

Reviews

Margo DeMello (Ed.). (2010). *Teaching the Animal: Human-Animal Studies Across the Disciplines*. New York: Lantern Books. 427 pp.

There are over 200 Human-Animal Studies (HAS) college courses currently offered in North America, according to Margo DeMello's introduction to *Teaching the Animal*, and hundreds more around the globe. There are a dozen or so dedicated HAS programs in North America alone. The field is growing so rapidly that most who develop and teach a course in Human-Animal Studies have never taken one. Because the courses' objects of study—other animals and our real and imagined relationships with them—challenge conventional scholarly methods, epistemological assumptions, and the discourse of species, new teachers may meet resistance from departments and students. These challenges mean that to develop a HAS course in a literature or social work program, for example, can be an exciting act of disciplinary creativity and pedagogical innovation. But at the same time, for all these reasons, many who teach HAS courses may feel as if they are going it alone.

By creating in its pages a community of wise and generous mentors, *Teaching the Animal* gives new and experienced HAS teachers a great gift, and makes an invaluable contribution to the emerging field. Twenty-two scholars offer expert guidance in considering human-animal relationships through cultural studies, film studies, history, literature, philosophy, religion, gender studies, anthropology, geography, law, psychology, social work, sociology, animal welfare, and environmental studies. They not only provide persuasive reasons for these courses, they provide the courses themselves: each chapter ends with at least one syllabus and a bibliography—sometimes an extensive bibliography, that represents years of work, upon which new HAS teachers can now build.

Shared pedagogical goals emerge across the chapters. Thinking with and about nonhuman animals means inviting students to unlearn habitual beliefs, become active learners, reflect on emotions, and negotiate new positions within charged debates. Many contributors helpfully describe problem-centered, experiential, community outreach, and service learning components of courses, even in traditionally text-driven courses such as history (Georgina M. Montgomery and Linda Kalof) and literary studies (Carrie Rohman). The interdisciplinary courses on animal welfare offered by David Fraser, Daniel M. Weary, and Marina A.G. von Keyserlingk provide particularly provocative models of student-centered, collaborative pedagogy. Cumulatively, the book makes an argument for giving students space to try out and reflect on multiple philosophical positions as they consider other animals.

The sociologist Cheryl Joseph recounts hearing her courses called “cute little animal classes” (p. 313), and given that most courses in HAS explicitly or implicitly leverage a critique against anthropocentrism, departments and

institutions can be bewildered or even hostile to their introduction. But the contributors continually point out—as Paul Waldau does convincingly in his wonderfully instructive chapter, “Religion and Other Animals”—that teaching HAS is not just about the animals; it teaches critical thinking in general, and illuminates every discipline it inhabits. Waldau argues eloquently not only for the importance of religious studies to animal studies, but animal studies to religious studies; Molly Mullin points out how studying animals can help students connect anthropology’s four subfields; Carrie Rohman’s argument for incorporating a section on the species barrier into a British Modernism class shows how elegantly an animal studies unit deepens students’ reading of that period; Christina Risley-Curtiss makes an impassioned argument for the benefits to social work of focusing on human relations with other animals. An appendix in the end synthesizes sage advice for getting courses approved.

Some scholars argue here for the necessity of doing interdisciplinary work in animal studies, like cultural studies scholars Annie Potts and Philip Armstrong, and Theresa Goedeke, whose chapter “Putting Society Back into the Wild” will be of particular interest to readers of this journal. Goedeke describes an interdisciplinary environmental studies course titled “Wildlife and Society,” and recommends combining human-dimensions approaches culled from natural resource management with sociocultural insights from anthropology and sociology, on the one hand, and science studies, on the other.

Goedeke fights the nature/culture divide, arguing for conversations between the social sciences and the sciences, and her argument is convincing. But for the most part, this book shows how to draw the insights of the natural sciences into the humanities and social sciences, and critique science’s methods from perspectives within those disciplines, but doesn’t move in the other direction; some readers may miss hearing from an ethologist or a cognitive scientist, for example, who focuses on the human-animal relationship. Some readers will miss, too, a contribution from performance studies, whose attention to nonlinguistic, embodied ways of knowing through everyday and theatrical rituals and events has much to contribute to HAS’s critique of anthropocentric epistemologies. But for an anthology in an emerging field, debates about disciplinary approaches and inclusiveness are inevitable; this book covers a huge amount of territory impressively.

Lantern Books has provided several ways of purchasing this text: you can purchase the Humanities and Social Sciences sections separately; many of the chapters are available individually for digital download. But it is in concert with one another that these chapters exceed their practical usefulness to do important thinking about human-animal relations. Everyone should read the wonderfully synthesized portrait of the philosophical debate over granting moral consideration to other animals in Mylan Engel Jr. and Kathi Jenni’s “Examined Lives,” and Lori Gruen and Kari Weil’s excellent chapter on “Teaching Difference: Sex, Gender, Species.” Reading across the book is the way to absorb the

methodological innovations needed to consider other animals seriously, and the pedagogical care it takes to critique anthropocentrism inside the classroom and out. More than just a pedagogical handbook, the book is an argument for the field of Human-Animal Studies—that it should exist, and how it should exist—and it is a rich and persuasive one.

Kristin Dombek writes about pedagogy, disciplinarity, religion, and other animals. She teaches in Princeton University's Writing Program.

Marie-France Boissonneault. (2010). *Every Living Being: Representations of Nonhuman Animals in the Exploration of Human Well-being*. Portland, Oregon: Inkwater Press. 324 pp.

With *Every Living Being*, Boissonneault maps out the roles in which nonhuman animals contribute to the care and well-being of humans in contemporary Western society. In the process, she shows that the benefits for humans are many and immeasurable, while benefits for nonhuman animals are difficult to establish. The known detrimental impacts on nonhuman animal species are at a scale and a degree, however, that, ultimately, have destructive consequences for humans and the natural world as a whole. She demonstrates that this dilemma is rooted in our perceptions of nonhuman animals. Based on an analysis of how and why we conceptualize nonhuman animals the way we do, Boissonneault suggests ways forward to achieve better outcomes for humans and nonhuman animals alike.

With this focus on the importance of how animals are perceived, Boissonneault devotes more than a third of her book to the visual and literary representations of nonhuman animals. She argues that media most often provide us with our first encounters with nonhuman animals. These mediated encounters, she stresses, have the ability to mould culture and directly affect behaviour and thus impact our understanding of nonhuman animals and our relationships with them. Most of her attention is directed at the fairytale genre but she also addresses literary works, fine art, photography, advertising images, and film.

Boissonneault then moves on to outline the range of care-giving roles nonhuman animals play for humans. She describes how they contribute to our emotional, social, cognitive, and physical well-being as friends, companions, guardians, aids, confidants, teachers, or healers. Nonhuman animals support humans in their different developmental needs, from childhood to adolescence, and adulthood to the elder life stage, and in different institutional settings such as hospitals, care facilities, and prisons. In sum, nonhuman animals are “important people in [human] lives,” as Boissonneault cites from a study of children’s views

of their companion animals. Additional roles of nonhuman animals referred to by Boissonneault include those of wild animals in ecotourism encounters and in zoos, as objects of biomedical experimentation, and as farm animals in industrialized animal agriculture and food production.

Throughout the book, Boissonneault acknowledges impediments to creating more sustainable human-animal relationships. As many others have also done, she points to the conceptual division constructed between humanity and the rest of nature, known as Cartesian dualism in Western philosophy, and the corresponding attitude that animals exist for the sake of humans, coupled with disregard for nonhuman animals' intrinsic values. In sum, current dominant views perpetuate speciesism, the discrimination by humans against other species. Boissonneault argues that overall, the mechanistic view of animals, that is the idea that animals are not capable of thought and emotion, has lost authority. Nonetheless, contemporary Western societies demonstrate ambivalence and apathy towards nonhuman animals.

Much of this ambivalence and apathy stems from our difficulties in understanding nonhuman animal language, emotion, and cognition, which Boissonneault regards as a major barrier for change in human-animal relations. Moreover, we are deeply influenced by notions of force and competition which lead us to understand and judge nonhuman animals as being driven by instinctual and survivalist impulse only. In contrast, Boissonneault cites research and gives examples that demonstrate a capacity for altruism in nonhuman animals, expressed as unselfish behaviour which benefits others but not the self. Other barriers for change, Boissonneault suggests, are based in mainstream Western society's tendency to dismiss human-animal bonds as sentimental and trivial, or as a cover for darker hidden emotions. Likewise, genuine interest in welfare is said to be ruled by impulse and sentiment rather than pure reason and logic and thus is also inherently devalued.

Offering hope, Boissonneault suggests some actions to bring about change. These include: the creation of new narratives that acknowledge the intrinsic value of nonhuman animals and our relationships with them; the collaboration of artists, photographers, and media specialists with animal behaviour experts to formulate representations of nonhuman animals; the development of teaching and research programs to raise awareness and understanding about the behavioural, cognitive, and emotional lives of nonhuman animals, which would then nurture the re-evaluation of animals for their own (intrinsic) sake rather than the instrumental purposes they fulfil for humans. She also reminds us to address our language of speciesism as we have addressed the language of racism and sexism. With this she means, for example, identifying a nonhuman animal as "she" or "he" rather than "it" to describe her or him as a being, rather than an undifferentiated object; not using euphemisms for nonhuman animals' bodies used for food—using "cow" instead of "beef," "pig" instead of "pork," and replacing "culling" or "harvesting" with "killing." This will send signals that social norms concerning nonhuman animals are changing.

Boissonneault joins the increasing number of authors and activists who call for a coming together of the sustainability and the animal rights discourse. Resonating strongly with current literature in sustainability and environmental education (see various authors in Stibbe, 2009, and in Gray-Donald & Selby, 2008), Boissonneault advocates for transitional change for sustainability at a deep level that defies the ideology of resourcism. She puts forward that nature and nonhuman species give meaning and purpose to our lives. They are an essential part of our living planet and it is not a normal, healthy choice to be disconnected from the natural world. Likewise, scholars in sustainability and environmental education recognize that in an ever-growing technological and urban environment, nonhuman animals play a significant role in creating a sense of connectedness and belonging, and in fostering emotional and physical health (Stibbe, 2009). At the same time, Boissonneault makes it clear that in the human-animal bond, the intrinsic needs of nonhuman animals must never be overlooked. She refers to the notion of consent for nonhuman animals, to the ecospheric right to individual choice to respond to one's needs, and to the right to interaction with the totality of nature, including various other nonhuman animal species. These dimensions can be considered an extension of the themes of social and environmental justice, care and responsibility, democracy principles, diversity and community autonomy, from the human community context to the nonhuman animal realm. The above demonstrates that a combined agenda between sustainability and environmental education, and animal rights and humane education, is already in the process of being articulated.

Overall, *Every Living Being* opens readers' eyes to the potential of the human-animal bond. This book will be of interest to scholars and practitioners in the fields of environmental education, media studies, conservation psychology, ecotourism, outdoor education, and humane education, and to those in the wider community who have an interest in animal and sustainability studies.

References

- Gray-Donald, J. & Selby, D. (Eds.). (2008). *Green frontiers: Environmental educators dancing away from mechanism*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Stibbe, A. (Ed.). (2009). *The handbook of sustainability literacy: Skills for a changing world*. Totnes: Green Books.

Iris Bergmann is honorary research fellow at RMIT University, Melbourne, interested in the intersection of human-animal studies and change for sustainability.

Margaret Somerville, Kerith Power, & Phoenix de Carteret. (Eds.). (2009). *Landscapes and Learning: Place Studies for a Global World*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. 227 pp.

High on the lexicon of current buzzwords in educational research is “placed-based” education. Anything in education with a focus on community, location, ecology, environment, context, or space seems to be attributable to “place.” Recently this haphazard, uncritical application of place has been critiqued as a problematic theoretical construct (Nespor, 2008; van Eick & Roth, 2010). With such widespread use and little consistency in the way that notions of place have been applied in environmental education, I read with interest *Landscapes and Learning*, hoping that the editors of this volume and their contributors might offer new critical insights.

In their edited volume, Somerville, Power, and de Carteret have assembled a diverse collection of papers from Australia, in which issues of globalization take centre stage. The editors ask: What does conceptualizing “place” as an object of study afford us in connecting local sites to global processes such as climate change? In their ambitious undertaking, the editors wish to foreground the economic and geo-political issues of place and space by applying a postcolonial framework. They argue that through an analysis of connection to, and the contestation of meaning about, location and identity, education can decolonize and re-inhabit places through story and narrative.

The volume is organized into three sections: (i) creative place making; (ii) landscapes of learning; and (iii) theorizing place differently. Preceding these sections is a chapter by Paul Carter whose concept of “care at a distance” provides a touchstone for the authors as they struggle with the ways that the semiotics of local landscapes shape inhabitants and whose meanings are, in turn, shaped by global relations through time and space. Carter argues that discourses of place-making must incorporate not only “insiders,” but also immigrants and those far beyond particular landscapes. Using the figure of “doubling,” Carter calls for a double-consciousness in this work, where one has a “sense of being both here and there (and in between)” (p. 31).

Admirable in this volume are those authors who examine the ways that difference is constructed in terms of race, gender, and economic status through historic processes of place-making. Notable are Paton and Brearley’s chapter on connecting Indigenous and non-Indigenous narratives about colonized landscapes, Rennie’s study of new literacies among Aboriginal children and their understanding of landscape and self, Nixon and Comer’s two-decades-long research on the spatial dimensions of children’s education in a high-poverty suburb, and Maynes’ insights about the tangled storylines of city slums in the social imagination of the Australian landscape.

The editors claim that “place” can offer a conceptual framework for integrating pedagogical approaches across fields of study and through bringing together researchers in the humanities to speak about the value of landscapes

for learning. Yet, throughout this volume, a focus on landscape is never clearly distinguished from place-based approaches and seems to be synonymous with the ways “place” has been used in environmental education literature. Frustratingly slippery phrases and baffling cryptic writing undermine the potential usefulness of this volume. For example: “Place learning that derives from a deep, embodied sense of connection gives rise to a different ontology, an ontology of self-becoming-other in the space between self and a natural world, composed of humans and non-human others, animate and inanimate; animals and plants, weather rock, trees” (p. 9). It’s not clear how this “self-becoming-other” is valuable, to be realized, or studied in those who undertake a landscape-based approach to learning.

Nonetheless, the editors of this volume and the chapter authors underscore the benefit of examining place through the lens of globalization. As such, *Landscape and Learning* highlights the tension between viewing landscape and living in it—between “observation and inhabitation” (Wylie, 2007, p. 5). A landscape-based approach to learning incorporates global history and changes in environments over time, for it is in this change that the learner can begin to understand his or her own role with this and other landscapes. As Carter notes: “I exercise care at a distance, as I might for a place from which I have come; and if this exercise is possible it is not because I come from outside (as anyone might visit the region because of their technical expertise) but because I come from somewhere else” (p. 33).

References

- Nespor, J. (2008). Education and place: A review essay. *Educational Theory*, 58(4), 475-489.
- Van Eijck, M., & Roth, W. M. (2010). Towards a chronotopic theory of “place” in place-based education. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, 5, 869-898.
- Wylie, J. (2007). *Landscape*. New York: Routledge.

Carol B. Brandt is Assistant Professor at Temple University. Her research explores the sociocultural dimensions of learning science beyond the classroom and the ways that language structures participation in learning as youth and adults move between home, community, and school.

Julie M. Davis. (Ed.). (2010). *Young Children and the Environment: Early Education for Sustainability*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press. 305 pp.

Over the past three decades there has been a steady stream of environmental education texts aimed at teachers of young children, describing various versions

of the same outdoor education practices and case studies. This book is very different. An innovative and inspiring compilation of recent practical applications of pedagogical research, it takes the reader on a welcome quantum leap into holistic approaches to education for sustainability. Tangible and lasting impacts are to be gained here. The book demonstrates ways in which early years education can address the pressing issue of climate and consequent environmental change—to encourage teachers and students to promote education for sustainability. While the authors are specialists in early childhood, from birth to eight years old, and the majority of examples taken from the Australian subcontinent, it is easy to see how the lessons learned from study of this text could also be applied at all stages of children's education across the globe.

The book is groundbreaking in its approach; it is practical, insightful, and inspiring. It goes well beyond what has become a typical run-of-the-mill gardening and bottle greenhouses approach to ad hoc outdoor experiences. There is exploration through case study examples of various organizational, cultural, and ethical core issues, which, when clarified by careful practical study and implementation, can lead to environmental core values being placed very much at the heart of the curriculum and life of the school. In this way, the book promotes and supports the development of a holistic approach to environmental pedagogy and practice.

Each chapter is prefaced by a useful introduction by the editors, acting as a summary and signpost. Although written by different authors, each chapter is on the whole engaging and easy to read. Chapter by chapter the reader/practitioner/student is lead through a case study, practical examples, and then, most importantly, key questions for self-evaluation, which the authors call "provocations." These serve to engage and challenge thinking, and have the potential to lead to deep and meaningful reflection on one's own values and practices. Taken together, the various authors lead the reader along the path, with anticipation of the next installment of intellectual nourishment, the next practical challenge, the next provocation.

This book could be supremely important as a core text both for teacher educators and those already in practice. It could be used as study material for in-house training and to improve reflective practice leading to improved pedagogical approaches. Written by a consortium of senior academics and experienced practitioners, it claims and indeed proves very much to be a book of positive ideas and actions. By providing detailed descriptions and case study examples, the reader is shown how early childhood education communities can come together and work with children, teachers, and parents to address the issue of environmental change.

The goal of education for sustainability can be seen as that of empowerment (of children and adults) in both decision-making and action. If one agrees that to be truly sustainable, the approach must engage not only the individual but also the community, promoting intergenerational responsibility and equity, then the material contained in this book will indeed be invaluable.

The book is set in a broader context of moving societies as a whole towards sustainable living, and has the potential to achieve its aim. Through empowering the reader by illuminating and demonstrating a wealth of up-to-date and inspiring material, it may yet be possible to embed environmental core values truly at the heart of the life of every school.

It is a practical rallying call—no excuses now.

Karen S. Nash is a lecturer, practitioner, consultant and researcher in environmental and sustainability science and education in both Steiner-Waldorf and mainstream settings.

Michael Littledyke, Neil Taylor, & Chris Eames. (2009). *Education for Sustainability in the Primary Curriculum: A Guide for Teachers*. South Yarra: Palgrave MacMillan. 262 pp.

“Our planet is sick” (p. x). Grabbing the reader’s attention right away, this first sentence of *Education for Sustainability in the Primary Curriculum* clearly emphasizes the need for a teacher’s guide on the subject of sustainability. Indeed, many authors, in various genres, have written about the plethora of environmental, social, and economic issues connected to global climate change and resource depletion. While describing problems is relatively straightforward, it is certainly not easy to develop a coherent approach to educating about these concerns. Littledyke, Taylor, and Eames, however, have managed to compile a team of authors able to bring such an approach to fruition.

The focus of this book is to tackle the main problems that inhibit teachers from bringing Education for Sustainability (EfS) into their primary classrooms. These issues, according to the authors, are: poor understanding of environmental and sustainability issues, low confidence in teaching EfS, uncertainty of how to incorporate EfS into the curriculum, and fear of depressing students from a lack of solutions to problems presented. In an effort to confront the first issue of a lack of understanding, Michael Littledyke, in an early chapter, offers an informative overview of the main social, economic, and environmental issues which give rise to the need for EfS. The summary of issues is accompanied by a description of pedagogical strategies which can be used with students to explore and connect the complex concepts during the learning process.

The subsequent chapter offers a theoretical backing on the importance of using “rich concepts” and “real-life” issues combined with a student-centered approach to teach EfS. The chapter’s author, Kathy Jenkins, uses Jensen’s model of action competence as a base from which to explore sustainability issues. Jensen’s model consists of interconnected steps which ask students to investigate an issue, envision an alternative, and engage in action to change the current situation. Building on this model, Jenkins provides useful diagrams and

descriptions for teachers to help students analyze the causes and symptoms of sustainability issues, as well as develop and use strategies that can work towards a “preferred future” (p. 32). The engagement elicited from this model can empower students into making changes as opposed to feeling helpless in the face of “insurmountable” issues (pp. 33-34).

These introductory chapters structure the guide in a very responsible way. The underlying scientific concepts and pedagogical approaches are comprehensively outlined before later chapters launch into descriptions of EfS activities. In this way, the reader/teacher is guided to reflect on and develop their foundational knowledge of EfS, alongside teaching strategies, making them better prepared to engage in the learning process with their students. There is also an important chapter on differentiated learning strategies which can be used to support and scaffold the learning of diverse students, to ensure that all learners are able to engage with the topics of EfS.

The remainder of the guide describes how various subjects, including science, technology, social studies, math, English, creative arts, and health connect with EfS. Each of these later chapters offers examples of activities that can be brought into primary classrooms, but that do more than tokenize environmental topics. The activities positively integrate critical thinking and active engagement with subject matter, and most are based on a progression of learning. This shows that the authors recognize the importance of building a knowledge base from which to explore and extend understandings in interactive ways.

Readers will find that some activity descriptions follow a traditional lesson plan format, while others are more descriptive in nature. This variation may frustrate some educators. Another potential weakness for some readers may be the strong focus on curriculum in Australian and New Zealand educational contexts. Fortunately, most of the suggested activities are adaptable to almost any classroom setting. For example, in the “Habitat Survival Game,” the educator could change the native species from wallabies and koalas to rabbits and squirrels to make the content culturally relevant to students.

Overall, *Education for Sustainability in the Primary Curriculum: A Guide for Teachers* provides a much-needed resource for educators interested in bringing important environmental, social, and economic issues into their classrooms. While activities promoting critical thinking are more prevalent in the secondary system, it is important to have a guide devoted to bringing the topic of sustainability to younger minds. This guide should find a welcome place on the bookshelves of critical educators around the world.

Becky Parker is a certified teacher working for Ontario Agri-Food Education. She is currently completing both an M.Ed and Diploma in Environmental/Sustainability Education at York University.

Warren Linds, Linda Goulet, & Alison Sammel. (Eds.). (2010). *Emancipatory Practices: Adult/Youth Engagement for Social and Environmental Justice*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. 249 pp.

Implicit in the concept of sustainable development is a focus on youth leadership. Sustainable development calls for a society that grows with priority placed on the interests of future generations. According to the United Nations Agenda 21, our next generation's leaders will have to be skilled at leadership that upholds democratic principles, is inclusive of diverse voices, and challenges the status quo. Engaging in this important process is the focus of *Emancipatory Practices: Adult/Youth Engagement for Social and Environmental Justice*, a new collection of papers edited by Warren Linds, Linda Goulet, and Alison Sammel.

Education is often viewed as an economic imperative. The authors in this book, however, frame youth education not as an avenue for increasing productivity or creating jobs but, fundamentally, as an exercise in transmitting society's values. As previous traditional ways of preparing youth to lead and rites of passage once used for generations around the world have faded in importance, the work of educators in transmitting values is increasingly important. Now, state-sponsored institutions and community organizations are struggling to fill the void.

To these ends, *Emancipatory Practices* is perhaps most valuable in its showcasing of many success stories of preparing youth for meaningful leadership. The book contains a collection of honest, thoughtful, and hopeful pieces about creating the right conditions for adults to "let go" and let youth lead. Along the way, it highlights a range of inspiring youth activities from across North America and Oceania. I use the word "inspiring" for the real accomplishments these youth have achieved and because of the refreshingly honest portrayal of the difficulties involved in teaching independence and leadership.

The heart of this book is a concerted attempt to describe the role of adults in cultivating the values of leadership, democracy, and justice in today's youth. The book seeks to define the fine line between adult dominance and youth empowerment. In this difficult task, the resulting lessons are somewhat muddled. A healthy sampling of the book's chapters is rewarded with stories of youth making positive changes in their communities. Carson tells of Australia's first "Youth Juries," where a panel of 16-17 year old students led an investigation into racial stereotyping. Dekraai, Bulling, McLean, and Fletcher describe the incredible story of Nebraska high school students who create a forum for youth to speak out and destigmatize mental illness. From San Diego, Jones and Yonezawa describe a "Participatory Action Research" project conducted by high school students that yields surprising suggestions for improving classroom instruction. Orsini shares lessons learned from leading several "bike-to-school" clubs and successfully portrays the difficult power relations an adult facilitator must navigate between student, adult, and administrative authority.

A problem evident throughout the chapters—perhaps by editorial design—is the mixed thinking around the proper role for adults as educators of youth. The book sets out to “interrogate adult/youth power dynamics” (p. xv), and what is found is a range of ideas about the extent to which adults should “dominate” or let the youth do the leading.

For example, Lund states in the first chapter: “adults seriously undermine the full engagement of young people if they do not allow them full partnership in collaborations” (p. 8). Later chapters, however, present several counterexamples where strong adult leadership takes the initial place before “full partnership.” In Gassner’s piece on a school with “Dialogic Learning Communities,” we see that a unique set of practices like Table Talk, glass-walled classrooms for transparency, and a 1:6 adult-student ratio have the unfortunate potential to be out of touch with the realities of high school. Indeed, several other chapters strongly suggest that a method of just stepping back and letting students lead often does not work without the proper preparation. Rather, as the authors of several chapters argue, prominent leadership from adults is a vital necessity. In this vein, Linds and Goulet’s chapter on using theater to address discrimination calls for adults to explicitly set ground rules and create norms. Likewise, student researchers described by Jones and Yonezawa were successful as a result of detailed training they received on interview techniques. The members of the Australian Youth Jury were heavily mentored by a committed group from Carson’s research team. Warner, Langlois, and Dumond eloquently describe the challenge of finding strong adult leaders:

Participants in this research talked about the need to identify and attract passionate adult leaders who respect and value youth as partners for community change. These ‘bright lights’ are adults who are passionate about youth, their community, or a particular issue, and who can work with youth to take ownership and leadership of the project. (p. 105)

The underlying idea here is that before students can be “emancipated” or lead effectively, their skills in leadership, facilitation, and emotional coping must be strengthened. Masked in the examples from this book is the reality that minority and low-income youth disproportionately lack these skills. Throughout the chapters, the featured youth are a self-selected, highly motivated group who already enjoy certain societal privileges.

The idea of emancipating youth through leadership opportunities contrasts with a powerful movement to focus on basic skills and proficiency. It is a crucial first step for youth to practice lower-order skills so that they can complete these tasks with “automaticity.” Students deficient in these basics will struggle when asked to demonstrate abstract reasoning and building deeper knowledge. And, low income and minority youth are disproportionately deficient in basic academic skills (Lemov, 2010).

The consequences of this deficiency are on display in the two most interesting chapters of the book that focus on disadvantaged youth. Susskind describes the

courageous efforts of a Seattle organization that fights for the rights of homeless youth and Ross, Downs, Tejani, Dezan, and Lowe share a community-building project in Worcester, Massachusetts. In both instances, the authors are honest about how each group's personal shortcomings (in facilitation, leadership, conflict resolution, or planning) are a source of frustration. The project leaders respond by becoming more directive. In Worcester, the facilitator took a commanding role in leading a research effort to prepare for an environmental justice project. In Seattle, Susskind describes how the organization's adult leader must wear multiple hats and whose role becomes almost parental.

In general, *Emancipatory Practices* is a great source of inspiration and real-world examples of the potential of our youth. The much trickier question of how to shape the next generation's leaders is best answered by ignoring the high-minded theorizing and paying closer attention to the heroic examples of the adult leaders featured here as they walk the fine line of "letting go."

References

Lemov, D. (2010). *Teach like a champion: Forty-nine techniques that put students on the path to college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Madhu Narayanan is an educator in New York City and is currently also a graduate student in Geography at Hunter College.

Leslie Main Johnson. (2010). *Trail of Story, Traveller's Path: Reflections on Ethnoecology and Landscape*. Edmonton: Athabasca University Press. 257 pp.

Upon reading the title, *Trail of Story, Traveller's Path: Reflections on Ethnoecology and Landscape*, I eagerly anticipated that this text would further enrich my understandings of inhabiting place in an embodied and culturally rich way. My research interests and passion lie in place-consciousness that grew out of my deep connectedness to the cultures and lands of the Algonquin of Pikwàkanagàn, the Anishinaabe of Zhingwaako Zaaga'igan and Temagami, and the Mohawk of Wahta First Nations. I soon realized that this text exemplifies the tension between Indigenous and Western worldviews as they relate to place. While Johnson states an intention to honour Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), the framing and presentation of community knowledge in the book suggests that Johnson is at the beginning of a long journey to decolonize the perceptions and understandings of Indigenous knowledge in the field of ethnoecology.

Johnson's book demonstrates her profound commitment to the Indigenous communities that she engaged with. Through time spent on the land with Gitksan, Witsuwit'en, Gwich'in, Kaska, and Dene communities, Johnson has

amassed a huge amount of ecological and linguistic information; the presentation of this ethnoecological information makes up a majority of the book. Johnson appropriately problematizes European standardized systems of reference, including mapping, directions, and GIS (geographic information systems) technology in particular; these can be tools to validate Indigenous knowledge and yet, as Johnson argues, they diminish the knowledge considerably by decontextualization: that is, by removing the knowledge from the place where it lives, and from where it is learned in relation to community and experience. As Johnson states, “relationship is not something that GIS does well” (p. 213). Despite these apprehensions, in the conclusion of the book, Johnson writes of the potential of the incorporation of TEK into GIS technology to improve the transmission of TEK for the resilience of Indigenous communities, and as a tool in the struggles to settle land claims.

The major strength of this book lies in its taking up of the controversial issue of the decontextualizing of TEK and the integral questions: Should TEK be shared? With whom? To what end? These are timely and important questions, and Johnson engages in the arguments for and against the sharing of TEK throughout the book. Unfortunately, Johnson’s engagement with these issues is undermined by her presentation of them in a decontextualized scientific work about the Indigenous knowledge of these First Nations communities. For example, in the Introduction, Johnson is careful to explore key terms used in the book, such as ethnoecology and landscape, and to challenge the separation of TEK (as information) from its social and place-conscious relations. Johnson also clearly sets out her intention to record and transmit local ecological understanding to combat the globalizing and generalizing rhetoric of scientific knowledge. She writes of avoiding reconfiguring local ecological understanding to mirror Western scientific concepts of the environment. However, Johnson frames the ecological knowledge of the Indigenous residents [of northern Canada] as having currency in the attempts to forge ecologically sound and socially just development. It is this language of resource-driven ‘sustainability’ that reduces Land into static values and quantities. While this is a way of valuing Indigenous knowledge through a Western lens, it is a diminishment of the understanding of and interaction with Land by Indigenous communities.

Johnson then steps into a common Eurocentric framework. For example, she asserts that “naming of seral phases seem weak or lacking” (p. 20), and that “vegetation terms in the areas that I have worked seem weakly developed” (p. 21). She uses the term “folk ecotopes” (p. 21), which is a much-used Eurocentric diminutive for the de-privileging of Indigenous or local knowledge in comparison to Western scientific knowledge (Shohat & Stam, 1994). These questions and assertions imply a troubling, deeply Eurocentric framework in both her approach to and handling of the language and knowledge she was entrusted with by the communities. In addition, there are translation tables of several Indigenous languages in the book; both these and Johnson’s own musings about the “weaknesses” of the languages are very Western in approach.

Like GIS, they hold Indigenous knowledge and the expression of knowledge (language) to a static value or interpretation.

As a socio-cultural environmental educator, I understand the wish to preserve or study TEK for posterity. Johnson's approach to doing so seems to be in the tradition of anthropology, or of a Western scientific approach to place and to culture; this is demonstrated through the use of classifications, generalizations, language keys, tables, and graphs. Johnson takes up the importance of Land in Indigenous cultures the world over at a moral, epistemological, and worldview level in her writing about place as a concept in several parts of the book. In her accounting of language, experience, and story, however, there is a profound underestimation of the power and agency of the place itself in the shaping of these cultures, their languages, and relationships. Although Johnson attempts to provide a sense of the land and more-than-human inhabitants as supporting actors in how knowledge is presented in the book, the core of the Indigenous identity and relationship to place is misapprehended. At the heart of the Indigenous teachings that I have been given is the understanding that respectful and meaningful learning must be embodied, must be relational: To learn languages, you listen, and speak. To learn place, you must be in that place. In an increasingly decontextualized, technology-oriented, information-rich/knowledge-poor globalized planet, this understanding is crucial. While Johnson's book is rich in data, and her stated aim to value TEK in the context of sustainability has economic merit, the presentation of this knowledge as data devalues the relationships to the places and communities that are fundamental to traditional, place-based Indigenous knowledge.

References

Shohat, E., & Stam, R. (1994). *Unthinking eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the media*. London: Routledge.

Alexa Scully is a PhD student at Lakehead University. She is learning to be in Thunder Bay, in the traditional territory of the Fort William First Nation, while studying Aboriginal and place-based education.

Tor Sandberg & Erica Shaker (Eds.). (2009). *Divided We Stand, United We Fall: Challenging How We Think About Environmental Education. Our Schools, Our Selves, Volume 19(1)*. Ottawa: The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. 134 pp.

Like most people, I wear many hats in my life and one of my biggest challenges is juggling them all. Each hat—parent, partner, educator, student—demands varying measures of attention, requires a different skill set, and challenges my

abilities in unexpected ways. The key to staying sane on this merry-go-round of changing expectations and responsibilities is balance: limit work time, set aside personal time, and don't take things too seriously. Environmental educators are faced with a dizzying challenge as they work to juggle curriculum expectations, political agendas, and the knowledge that changes in the way we act toward our world are not happening fast enough. Balancing these increasingly complex sets of issues and expectations can leave us unable to search for new perspectives on the social and natural environment in our own teaching practice, and see us settling for the status quo.

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives recently dedicated an issue of their education publication, *Our Schools, Our Selves*, to looking at the challenges facing environmental education in Canada and suggesting ways that educators and policy makers might begin to address these problems. In particular, this issue explores the possibility for hope and change that exists when educators consider a diverse range of environmental perspectives, philosophies, and ideas, and value personal experience, community involvement, and local knowledge as they aim to cultivate a complex and inclusive understanding of the environment in their students. For example, contributor Jocelyn Thorpe uses an intergenerational interview to illustrate that the consideration of "different ways of relating to the world...can lead to important insights, allowing us to comprehend why we need to strive simultaneously for social and environmental justice" (p. 58).

Divided We Stand, United We Fall celebrates the importance of particular responses to particular environmental issues as Canadians decide what we should teach our children about the environment and how best to do so. Dissatisfied with the "grand messages" (p. 11) put forward by the people who tend to have the most power in policy making, the contributors to this issue critique the use of corporate money to fund underprivileged schools, highlight the shameful lack of language rights for Inuit students in Nunavut, and question the lack of funding for real policy changes in the Ontario school system. Tor Sandberg, the issue's co-editor, states in his introduction that, "in order to address environmental crises, grand messages must be disrupted and differences and divisions be acknowledged" (p. 14).

It is in the acknowledgement of difference in how we approach environmental education provincially, nationally, and internationally that we find the biggest strength of *Divided We Stand, United We Fall*. Ranging from Stephen Lewis' rather stark discussion about the connection between health, environmental crisis, and women's rights, to Hannah Lewis, Anders Sandberg, and Constance Russell's examples of the ways in which environmental education is crossing disciplinary boundaries, the contributors to this issue provide dynamic examples of the power of community and individual response in creatively and effectively addressing environmental issues.

However, the focus on difference is also the issue's weakness. With so many vastly different topics and perspectives, *Divided We Stand, United We Fall* fails

to offer a workable strategy for moving forward on most issues. Herein lies the problem for all environmental educators. The environment is impossibly large and diverse and environmental issues and crises are mind-bogglingly complex; how can we possibly begin to address these issues or teach children about our changing world in any meaningful way? Tor Sandberg makes no apologies for the editors' decision to focus on a range of possibilities rather than a single solution, as he believes that the way forward lies in finding a "shared humanity" and that "commonality is about understanding and acknowledging the differences that exist between us, and how they relate to our precarious position on the planet" (p. 12). *Divided We Stand, United We Fall* recognizes the impossibility of finding one strategy that will work for everyone and instead demands that we take a more critical look at our current education methods and suggests that we explore approaches we may not have considered before.

In the end, the success of *Divided We Stand, United We Fall* lies in the issue's ability to wear multiple hats. It functions as both an example of the richness and diversity that is possible in environmental education and as a critique of the tendency for environmental educators to shy away from complicated social and political issues. The contributors make a varied but eloquent call for balance between the attention paid to the classic, often science-based focus of environmental education and to more complex environmental issues, which include Indigenous rights, accessibility, food production, and more responsible urban planning. And while some articles are stronger than others (of particular note are Derek Rasmussen's scathing critique of the government's treatment of Inuit education in Nunavut, Trevor Norris's look at corporate "sponsorship" of schools in the Toronto District School Board, and Hannah Lewis's account of community mapping in The Parkdale Maps project), the volume as a whole is a pleasure to read, appeals to a wide audience, and effectively achieves its goal of challenging the status quo through exploring and celebrating difference.

Amanda Di Battista is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University. Her current research focuses on literature, place, and environmental education.

Peter Blaze Corcoran & Phillip M. Osano. (Eds.). (2009). *Young People, Education and Sustainable Development: Exploring Principles, Perspectives, and Praxis*. Wageningen, The Netherlands: Wageningen Academic Publishers. 453 pp.

In this day and age, young people form the core of soon-to-be decision-makers who are expected to make a difference in building a sustainable future and better environmental management practices. Therefore, educating today's youth so that they can make informed and sound decisions in the context of

sustainability and environmental protection is essential towards securing a future for humanity as well as the planet. The message of this book, *Young People, Education and Sustainable Development: Exploring Principles, Perspectives, and Praxis*, is anchored on the need for today's youth to be educated as active participants in world issues.

As the title indicates, the book is divided into three parts: principles, perspectives, and praxis. "Principles," the first part, locates the centrality of education for sustainable development within different geographical and cultural jurisdictions, especially in relation to how formal and traditional learning can be annexed to provide motivation for positive and responsive environmental action among young people towards building a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world. This section outlines the key issues in sustainable development education and provides theoretical and conceptual discourses forming the foundation upon which the book stands.

The second part discusses the perspectives that arise in different kinds of learning contexts, including formal, such as educational institutions, and informal domains, like zoos and museums, as well as within traditional communities capable of promoting young people's participation in their education and communities. As such, "Perspectives" offers a critique of the existing learning models with regards to sustainable development, while also offering new and innovative suggestions spanning geographical and thematic issues.

The third and final part of the book is devoted to "Praxis," and consists of 12 chapters that describe specific examples of projects, institutions, and processes of education for young people to enhance their participation and involvement in advancing sustainable development. Through the description of actual practices, this third section nicely illustrates and supports the theory presented in the two earlier sections of the book. Examples of these practices include: local initiatives that deal with consumerism among youth in Australia, sustainable development education in the Netherlands, the role of youth in creating a more peaceful Nepal, young people's activities towards protecting wetlands in Slovenia, coral reef restoration in a Fijian village, education about sexual health in Mexico, as well as young people's contributions and how they are helping to achieve the United Nations millennium development goals through youth-led activities. The "Praxis" section also examines learning through the Earth Charter Youth Initiative and Youth Encounter on Sustainability, aimed specifically at cultivating knowledge and skills in the next generation of sustainability leaders.

Overall the 35 chapters in this book are, without exception, well researched contributions that reveal the need to involve both conventional and non-conventional approaches in education for sustainable development if we are to meet the goal of mobilizing young peoples' interest and active participation in addressing the challenges of sustainability.

It is worth noting that the book offers a diversity of voices and follows a unique pattern in its arrangement. It opens with a preface by Wangari Maathai,

a foreword by James Speth, and an afterword by Ruud Lubber. Each offers a unique insight to the book and speaks to the mission of the editors of the book, which is to elucidate theories, principles, practices, and approaches at the intersection of young people, education, and sustainable development, and to provide increased attention and resources for educational programs for young people locally and globally. Each chapter is presented in an incisive, readable style that is accessible beyond academia and across a wide spectrum of professionals involved in environmental education, sustainable development, and education for sustainable development in both governmental and non-governmental organizations. Overall, the book is an important theoretical contribution to the field of sustainability and environmental education as it presents new understandings of how to educate young people about sustainable development and provides practical applications that will inspire and guide educators as they develop their own praxis for sustainability education.

Anthony Kola-Olusanya, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer at the College of Human Resource Development and Lifelong Learning, Osun State University, Nigeria. He is author of Environmental Sustainability: Understanding Young Adults' Learning, Thinking, and Actions, published in 2009 by Lambert Publishers.

Julian Agyeman, Peter Cole, Randolph Haluza-DeLay, & Pat O'Riley (Eds.). (2009). *Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press. 269 pp.

Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada is a compilation of essays examining issues of environmental justice and social equity in Canada. Coming from an assortment of academic disciplines, the editors have drawn upon an even more diverse array of contributors not only from within the academy but also outside of it. Of particular importance is the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives that have too often been ignored by academia because they fall outside of the narrow paradigm of Western knowledge creation. This inclusion is significant not only because it makes the book relevant to a wider range of academics and activists alike, but also because it may mark the beginning of a long-needed process of reconciling Western forms of knowledge creation and perpetuation with Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing.

This reconciliation is imperative for a number of reasons that are relevant to environmental justice and social equity, not the least of which being that Indigenous peoples are by far those most victimized by environmental injustices within Canada. From the Tar Sands in Alberta, to Barrier Lake in Quebec, to Williams Lake in British Columbia, to the Grand River in Ontario (to name just a few), ongoing assaults against the territories, cultures, and persons of native

North America abound throughout Canada in violation of the land, treaty, human, social, economic, political, and self-governing rights of these peoples. Because of this, any social equity and environmental justice discourse in Canada that does not include at least an equal platform for Indigenous voices can be neither equitable nor just.

Acknowledging the necessity of hearing all voices, *Speaking for Ourselves* offers an excellent start to an expanded and more inclusive discussion around environmental justice and social equity. Essays discussing the Lubicon Lake people's successes and struggles in regulating resource extraction in their territory, the Anishnaabe people's view of environmental justice, and the Ardoch and Shabot Algonquin people's ongoing fight to defeat a proposed uranium mine, are included among academic examinations of persistent organic pollutants and climate change in the Arctic, and the prevalence of environmental inequality articles in national print media coverage. Other essays in the book contextualize injustice in Nova Scotia within historic international patterns that influenced the direction of Canadian development; analyze the simultaneous dominance and invisibility of women in environmental justice organizing; and examine the impact of multicultural (versus anti-racist) "diversification" strategies of white, middle-class environmental organizations.

The writing in each chapter is accessible, and each chapter can easily stand on its own. While at times there almost appears to be more disconnect than dialogue among a few chapters in the book, the chapters are also individually strengthened by their collective appearance, and much of the disconnect between various chapters can be resolved by reading the book as a whole, or even by juxtaposing a couple of the chapters in the classroom. Either approach will highlight some of the implicit and explicit tensions among different approaches and perspectives in the book, likely fostering interesting classroom discussions. For example, within the book one can find implicit and explicit tensions (and commonalities) among local, regional, national, and global approaches to studying or resolving environmental injustice issues; differences between rural and urban approaches; debates over the value of individual versus collective rights and/or the need to supplant conceptions of rights with conceptions of responsibilities; and disagreements over which actors/groups should have a role in or be responsible for making and coordinating necessary changes, to name a few.

The one disconnect that still stands out in the book, despite the editors' valiant efforts (and this is perhaps more of a societal problem than a problem with the book): the apparent ongoing refusal of Western industrialized society to reconcile with and learn from Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing. Western industrialized society has long been misguided and is just now beginning to understand what Indigenous peoples have been saying for centuries: harming life and/or the natural world also harms humans. At a time when melting polar ice and rising ocean levels are causing the extinction of countless species,

threatening the cultural survival of Indigenous and other peoples throughout the world, and calling into question the ability of future generations of human beings and other life forms to survive on this planet, dominant Western society would be wise to start listening and learning.

Speaking for Ourselves makes an excellent contribution to the environmental justice and social equity discussions that concern everyone and everything on the planet. It is in all of our best interests to engage in the discussions put forth by the book and to make sure that all future discussions continue moving in the right direction.

Shana Siegel is a doctoral candidate in Sociology at the City University of New York Graduate Center.

Tyson E. Lewis & Richard Kahn. (2010). *Education Out of Bounds: Reimagining Cultural Studies for a Posthuman Age*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. 189 pp.

In this book Tyson E. Lewis and Richard Kahn argue that the material, intellectual, and aesthetic requirements for gaining a perspective on our contemporary Western world are found within the narrative constructions that form its political, social, and ecological facets. Instead of providing an ethical mandate for change, Lewis and Kahn attempt to push their reader beyond her or his comfort zones, and advocate a critical appraisal of the violence, exploitation, and destruction that they claim lies at the very heart of our collective social, political, and economic world. They suggest embracing the “monstrous” (that which is said to dwell in the margins of the human and the nonhuman world) that exists amidst and within us, and therein adopt an imaginative disorganization of the categories and subject roles that define us; this recognition of the “monstrous” is averred as a new approach to education, an “exopedagogy,” an education that exists out-of-bounds. Lewis and Kahn write:

When tried and true categories are under threat or have been suspended—categories of us versus them, inside versus outside, human versus animal, inclusion versus exclusion, destruction versus production—the monstrous appears as an important conceptual category. (p. 2)

The monstrous is the soul of this book; it represents a critical and open conceptual space, a new form of liberation, and an exodus from the contemporary relationship between our imagination and power.

The book begins with a Preface, an Introduction (“The Bestiary Times: From Bestiary to Posthumanist Pedagogy”) that introduces the reader to the pedagogical aspects of the monstrous, and an Intermezzo (“Marxism and the Bestiary”) that describes the critical perspective(s) of the book. The first chapter (“Victor, The

Wild Child: Humanist Pedagogy and the Anthropological Machine”) details the wild as a space of resistance, the second chapter (“The Reptoid Hypothesis: Exopedagogy and the UFOther”) deals with the place and role of the other, and the third chapter (“Faery Faiths: Altermodernity and the Divine Violence of Exopedagogy”) argues that critical pedagogical practices need to begin within new conceptual categories—as a rupture and a critique that suspends the logic of contemporary power relations. The Conclusion (“A Monstrous Love Affair: The Ethics of Exopedagogy”) deals with the ethics of it all.

I came to this book already familiar with some of Richard Kahn’s work, but Tyson E. Lewis is new to me. My background in philosophy and critical theory granted me a foothold for this book. Still I found this book challenging, but in a good way; that is, it challenged my own assumptions concerning the contexts and perspectives open to critical theorizing. This book is unique, and dare I say “out there,” in terms of its dealings in werewolves, vampires, aliens, bestiality, the bestiary, the feral, etc. This is not to suggest that this book is nonsensical, indeed quite the opposite. The “critical space” this book creates is accessible, even though it attains it through a navigation of the radical and the unrepresentable. I find this to be a strength, and an avowal of the creativity and merit of the authors; in short, I really enjoyed this book.

James M. Czank (HBA Phil., MA Phil., MA Poli-Sci., MEd) is a PhD student and contract lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University.