyment is the ability to be physically active; as a demanding activity which both requires and produces fit and healthy bodies, the sport "is very relaxing, it keeps me fit, and I meet like-minded people who enjoy the exercise for fun", or as the following respondent puts it, "it's fun, it's healthy, and it's something I feel successful at." A further key dimension to this whizz sport is the camaraderie involved. Although not a team sport, sea kayaking is often undertaken in groups for safety reasons. 46% of kayakers who responded to the survey suggested that social reasons were central to their participation in the sport; as individuals put it, the "main thing is the friendship of paddlers", "I enjoy paddling with my friends, chatting and having a laugh is important while paddling."

Sea kayaking is therefore experienced as an exciting, enjoyable and friendly pursuit by its participants, and as we will see below, this excitement is exacerbated by the risk involved in the activity. Such excitement (and risk) can be found in many sports, especially other whizz or extreme sports. However, as this chapter goes on to suggest, kayaking is also significantly different from this family of activities: there is something different about (being in) the sea.

The sea as viewed from a kayak.

> "I hoped to... come to terms, somehow, with the peculiar attraction that draws people to put themselves afloat on the deep, dark, indifferent, cold and frightening sea" (Raban, 1999:6).

> "'Yer in a kayak?'
> 'Yeah'.
> 'And yer going to paddle it around the South Island?'
> I looked right back at him, smiled, and said, 'Ah yeah'.
> There was a slight pause... He squinted his eyes as if he was trying to figure something out, then asked in a gravely puzzled voice, 'Why?'
> How did I tell this guy...that I like the feel of the waves? ...That I like feeling the sun and the wind and the power and the sensuous feel of ocean swells driving the boat forward...?" (Duff, to a fisherman on the subject of his paddling route around South Island, New Zealand, 2003: 52).

Like Chris Duff (above), many individuals state they participate in kayaking due principally to the opportunity it gives them to engage with the sea. Participants articulate a strong affiliation between their sense of self and their belonging with the ocean; as one respondent put it, "I feel most comfortable and at home on the water", whilst others express their attachment to the element itself: "I love water and have an affiliation with it!" In order to find my own words for what this 'something' is about the sea, I went paddling.

I stand on the shore and look across the water. The sky is dappled blue. There are rain clouds in the distance, emptying themselves over England. I raise a smile at the lovely view. Carrying my boat to the water's edge puts up the gulls that were quietly swimming on the surface. I clamber into the cockpit.
The first thing you sense is your new orientation to the world. I'm now at 'ground' level. As adults, when do we ever see the world from this perspective? My familiar compass bearings become disoriented by this straightforward change in vantage point. Re-positioned to the land, I cast myself adrift from it with two simple strokes – left, right. How does this engagement with the sea change my senses? As I'm floating here a child's snow globe comes into my mind. On land, my life is set in such a hemisphere, and I am grounded, in the centre, at the bottom. The ground rarely moves, I take it for granted, and I have floating flakes above me. On the sea it is different. The hemi-sphere is wholed. My 'globe' is now a perfect sphere, partially filled with water, and I'm now floating in the middle, with a world around me. I become aware of the world of sky above, and the world of water below. Unlike the ground, the water beneath me isn't static. It's moving. *Although I know better, I feel it as if it were a body. I'm reminded of how Chris Duff calls the sea 'possessed' (2003:214). It's definitely far from dormant. This space, as Tuan (1996:445) would say, has 'personality'. The sea is lively, it's not a socially constructed metaphor, but it's here, it's present; if not quite a danger (yet), then active (as Peters, 2012 tells us). This morning the surface has small cats paws from the squall across*

the water, fractal mini waves on the surface, gathering into small waves, which will eventually become a series. Due to this surface movement, even when I do nothing, just sitting here with hands in the water, I move. The boat revolves to face the waves. They lap around me, slowing inching me backwards. I become aware of the easy but strengthening wind, and how I'm the weak link between these two elements. I'm the join between the sea and sky. My body could become a sail, my paddles too; catching the wind and moving me whether I want to or not.

I know where these waves are coming from; I can see their source (the squall across the water) at the edge of my 'kayak globe' bubble. Yet there are forces acting on my water world that I can sense but I can't see. Soon the tide will turn. The second largest tidal range in the world will begin to act on my boat. Lunar power. Gravity. The whole damn universe is affecting me. And here I am in the middle of it all, on the water, at the mercy of deep mobilities I cannot fathom.

Sometimes you can see into the deep. When clear, the sea becomes a 'body' visibly alive with other bodies. Sometimes full of fish, sometimes saturated with sand, salt, even sewage, sometimes just too deep. Today it's a slurry brown. But I can imagine the rocks shelving out beneath me, and the forests of seaweed popping and gurgling in the submarine world. Above me the two dozen young gulls I put up earlier caw and wheel, curious about this interloper in the intertidal zone.

Although this new water world is strange and disorientating, many kayakers feel a sense of home on the sea. Respondents allude to how, from their point of view, it's the human condition to belong on the water. As the following respondent put it:

> "Man [sic] has always wanted/needed to be close to water. For me it is more of a natural need. If I cannot be on it, I like to be near it. It gives me a sense of satisfaction."

Another kayaker states how their bond with water began at a young age: "I've always been a 'water baby'"; whilst another articulates how being close to water has been "such an intrinsic activity to me through my youth that it just feels natural. I'm a kayaker and always will be." Respondents here express how their human existence is a profoundly geographical – and oceanic - one. They are co-constituted by this watery realm. Kayakers, therefore, have particular spatial identities - they are co-constituted by water worlds. In the words of Webb, there is a sense of growing "uncertainty about where the[ir] body ends and the rest of the [water] world begins" (2000:3). This is perhaps unsurprising, as for those involved in kayaking activity their bodies are often partly submerged by water; as Sanford states, "Paddlers emphasize their intimacy with the [sea]... kayakers sit low in the water and are always partially immersed in the water" (2007:882). I feel this intimacy strongly.

I sense each rise and fall of the sea through my boat and my body. I'm in *the boat, and the boat is* in *the water. Importantly, it doesn't feel as if I am under the sea, or simply on the sea. The hull of the boat is a few inches under the water, and in the cockpit it is only this thin plastic hull that separates me from the deep. It's a very different feeling to being on a surfboard, or sitting on a surf- or wave-ski. They feel more like trays lying* on top *of the water. Kayaks have depth, have rails and edges; we are suspended in the meniscus between air and submergence. I feel this as I am now part of the boat. I'm wedged in, thighs, hips, feet. 'If your feet aren't bleeding', I was told when I first bought this boat, 'it doesn't fit right'. I tilt my hips, and the boat tilts in immediate response. I lift my left knee, I veer anticlockwise. I am semi-amphibious, a bi-elemental cyborg.*

As an extreme sport, being positioned in this new medium is a risky venture. The kayaker is at the mercy of the elements and more aware of their vulnerability than they are on land. Duff is always conscious of this vulnerability, as he puts it:

> "One of the challenges of sea kayaking is that every time the paddler snaps the spray deck in place and pushes off from shore, he or she is instantly in an environment that is potentially dangerous. Wind, tidal currents, reflecting waves, and water that is cold enough to lower the core temperature and kill by hypothermia are factors of the sea" (1999:39).

This risk is something respondents acknowledge, tolerate and often become attracted to due to their feelings for the water:

> "Kayaking has the added level of being an extreme sport with a level of risk that ensures you stay focused."

> "I mountain bike and hike but never feel more alive than paddling on the edge in water, sounds a cliché, but its true!"

> "I love being in, on, or around water. I enjoy being challenged physically and mentally and enjoy the environments that the sport takes me to."

Many respondents suggest that it is precisely the challenge presented by this water world that they enjoy. Participants enjoy the "thrill of testing [themselves] against the water", whilst the "challenge of you vs. the conditions, the planning, the problem solving, makes [your] heart pound". In a sense, these perspectives could be interpreted in ways that frame humans as against the water world, seeking to conquer it - as one respondent put it, "I enjoy the feeling of mastering the elements" (see also Anderson, 2010). However, many fall short of this urge to conquer and master nature, and appear satisfied by the combined mental and physical challenge offered by this element which they seek to move through safely and skilfully.

> "I think it has a lot to do with the unknown and tackling the water knowing you can't control it but you can try your best to use it. Working out the water ...is fun and speculative."

Although risk is relative to age, skill, and perception (see Cloke and Perkins 1998, Standeven & de Knop, 1999), kayaking does appear to offer participants a sense of risk – and safely practicing this activity in the face of this risk is vital to their sense of identity (Wheaton, 2004). A quarter of kayakers who responded to the CIWW survey stated that 'risk' is central to their motivation for kayaking, and as one individual states (perhaps with an element of dry humour), "I kayak to cheat death and feel alive. I have an office job and knees are not up to jogging." Speaking personally, this sense of risk and thrill occurs when experiencing the attack of coastal surf.

A vitally offshore wind. Surf. Sets of surf. Looming large from a distance, building walls of grey green, floomphing down in hard, fast collapse. The surf zone is a rough, encapsulated storm. Intimidating if I thought about it, so I don't. Speedily manoeuvre into the boat, get out there. The first rush of whitewater comes quickly, breaks the bow and explodes into me, bracing, invigorating, then gone. Shaking my head, salt piercing my eyes, a smile broadens and firecrackers of delight course my body.
From this level the waves are vast and vital. Limits are sensed, so through three broken sets I paddle then turn, prior to the rising battalions. I set myself for their boisterous collapsing. I attempt to gather pace, driving my paddle into the murk, but it's drawn back, being gathered into the beast. It comes, it's upon me. I lean back, feeling for the drive. The boat surprises; it's smooth, happy even, and with a pivot of my hips it turns easily along the lip, riding sideways and forwards towards the shore. Clean, fast. Hips pivot back, the boats wants to stay, but bracing my paddle it reluctantly straightens and instantly remembers the fun it can have being driven arrow-straight.
A dozen runs later, twists left and turns right have been nailed competently enough. And as I prepare my exit, a wave demolishes around me, dumping me onto the ocean floor, stealing my wind as down-payment and scouring my scalp into sand. Again I smile. Body stiff, torso aching, face weathered, I sit on the shore and see the tide rise, the beach withdraw and walls of sea build in magnitude and frequency. Braver souls than me continue the dance.

Coupled to the sense of risk in the water, participants also remark on the sense of escape they feel from engaging with the very different medium of the sea. 34% of respondents choose to participate in kayaking as an 'escape', using their time on the water to leave behind personal and/or everyday problems and stresses (see also Mannell and Iso-Ahola, 1987). As the following respondents put it:

> "I have always loved water and find water sports a release from real life."

> "I get a sense of achievement whilst upping personal skills - something that is in contrast to my normal work environment. Being on the water is somewhere that is 'me' time. Being away from the city."

In these comments one may be tempted to suggest that kayakers emerge as others from their normal selves when they engage with water. In this element they are more at home, expressing themselves and their bodies in different ways to those articulated in their landed lives. In this new media, they can escape to and express a new element of their identity. Such a perspective would suggest that kayakers have a multiplicity of selves (Jameson, 1991; Featherstone, 1995), each articulated in different elements. Kayakers therefore have a spatial – perhaps even an elemental – *division* of identity (see Anderson, 2004, 2012b). They can perhaps only be (part of) who they are when they are on the water. This co-constitution of self and water world is something sea kayaker Chris Duff has recognised:

> "On the sea I was utterly myself. The wind, the seas, and the cliffs that resonated with the booming heartbeat of the ocean demanded that I put all other cares aside and be nothing but a paddler.... What I feared was having to be something other than who I was on the ocean" (Duff, 1999: 222)

Whilst other sports may offer a sense of enjoyment, fitness and camaraderie, and other whizz sports may provide equivalent risk and challenge, it is only on water, and water encountered through the practice of kayaking, that participants can live out this crucial aspect of their identity.

So far in this chapter we have seen how the act of sea kayaking can be seen as a social, active, and adrenalin-fuelled practice. As an extreme sport it provides participants with a sense of thrill and risk, so much so that it enables individuals to articulate a different aspect of their identity to that performed on land. In the second half of the chapter we extend this idea of sea kayaking as an escape from land-centric modalities and consider it as a means through which participants can encounter a new way of viewing the world.

Water thoughts.

> "Kayaking is like the initial plunge into a mountain stream, it refreshes and wakes the body and mind to new life" (Duff, 1999:64).

With a few strokes I wheel around and try to navigate a 'path' parallel to shore. In considering my route as a 'path' I may be retaining my land vocabulary, but increasingly I'm having what Raban (1999:40) refers to as 'water thoughts'. Duff talks of time being a strange thing when it 'slides past at the length of a paddle stroke' (1999:87), and here I mark my own time by slicing the water with my paddles and splicing waves

with my bow. This is the world at four miles an hour. At this speed, from this vantage point, I pay a different kind of attention. I see the small things – in same way that I do in a gallery when all is quiet and you have time to 'really look' (as Gormley suggests we should, 2009). I see swarms of midges over the water; there is still that 'urgh, get out of my face' reaction, but as I move through their suspension in the air, I sense the world not as a retrofitted movie existing on many differently layered spatial planes, but in perfect 3D interactive vision. Does the reflective capacity of the water and its distorted mimicry create this? Am I living in yet-to-be-invented surroundsensovision? This world must be here all the time but I simply fail to notice it. I now pay attention to the droplets falling from the rotating arcs of my paddle, how they fall in small ephemeral rainbow streams. I notice how the paddles delicately cut the sea surface, leaving circles that grow, fragment, and fade. I notice the water breaking off my bow, globules bending and sparks fizzing as I forge through the water. When I turn my head it's just beautiful: geometric fanning from stern to open ocean. Rhythmic fishtails.

The world at four miles an hour makes me notice the haiku of the moment. The small things, the interactions of – not letters, syllables, words and pauses – but paddle with water, flies with air. This overcomes me as interactions repeat, another and another, senses overload. I have to tune out. But then I tune back in again as it all filters back through me. I concentrate on just one thing. Smooth water over smooth rock. It flows like molten lava. Folding and mixing. It's as if I'm in a picture. But a picture that doesn't finish, is constantly in the making. Can sea kayaking be considered as artistic performance? The beauty of it feels that way to me.

> "every human being has the potential to be not only an observer of a picture but to be in the picture. That… matters" (Gormley, 2009: no page).

As Duff tells us, kayaking can be considered as a refresh and a reboot, not simply for our bodies, but for our minds too - sea kayaking can help us see the world anew. From my own experience, kayaking on the sea focuses my attention on the minutiae of life, so much so that it can render me as witness to and participant in something bordering on the artistic. Tim Ingold (1993) ventures into similar territory when he talks of 'taskscapes'. A 'task' in his view is "any practical operation, carried out by a skilled agent in an environment" (1993:158). The taskscape by extension is the "entire ensemble of tasks [and] their mutual interlocking" (1993:158). Ingold would argue that the act of performing these tasks and creating a taskscape can be seen as form of art, not in the sense that it becomes a definitive product or commodity that can be witnessed and sold, but as a process that is transient and ephemeral in nature. As he describes with respect to the task of painting,

> "In many non-Western societies… what is essential is the act of painting itself, of which the products may be relatively short-lived - barely perceived before being erased or covered up. This is so, for example, among the Yolngu, an Aboriginal people of northern Australia, whose experience

> of finished paintings, according to their ethnographer, is limited to 'images fleetingly glimpsed through the corner of their eyes' (Morphy 1989:26). The emphasis, here, is on painting as performance. Far from being the preparation of objects for future contemplation, it is an act of contemplation in itself" (1993:161).

This contemplation of the performance of the task, of a barely perceived act of creation that is both fleetingly lived and glimpsed, seems to me definitive of the practice of kayaking. The mutual interlocking of 'haiku upon haiku' feels to this paddler as an epic saga unfurling then disappearing through practice. As a solitary kayaker today, this art is for the maker alone, an audience of one. It does not matter that there is no permanent record of that beauty, or that no one else will see it. Its transience is perhaps part of its beauty. Its fluidity and ephemerality challenges my preoccupation by a world view dominated by the apparently solid and substantial terra firma. The sea's constant mutability offers me an alternative. The sea doesn't accumulate, congeal, or accrete. It doesn't sediment into layers, or allow durable traces to be left in its surface. It is the counterpoint to the sculptured land which, for the artist Anthony Gormley, offers the opportunity for people to "sense their own lives" in relation to something "that doesn't move at the same speed that they feel they have to" (2009: no page). Rather than being like the sculpted land which offers a still point against which people can 'sense their lives', the sea offers a moving moment. The seas mutability renders our lives longer and more permanent than a wave or storm squall, but its constancy renders that same life a fleeting ripple on its breaking surface. Sea kayaking makes us pay attention to these moments, offering us a reminder of the transience of all things and how this recognition is not something to rail against or resist, but is rather something beautiful.

Kayaking as epistemology.

> "everything is fluid, even the land, it just flows at a very slow rate" (Goldsworthy, 1994:65).

The ability for sea kayaking to make us look at the world afresh, perhaps as a form of processual art, renders the pursuit more than an extreme sport or embodied identity, but as a new way of looking at the world. Sea kayaking produces water thoughts that critically challenge terrestrial assumptions of solidity, pace and permanence. In a similar way to Goldsworthy (above), it makes us aware that the world can be seen as continually in flow. Such new perspectives are so powerful that as I write this and consider the performance of art as something that lives and dies in the moment, any notion that we should seek to preserve experiences, congeal them into objects or accrete them into solidscapes seems anathema to the point of art itself. By seeking to capture and conserve a moment, it misses the point of creation and destruction entirely[iii]. Sea kayaking therefore gives us a perspective which helps to recognise our involvement, vulnerability, and transience in the world. We begin to move away from seeing the world as 'landscape' – as a 'congealed form of taskscape' (Ingold, 1993:162) - and every object as a 'collapsed act' (see Mead, 1977) as these terrestrial terminologies fail to account for the fluidity of the water world. Water thoughts tell us that, as Inglis points out, scapes are "living processes; [they] make men" (1977: 489). The

scapes we live in are dynamic, and form our world views and our lives. Kayaking reminds us of the agency of water, the agency of the unseen, and the power of time, and their capacity to 'act back' on our lives 'in the process of their own dwelling" (after Ingold, 1993:163). When the practice of sea kayaking gives us these moments of reflection, it also gives us a new way of seeing the world. As Chris Duff recalls following a day of risk on the ocean:

> "[Sometimes] this life on the sea, which at times seemed so difficult and vulnerable, seemed not to make sense. And yet I continued to return to it, perhaps because the sea demanded so much, but it also fed me in a way that no other lifestyle had. In its demands there was no masking the fragility of human life, yet in those extremes there was also a beauty that surpassed anything I had experienced. And in that intimacy of extremes, I had found the fullness and acceptance of who I was and how I fit into a very complicated and busy world.... The ever-changing, ravaging, and seductive sea forces one to acknowledge how tenuous and rich are the moments of a heartbeat, the flight of an albatross, and the arc of a rainbow. I closed my journal, not certain of but closer to understanding the power that the sea had over me. Maybe it was enough just to acknowledge the power of the sea and the value I placed in exploring my relationship with it" (2003:242-3).

Conclusion.

> "being afloat gives me, at least, a heightened sense of being alive moment to moment. As small earthquakes do, it keeps you properly aware of your precariousness in the world" (Raban, 1999:90).

As the discipline of human geography tells its students, human are geographical beings. As we have seen in this chapter, some humans are formed, influenced, and feel most at home in water worlds. Kayakers enjoy lifestyles that are tied to moving water, connected through the emotions felt through immersing with it, and being mobile on it. Kayaking on the sea gives humans the opportunity to be other than who they are on land, and gives them a new way of looking at the world as a consequence. As the following kayakers put it:

> "the world is more beautiful kayaking - it's why we do it, to interact with nature in a different way, from a different perspective".

> "paddling in natural environments is just good for my soul".

Kayakers are therefore one group of people who want to be challenged in relation to their constitution with the world (see Erskine & Anderson, 2013 for others). Kayakers need *to move* and *be moved*, to be stimulated and challenged in terms of their relations to place. As spatial beings, this challenge comes from a geographical location itself; in this case a seascape's diversity and dynamism. Kayaking repositions humans in terms of their vulnerability and sensitivity and leaves them porous to new affects - of seconds of neat fear, but also moments of pure adrenalin and joy. To answer the question posed by the Kiwi fisherman

to Chris Duff (above), accessing this new world view is what kayakers think about when they think about kayaking:

> "Anyone who slips past those cliffs and carries on northward, enduring and exalting in the challenges of the passage, may well emerge from the experience with a different perspective, not in the sense of achieving anything of great notoriety but rather in the awareness of how one's life is a blessing, and if there is anything insignificant on the earth, it is the heartbeat of time in which we spend our lives" (Duff, 2003:257).

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[i] This survey was conducted with kayakers frequenting the Cardiff International White Water (CIWW) Centre in Cardiff Bay in 2011. Cardiff International White Water is an Olympic standard white water centre

and the first on-demand white water rafting centre in the UK. An online survey was written by the author and CIWW staff member Bryony Rees, and was sent to 2000 kayakers on the Centre's mailing list. The survey was completed by 395 people representing a range of ages, genders, skill levels, and experiences. 98% of all respondents had paddled on both artificial and natural bodies of water.

[ii] As an illustrative exemplar, according to respondents of the survey at CIWW, kayaking appeals to a wide age group. The youngest kayaker who responded to the survey was 9 years old, the eldest 73, with the average age of respondents being 32 years. 56% of all respondents had been active in the sport for 10 years or more (with 28% participating for over 20 years). 8% of all respondents classed themselves as 'beginners', 52% as 'intermediates', and 40% as 'advanced' kayakers.

[iii] As Goldsworthy suggests in relation to his artistic construction of walls, he does not see these objects as solid, permanent edifices. In his words, "The wall is not an object to be preserved in the traditional sense of art conservation. It is at the beginning of its life. What kind of life it has will depend on what happens to it. There are many possibilities... Fragility and risk give the wall its energy. For it to retain this energy I must accept that the work has an uncertain future – even at the extreme of the wall being allowed to decay and trees left where they fall" (2001: no page).