

# Introduction to Ecologizing Philosophy of Education

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We proposed this special issue of *Studies in Philosophy and Education* to help mend the gap we see in the philosophy of education community with respect to the ecological crisis. In 1972 the United Nations recognized that virtually every living system on Earth was in decline, putting at risk countless species including humans. Nearly half a century later, the situation is much more precarious. Since humans are immersed in, responsible to, and reliant upon the world around us, we, as educators, philosophers, and living beings, are called upon to take substantive action. Our question is how?

Never in human history has life on our planet faced such a serious threat. And yet, the widespread commitment it deserves is scarcely seen. Education has responded to the problem largely by *ad hoc* tinkering, adding on units to the existing curricula, and ignoring the very likely possibility that the curriculum itself and its pedagogical delivery may be intrinsic to the problem. In 1992, Orr<sup>1</sup> suggested that “all education is environmental education” positing that forms of representation, or backgrounding and foregrounding of the environment and its denizens normalize different ways of engaging with the environment in all pedagogical encounters. All education, formal or otherwise, therefore implies something about and has implications for the environment. But Orr also recognized that all learning is shaped and influenced by the places where it occurs. All environments are educational. If all *philosophy of education* is environmental too, how do we respond?

In a literature review produced for this special issue,<sup>2</sup> we found that only 50 articles in the five major philosophy of education journals (*Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *Educational Theory*, *Studies in Philosophy of Education*, *Educational Philosophy and*

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<sup>1</sup> David Orr (1992).

<sup>2</sup> Humphreys and Blenkinsop (2017).

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*Theory, Philosophy of Education Society*) referenced the environment in a substantive way, and only a handful sought to re-examine fundamental assumptions about the relationship between philosophy, education, and the environment. We believe that the philosophy of education community's diverse approaches and tools can and must be enlisted to help reimagine education writ large and transform it in ways that address the ecological crisis. This special issue is an invitation into a conversation about the root assumptions and approaches to thinking about education and to uncovering the shared horizons of philosophy, education, and the environment, both as practices and as theories. What might this *ecologizing* of philosophy of education look like?

### **Sean's story**

The impetus for this special issue journal is for me most personal. I have always loved the natural world and its myriad denizens. To this day I prefer to be on the trail in the backcountry to sitting at my desk looking out my window. In fact, most of my papers, including one in this collection, were first written in pencil while outdoors, and recently I have begun to realize that those places in which I wrote have had an influence on my work and, at times, have found ways to speak quite loudly through what I previously assumed were simply my thoughts. And now in my work-life I have immersed myself in thinking about how to involve the natural world more actively and explicitly in education at all levels of practice, content, and theorizing. Yet no matter how involved I have been in starting eco-schools or delving deeply into existential philosophy, as I try to respond to what is clearly a crisis of epic proportions, it has surprised me how few others seem to be engaged in the work as well, and how scatter-shot both my work and our shared efforts appear to be. Thus, when the opportunity arose to respond to both of these challenges in the company of a group of inspiring and talented colleagues I jumped at it.

I am not that old, especially when compared with the Yellow Cedar or the Pre-Cambrian Shield, and yet I remember a time when I canoe-tripped with an enamel cup and drank straight from the rivers and lakes upon which I floated. And I wonder if there is difference in how I understand and engage with the world simply because I was able to immerse myself in it in a way that today's filtered, ozone and UV treated, chlorinated, tap turning folks don't. How does one understand the Other they have never encountered in raw, unfiltered form? But even though I am not that old, I have spent a significant amount of my life on the trail, working as an outdoor, environmental educator, and thinking, researching and writing about issues related to the environment and education. Unfortunately, it has taken me some time to gather the courage to leap into the philosophy of education discussion with both of my green feet. This is a project that responds to that failure.

Now I am not that well-travelled, especially when compared to the migrating caribou and arctic tern, and yet I remember a time when there was a lot more bio-structure and a lot less infrastructure, and I wonder what it means for people to grow up in a world that is attempting to colonize the wilderness, to pave it over and organize it according to some utopian vision, or because of a fear of anything that doesn't conform to our current human perception of order. How does one understand one's own freedom when examples are so limited? And even though I am not fully conversant with models of education throughout the world, I can see that schooling possesses its own infrastructure, one that is often unecological and disconnected from its immediate environment, its neighbours. And this lead me to the realization

that there is a significant amount of work to be done to first de-construct and then to eco-construct, using the natural world as equal partner. This journal contributes to that work.

Though a caring person, I do not seem to experience the same sense of loss as the living kin of dead snow geese and African elephants, but I feel sadness and the need to mourn as clearcuts, industrial farming, and the next subdivision devastate the habitat of other living beings, and I wonder if others, especially children, feel the same way. To have a close relationship with the natural world, its plants and its creatures, and then to witness them being displaced and exterminated in the name of progress is reason for distress, serious doubts about the values and direction of our society, and a cause for commitment to action. I need to do something, to name what is happening, and to think about the role education plays in this destructive process. I think our work here is one way to respond to that sadness and frustration.

Unfortunately I am not that wise, especially when compared with the inscrutable owl or the wily raven, and yet I am experienced and thoughtful enough to know that infinite growth plus a finite planet add up to a negative result. The Anthropocene is upon us and a re-negotiation of our relationships with other beings and the planet must occur. Can education be a leader in the conceptualization of a new relationship between human society and the natural world? What might be achieved, for example, if philosophers of education turned their not insubstantial resources to the project of creating theory that reflected the interconnectedness of humanity and nature? I can not imagine all the possibilities myself, much less put them into place, but I know that that is where our energies might be well spent at this time, and urgently. This issue of the journal is an attempt to launch that process by bringing together people who have been thinking about this critical matter.

When compared to the giant land tortoise or the three-toed sloth, I am not that patient, and in fact what patience I have is wearing mighty thin. Something must change; humans must learn another way of existing on this planet alongside all their natural partners, flora and fauna, and philosophers of education must be there to question and to guide. Imagine what might happen to education if we were to take the natural world into our theorizing as partner, teacher, co-dependent! Though my patience is almost worn through, I understand that in order to do this work one needs allies and friends, and this project gives me the hope that this group of like-minded colleagues represents a furthering step in the development of an ecological philosophy of education.

With the global ecological crisis, we are witnessing the demise of the health and livelihoods of countless people alongside the loss of countless species and biological systems. The earth is rapidly becoming less livable, less lively, and less alive. Information piles up to illustrate the magnitude of this imminent danger, but the response is scarce and timid. Environmental educators who have studied worldviews, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and values,<sup>3</sup> have only found poor correlations between any of these and effective environmental “behaviour.” To be blunt: We are not doing very much, that which we are doing is incompletely understood, and the educational approaches employed are not working.

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<sup>3</sup> ex. Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002).

It has become apparent that we are at a time where we need to be experimental, collaborative, and radical in fostering possible pedagogies. Part of the impetus of this special issue is to suggest that the challenges environmental education faces, and its limited successes, are related to its unwillingness or inability to examine deeply held assumptions regarding teaching and learning. We believe that philosophy can assist education by helping to identify, break down, and reconstruct basic assumptions about educational theory, practice and research and do so through more sophisticated ecological lenses. Philosophical thinking can lead to creative thinking, agility, a deeper appreciation of the paradoxes and bewildering wonders of existence, and sensitive and ethical engagement in matters of the world. It is our hypothesis that philosophy is unacknowledged as a necessary but not sufficient dimension of human and planetary sustainability, and that philosophy of education in particular can play a key role in helping develop educational approaches that change our relationship to the natural world while at the same time responding to the ecological crisis.

And yet, to date the philosophy of education community has, with several notable and important exceptions, either avoided or left this topic unexplored.<sup>4</sup> We have brought this special issue together to expand the discussion and initiate a new—and we hope indis-sociable—relationship between philosophy, the environment, and education. If philosophy's promise is in part to help humanity steer a wiser course, the time for enlisting it in such a service is now. We also believe that a fundamental re-imagining of these relationships is ripe with important philosophical ideas, many of which may be pertinent to education and life more generally. Moreover, we believe that the environment is not an optional add on or niche topic by which particular scholars claim their turf but is rather an intrinsic dimension of all of our lives and to which everyone in the community can and should contribute. The planet is burning and does not have time for minor philosophical fiddling.

### **Chloe's story**

My reasons for wanting this special issue are varied, much like our introduction and the issue itself, I guess. Polyphonic, if I may, like the voices of the nature. My reasons are steeped in my experience, care, and respect for the environment, philosophy, and education. My immersion with nature began at the embryonic stage, in my mothers' womb, on an island off the west coast of BC. There were no roads, no electricity, no neighbours, just cedar trees, the narrow surge of the Pacific Ocean in front of our home—a one room shack pieced together from scrap wood and windows—and Salal bushes. I asked my dad if I was the first girl to be born on that island (so far I am the last) he said the first white girl. I think that's a nod toward the Coast Salish who were there long before us. The arrow heads still turn up in the garden.

But it wasn't just this experience that lead me towards a deep concern and, consequently, a desire to create this issue, although I believe the connection with nature must be formed early. My interest in philosophy began in my late teens and early 20's; this was a crucial and slightly dangerous time to study it, before my adult brain had formed. While I was deeply interested in philosophy of environment, I wondered if this, like any discourse, was constructed, and outside of language there was no environmental crisis, only a manifold of sense data. I wondered if human concern for

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<sup>4</sup> for a review, see Humphreys and Blenkinsop (2017).

the environment was about humans themselves and the environmental movement was narcissistic, or solipsistic, epistemologically speaking. And while I spent time in this anchorless state, my solace was spending time in nature.

I know there are secrets in nature, educational secrets, healing secrets... I learned one last month from a salmon swimming upstream to spawn, and another today during the first snowfall of the season. And I think my son Julian learned them too. Some might say this is an anthropocentric reason to care about nature—for what it teaches me and my children—but that's not the only reason why I care. I also care about the salmon herself swimming up the stream to spawn her eggs, and curl her decaying body around her roe to provide food for them. The ultimate motherly sacrifice. I want her to make the journey. I think Julian does too.

Although my experience in education and the school system began when I first sat at a desk, it became more critical and articulate during my doctoral studies in philosophy of education and has become even more pressing now that I have my own children (Julian two and half and Sidney seven months). It seems my children feel better and learn more when we forest bathe, or river bathe, or make snow angels. Sidney tucked into my jacket breathing in the healing secrets of the forest. It's hard to learn these secrets within the confines of walls. The more diverse and wild the space, the more secrets to breathe, especially when we are still raw and open towards the world. So the creation of this issue was, for me, most timely.

While my own nascent phase of life was spent in the deep wild, my second son's fetal formation occurred during the development of this issue and our gathering of the triad: philosophy, environment, and education. When I began the proceeding whitepaper, Sidney was an embryo. While Sidney formed his heart, spinal cord, and brain, I sifted through the papers philosophy of education offered on the environment. During my second trimester, Sidney developed his skeleton and his nervous system matured and I categorized the proceeding discussions on place, politics, post-structuralism, and aesthetics. In the third trimester Sidney opened his eyes in the womb and grew fat and I stopped writing and began to edit. And finally when the barometer dropped, a break in the hot spell we were having, I felt contractions, and I finished editing. I read somewhere that either the baby decides when to be born, the mother decides, or sometimes it's the placenta that dies and the baby is born. My son's birth, my midwife told me, was decided by the drop in the barometric pressure. While I had until then thought the birth was a triad – me, the connecting placenta, and my baby—it was the environment that whispered our birth time. I was once again reminded how I was rooted in the earth. Much like how I overlooked the voices of nature in my son's birth, I found the majority of the discussions within philosophy of education also overlooked these voices. Perhaps the underlying reason I became involved in this issue is that I hope to create space for those who attempt to articulate these voices.

The papers (like the editors) collected for this special issue come from diverse philosophical traditions, treat multiple topics, and bear the prints of each of the authors' tools, gifts, interests, and idiosyncrasies. We do not claim commensurability between them, still less do we desire it. For us, "ecologizing" philosophy of education does not imply modelling our philosophical practice on a particular conception of the term while discounting others. We recognize that ecologies are healthy when they are diverse and

inventive. As Thayer-Bacon<sup>5</sup> might put it, there is a pluralism to our project, and yet in some sense we are also aligned in our commitment to open up and explore this conversation so crucial for our survival, lives, and well-being. Our papers are now a part of the ecology of our community, and it is the subsequent interactions between us, our thoughts, and the places we live that can help us evolve a philosophy of education that heals rather than harms life.

Amongst this ecological pluralism, we have various diagnoses of “the problem:” is it “human hubris”,<sup>6</sup> a dualistic ontology,<sup>7</sup> an alienation of nature from education,<sup>8</sup> our colonial silencing of nature,<sup>9</sup> a failure to see the global impact of human action on planetary systems and on children,<sup>10</sup> or our incapacity to see that “educational relations” pervade the living?<sup>11</sup> Perhaps our assumption that there is a way of identifying “the problem” itself reveals un-ecological conceptions about the nature of causality, seeking necessary and isolatable factors rather than webs of correlating variables in ongoing interaction. Perhaps each of these accounts tells part of the story, and the work yet to be done is to put these and other voices into conversation with one another and with others.

Despite the diversity, we also see important commonalities spread across several or many of the papers. A few themes should be drawn out in passing. There seems to be an urgent call for a view that gives the nonhuman an agency, an intrinsic value, and a power not normally accorded to it in much of the philosophy of education discourse. Whether this be Bonnett’s phenomenological encounter with nature,<sup>12</sup> or the agency of particular beings around us,<sup>13</sup> there is a clear need to “renounce” a sense of *hubris*<sup>14</sup> (and supremacist anthropocentrism) that has affected the ways in which we conduct our practice. Even Laird’s paper,<sup>15</sup> which does not treat the matter explicitly, suggests that we acknowledge the Anthropocene in order to catalyze some humility in our activity. As such, it recognizes that the Anthropocene is a paradoxical concept that at once seems to bestow upon humans extraordinary power and responsibility, while simultaneously suggesting that there is something happening deeply out of our control. Links to de-anthropocentrizing ontologies from posthumanism and various materialisms (old and new) may well assist in redrawing the definition and scope of agency in the world, though important philosophical questions are also raised in response to those seeking to spread the concept of agency indiscriminately<sup>16</sup> across all phenomena as it may trivialize the different types of agencies that emerge in the different manifestations and processes of the world.

A relational ontology is also explored in different ways by several of the authors. Bonnett describes the need for “holism and the ontological over the atomistic and the

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<sup>5</sup> Thayer-Bacon (2016).

<sup>6</sup> Martin (2016).

<sup>7</sup> Thayer-Bacon (2016).

<sup>8</sup> Bonnett (2016).

<sup>9</sup> Blenkinsop et al. (2016).

<sup>10</sup> Laird (2017).

<sup>11</sup> Affifi (2016).

<sup>12</sup> Bonnett (2016).

<sup>13</sup> as in Affifi (2016), and Blenkinsop et al. (2016).

<sup>14</sup> Martin (2016).

<sup>15</sup> Laird (2017).

<sup>16</sup> For example, Bennett asks us to consider the agency of artifacts such as chairs. See Bennett (2009).

epistemological” evident in the inherent relationality of “being in the world”.<sup>17</sup> Fundamentally, however, this relationality involves being in a world where we learn from and engage with a nature that appears as self-arising, “possessing its own normativity, agency, and intrinsic value.” As fundamental to the human experience, such a nature and our letting this self-arising be by sustaining it, is inherent in education. Thayer-Bacon’s relationality consists in a “nondualistic ontology,” inspired by James’ radical empiricism, but calling for an approach that “starts from wholes and moves to parts and back to wholes again”.<sup>18</sup> For Thayer-Bacon, the whole that we start from is the unified being of the universe as a whole prior to any distinction making, including the separation of humans from nature. For Affifi,<sup>19</sup> life participates in an “ontological reversal”<sup>20</sup> such that the organization and meaning making activities of organisms, indeed the organism-environment relation itself, at the same time constitutes and is constituted by life’s activity. There seems to be contrasting positions in the papers between concrete and specific, or general and universal “relationality”—between particular people and particular nonhuman organisms and places,<sup>21</sup> or between people and the whole universe<sup>22</sup> or nature as a self-arising aspect of experience.<sup>23</sup> Some papers challenge the monopolization of thought that has occurred through the prominence of epistemology in (Western) philosophy. For example, in reminding us to “shut up and listen” to the natural world and particular denizens therein, Blenkinsop et al.<sup>24</sup> are also asking us to silence the types of arguments that would make listening to the natural world seem absurd or impossible—among these, of course, the epistemological argument that this involves a sort of naïve anthropomorphism.

### Clarence’s story

This collection of essays for me is a long time coming, emerging out of personal biography and merging with professional, scholarly interests. I grew up in a post WWII immigrant community in rural Canada, where recycling was a central feature of life long before it named a social practice. My Grandfather, for example, taught me how to straighten out used nails (“they’re perfectly fine, just a little crooked”) by rolling them with my index finger while lightly hammering them in strategic places. From him I learned the frugal use of everything to its utmost, indelibly stamping a heightened sense of valuing material for its own sake.

As a university student in the 70s, exposed to Love Canal, acid rain, ozone depletion, and leaded gasoline, I was drawn to the emerging environmental movement, eagerly reading the works of Rachel Carson, Barry Commoner, Aldo Leopold, and Wendell Berry. These gave voice to the ideas I was slowly developing, that there were limits to economic growth, that the earth had a finite carrying capacity, and that North American lifestyles were complicit in environmental degradation. That my lifestyle, even frugal as I thought it might be, nevertheless contributed to our ecological problems. That it was difficult to change. That I was caught up in structures that

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<sup>17</sup> Bonnett (2016).

<sup>18</sup> Thayer-Bacon (2016).

<sup>19</sup> Affifi (2016).

<sup>20</sup> Jonas (1966).

<sup>21</sup> Affifi (2016), Blenkinsop et al. (2016).

<sup>22</sup> Thayer-Bacon (2016).

<sup>23</sup> Bonnett (2016).

<sup>24</sup> Blenkinsop et al. (2016).

constrained my actions even if I wanted to be environmentally responsible. So, when I became a high school teacher in rural Canada in the early 80s, I tried to enact institutional change, starting a paper recycling program in the school and developing an environmental science course for skeptical farmers' kids. Although it affirmed that institutional structures can change positively through resolute persistence, what emerged also was the need for a deeper change, in collective self-understanding. That education needed more than just an added course to the curriculum, but something more radical and basic. A change in self-interpretation.

The religious tradition in which I grew up included an idea of environmental stewardship, sometimes expressed as earthkeeping. In variance with much of American evangelical thought at the time, this included the idea that for us humans the earth was our home. At the same time, it was at variance with the classic liberal idea of property, for stewardship also meant that humans didn't own the earth (land, property) outright, to do with it whatever they wanted. Rather, humans were envisioned as stewards, tasked with the responsibility of caring for "the creation" as it was often put. This was an anthropocentric idea to be sure, but it pushed back against both evangelical and classic liberal ideas of our relationship to the earth.

A talk given by Eban Goodstein at a Greening the Campus conference in Sept 2007 led me to explore more seriously the idea of sustainability. By this time the Brundland Report to the UN had spawned the decade of educating for sustainable development, and the idea of sustainability for me was a way to perhaps get beyond the problematic anthropocentrism of stewardship. Indeed, despite its roots in fisheries and forestry management, I thought, with some justification, that it might have a more radical edge, transforming a mere management tool of fish and trees into a new way of seeing our human place in our earthly setting. When put into practice, especially by higher education organizations such as AASHE (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education), it gave educational institutions a comprehensive approach to reducing their carbon footprints and concrete ways of working towards carbon neutrality. I thought it might offer the possibility of more comprehensive curriculum change with the idea of "sustainability across the curriculum." Indeed, using the idea of sustainability was a step forward, allowing faculty from the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and professional programs to see possibilities in their own teaching and curriculum for greater environmental and ecological awareness, that issues of energy use and climate change face us all, and that each discipline does indeed have something to contribute even as our environmental crisis worsens. Simultaneously I saw that sustainability showed the limits of a disciplinary-based curriculum structure in addressing this crisis. And yet, in working with others using the idea of sustainability, it also showed me the limitations of this idea, that it remained problematically anthropocentric, limiting the possibility of radical change in self-understanding which our on-going environmental crisis requires. I began to recognize that it requires not only practical action but also more in-depth theorizing about what it means to be earthlings, part and parcel of a larger web of relationships that we might call ecological, as we have in this themed issue.

Who better to take on this task than philosophers of education? Although often part of the problem, education also remains a central vehicle for the possibility of positive social change, including in this area. And yet, as the white paper included in this



issue makes clear, there isn't yet an on-going conversation and sustained research in philosophy of education about this, comparable to social issues such as racism or social justice. Although slowly changing, philosophy of education is still conspicuously absent in conversations about what in this journal issue we're calling ecologizing education. Although the philosophy of education community is working on important and worthwhile issues, it still undertheorizes what might well be the most pressing issue facing us as a global community, an issue that requires collective theorizing and action.

I have a ten-year old grandson. He is smart, energetic, kind, and good-looking—like all grandchildren. My hope is that he will be able to live on a globe that is hospitable to his generation, that the earth will remain supportive for his dreams of his place in the world. But more, my hope for him and his generation is that he will see that this earth is not merely a stage *on* which life is lived, but more fundamentally as an earthling he is part of a web of life that is interdependent. For me, our themed issue is meant to contribute to his life.

Many of the authors take axiological positions in recognizing the need for reconsidering or reconstructing moral practices. Laird<sup>25</sup> reminds us that the crisis is not merely scientific or technological, but ethical, political and sociocultural as well. Bonnett<sup>26</sup> confronts the “naturalistic fallacy” head-on, claiming that Hume was wrong in assuming that an “ought” can never be derived from an “is,” arguing that such a position makes all values merely a human projection onto an otherwise valueless. In a world where the nonhuman others have value this becomes immediately untenable. A similar critique is echoed in Thayer-Bacon's discussion of Cajete's cosmology.<sup>27</sup> Affifi's<sup>28</sup> suggestion that an educational dimension pervades ecologies is meant to highlight an ethico-pedagogical dimension to life itself: that ecologies are unfinished and depend upon co-learning processes that we are necessarily involved in and therefore partially responsible for. On the other hand, Blenkinsop et al.<sup>29</sup> argue that nature is kept inanimate and unknowable as a means of rendering it ethically inconsiderable—so that we as humans can come to *not know* those responsibilities. Related to these ethical concerns, several authors explicitly adopt critical approaches to understanding the systemic and political factors contributing to the marginalization of some groups over others. Notably, Laird<sup>30</sup> discusses environmental racism and the disproportionate suffering from environmental pollution that certain human minority groups face. Martin<sup>31</sup> critiques the patriarchal dimensions of the environmental crisis which she thinks also invoke *hubris*. Meanwhile, Blenkinsop et al.<sup>32</sup> take an anti-colonial approach to understanding the attitudes and practices that Western humans adopt towards other species, beings, and processes. There is much room for further theorizing on how racism, patriarchy, and human exceptionalism, are connected and mutually re-

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<sup>25</sup> Laird (2017).

<sup>26</sup> Bonnett (2016).

<sup>27</sup> Thayer-Bacon (2016).

<sup>28</sup> Affifi (2016).

<sup>29</sup> Blenkinsop et al. (2016).

<sup>30</sup> Laird (2017).

<sup>31</sup> Martin (2016).

<sup>32</sup> Blenkinsop et al. (2016).

enforcing with each other and with other means of silencing and marginalizing (including ableism, homophobia, speciesism, etc.).

Many of these papers employ or redirect philosophical approaches in new directions, opening up possible modes of further inquiry in philosophy of education. Laird<sup>33</sup> helps us consider the rich philosophical potential of the conceptual revolution afforded by the term Anthropocene, and the challenges it places upon frameworks and practices to which we have long been habituated. Bonnett<sup>34</sup> applies a phenomenological perspective to examining the structure of experience, and draws out nature and sustainability as core dimensions of it. Affifi<sup>35</sup> draws from enactivism and transactional theory to re-frame human-nature from bacteria up as contingent, developmental, and novelty generating co-learning processes. Martin<sup>36</sup> builds a case based on Kuhnian paradigm theory that we are in the midst of a Copernican “sea change” that will place us as one species amongst many instead of our currently assumed location at the pinnacle of creation. Thayer-Bacon<sup>37</sup> re-interprets Jamesian radical empiricism and connects it fruitfully with indigenous and Montessori pedagogical approaches, which she argues can be consonant with the relational ontology that she has developed. Blenkinsop et al.,<sup>38</sup> seek to reverse the rationalistic philosophical approach with a sort of anti-colonial empiricism: instead of treating other beings in ways we assume to be correct given our own limited positionality, philosophy should begin with listening to what the beings of the world are saying and humbly proceed accordingly.

These papers do not merely raise philosophical debates. They also all involve rewriting and reimagining what education is and does. The range for educational implications are diverse. The notion that education primarily occurs in classrooms is also emphatically rejected by all of the authors. The point is expressed most explicitly in Martin,<sup>39</sup> but recurs in Blenkinsop et al.,<sup>40</sup> Bonnett,<sup>41</sup> and Affifi.<sup>42</sup> Further, Bonnett,<sup>43</sup> Affifi,<sup>44</sup> and Blenkinsop et al.<sup>45</sup> ask us to reconsider who is a teacher and who is a student, seeking to open a pedagogical space for human-nature co-learning writ large. This approach rejects merely expanding the sphere of the educationally considerable to include certain animals defined by human capacities, and seeks instead to notice and engage with intelligent voices and commentaries in places we might least expect. Collectively, these papers seek to locate education as an interactive process that involves many organisms and processes and that is intrinsic to life itself.

Finally, for all these papers reimagining education means reconstructing educational practices. This is likely to be substantive and interesting work which will require a great

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<sup>33</sup> Laird (2017).

<sup>34</sup> Bonnett (2016).

<sup>35</sup> Affifi (2016).

<sup>36</sup> Martin (2016).

<sup>37</sup> Thayer-Bacon (2016).

<sup>38</sup> Blenkinsop et al. (2016).

<sup>39</sup> Martin (2016).

<sup>40</sup> Blenkinsop et al. (2016).

<sup>41</sup> Bonnett (2016).

<sup>42</sup> Affifi (2016).

<sup>43</sup> Bonnett (2016).

<sup>44</sup> Affifi (2016).

<sup>45</sup> Blenkinsop et al. (2016).

deal more thought and pedagogical experimentation. Suggested throughout these pages are numerous educational activities that begin to question and redefine pedagogical engagement and the very act of teaching.

### **Ramsey's story**

Sometimes I am guided by love and admiration, sometimes by fear of the future. Sometimes I feel gratitude, wonder, and beauty. Sometimes I am filled with guilt and shame, other times I am energized by being "part of the solution." Often I am depressed, which makes me apathetic, sometimes (many times) I am distracted. I feel connected and at other times severed from my relations. Sometimes I hear the many voices articulating their many worlds all around me, but often the only voice I listen to is my own. I am guided by hope and despair, -sometimes at the same time. It is with these and other feelings that I joined this team. I come to it eager (...and hesitating) about the role of philosophy (and thinking) might play in the solution (and problems) lying before us. A poem on this:

whether

whether it is because we have a word for "snow"  
 or because we don't have 17 words for it  
 whether it's the subject-object dualism  
 our sense of freedom  
 or some fatalistic monism  
 whether we're controlled by our gut microbiome  
 or cos we admire danto's A-bomb explosions  
 which really are chrysanthemum blossoms  
 (and so but therefore because which implies)  
 logically sophocles' embers still fire these cultures

whether it's that polluted minds pollute  
 or the other way around, unbound  
 whether it's a feedback loop unravelling  
 so it's the Dharma of dependent co-arising  
 of Microsoft call centres dependably advising  
 comprising an impending upending  
 and because we the colonizing  
 are colonized colonizers  
 colonized by the colonized of the colonized  
 (and because from the ashes of their mountains  
 we "we" the problem)

whether it's either/or and or both/and  
 whether we haven't learnt enough science or art  
 or philosophy,  
 or have spent childhoods locked inside bottles of words  
 because we haven't built our bothy  
 and scattered oats for our chickens  
 and danced with the daffodils  
 under canopies dappled golden green  
 or that we can't: that our suffering has built us a wall  
 now smoky mirror leaden glass

or whether it's because our critique of romanticism isn't sufficiently robust  
 we still have to exorcise our "naiveté"  
 because "capitalism" or "patriarchy" or "human supremacy."  
 with that bliss of connection still a symptom  
 of some abstract concept still circulating  
 within a systemic structural stomping ground  
 for critical discourse  
 (whether it is because we failed to point the finger  
 cos the labour was not our own)  
 whose fingers are busted broken bone?

or is what's burst  
 an integrated dys-ecology of problems  
 where identifying The Cause becomes a cause  
 where the focusing lens of consciousness  
 only distorts some platonic "right" relation?  
 that we chose democritus over heraclitus  
 (no but who believes a wash of process,  
 a hush to all beasts and beings,  
 is progress?)

and whether the university demands that we'll never know  
 cos each of us have gots to claim our own position  
 each the Real Slim Shady  
 each needing new problems  
 so it refracts into a cascade of colourful colours  
 each now a tenured track  
 each now a groove wearing itself in  
 but the mortgage payments aren't now spread so thin

or whether it's our failure to adapt,  
 re-adapt, exapt  
 -respond-  
 to destroy old habits  
 to reconstruct reconstructions  
 and without ends-in-view it's all askew, they say.  
 or our (read: "not our") insuffic/ient deco(nstr)uktions  
 [insert logical relation here]  
 dream logotopia in the bubblebox  
 (or whether it's that we don't know how to listen  
 to each other or to others)

have we forgotten how to grieve?  
 are we burning the wrong incense  
 were we deformed at some critical childhood stage  
 somewhere in the midst of  
 cascades of intergenerational trauma  
 or is that we just don't care  
 (biophilia, the instinct [sic] we rarely learn)  
 or care about the wrong things

or that care is really only possible between humans (1984)  
 or impossible altogether  
 or because it is someone else's problem  
  
 and whether we block streets  
 or write our treatise  
 or right our treaties  
 or play the long game  
 or channel poetry  
 or "slow down to appreciate nature"  
 or occupy "this"  
 or retroactively justify our (in)action  
 believing our reasons are steering the vessel  
  
 or now weary, whether it's time for intercultural hera-kiri  
  
  
 or "buycott"

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