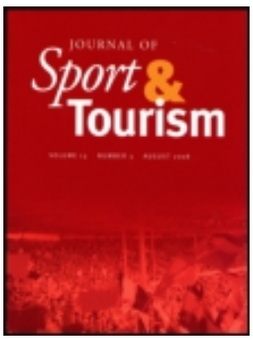

Journal of Sport & Tourism

ISSN: 1477-5085 (Print) 1029-5399 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rjto20

Lifestyle climbing: Toward existential authenticity

Jillian M. Rickly-Boyd

To cite this article: Jillian M. Rickly-Boyd (2012) Lifestyle climbing: Toward existential authenticity, Journal of Sport & Tourism, 17:2, 85-104, DOI: 10.1080/14775085.2012.729898

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2012.729898

Published online: 08 Nov 2012.

Journal of Sport & Tourism
Vol. 17, No. 2, May 2012, pp. 85–104

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Lifestyle climbing: Toward existential authenticity

Jillian M. Rickly-Boyd

Among the rock climbing community exists a subculture of highly dedicated individuals who give up permanent residences for the full-time pursuit of this sport. In doing so, these lifestyle climbers maintain hypermobile and minimalist modes of living as their commitment spans years and decades. This article employs the concept of existential authenticity developed in tourism studies to examine some findings of an ethnographic study of this subculture. As they speak about the bodily practice and flow of climbing, the liminality of travel, life in the outdoors, the camaraderie of fellow lifestyle climbers, and the (re)discovery of a sense of self, it is argued that authenticity is performative. Yet, while a passion for climbing is the primary motivation for taking up this lifestyle, moments of existential authenticity are the result of experiences, challenges, and accomplishments of travel. As such, lifestyle climbing, which is inspired by the bodily practice of rock climbing, framed by frequent travel, and enacted within community necessitates a performance-based authenticity as an analytic.

Keywords: authenticity; rock climbing; lifestyle; travel; performance; dirtbag

Introduction

Rock climbers are a highly mobile sport community. While cliff lines may be accessible throughout the year, seasonality can greatly impact the quality of climbing. As a result, many climbing destinations have optimal seasons, for example, Hueco Tanks, Texas sees the greatest numbers in the winter months while the Shawangunk Mountains of New York are popular spring through fall. Thus, travel has become intricately woven into rock climbing culture. In his guide to *American Rock*, Mellor (2001, p. 9) writes, 'Climbing, to me, isn't just climbing. It's experiencing place and people, and it's relishing their variety.' Travel, as an aspect of the rock climbing experience, however, has been underexplored in both sport and travel literature.

Rock climbing has been central in investigations of risk, including perceptions of risk and danger (Palmer, 2002; Fave *et al.*, 2003; Llewellyn & Sanchez, 2008),

Jillian M. Rickly-Boyd is at the Department of Geography, Indiana University, Student Building 120, 701 E. Kirkwood Avenue, Bloomington, IN 47405-7100, USA. Email: jrickly@indiana.edu

ISSN 1477-5085 (print)/ISSN 1029-5399 (online)
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2012.729898

motivations for adventure (Lyng, 1990; Weber, 2001; Varley, 2006; Llewellyn & Sanchez, 2008), and its commodification for the marketing of 'extreme' sports (Palmer, 2002; Robinson, 2008). Conversely, the majority of rock climbers express motivations and experiences driven not by risk but a sense of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Heywood, 1994, 2006; Kiewa, 2002; Lewis, 2004; Taylor, 2010). Flow is a state of mind, characterized by intense focus and psychological energy that results when one's skill level is met with an optimal challenge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In fact, a sense of safety or at least security with one's gear and partner's abilities is essential to the deep focus that results in flow (Heywood, 2006; Rossiter, 2007). Thus, it is not surprising that active climbers refer to this as a 'lifestyle' sport (Wheaton, 2004), as opposed to the popular media term, 'extreme' sport (Wheaton, 2004; Robinson, 2008).

However, for some, rock climbing transitions from a lifestyle sport to simply a lifestyle, with intense dedication and sacrifice, along with increased mobility. While the majority of rock climbers can only afford the time and expense of weekend trips, as they have careers, families, and other obligations, these climbers are driven by their reverence for the sport, pursuing it full-time for years of their lives. In doing so, they also enter into a community of other committed climbers, taking on a collective identity characterized by traveling circuits of destinations. Thus, lifestyle climbers are a type of lifestyle traveler, 'individuals for whom extended leisure travel is a preferred lifestyle that they return to repeatedly' (Cohen, 2010a, p. 118). As such, it is also 'a phenomenon that illustrates a de-differentiation of everyday life and tourist experiences' (Cohen, 2011, p. 1537) and shares much in common with other full-time, travel-minded athletes, including surfers (Chouinard, 2006; Waeschle, 2009) and white water rafters (Filho, 2010).

Yet, while academically 'lifestyle climbers' best captures the lifestyle travel and sport dedication of this community, such a phrase was not observed among this community. Rather, these climbers use a series of terms to denote their collective identity, including 'dirtbag', which places them in an historical lineage of rock-climbing subcultures dedicated to this sport (Taylor, 2010), 'lifer' and 'full-timer' referring to the long-term commitment of this lifestyle, and 'vanner' denoting the most common abode and mode of transportation. Despite these various identities, lifestyle climbers, in general, define themselves as living 'a very frugal existence' and willing to 'sacrifice in life's luxuries to maintain an intense climbing schedule' (Rockclimbing.com, 2011; see, for example, Stevens, 2010).

This article uses the framework of existential authenticity to explore this highly dedicated, mobile subculture of rock climbers. While authenticity has long been central to tourism studies, it has also been among the most contested concepts. From objectivist measures to socially constructed meanings, authenticity studies can tell us much about tourism places and tourist motivations. However, as 'object-oriented' perspectives, these approaches have limitations concerning the authenticity of tourism experiences (Wang, 1999; Cook, 2010). Therefore, existential authenticity, as an activity-based approach, is most useful for addressing the feelings, sensations, relationships, and sense of self that comes from the performance of tourism. Thus, authenticity is also performative, from the embodied experiences of 'doing' tourism to the narrative

communication of self (Noy, 2004b; Shaffer, 2004; Knudsen & Waade, 2010). Authenticity is 'something which people can *do* and a feeling which is *experienced*' (Knudsen & Waade, 2010, p. 1, emphasis original). As such, lifestyle climbing, which is inspired by the bodily practice of rock climbing, framed by frequent travel, and enacted within community necessitates a performance-based authenticity as an analytic.

Authenticity

Authenticity is among the more debated concepts in tourism studies (Cohen, 1988; Hughes, 1995; Wang, 1999; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Belhassen & Caton, 2006; Mkono, 2012; Rickly-Boyd, 2012). While Boorstin (1992 [1961]) declared tourism a means through which to justify the inauthenticity of everyday life, MacCannell (1976, 1999) contested that tourism is, indeed, a quest for the authentic, acting as a counterpoint to the inauthenticity of modernity. Over time, research in tourism has shown that not only are there different theoretical approaches to the concept (objective, constructive, postmodern, and existential), but these can change depending on the focus of analysis – an object, a site, or an experience. More often than not, researchers use more than one theoretical approach to examine a multiplicity of factors that contribute to tourism experiences (Selwyn, 1996; MacCannell, 1999; Belhassen *et al.*, 2008; Buchmann *et al.*, 2010; Cook, 2010).

Objective perspectives measure or judge authenticity based on originality and genuineness, and privilege the opinions of certified 'experts' (Trilling, 1972; Wang, 1999; Chhabra, 2012). Such a perspective is commonly used in museum settings. Furthermore, objectivists believe that the 'search for authentic experiences is thus no more than an epistemological experience' (Wang, 1999, p. 214). Accordingly, an inauthentic object yields an inauthentic experience, and no copy could ever be authentic. As such, objectivist perspectives offer little upon which to understand the authenticity of participatory tourism, such as sport and nature tourism, in which the tourist experience depends more on the doing and less on viewing.

Conversely, constructivist approaches contend that tourists are not in search of essentialist properties of authenticity but symbolic authenticity (Wang, 1999). Constructivist authenticity is, therefore, negotiable (Cohen, 1988), contextual (Salamone, 1997), and open to pluralistic interpretations (Schwandt, 2000). As a result, this perspective rejects authenticity as a dichotomous concept – real/fake, true/false. Semiotically, constructivism justifies authenticity based on one's expectations and cultural preferences (Culler, 1981); as such it allows the tourist to determine what is authentic to her/him. While such a perspective is particularly useful for addressing touristic motivations and meaning-making processes (Bruner, 1994; DeLyser, 1999), constructivism has limitations concerning the authenticity of lived, felt, and embodied experiences (Cook, 2010).

In response to these 'object-oriented' perspectives, Wang (1999) proposes existential authenticity as an activity-based approach (see also Pearce & Moscardo, 1986; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). He argues, in this sense, authenticity may 'have nothing to do with the authenticity of toured objects' (1999, p. 212). Instead, it refers to a state of being, and therefore is frequently grounded in Heideggerian philosophy. Pearce and Moscardo

(1986) were among the first tourism scholars to suggest an alternative perspective to authenticity. In particular, they assert that authenticity can come from experiences with people and places, in accordance with Heidegger's concepts of self-actualization and *Dasein* – an entity which genuinely exemplifies its being.

Steiner and Reisinger (2006, p. 302) also advocate a Heideggerian perspective to tourism experience, as it is 'another human activity that creates, in its own way, opportunities to explore and experience what it means to be human'. Yet existential authenticity is not something that is realized or enduring, but is momentary. Therefore, they argue that, 'if tourism scholars are really serious about exploring existential authenticity from a Heideggerian perspective', we must also consider his three characteristics of authenticity – mineness, resoluteness, and situation (2006, p. 306; citing Heidegger, 1996). This means, according to Heidegger, existential authenticity comes in the rare experiences (situations) in which one recognizes one's possibilities of self (mineness) and acts with tenacity to claim this potential (resoluteness).

Based on existentialism generally, Wang (1999) argues that an

> authentic self involves a balance between two parts of one's Being: reason and emotion, self-constraint and spontaneity; Logos and Eros [...] inauthentic self arises when the balance between these two parts of being is broken down in such a way that rational factors over-control non-rational factors. (pp. 360–361)

As a result, a search for existential authenticity tends to focus on feelings, emotions, sensations, relationships, and sense of self.

In developing this concept for tourism studies, Wang (1999) puts forth two dimensions of existential authenticity – intra-personal and inter-personal. 'Bodily feelings' are an important component of the intra-personal dimension of existential authenticity. While the Cartesian-Kantian tradition prefaces the mind at the expense of the body, bodily concern (recreation, relaxation, rejuvenation, etc.) is central to tourism (Veijola & Jokinen, 1994; Cook, 2010). 'Self-making' is the other component of intra-personal authenticity. Modernity has rationalized nearly all activities and use of time, imposing constraints to self-realization. The break from these norms, through tourism, can provide a structure in which individuals can act spontaneously, in-line with their true feelings and authentic self (Wang, 1999; Kim & Jamal, 2007).

Inter-personal authenticity is the second dimension of existential authenticity, also composed of two parts – family ties and communitas. Tourists in search of authentic experiences are not just seeking an authentic other, or a 'true' self, but they are also in search of authenticity of, and between, themselves (Wang, 1999, p. 364). Thus, the existentially authentic tourism experience is not a result of seeing sights of socially constructed importance (MacCannell, 1999), but is about collectively performing and experiencing the journey (Belhassen *et al.*, 2008; Buchmann *et al.*, 2010; Rickly-Boyd, 2012).

Research Design and Methodology

Hypermobile communities are particularly difficult to study (D'Andrea, 2006). While there are some general patterns that rock climbers tend to follow, based on seasonality

and climbing style, individual choices and circumstances also influence travel behavior in unpredictable ways. Rather than take to the road and attempt to follow traveling climbers along various circuits, this research is focused on one popular destination – Red River Gorge, Kentucky – during its peak climbing season. Whereas some spend only a weekend climbing, others stay for weeks to months before traveling to other destinations.

In addition, this research utilizes a popular climbing website, Rockclimbing.com, in order to observe the diversity of the community. In an age of increasing globalization, social media and networks can foster communities that span vast distances (Massey, 1991; Hall, 1995). While climbers do meet and perform group identities on the ground, in specific places, the website's forums facilitate community communication, development, and maintenance. Thus, an ethnographic study of lifestyle climbers as a subculture of the larger rock-climbing community engages both its online manifestations as well as The Red as climbing destination.

Rockclimbing.com

Rockclimbing.com is the largest and most encompassing website dedicated to the sport, hosting more than 100,000 members. The website provides information for more than 100,000 climbing routes around the world, articles, and media sources pertaining to the sport, gear reviews, and ratings, climbing videos, a partner board, and over 30 different forums regarding topics from regional US climbing areas and techniques to memorials and gender dynamics.

Altheide *et al.* (2008, p. 135) suggest that 'an ethnographic perspective can be brought to bear on symbolic communication in other than 'physical spaces', including information bases and cyberspace' (see also Hine, 2008). In fact, Mautner (2005, p. 813) argues that, 'if it was not for the internet, many representations of reality and social relationships would not be articulated at all.' Accordingly, discourse analysis of the website's forums provides insight into the social relationships that characterize this sport, as it offers a way to examine the outcomes of discourse in terms of perceptions, attitudes, and actions, to identify frameworks through which social knowledge is produced, circulated, and communicated, and to uncover the mechanisms that maintain such social knowledge as 'natural' (Waitt, 2005; Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002).

Investigation of the forums at Rockclimbing.com began with a search for the word 'dirtbag', the most common term used within the rock climbing community to distinguish full-time, non-sponsored climbers from leisure climbers. The first step of analysis identified forum conversational threads which pertained directly to 'dirtbag', revealing 52 threads and 1450 individual posts. The next steps included coding and the identification of themes and sub-themes among the forum discussions with the assistance of the qualitative analysis software 'HyperResearch'. Themes were used to develop preliminary theories regarding motivations, goals, and experiences that were then tested in the field at the Red River Gorge. Because individuals post their own comments to forum discussion threads, quotes from these posts used in

this article are kept as is, including any spelling or grammatical errors. References to individual's comments are cited in terms of the thread number and post number, for example, T3P16 represents post number 16 within conversation thread 3.

Red River Gorge

The Red River Gorge in the foothills of Appalachian Kentucky is one of the most popular sport climbing[1] destinations in the world. As a result, thousands of rock climbers visit this area each year; however, the population peaks in October, as the cool, dry air of fall begins to set in. While some climbers live in The Red year round, the majority arrives in mid-September, camping at Miguel's Pizza, and climbing into November. Most travel south in the winter months, then return for a few weeks in the spring.

Miguel's Pizza is a staple of the rock-climbing community in the Red River Gorge. While at most destinations, climbers are dispersed across a series of small campgrounds, The Red is one of the few locations that has a single, central social space where the vast majority of climbers camp. This is partly due to the fact that most crags are accessible by driving, parking, and making a relatively short hike. It is also the result of a long relationship between Miguel's Pizza and the climbing community. Miguel Ventura started his pizzeria in 1985 when the climbing community consisted of just a few individuals. A couple of climbers started selling gear at his shop and it soon became a popular social space (Ellington, 2007). Ventura set up a small campground in the late 1980s and has expanded it several times over, adding other amenities, including camping accommodations at $2/day, restrooms, token-based shower and laundry facilities, and most recently Wi-Fi. As the climbing community has grown so has the pizzeria and campground. It can now accommodate more than 150 tents or about 500 campers.

Fieldwork with this community began in August 2011 and continued through November. This involved living in a cabin in The Red that facilitated daily visits to Miguel's Pizza, crags, and various other social spaces. Informed by an investigation of the forums on Rockclimbing.com, a series of qualitative methods were employed, including participant observation and interviews. The early weeks of participant observation were used to establish familiarity within the community and to identify the lifestyle climbers. Once identified as lifestyle climbers, individuals were then asked to participate in an interview about sport dedication, travel behavior, and lifestyle choices. Thus, a criterion sampling method was used (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2005). A total of 21 individuals were interviewed – 6 females and 15 males. This gender disparity is representative of the lifestyle climber population observed at The Red, in which only about 30% were female. The age of participants ranged from 19 to 56 years, and the time spent traveling and climbing full-time varied from 1 to 17 years. These lifestyle climbers, as reflected in the rock climbing population in general, were predominantly white (Erikson, 2005). All but two of the interviewees are Americans, with the exception of one Canadian and one French.

Analytic Framework

In addition to audio-recorded interviews, fieldnotes from participant observation and informal conversations and online forum data were stored and analyzed using HyperReserach qualitative analysis software. Initially, broad themes – rock climbing, travel, dirtbag, and 'The Red' – were used to sort data. Next, sub-themes and specific codes were applied. This examination occurred throughout the fieldwork process, and over time, a series of key conceptual categories resulted. It is the concept of existential authenticity that is the focus of this article. Informed by the work of Wang (1999), several categories and sub-categories relating to the concept of existential authenticity have been uncovered among this community of lifestyle climbers (see also Kim & Jamal, 2007). This investigation suggests bodily feelings, self-making, and liminality work to develop a sense of intra-personal authenticity, while inter-personal authenticity is experienced through *communitas*. In what follows, each of these categories and subcategories are elaborated upon using online forum, interview, and observational data. Generally, participants are not identified by name but by basic demographics; where necessary pseudonyms are used to ensure confidentiality, with male and female names used to denote gender.

Dirtbagging Toward Existential Authenticity

MacCannell (1976, 1999) argued that tourists are motivated by a desire for authentic experience; however, they are ultimately doomed to fail in this quest because cultural commodification has resulted in only a staged authenticity. Thus, he was drawing a connection between authentic experience and objective epistemology that does not account for the feelings, emotions, and sensations that arise from 'doing' tourism. An authentic experience can be informed, not only by the object of the tour, but by bodily feelings, a sense of self, and intersubjective experiences (Wang, 1999). This is particularly important when considering motivations for tourism based on activity, not on sightseeing. This is the case with lifestyle climbers who are motivated by recreational experience and whose authenticity comes not from viewing the cliff line, but a multiplicity of subjective sensations and intersubjective relationships experienced on and off the rock face. In this vein, Heywood writes of the 'expressive possibilities' of engaging with such lifestyle sports

> They are associated for participating individuals with a feeling that the activity is not just an enjoyable way of passing time, but is on the contrary capable of revealing things of importance about people – perhaps particularly the participants themselves – and the world. The activity is able to disclose more than we know already and will go on offering disclosure, a glimpse of inner depths, to committed individuals. The sport represents a dimension of experience in which the world appears vivid, poignant, tangible, fresh and illuminated, often to the considerable disadvantage of the other lifeworlds to which the individual belongs. (1994, p. 180)

These climbers are 'dirtbagging', as they would say, living minimally in order to maintain a hypermobile lifestyle dedicated to rock climbing; yet, that does not mean that all identify as 'dirtbags'. As a result, for these lifestyle climbers, existential

authenticity comes from the bodily feelings of rock climbing and life in the outdoors, experiences of liminality, challenges, and sacrifices, and community bonds.

Bodily Feelings

Some of the primary motivations for tourism include recreation, relaxation, and rejuvenation, which place the body, and bodily feelings, at the center of tourism experience (Veijola & Jokinen, 1994; Wang, 1999). Even more so, the body is central to the experience of sport. Thus, the body is both sensual and symbolic (Featherstone *et al.*, 1991; Wellard, 2009). While the body is the means of sensing and feeling, both physically and emotionally, it is also a display of personal identity, including health, fitness, class, age, sexuality, etc. (Bourdieu, 1984; Featherstone *et al.*, 1991; Wellard, 2009).

Rock climbing as practice. While some may find spirituality in rock climbing, the majority of participants in this study claimed the bodily experience is what they enjoy, and in particular, the relationship between the mind and body that is fostered with rock climbing. They thrive on the mental, emotional, and physical challenges of scaling the natural rock face.

> As a climber, you use your body, and mind, and soul. (T3P45)
>
> I like the challenge. I like to get on things that are really difficult for me and figure them out. (Female, mid-20s – climbing 8 years, dirtbagging 2 years)
>
> It feels like a practice. Maybe a philosophical practice with physical applications. [. . .] You have the mental factors that are brought about through a physical practice and that's kind of what climbing feels like to me. The physical part with the intent of bringing about a specific mental concept is kind of the idea. The Zen quote, punish your body to purify your mind, type of deal, it's that sort of idea. (Male, late 20s – climbing 15 years, dirtbagging 9 years)

The climbing body, argues Lewis (2000, p. 59), 'physicalizes or embodies a set of ideas and practices that often belie the deep-rooted ambivalence held by modernity towards the body and sensuous knowledge'; thus how one chooses to make sense of the world is to exert an existential freedom. For the rock climber, he argues, 'direct experience [...] usurps the pre-eminence of cognitive apprehension' (2000, p. 71).

Life outdoors. By dedicating themselves fully to the pursuit of the sport, and this bodily experience, these climbers encounter few of the alienating distractions that are noted with conventional lifestyles. In fact, their bodies are at the forefront of each experience. The majority of lifestyle climbers live out of a vehicle, most commonly a van, a few have a small recreational vehicle (RV) or camper, and some just a tent. Thus, while Simmel (1997 [1950]) suggests that life becomes easy in a metropolis, 'the individual has become a mere cog in an enormous organisation' (p. 184), to step away from such automation of choice and action makes life all the more difficult, but offers the potential for existential authenticity (Lewis, 2000).

> I mean, every now and then you have those days, where it's rainy and it's fucked and everything you have is wet and it's cold and it's shitty. And you're just like what the fuck am I doing living in the woods, man? I could be doing something with my life; I could be giving something back to society. But no, I'm going to live in my car and get rained on so I can go rock climbing tomorrow. But then when the sun comes out and the rock's dry and you do that first pitch and you remember why you're doing it. (Male, early 20s, climbing 6 years, dirtbagging 1 year)

Their days play out in the elements, from sleeping to cooking to climbing. As a result, weather has a tremendous effect on individuals' moods. While a single rainy day can be a bummer, severely limiting the dry climbing areas to the most overhanging cliff lines, a series of rainy days can be devastating. Because these lifestyle climbers have tight budgets, their options for other recreational activities are also limited. Thus, prolonged inclement weather or an injury that prevents them from frequent climbing tests their patience, and can result in irritability and even depression. For some, these instances make them most questionable of their decision to climb full-time and, therefore, reassess their current situation. For example, after a few unexpected expenses crippled Kevin's budget and a whole week of rain hit, he declared he was quitting the lifestyle and looking for full-time work. But when he secured some temporary work and the sun returned, he was back at the crag on a regular basis.

Body as display. As with most sports, there is an ideal body type associated with optimal performance. Because the rock climber is continually lifting her/his weight against the force of gravity, a lean but muscular body is ideal. This is not only displayed in the numerous rock climbing magazines, such as *Rock and Ice* and *Climbing*, but also at the crag (Erikson, 2005; Chisholm, 2008). Such appearances make first impressions. Those who do not conform to such preconceptions are looked at with speculation. However, those who perform well, despite their deviation from the norm, are often praised and this becomes a source of friendly jokes. For example, Robert is affectionately teased for his ability to 'walk up to a route, beer gut hanging out over his harness, and totally send that 5.12'. As American climbing routes are graded within the fifth class of the Yosemite Decimal System, they range from 5.0 to the most difficult recorded grade of 5.15, of which only a handful of climbers have completed.

For women, however, this results in a bit of a catch-22. Despite changes, rock climbing remains a male-dominated sport, and this disparity grows among lifestyle climbers. In fact, some of the top climbers in the world are female, notably Lynn Hill, Beth Rodden, Katie Brown, and Tori Allen. Yet, that does not translate to the crag. Females are expected to underperform compared to their male climbing partners. As a result, when this does not happen, gender becomes associated with accomplishment.

'Elizabeth is the only one who has sent that route, man or woman', described her boyfriend. Despite the fact that Elizabeth is one of the best climbers in The Red, better than her boyfriend in fact, he still felt the need to qualify her success in relation to her gender. This is a tactic employed not only by the males in the community, but the females likewise add such qualifiers to their climbing achievements. Thus, the bodily experience for the female climber is also a highly gendered experience, particularly off the rock face (Erikson, 2005; Robinson, 2008; Chisholm, 2008; Dilley &

Scraton, 2010). Moreover, when the skilled female climber develops a body that is especially muscular, she is described as masculine. In describing such a person, one climber noted, 'Sarah, yeah, you know her. She's got blonde hair and is built, you know, like a dude.' Femininity and masculinity are at odds for the female climber. While the rock may be gender-neutral, the 'practice of rock climbing cultivates the body towards a better configuration for climbing' (Lewis, 2000, p. 75). To be strong enough to overcome the challenges of the rock face means foregoing bodily aspects that fuel preconceptions of femininity (see also Chisholm, 2008). Thus, with gender in the background of each 'situation' for the female climber, argues Chisholm (2008), existential authenticity is more difficult to achieve.

Liminality

Existential authenticity is commonly associated with liminality in the tourism literature, as a distinct spatio-temporal experience from the everyday (Wang, 1999; Graburn, 1983). While, it is argued, modernity imposes constraints on one's behavior, appearance, and emotions, the liminality of tourism allows for a more spontaneous, free experience and, therefore, an opportunity for expressing an authentic self (Wang, 1999; Kim & Jamal, 2007). Lifestyle climbers experience numerous liminoid moments, from experiences on the rock, which many describe as 'timeless' moments of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) to their constant mobility (see also Varley, 2011).

Flow. One of the symptoms of 'flow' is a feeling of timelessness during the activity. This is among the most common descriptions offered by climbers regarding their experience on the rock face.

> When you're climbing you don't have time to be thinking about anything else. It's not that you don't have time to think, but that there's just, like, no time, *no time* when you are climbing. (Male, late 20s – climbing 10 years, dirtbagging 4 years)

Csikszentmihalyi has developed a theory for the experience that results when peak skill is met with peak challenge. He has termed this, 'flow', an optimal experience, a 'state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter' (1990, p. 4). This experience is a primary motivation for those who wish to climb more. This state of mind, combined with adrenaline rush, physical exertion, and enjoyment of the outdoors produce a powerful drive to maintain their climbing lifestyle. Yet, despite pursuing rock climbing full-time, a relatively small portion of their day is actually experienced as 'flow'. Few can physically climb every day as muscles, tendons, and skin must have periods of rest and recovery. Therefore, many climbers have schedules, such as 2 days on, 1 day off, to allow their bodies to recover. Moreover, when they are at the crag, only a small amount of time is spent on the rock face. They might climb a sport route[2] for 30 minutes, but then need to rest, as well as belay their climbing partner. As a result, the average full-time climber gets only a few opportunities a day to experience flow. Much of the rest of the day, however, is spent engaged in conversations about climbing, rehearsing the

moves of routes with friends, and in discussion of which routes to take on as new projects. In particular, when describing routes climbed, they will rehearse the moves, verbally as well as physically. Hands are thrown into the air as if reaching for a hold, and sometimes grunts and moans are used to express the difficulty of the move. Ness (2011, p. 75) describes witnessing such a rehearsal – 'they moved between linguistic and gestural forms of representation with a fluency that indexed their combined extensive practice.' These expressive moments allow climbers to recapture bits of that flow experience and stay energized in their down time.

Mobility. When choosing to climb full-time, these climbers are also choosing a life of travel. One climber explained that 'there's nowhere that is great 12 months of the year, so if you really want to climb all the time, it's pretty important [to travel]'. This results in a highly mobile lifestyle, with most climbers spending only a few weeks to months at a single destination.

> I think that's what makes it fun, going other places, being humbled on different things you're not used to and trying different climbing. (Male, mid-20s – climbing 6 years, dirtbagging 3 years)

Over time, this constant travel results in a sense of placelessness (Relph, 1976) for some.

> Basically, I haven't had a 'home' for two years. (T29P1)

Others relish in this aspect of the lifestyle, as they do not like to feel tied to a single place.

> I like to be in situations, places that I am not comfortable, like in new places. (Male, late 30s – climbing 20 years, dirtbagging 14 years)

Most of these itinerant climbers, however, explained that they have adjusted to this constant mobility so that they feel at home when climbing or when they are with other climbers. For those who have been traveling and climbing for longer periods of time, and in particular, those who have converted a van or live out of a RV have made their small space home.

> It's just been within the past year or two that I've realized there's not like geographical areas that are like home, so it's been pretty easy to be like home is the back of my Toyota. I have everything I need with me and I can bring it wherever I want. And I am home in my body, instead of like, I have to be in a certain place. So travelling has felt pretty normal, pretty mellow. (Female, mid-30s – climbing 9 years, dirtbagging 7 years)

While this hypermobile lifestyle can result in feelings of placelessness (Relph, 1976), most lifestyle climbers have carved out their own private spaces and have pushed the boundaries of 'home' space. As Germann Molz (2008, p. 327) argues, with increased mobility,

> *home* becomes a signifier not only for the normative stability of a particular place or for the transportable sentiments of comfort, security, familiarity and control, but also for a way of being and belonging in the world as a whole.

Sense of Self

Because many individuals find their everyday roles monotonous and therefore constraining to efforts of self-realization, Wang (1999, p. 363) argues that '[s]elf-making is an implicit dimension underlying the motivation for tourism, particularly for traveling off the beaten track'. Lifestyle travelers, as Cohen (2010a, 2010b, 2011) suggests, are particularly driven by identity-processes. Through the performance of dirtbagging, many discover a new sense of self, as well as construct individual and collective identities.

Discovering self. While a love of rock climbing is the most frequently cited motivation for taking up this pursuit, observations of the forums at Rockclimbing.com and conversations with lifestyle climbers reveal more personal motivations regarding a sense of self that remains unrealized in everyday life. Encourages one former 'dirtbag', 'You can find out a lot [*sic*] about yourself on the road, you just have to go and look.' (T6P33) Thus, the idea of full-time climbing and travel offers great potential for the (re)discovery of self, an essential component of existential authenticity (see also Noy, 2004a, Shaffer, 2004).

> I'm so looking forward to a simpler life. I'm only 26, but I feel 40. There is so much that I need to leave behind right now, so that I can focus on me. [...] I need to get to know myself, cause I've nearly forgotten who I am. I have been groomed into a corporate lemming, and nearly lost site of what is TRULY important to me. (T8P32)

> I feel complete. I was pretty lost before I started climbing; it saved me, in many ways. I don't like driving several hours just for work, I don't like being in a cubicle, to, like, be in there to work eight hours, 8 to 5, in an office. I did that for a while. It didn't interest me and I didn't have an appetite, for anything, really. I was like 20 pounds lighter, addicted to Adderall [a medication used for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder]. (Female, mid-20s – climbing 2 years, dirtbagging 2 years)

One climber described how she changed so much during her travels that she no longer, literally, fit into society. As a result, she saved money for another year and set off traveling again, she has been on the road since, that was 4 years ago and she has no plans to stop.

> So in 2006 I took one year off and bought a round the world ticket with British Airways. I did 26 flights and 5 continents. It was the first time I was really travelling, and I was by myself. It was kind of like a jump in the ocean, you know. Really scary, but seemed like the best gift I could give myself. [...] Then I came back to my work and I was living with my mom and stepdad. I was trying to find my place. [...] I mean, you're so different from everything, travelling and, yeah, different. I was feeling kind of stuck in my, I don't know, my place. I was feeling out of place. I would say, umm, my shape, it was different. So it was kind of like, you have put yourself back in that box, and that's it. It was like I was round and I just didn't fit anymore, into the box. (Female, early 30s – climbing 13 years, dirtbagging 5 years)

Although lifestyle climbers cite a passion for rock climbing as the primary motivation for their full-time commitment, in explaining realizations of self, it is the travel experiences that come for the foreground.

Constructing an identity. While everyone in this study agreed that dirtbagging is a lifestyle or a way of living, some distinctions among those who view this as a

temporary or permanent endeavor can be made, particularly in relation to the acceptance of the identity of 'dirtbag'. For those who are reluctant to fully embrace this identity, particularly because of basic comforts they maintain, there was also a temporariness to engaging this lifestyle.

> I definitely try and live cheaply and on a budget. But I'm not willing to eat Ramen [a low cost, instant noodle dish of low nutritional value]. I like to eat good food. I'm not willing to sacrifice some of those things. I lived in my truck before [now a RV]. I don't know. I just don't think I'm quite cheap enough to be considered a dirtbag. (Female, mid-20s – climbing 8 years, dirtbagging 2 years)

> I certainly wouldn't call myself a dirtbag. I wouldn't call myself a working professional as well. I make pizza for nine months out of the year and travel. (Male, mid-20s – climbing 6 years, dirtbagging 3 years)

Those who fully embrace the 'dirtbag' identity, however, are also the most committed to the long-term pursuit of climbing and travel. One climber explained that dirtbagging has become her life.

> To me it's not just, like, a transition, it's a choice. And, it's my life. I'm not on vacation. It's my life so I'm going to try to stick with it as long as I can. It may be the happiest years of my life, so far. (Female, early 30s – climbing 13 years, dirtbagging 5 years)

And to another, the drive of rock climbing represents more than a recreational activity but has significant implications for how a life is lived.

> A dirtbag is someone who lets the act of the climbing dictate their life. [. . .] And most of the dirtbags are out there because climbing means something to them, they believe in it and believe it's going to do something to them. I'd go a step further and say they don't even believe in it because then that sounds sort of faith-based. They know it, they've seen it make a change in their life and they keep pursuing that. [. . .] The climbing is just a means to an end. What actually happens in the climbing doesn't really mean anything. It's just something that goes on and it's important because of how it makes you feel and what it makes you do outside of rock climbing. (Male, late 20s – climbing 15 years, dirtbagging 9 years)

Some climbers chose this lifestyle not only to engage with rock climbing full-time, but also to make a statement and a physical separation from a societal norm with which they do not conform. Identity processes are based on delineating difference between self and the 'Other' (Anderson, 1983; Hall, 1996); therefore a statement of 'I am ____' is as significant as a statement of 'I am not ____'. To most of us, 'dirtbag' would seem a pejorative term. Thus, the statement, 'I am a dirtbag.' is a protest against the societal norms that inform such an interpretation, as well as an embracing of the lifestyle that underlies it. As this climber explained, a minimal lifestyle is a choice, and as a result, it empowers a particular perspective on life.

> Being a minimalist, it's almost sounds like your losing something. You're choosing to find things through other means. (Male, late 20s – climbing 5 years, dirtbagging 2 years)

Being a dirtbag is not only a discursive identity, but also a performance of dedication, sacrifice, and lifeways (see also Shaffer, 2004). This climber, in particular, indicated the exclusivity of membership in this community, noting the importance of

dedication to the sport and commitment to the lifestyle. Therefore, the longer one has been traveling and rock climbing full-time, the more emphasis was placed on the identity and lifestyle aspects of dirtbagging.

> I feel it's super easy to stay psyched for the first couple years you're climbing because you get good so quick. But then the lifers come out. [...] Once you hit that three or four-year plateau, if you can commit and still do it through that, maybe you belong in that group. (Male, late 20s – climbing 15 years, dirtbagging 7 years)

Communitas

Wang (1999, p. 364) suggests that tourists 'are not merely searching for authenticity of the other [but] also search for the authenticity of, and between, themselves.' As a result, he argues tourists form *communitas*, similar to Turner's observations of pilgrims. Turner (1973) theorized that pilgrims form *communitas* – spontaneously generated, temporary communities in which individuals, stripped of socio-economic attributes are treated as equals, joined by common belief and purpose. Lifestyle climbers illustrate some aspects of *communitas*, but the fact that they are a subculture of the larger rock climbing community suggests that this is not a spontaneous happening but one informed by hierarchy and perceptions of cultural difference (Williams & Donnelly, 1985; Kiewa, 2002; Cailly, 2006). Moreover, the lifestyle mode of rock climbing has a long history in this sport.

Taylor (2010) argues that dirtbags evolved out of a generation of 1950s Beatnik climbers who established the ideal of climbing as a lifestyle. This 'climbing lifestyle' began at Camp 4 in Yosemite Valley, but in the 1960s, it began to spread to other climbing areas. Among these early devotees, arose legends in the rock-climbing community as the limits of what was considered un-climbable were pushed beyond anyone's imagination. At the same time, what Taylor (2010) terms the 'strategy' of dirtbagging was being perfected – dumpster diving, sneaking showers, bumming rides, and developing a circuit. Accordingly, Taylor writes, ' dirtbags were Brahmins and Untouchables all in one' (2010, p. 214).

In choosing the climbing lifestyle, these climbers are not just saying something about themselves, as individuals, but they are placing themselves in an historical lineage of rock climbers. So while there is a strong, common goal to climb more frequently and experience more difficult routes, there is also a hierarchy, informed by climbing ability and experience. Ability is assessed by the grade at which one climbs. American climbing routes are graded within the fifth class of the Yosemite Decimal System, as 5.0–5.15, although, the hardest grade continues to rise (Mellor, 2001; Taylor, 2010). And yet, while many of the climbers interviewed do climb in the more difficult end of this spectrum, they were quick to explain that reverence for the act of rock climbing, not competition, is most important to this community. In fact, many argued that this is what separates them from the larger rock climbing community.

> For me, [rock climbing is] probably everything, except competitive against another human being. For me, that kind of kills it. [...] I get more psyched to see someone

> send something that I do, than to send it myself. I am super psyched to see someone else, and that's just like part of the experience. That's what part of a climbing day is, especially with sport climbing, you're climbing with more than one person. It's nice to see, I don't get tweaked really when people crush my project. I've been climbing long enough to have that happen so many times, that it's just like, it doesn't come to a surprise when a ten year old girl flashes my problem [completes a route on the first attempt with little information], at all. I'm pretty used to it by now. [...] But it's never competitive. [. . .] I've been climbing long enough to know where that road leads. And it just makes climbing sour to me, so I just don't pay those thoughts too much attention and don't act on them really. (Male, late 20s – climbing 15 years, dirtbagging 7 years)

While many noted their love for rock climbing is a result of its personal, individual nature in which one is not on a team and does not compete with others, the climbing abilities of fellow climbers do act as a motivator to stay fit and as inspiration to push one's limits (see also Williams & Donnelly, 1985).

Climbing experience, however, is judged by both the number of years one has been active in the sport and the amount of travel one has undertaken, resulting in experience at a number of climbing destinations and with a variety of rock types. An extensive traveling repertoire is, therefore, respected among the community. As such, lifestyle climbers have intense discussions of where to spend the next season, during which they plan out their travel routes. Moreover, many identify a circuit of frequented climbing destinations. Because these climbers meet up with friends from across the US at various locations, their sense of community is strengthened. These climbers illustrate the variety of travel circuits, from widely international to domestic.

> I've been running in to the same people travelling in the same circuit. [...] I was spending from spring to summertime in U.S., then I was going back to France and what I've been doing is going to Thailand in wintertime, then Greece, Kalymnos, in March, then coming back. That is kind of my circuit now. (Female, early 30s – climbing 13 years, dirtbagging 5 years)
>
> I am leaving here [The Red] after Thanksgiving and I'll be going to Bishop, California for a month, then I'll go to Hueco, Texas for two months. Then probably back here for the spring. (Female, mid-20s – climbing 8 years, dirtbagging 2 years)

These itinerant climbers choose their destinations primarily by the style and quality of rock climbing, but they are also points of gathering where community is performed.

> So part of the reason I go to Hueco [Texas] every year is because I have people that I've known for a super long time that do the same thing. So it's like a family reunion. That's what I like about it, the climbing and the relationships that I've formed. I don't know that many people who don't climb, I mean, it's my whole life. I've been climbing longer than I haven't. I can't imagine, you know, not doing it. It's just like an integral thing for me. (Male, late 20s – climbing 15 years, dirtbagging 7 years)

The Red River Gorge in Kentucky is a common denominator in the circuits of participants of this study, yet many also noted that this place is special among climbing destinations. Miguel's Pizza offers a central social space where most climbers camp, therefore they begin their days together with negotiations over breakfast of where to climb and then reconvene in the evenings with stories of the day's experiences. This

climber sums up the importance of climbing when choosing a destination, but also the role of the community in making place.

> I always say what's brought me to Kentucky is the climbing and what keeps me in Kentucky is the people. [...] You have to make bonds, make friends, because you don't climb by yourself. You're always at least two people, so when you travel by yourself you have to find the good community. (Female, early 30s – climbing 13 years, dirtbagging 5 years)

Conclusions

This article explores the concept of existential authenticity through the investigation of the experiences of lifestyle climbers, a particular type of lifestyle traveler (Cohen, 2010a, 2010b, 2011) driven by the pursuit of rock climbing. By extending this ethnographic study to both the online forums of Rockclimbing.com and the sport climbing community in the Red River Gorge of Kentucky, this project has been able to capture climbers at multiple stages of 'dirtbagging'. Most climbers on Rockclimbing.com speak of dirtbagging in either the past or future tense, that is, they are either ambitious to take up a climbing lifestyle or they are reflective on time spent as a former 'dirtbag' Yet, the full-time traveling rock climbers observed and interviewed in The Red discuss the lifestyle in the present tense as they live it day-to-day. This is significant when considering the concept of existential authenticity. As Steiner and Reisinger (2006, p. 303) remind us, 'the existential self is transient, not enduring, and not conforming to a type. It changes from moment to moment'. Those who are ambitious see this as chance to be free from societal constraints, to focus on the sport they love, and experience new places with friends. It offers the *potential* for existential authenticity. Former lifestyle climbers express similar sentiments when they reflect on their travels and experiences, as a time of happiness, simplicity, and freedom. However, for those in the midst of living it, the moments of existential authenticity are fleeting. Many express that they underestimated the difficulties of a climbing lifestyle – abiding by such strict budgets, sacrifices of family, career, and health, the discomforts of life in the elements, and the frequent periods of down time. Thus, it is in *living* the lifestyle where the struggle for existential authenticity takes place, as many frequently question their lifestyle choice, searching within themselves for their true motivation. Nevertheless, this is even stronger support for the applicability of the concept of existential authenticity – achieving authenticity is not supposed to be easy. Authenticity, Golomb (1995, p. 201) argues, 'is best forged and revealed in "boundary" or extreme existential situations'.

So while the desire to engage more frequently with rock climbing, and its short moments of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), inspires lifestyle climbing, existential authenticity is more often experienced off of the rock face. By returning to the Heideggerian framework established by Steiner and Reisinger (2006), it is argued that life on the road, rather than the rock climbing that informs it, presents the 'situations' of potential existential authenticity. That is, the trials of a minimalist lifestyle and constant travel encourage independence and self-sufficiency. Moments of challenge, from injury to vehicle breakdowns are 'situations' in which these lifestyle climbers

may act with 'resoluteness' to achieve 'mineness'. They may rise to these challenges, or they may fail, but in either case, the potential of authenticity of self is experienced.

Authenticity is performative; it is not simply achieved (see also Shaffer, 2004; Knudsen & Waade, 2010). 'Authenticity calls for an ongoing life of significant actions' (Golomb, 1995, p. 201). For lifestyle climbers, existential authenticity ultimately comes from fleeting moments and self-examination surrounded by individuals with similar intentions. Interestingly, this reflects how they approach sport climbing. The goal is not to climb a route for the sake of climbing it, in order to check it off a list, but it is the way one approaches the rock, and thereby travel and the lifestyle, that is important (see also Lewis, 2000; Varley, 2006). 'In an effort to shape an authentic life in a world of immanence, the way is the goal, for there is no goal at the end of the way' (Golomb, 1995, p. 174). Thus, the *pursuit* of rock climbing is crucial to existential authenticity, as that which informs the mindset of this lifestyle.

This research has also uncovered several areas in need of further investigation. In particular, while lifestyle climbers are hypermobile, they also have deeply personal experiences in the places they encounter. While their travel circuits are informed first, and foremost, by the type and quality of climbing available, they are also points of community gathering and performance. As such, studies of place making, community, and mobility within this subculture would be worthwhile.

Notes

[1] Sport climbing is a particular style of rock climbing. There are multiple free climbing approaches to rock climbing, including traditional climbing, sport climbing, and bouldering, among others (Cinnamon, 1994). Free climbing means only one's hands and feet, rather than gear (aid climbing) is used to ascend the rock face. Traditional and sport climbing are the most commonly contrasted styles. In traditional climbing temporary protective gear (cams and nuts) are placed in natural rock features by the lead climber and removed as the second climber ascends. This style of climbing emphasizes adventure, danger, and managing risk (Lewis, 2000, 2004; Kiewa, 2002). Sport climbing, however, utilizes permanent protection, usually bolts that have been drilled into the rock. This type of climbing began on more over-hanging rock faces that were not climbable by traditional measures (Mellor, 2001; Bisharat, 2009). As a result, sport climbers are more focused on endurance, strength, and gymnastic ability. Bouldering takes place over a shorter distance from the ground, most commonly on boulders as the name suggests, so that no gear or ropes are used, just 'crash pads' for landing. Therefore, bouldering is considered to be one of the purest approaches to the sport and emphasizes the climber's strength and power (Ness, 2011).

[2] A climbing route is a path along the rock face, which has been named and given a grade. A sport route has been bolted with a two-bolt anchor at the top (Bisharat, 2009).

References

Altheide, D., Coyle, M., DeVriese, K. & Schneider, C. (2008) Emergent qualitative document analysis, in S. N. Hesse-Biber, P. Leavy (Eds) *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, pp 127–151 (New York: The Guilford Press).

Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso).

Belhassen, Y. & Caton, K. (2006) Authenticity matters, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(3), pp. 853–856.

Belhassen, Y., Caton, K. & Stewart, W. P. (2008) The search for authenticity in the pilgrim experience, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(3), pp. 668–689.

Bisharat, A. (2009) *Sport Climbing: From Top Rope to Redpoint, Techniques for Climbing Success* (Seattle: The Mountaineers Books).

Boorstin, D. J. (1992 [1961]) *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Vintage Books).

Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

Bradshaw, M. & Stratford, E. (2005) Qualitative research design and rigor, in I. Hay (Ed) *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, 2nd ed., pp. 67–76 (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Bruner, E. M. (1994) Abraham Lincoln as authentic reproduction: A critique of postmodernism, *American Anthropologist*, 96(2), pp. 397–415.

Buchmann, A., Moore, K. & Fisher, D. (2010) Experiencing film tourism: Authenticity and fellowship, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37(1), pp. 229–248.

Cailly, L. (2006) Climbing sites as counter-sites? Essay on neo-community forms and territorialisation processes at work in the practice of rock climbing, *Journal of Alpine Research*, 94(3), pp. 35–44.

Chhabra, D. (2012) Authenticity of the objectively authentic, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(1), pp. 480–502.

Chisholm, D. (2008) Climbing like a girl: An exemplary adventure in feminist phenomenology, *Hypatia*, 23(1), pp. 9–40.

Chouinard, Y. (2006) *Let My People Go Surfing: The Education of a Reluctant Businessman* (New York: Penguin).

Cinnamon, J. (1994) *Climbing Rock and Ice: Learning the Vertical Dance* (Camden, ME: Ragged Mountain Press).

Cohen, E. (1988) Authenticity and commoditization in tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15, pp. 371–386.

Cohen, S. A. (2010a) Chasing a Myth? Searching for 'Self' through lifestyle travel, *Tourist Studies*, 10(2), pp. 117–133.

Cohen, S. A. (2010b) Personal identity (de)formation among lifestyle travellers: A double-edged sword, *Leisure Studies*, 29(3), pp. 289–301.

Cohen, S. A. (2011) Lifestyle travellers: Backpacking as a way of life, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), pp. 1535–1555.

Cook, P. S. (2010) Constructions and experiences of authenticity in medial tourism: The performances of places, spaces, practices, objects and bodies, *Tourist Studies*, 10(2), pp. 135–153.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990) *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper Perennial).

Culler, J. (1981) Semiotics of tourism, *American Journal of Semiotics*, 1(1–2), pp. 127–140.

D'Andrea, A. (2006) Neo-nomadism: A theory of post-identitarian mobility in the global age, *Mobilities*, 1(1), pp. 95–120.

DeLyser, D. (1999) Authenticity on the ground: Engaging the past in a California ghost town, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 89(4), pp. 602–632.

Dilley, R. E. & Scraton, S. J. (2010) Women, climbing, and serious leisure, *Leisure Studies*, 29(2), pp. 125–141.

Ellington, R. (2007) *Red River Gorge Rock Climbs,* 2nd ed. (Silt, CO: Wolverine Publishing).

Erikson, B. (2005) Style matters: Explorations of bodies, whiteness, and identity in rock climbing, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 22(2), pp. 373–396.

Fave, A. D., Bassi, M. & Massimini, F. (2003) Quality of experience and risk perception in high-altitude rock climbing, *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 15(1), pp. 82–98.

Featherstone, M., Hepworth, M. & Turner, B. S. (Eds). (1991) *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory* (London: Sage).

Filho, S. C. (2010) Rafting guides: Leisure, work and lifestyle, *Annals of Leisure Research*, 13(1–2), pp. 282–297.

Germann Molz, J. (2008) Global abode: Home and mobility in narratives of round-the-world travel, *Space and Culture*, 11(4), pp. 325–342.

Golomb, J. (1995) *In Search of Authenticity: From Kierkegaard to Camus* (London: Routledge).

Graburn, N. H. H. (1983) The anthropology of tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 10(1), pp. 9–33.

Hall, S. (1995) New cultures for old?, in D. Massey & P. Jess (Eds) *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization*, pp. 175–214 (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

Hall, S. (1996) Introduction: Who needs 'identity', in S. Hall, P.D. Gay (Eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*, pp 1–17 (London: Sage).

Heidegger, M. (1996) *Being and Time* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press).

Heywood, I. (1994) Urgent dreams: Climbing, rationalization and ambivalence, *Leisure Studies*, 13(1), pp. 179–194.

Heywood, I. (2006) Climbing monsters: Excess and restraint in contemporary rock climbing, *Leisure Studies*, 25(4), pp. 455–467.

Hine, C. (2008) Internet research as emergent practice, in S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy (Eds) *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, pp. 525–541 (New York: The Guilford Press).

Hughes, G. (1995) Authenticity in tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 22(1), pp. 181–203.

Kiewa, J. (2002) Traditional climbing: Metaphor of resistance or metanarrative of oppression?, *Leisure Studies*, 21(1), pp. 134–161.

Kim, H. & Jamal, T. (2007) Touristic quest for existential authenticity, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34(1), pp. 181–201.

Knudsen, B. T. & Waade, A. M. (2010) Performative authenticity in tourism and spatial experience: Rethinking the relations between travel, place and emotion, in B. T. Knudsen, A.M. Waade (Eds) *Re-Investing Authenticity: Tourism, Place and Emotions*, pp 1–21 (Bristol: Channel View Publications).

Lewis, N. (2000) The climbing body, nature and the experience of modernity, *Body & Society*, 6(1), pp. 58–80.

Lewis, N. (2004) Sustainable adventure: Embodied experiences and ecological practices within British climbing, in B. Wheaton (Ed) *Understanding Lifestyle Sports: Consumption, Identity and Difference*, pp 70–93 (London: Routledge).

Llewellyn, D. J. & Sanchez, X. (2008) Individual differences and risk taking in rock climbing, *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 9(4), pp. 413–426.

Lyng, S. (1990) Edgework: A social psychological analysis of voluntary risk taking, *American Journal of Sociology*, 95(4), pp. 851–886.

MacCannell, D. (1976) *The Tourist: A New Theory for the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books).

MacCannell, D. (1999) *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press).

Massey, D. (1991) A global sense of place, *Marxism Today*, June, pp. 24–29.

Mautner, G. (2005) Time to get wired: Using web-based corpora in critical discourse analysis, *Discourse & Society*, 6(6), pp. 809–828.

Mellor, D. (2001) *American Rock: Region, Rock, and Culture in American Climbing* (Woodstock, VT: The Countryman Press).

Mkono, M. (2012) Authenticity does matter, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(1), pp. 480–483.

Ness, S. A. (2011) Bouldering in Yosemite: Emergent signs of place and landscape, *American Anthropologist*, 113(1), pp. 71–87.

Noy, C. (2004a) This trip really changed me: Backpackers' narratives of self-change, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 31(1), pp. 78–102.

Noy, C. (2004b) Performing identity: Touristic narratives of self-change, *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 24(2), pp. 115–138.
Palmer, C. (2002) 'Shit happens': The selling of risk in extreme sport, *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 12(3), pp. 323–336.
Pearce, P. L. & Moscardo, G. M. (1986) The concept of authenticity in tourist experience, *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 22(1), pp. 121–132.
Phillips, L. & Jorgensen, M. W. (2002) *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: Sage Publications).
Reisinger, Y. & Steiner, C. J. (2006) Reconceptualizing object authenticity, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(1), pp. 65–86.
Relph, E. (1976) *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited).
Rickly-Boyd, J. M. (2012) Authenticity & aura: A Benjaminian approach to tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(1), pp. 269–289.
Robinson, V. (2008) *Everyday Masculinities and Extreme Sport: Male Identity ad Rock Climbing* (Oxford: Berg).
Rockclimbing.com (producer) (accessed 11 January 2011) Forums.
Rossiter, P. (2007) On humans, nature, and other nonhumans, *Space and Culture*, 10(2), pp. 292–305.
Salamone, F. A. (1997) Authenticity in tourism: The San Angel Inns, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(2), pp. 305–321.
Schwandt, T. A. (2000) Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry, in N. K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln (Eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* 2nd ed, pp. 189–213 (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc).
Selwyn, T. (Ed). (1996) *The Tourist Image: Myths and Myth Making in Tourism* (Chichester: Wiley).
Shaffer, T. S. (2004) Performing backpacking: Constructing 'authenticity' every step of the way, *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 24(2), pp. 139–160.
Simmel, G. (1997 [1950]) The metropolis and mental life, in D. Frisby & M. Featherstone (Eds) *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*, pp. 174–185 (London: Sage).
Steiner, C. J. & Reisinger, Y. (2006) Understanding existential authenticity, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33(2), pp. 299–318.
Stevens, C. (2010) Confessions of a Dirtbag, *Dead Point Magazine*, 12, pp. 46–49.
Taylor, J. E. (2010) *Pilgrims of the Vertical: Yosemite Rock Climbers & Nature at Risk* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).
Trilling, L. (1972) *Sincerity and Authenticity* (London: Oxford University Press).
Turner, V. (1973) The center out there: Pilgrim's goal, *History of Religions*, 12(3), pp. 191–230.
Varley, P. (2006) Confecting adventure and playing with meaning: The adventure commodification continuum, *Journal of Sport and Tourism*, 11(2), pp. 173–194.
Varley, P. (2011) Sea kayakers at the margins: The liminoid character of contemporary adventures, *Leisure Studies*, 30(1), pp. 85–98.
Veijola, S. & Jokinen, E. (1994) The body in tourism, *Theory, Culture & Society*, 11(1), pp. 125–151.
Waeschle, A. (2009) *Chasing Waves* (Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers Books).
Waitt, G. (2005) Doing discourse analysis, in I. Hay (Ed) *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography,* 2nd ed., pp. 163–191 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press).
Wang, N. (1999) Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2), pp. 349–370.
Weber, K. (2001) Outdoor adventure tourism: A review of research approaches, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 28(2), pp. 360–377.
Wellard, I. (2009) *Sport, Masculinities and the Body* (London: Routledge).
Wheaton, B. (2004) Introduction: Mapping the lifestyle sport-scape, in B. Wheaton (Ed) *Understanding Lifestyle Sports: Consumption, Identity and Difference*, pp. 1–28 (London: Routledge).
Williams, T. & Donnelly, P. (1985) Subcultural production, reproduction, and transformation in climbing, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 20(1), pp. 3–17.