

## Reviews

Cecilia Chen, Janine MacLeod, and Astrida Neimanis (Eds). (2013). *Thinking with Water*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press. 351 pp.

*Thinking with Water* is a collection of articles, from authors with a refreshingly wide range of backgrounds and expertise, which contributes to eco-cultural theory by exploring the meaning of water. With its origin stemming back to a conference in 2007 entitled "Nature Matters," this manuscript is the first joint project of the three editors. Both Cecilia Chen and Janine MacLeod are doctoral candidates, Chen in communication at Concordia University, where her research explores the notion that "how we come to know, understand and represent water is of radical importance to the quality of our relations with water" (p. 337); and MacLeod, in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, where her research delves into "water's capacity to carry memory between diverse bodies, habitats, and landscapes of imagination" (p. 338). Astrida Neimanis is an academic with the School of Gender Studies unit at Linköping University.

As our climate continues to change and the need for critical resources becomes more pressing, a discussion on society's cognitions around water—arguably the most precious resource—is of immediate importance. However, according to the editors, "where they are not being immediately managed or contested, when they are not unexpectedly flooding or washing away human lives and livelihoods, waters are often conveniently forgotten" (p. 3). It is thus the intent of this book "to bring water forward for conscious and careful consideration, and to explore the possibilities and limits of thinking with water" (p. 3), and importantly, "to demonstrate how water brings different ways of thinking into productive conversation" (p. 14).

In order to draw out the different ways of thinking with water, the editors have gathered an interesting and diverse collection of art and literary work. The content of this collection ranges from a poem with a syntax that elicits the image of water's fluid movement (Armstrong), to a work of art that depicts the passage of time as ice thins to become water (a metaphor for memory) (Renshaw), to an assortment of articles that explore environmentally, culturally, and politically sensitive topics, including water contamination (Spiegel), ocean sound ecology (Roburn), mega-dams (Haiven), and resource appropriation (Chen).

The text is provocative and compelling, considered and meaningful. Moreover, it is clear that Chen, MacLeod, and Neimanis genuinely appreciate the intrinsic value of water. However, though ambitious in content and breadth, I find that the assembled work lacks cohesion and organization, which detracts from the narrative. Further, the language and imagery employed throughout the text may prove cumbersome for those outside the discipline of eco-cultural theory and thus alienate some readers.

With that said, because of the variety of ways of thinking with water discussed, the book may be well suited to senior undergraduate or graduate-level cultural environmental studies course work (e.g., seminar/ discussion-based lecture). *Thinking with Water* elicits a variety of emotions and feelings from the reader, and while this is difficult to qualify (and quantify for that matter), it does promote debate, which will provide students with the opportunity to think critically and build off the insights of others.

In the end, *Thinking with Water* was less accessible than I would have preferred (from an organization and content perspective), but the text does indeed foster immersion, contemplation, and dialogue, and for these reasons I believe that it is a good read.

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Margaret Somerville. (2013). *Water in a Dry Land: Place-Learning through Art and Story*. New York: Routledge. 206 pp.

*“There is no map for the country of this writing. It is always being at the edge of territory, it is like being on the edge of the cliff, always shaping new words to make a bridge into that space” (p. 19).*

*“As a visitor to this country... you can go anywhere and see a beautiful place but you will not know its story” (p. 42).*

Visual artist Jasper Johns once encouraged us to “Take an object, do something with it, and then do something else with it” (1996, p. 31). This sentiment, this invitation, this call to deconstruct objects, places, events, to detangle and retangle, and open up spaces within which to explore difference is fully taken up by Margaret Somerville as she re-presents to readers, and viewers, *Water in a Dry Land: Place-Learning through Art and Story*, and its website (<http://innovativeethnographies.net/water-in-a-dry-land>), the experiences, the stories, the learnings, the knowings, and the beings of and in a fluid place of change.

Maps are re-presentations of our relationships with the world around us, with the physical

*“As Western viewers we are positioned as other, as the unknowing learner, but the artworks, the maps, and their stories give some access to alternative understandings of water in this dry land”* (p. 137).

*“... the artworks functioned as transitional objects ... they were offered as gifts, becoming literally incorporated into the other [Other] through their presence in the other's [Other's] world. These gifts were a way of bridging different understandings, relationships, and knowledges of Country and water. They expressed our growing relationships and the intermingling of knowledges. At time the art also actually represented the nature of mutual entanglement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Country”* (p. 16).

environment and also the historical, cultural, political, spiritual, and personal contexts within which we dwell. Somerville draws together a layering of maps of place tracing the shared flow of water, and of drought, that connects these stories, and that through their re-presentation together realizes and fills an in-between space where the voices of Indigenous people and of Country previously silenced can be heard. The deep mapping, the altering of western maps of territory and displacing of divisive roads and re-named places, and subsequent re-placing of story places, a textual multiplicity of narrative, art, and language, undertaken by Somerville and her co-creators, marks a turn that at once looks back as it shares the historicity of place and also looks forward to the future and to possibilities for place and relations with and in place.

The flow of water through place and places continues in its permeation of the research approaches followed, of *thinking through Country* and of postmodern emergence. In a time of detachment from place and space, it is grounding to be immersed in, to feel the rush of the water in the fluid opening of the reflective and creative journeys of Somerville and her co-creators through place, space, and time. This methodology embraces “a stance of unknowing” (p. 14), the impossibility of the possibility of a transcendental signified, a single and dominant known, and plays with and in “the irrational, messy, embodied, and unfolding nature of our participation as bodies in the ‘flesh of the world’” (p. 14). Thinking through Country

*“The meanings of the storylines are elusive too, in the sense that we cannot know all of the layers and complexity of these stories. They can be told and represented but they refuse the closure of the already known”* (p. 137).

*“Imagine a river without a map having it in your head that’s how people found their way if they got lost the little ones would start with a small cloak as they got older they would come along with it on just throw it down and talk with the mob this is my country where I come from you could wear it as a cloak and use it as a map together”* (p. 169).

*“In the coming together of all of these elements in ritual practice in Country the storyline becomes a songline. In the ritual of a songline, all of the elements simultaneously come into being each time*

involves immersion within the inextricable web of story woven by history, ceremony, and culture. For the reader, engagement with and in a text that thinks through Country involves an exchange of authorship as the reader becomes the author, adding their stories and their questions as they interpret the art and story presented.

Chrissiejoy Marshall’s stories flow from the Narran Lake, a lake that once provided a wealth of food and now offers a fluid body of knowledge and wisdom of creation and of place. These stories are presented in the landscape of place and in the flow of waters through that space, and are re-presented in Chrissiejoy’s words and paintings. And these textual re-presentations open up spaces for re-visiting, re-remembering, re-viewing, and re-inhabiting those lived narratives. Daphne Wallace’s sharing of artworks and stories offer similar openings for the voices, and hear the very language of the silenced to be heard. The stories are at once poignant and painful, necessary re-tellings of the violent separation of people from place, from culture, and from identity, and the voices are shared with the urgency and energy of water held back for so long and then released to flow over and bring life and colour to a dry space. From a large road map, Badger Bates traces the paths of escape and of water stories of Country and language and these are re-presented in lino prints whose carvings, whose depths reach back to creation while also reaching forward to the present, and to the future. The prints capture

*the ritual is enacted. It is the performance of ritual, the coming into being in the space of the liminal, through which the chaos of the world becomes meaningful, through which Country is sung into being” (p. 142).*

*“Thinking through the visual images that these artists have created helps me to find words to name the complexities of working together in Country to produce new knowledge about water. Not only did we create alternative artwork and stories, but those artworks and stories are the site of articulating our own entanglements and possibilities for knowledge production. Without this entanglement now new knowledge is possible. Each of us moves to the very edges of our being, takes on a new skin, in the process of doing this work together” (p. 184).*

places, and spaces, that on a traditional map are lost, but in this alternative cartographic form are richly textured with narratives, with people, with language, and with history. Treahna Hamm’s connection to Country is re-presented through the etching of and mark making on metal plates, “a kind of body/place journal written in symbols of Country” (p. 155). Using materials of place, of Country, her art echoes a widely held concern for and care of community, of land and of people, of young and of old, and creation, that flows across borders, with and in people and place.

*Water in a Dry Land* brings together the stories of artists and dwellers of place, of Country in a mutual entanglement of narratives and media. A multiplicity of voices come together and flow into a single shared song of the water re-awakening and re-newing knowledge and wisdom of creation and Country, upsetting those binaries that disturb and displace the movement of the waters and open up a space for re-inhabitation of story, of song, of self, and of spirit.

## References

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Stephen R. Kellert. (2012). *Birthright: People and Nature in the Modern World*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press. 264 pp.

In *Birthright: People and Nature in the Modern World*, Stephen Kellert examines the significance of humanity's relationship with nature for humans' individual and collective fulfilment, despite the increasing artificiality of our world. Central to his viewpoint is the notion of "biophilia," "the inherent inclination to affiliate with the natural world instrumental to people's physical and mental health, productivity, and well-being" (p. xii), a concept first propounded by biologist Edward O. Wilson. Kellert delves into the notion, exploring the ways in which humans ascribe meaning to and derive meaning from the natural world, through such biophilic values as attraction, reason, aversion, exploitation, affection, dominion, spirituality, and symbolism. He argues that this "inborn affinity for the natural world" is a "birthright that must be cultivated and earned" (p. xiii), necessitating human beings' conscious engagement with nature.

For instance, discussing "reason," an intellectual understanding of the world, Kellert considers the stimulating information and sensory environment offered by nature, particularly during the formative childhood years. The diverse features of the natural world present a multiplicity of colours, smells, sounds, and other details; these hone our analytical and critical-thinking skills as we recognize, identify, differentiate, categorize, evaluate, and judge its elements, for instance, recognizing cardinals and robins as birds but differentiating them from hawks or ducks. Additionally, nature's dynamic qualities calls for individuals to "adjust to a dynamic community of fluid experiences and relationships" (p. 23), further sharpening reasoning skills.

Kellert's examination of "spirituality" focuses, firstly, on how our spiritual selves magnify a basic order and organization in nature. Despite the universe's diversity, there are fundamental properties recurrent throughout nature, such as bodily structures and metabolic processes "that in basic ways render alike a spider on the ground, an alligator in a swamp, a fish in the sea, a bird in the air, or a person in a modern metropolis" (p. 99). Secondly, Kellert highlights how the natural world points to a greater meaning of existence, and to an inextricable connection between nature and humanity.

Of interest is his contention that the biophilic value of "aversion," dislike and fear of nature, too is critical to human well-being. He writes, "a certain apprehension is a necessary component of feelings of awe and respect for nature that ultimately form the basis for a deep, reverent regard for powers greater than our own. These sentiments in turn inspire ethical restraint when we exploit nature—preservation rooted in keeping a healthy distance" (p. 34). Whilst Kellert acknowledges that aversion to nature can lead to destructive behaviours, he also draws on the work of Michael Jawer and Marc Micozzi (emotion researchers), highlighting how aversion has facilitated, for instance, adaptation to environmental changes and bonding with others when faced

with environmental threats such as floods, earthquakes, and vermin. He argues that aversion can be channelled positively, motivating new ways of exploring the nonhuman world. In this discussion, he offers one of his more poignant “interludes,” narratives (both imagined and real) that draw upon his personal and professional experiences, which he intersperses throughout the volume to offer alternative expressions of humans’ relationship with nature. Kellert shares memories from a canoe trip in Canada’s Northwest Territories. Although faced with mosquitoes, rain, and predators such as wolves, he gains appreciation for the unspoiled wilderness and its many inhabitants such as waterfowl and caribous. Moreover, as the rain clears on the sixth evening, he admires the aurora borealis, laying there for hours “watching the vaporous ribbons of light and color swirling in sinewy ghostlike shapes, constantly shifting from hues of yellow, green and blue to red, magenta, and purple” (p. 48). This leaves him with a “fresh, awe-filled, and reverent respect for the sky [he] had never known before” (p. 48).

He ends the book with two illustrations set in urban locales, which exemplify how the natural world can nurture wholeness. The second illustration, an imagined scenario, centers on a young female graduate employed at a marketing firm in New York City, whose work and home settings are largely artificial constructs devoid of nature. Her social pursuits mainly revolve around technology and outings with friends to movies, concerts, and the like. After reading an article that claims that “contact with nature can add satisfaction, beauty, and purpose to one’s life, even significantly contribute to physical and mental health and happiness” (p. 203), the young lady, despite her scepticism, modifies her office and home spaces with natural lighting, live plants, prints/photos of nature, and furnishings made from natural materials. She increases her contact with the outdoors, visiting parks, taking up bird watching, and engaging in adventure and nature-based tourism. These changes increase her sense of peace and emphasize the significance of life as she gains a “conviction that no matter what she faced in life, she would never lose her feeling of belonging to something beyond that also embraced her” (p. 208). The transformation, which takes place within this individual, offers a promising portrait of nature’s rejuvenating power for body, mind, and spirit.

Kellert’s work is generally thorough and clear with respect to his treatment of the biophilic values, however I will raise two points. Firstly, in his discussion of “spirituality,” I felt that readers would benefit from slightly more discussion on the worldviews of traditional tribal religions and contemporary nature worship as these offer justifications for conserving nature that, as he points out, can be far more powerful than legislative and regulatory mechanisms. Indeed, deeper discussion would have offered a strong counterpoint to the negative lens with which the Western world oftentimes views these belief systems, characterizing them as “backward” and “primitive.” Secondly, his chapter on “symbolism” necessitated more than one reading to fully engage with his exploration of the

impact of humans' symbolic representation of nature on human thought, communication, creativity, and design, leaving me to wonder whether the discussion could have been undertaken with a tad more simplicity.

Overall, Kellert's mix of theory, science, practice, and narrative results in an insightful and emotional consideration of the importance of the biophilic values for physical, mental, and spiritual wholeness, and for a truly transformative environmental ethic. His work will therefore be of interest not only to professionals and academics within fields such as education and psychology; it also will appeal to the general public.

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Mags Liddy & Marie Parker-Jenkins (Eds). (2013). *Education that Matters: Teachers, Critical Pedagogy and Development Education at Local and Global Level*. Rethinking Education (vol. 7). Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang. pp. 215.

In the new book *Education that Matters: Teachers, Critical Pedagogy and Development Education at Local and Global Level*, editors Liddy and Parker-Jenkins compile a collection of essays on Development Education and its implementation in the classroom. The book is a response to the current state of global affairs and specifically the present environmental crisis. The editors note that society is caught in a paradigm of progress. As it moves closer and closer to environmental disaster and devastating climate change, the world may not be progressing in the direction that it truly hopes. Based on these concerns, the text is devoted to Development Education, which investigates the link between power and knowledge while asking questions about issues of sustainability and development.

Development Education is linked to critical pedagogy and sustainability education, but it is not limited to these approaches. The authors suggest "Development Education is a broader and more useful term allowing for centering on the local and community level while making links to global aspects" (p. 13). In the exploration of Development Education, the chapters of the book can be divided into two areas: (a) the definition and components of Development Education, and (b) various approaches and methods to implement Development Education in classrooms.

The first area is primarily discussed in the forward, chapters one through four, and chapter ten. These sections explore the basic concept of Development Education. One of the most important characteristics to this approach is its connection to values. Like critical pedagogy, Development Education recognizes



that learning is not value-neutral but instead value-laden (Agostinone-Wilson, 2005). Practitioners of Development Education recognize that learning is “a value driven activity that requires commitment and passion from the teacher if students are to become engaged” (p. 51). As Development Education is overtly value-driven and connected to global issues, the teacher must be prepared to address some of the ethical challenges that may come with it.

However, teachers are sometimes not fully prepared to teach development subjects, and those who have not studied development issues can struggle to incorporate Development Education into their curriculum. This is compounded by the current limited availability of adequate textbooks and supplemental materials for Development Education. The second part of this book addresses some of these concerns by providing methods and ideas for incorporating Development Education into the curriculum.

In Development Education, the goal is not to create a second curriculum but to embed it into what is already present. In the remaining chapters, authors discuss a variety of teaching methods for Development Education including place-based pedagogy, critical media approach, arts integration, computer information technology, whole school, and interdisciplinary learning. The critical media approach is the strongest portion of this part of the book. It is rooted in a clear theoretical framework, and classroom level suggestions stem from this framework. In this approach, development-themed films are used as a foundation for asking development-based questions and creating a “pedagogy of discomfort” (p. 74). The purpose is to disrupt the students’ normative understanding and modes of thinking, so that they can begin to employ multiple lenses to ask questions about the world.

This book is useful for educators and teacher-educators interested in ideas and examples of ways to implement Development Education and other critical approaches to teaching and learning into their curriculum. As the editors aimed, the book provides methods and suggestions for creating classrooms that equip “individuals with the tools to improve their lives and strengthen democracy, to create a more egalitarian and just society, and to engage in social change” (p. 3). The text is accessible to practicing educators, and it provides examples of what Development Education might look like in the classroom. The book also incorporates useful reflection questions for teachers and practitioners, as well as lists of resources and materials for further study.

There is room for improvement in the depth of the book’s conceptual framework. Development Education is a critical approach to teaching and learning, and the book could be enhanced with a stronger discussion of the larger social/political context of schooling. For example, a key part of a critical frame is the investigation of existing power structures and the impact of these structures on education (Kincheloe, 2008). This connects to some of the challenges of implementing Development Education that are discussed in the book such as the narrow, inflexible math and science curricula and the

lack of teacher preparation in development studies. These limitations link to the larger dominant educational discourse that supports movements such as standardization and one-size-fits-all approaches to teaching and learning. The “thin” theoretical framework can be addressed by pairing the text with another scholarly work that provides a more in-depth discussion of the larger issues that influence classrooms and schools.

## References

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- Anthony J. Nocella II, Judy K. C. Bentley, and Janet M. Duncan (Editors). (2012). *Earth, Animal, and Disability Liberation: The Rise of the Eco-Ability Movement*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc. 257 pp.

Environmental studies might not at first seem a likely alliance with disability studies and the animal rights movement. However, *Earth, Animal, and Disability Liberation: The Rise of the Eco-Ability Movement* presents a convincing case that all three movements are linked by their struggle against dominant, hierarchical ideology. This is the first book ever to look at how the fields of disability studies, animal rights, and environmental studies intersect. Bringing together academics and activists from all three fields, this is a compilation of essays that argues all three movements struggle against oppression from the same ideology, and that advocacy in one field can detract from the others if ableist and speciesist language is used.

Eco-ability is a movement that celebrates all forms of diversity, including those conventionally labeled “disabilities.” Authors claim their approach is a blend of ecological and anarchist principles—life thrives on diversity and interdependence rather than monoculture and competition, and thus society should be built upon respect and appreciation of diversity, and opposed to all forms of competition, authoritarianism, and domination. As such, eco-ability promotes a non-hierarchical community structure in which equal primacy is given to the

rights and aspirations of human animals, nonhuman animals, and the environment alike. “[As] a philosophy that breaks down the binaries between normal and abnormal, civilization and nature, and human and animal, eco-ability is based on the ecological principles of harmony in diversity, which include the varied social identities, cultures, and abilities of all species” (p. 98).

A theme that runs through almost every chapter is how capitalism promotes a hierarchy of value that contributes to the devaluing of people with disabilities, nonhuman animals, and the environment. In a capitalist framework, it is argued, a being’s value is measured according to its ability to be useful in the production and exchange of goods and services. According to this hierarchy of value, some humans are mislabeled as “less than able,” animals are mislabeled as “less than human,” and our planet is mislabeled as “totally natural” (p. 29). A consequence of this hierarchical framework is that those who fall lower down the value line are often regarded with “a presumption of *incompetence*, a lack of thought and conscience, and an inability to produce commodities and services” (p. 41, *italics author’s own*). This assumption can put the care of these beings, and even their lives, in peril, because they are considered separate, inferior entities from the main players. Eco-ability instead approaches all members of a community “from a presumption of competence, as fully capable, and deserving of a life worth living” (p. 39).

By using jargon-free language and concrete examples, the authors succeed in an approach that is inclusive to all readers. While each author comes from a particular professional background, each synthesizes all three fields in every chapter, and carefully articulates the implications of their theory for all three fields. Many current and relevant examples are provided of how harmful stereotypes are promoted through mainstream media such as Disney films (Chapter 5), comparisons of international policies (Chapter 9), and litigation case studies (Chapter 12). For this reason, this book is a great introduction to the positions taken and problems faced by disability studies, animal rights, and environmental studies.

This book is not just a reflective piece; it is also a call to action for readers “to challenge their language, perspective, politics, and location that perpetuates normalcy, speciesism, and domestication” (p. xx). For example, eco-ability is opposed to the development of genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, and the practice of eating meat, because these practices are seen as contributing to the ideology that nature may be controlled or manipulated. Additionally, many of the authors are committed activists; as such, there are often slips into the defense of activism, which sometimes confused the issues for me. However, the authors’ strong stance on veganism should not detract from many useful components in the book. For example, it has been refreshing to read an alternative to the dominant discourse that disabled people are a “burden” or “drain” on our resources. As an educator, I see first-hand how these modes of thinking lead to many people being deprived of their potential as their needs are overlooked or

even dismissed. I often wonder what kind of systematic change in approach can garner the greatest outcome. This book has really challenged me to see how the “capabilities approach” can change things not just for people with disabilities, but for many other oppressed groups as well. Throughout the book, the authors also constantly suggest concrete ways people can overcome the oppressive hierarchical ideology, such as by volunteering to add to Inclusion U’s online database of accessible recreation facilities (Chapter 11), or for teachers to promote the use of technology not as a great equalizer, but as a tool for social change (Chapter 15). As a result of reading this book, I have gained real insight as to how the injustices suffered by these seemingly unrelated disciplines can be due to the same underlying philosophy.

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Leslie Paul Thiele. (2013). *Sustainability*. Cambridge, MA: Key Concepts/Polity Press. 234 pp.

The modern world is characterized by the lust to gain from unsustainable practices, and relationships and institutions whose narrow selfish interests position the latter on the opposite side of sustainable practices. Despite this, sustainability has become a formidable ideal that speaks to the need to live well in an ever more crowded world competing for necessary scarce resources. Sustainability speaks to humanity’s ability to combine, interpret, and balance ecological health, economic welfare, social empowerment, and cultural creativity or maximisation of positive human impacts on the planet. It therefore goes without saying that, in our increasingly interrelated and interdependent world, sustainability holds the key to mitigating the consequences of human actions and inactions across borders, and generations. As an ideal, sustainability has become a pragmatic affair, which speaks to our lives collectively as leaders, citizens, neighbours, and community members among others, by helping in the redefinition of the notion of “prosperity.”

From the foregoing, *Sustainability’s* overarching goal is best captured in its “conception as it cultivates a sense of responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the ecological, social and economic networks that supports us while adapting to the ever changing shapes” (p. 3). This book by Leslie Thiele is divided into seven chapters and a conclusion. With each chapter flowing into the other without any disconnect in the presentation of the analyses and discourse, each of the chapters points to the need for living responsibly and reasonably in our usage and consumption of nature’s resources, which are being depleted all around the planet.

For instance, chapter one of the book engages the history of sustainability as a concept and practice. More broadly, the chapter presents a travel over time while examining the history, place, and practice of sustainability across generations—especially how sustainability has shaped intergenerational responsibility towards generations unborn as well as humanity’s appreciation of inheritance from the past. Intergenerational responsibility requires humans to cultivate certain virtues such as frugality, simplicity, balance, moderation, and prudence. The book also explores the geography of sustainability and its social foundations in a world where the fate of humanity is a truly common one. It focuses on the need to protect the grossly threatened global commons, and reduce global poverty, social inequality, and environmental injustice by framing the discourse around the issue of geographic sustainability that is “think globally, act locally.” Thinking “glocally” speaks to the essence of being concerned about the need of future generations, because sustainability extends moral concern not only across expanses of time but also geographical space. In short, thinking “glocally” is a crucial investment in individual local environment grounded in personal caretaking.

With the focus on the importance of intergenerational responsibility established in the previous chapter, Thiele devotes the next to ecological resilience and environmental health. He argues that since sustainability is grounded in responsibility, human beings have no option other than to sustain the community that sustains us. The chapter also presents an examination of the value of biodiversity and environmental health and the nature of resilient ecosystems. The chapter stresses the importance of promotion of environmental health and its linkage to the caretaking of nature with concern for human life. This suggests that living sustainably requires conservation resources. In chapter four of the book, Thiele outlines an investigation of technology, underlining the importance of green innovation while confronting the limits of technological solutions and their side effects. The chapter categorizes such side effects as unintended consequences of the scope of civilization, and concludes with a call for smarter and appropriate technology grounded in local cultures.

In chapter five, focus is on the assessment of political and legal challenges regarding sustainability. The chapter narrows on the roles of political parties and policies by exploring the relationship of sustainability politics as it relates to empowerment and transparency, as well as power sharing and knowledge.

In chapter six, Thiele confronts the universal notion and belief that economic growth is required to sustain prosperous businesses and societies, by tackling the limits of growth in relation to the current levels of consumption and waste. The quantum of international trade and its impacts on the local business and people and communities, within the “glocal” perspective is also critically examined while exploring the demands and opportunities of an ecological economics.

In the last chapter, Thiele investigates the cultural foundations of sustainability, including its intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical dimensions, for its

importance in fostering cultural understanding. Thiele also calls for an effective sustainability education that is capable of engendering a behavioural change to foster a sense of responsibility and agency. In the same vein, the book also discusses how ethical and religious foundation can impact aesthetic sensibilities.

Concluding, the book points to a possibility of a collapse of the earth's support system due to the gross devastation occasioned by humanity's anthropogenic activities. Such activities include the precipitous falling of natural resources stocks, and an exponential population increase across the global south pitted against the great consumption and colossal wastage of the global north, as well as the overflowing of the earth's soakaway due to pollution. With a clarion call for embracing sustainability, the book nudges humanity to view sustainability as a way of life with the hope that through sustainability, we can foster just and equitable societies capable of stimulating cultural creativity. As argued by the author, it is through the ensuing transformation of the core values and relationships that the future-focused inheritance can be assured, as well as the management of rate and scale of change occurring in the environment. In summary, although the book was lucidly written with undergraduate students in mind, there is no doubt that its potential is beyond the classroom; it is a good manual of how-to's which espouses human linkages and responsibilities to sustainability. However, despite the ideas espoused and recommendations put forward in the book, the question that begs for an answer remains: How long will it take to get to or attain sustainability?

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Darren Stanley and Kelly Young (Eds.). (2012). *Contemporary Studies in Canadian Curriculum: Principles, Portraits and Practices*. Calgary, AB: Detselig Enterprises, Ltd. 422 pp.

This edited collection of 16 distinct yet interconnected works contributed by Canadian university scholars explores contemporary Canadian curriculum through the concepts of principles, portraits, and practices. Editors Stanley and Young describe principles as dialogues about Canadian curriculum that includes ideologies, conventions, assumptions, and beliefs. Portraits are discussions and approaches that consider landscapes, place, stories, and profiles. And practices are methodological approaches and performances of Canadian curriculum.

The collection is divided into three sections: Canadian curriculum and (a) social identities, (b) cultural perspectives, and (c) Indigenous and environmental perspectives. Salient themes, including story, ecology, social justice versus economism, and cultural multiplicity are sewn through all three sections of the book, threading it into a cohesive volume. The most prominent of these

themes is story. In Riley and Rich's chapter on narrative pedagogies, the authors juxtapose a story of self-discovery with a story of creating a reflexive classroom curriculum. In his chapter on Canadian curriculum theory as possibility, Smits evokes the stories contained in novelist Kazuo Ishiguro's *Nocturnes*. Smits relates his own thinking about curriculum to Ishiguro's image of *nocturne* as the creative urge to make sense of our feelings of loss in dark times. In Balzer's piece on international service learning, high school students returning from Guatemala extend their learning experience by sharing their stories with their peers. In a chapter on curriculum, social action, and Indigenous communities, Ng-A-Fook writes of deconstructing curricular texts to generate autobiographical stories to facilitate an understanding and questioning of embedded social conditions. Furthermore, Bell bookends her chapter on the importance of cultural identity development for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students with poignant stories. The chapter begins with the story of a six-year-old boy who draws from his family's Indigenous worldview to complete an assignment, yet is marked as incorrect by the teacher. The chapter concludes with a story of hope as, through an outdoor education program, the same boy enjoys the opportunity to learn in ways conducive to his traditional understandings.

Ecology is an equally salient theme throughout the text. In the first chapter, authors Davis, Sumara, and Laidlaw emphasize the usefulness of vocabularies stemming from the fields of ecology and postmodernism in organizing and interpreting Canadian curricula that is "rooted in local needs, worries, desires, and imaginings" (p. 40). In his chapter on conceptualizing curriculum as learning landscapes, author and co-editor Stanley details the healthy local ecology of a swamp to illustrate the complexity and systemic framework necessary to create a transdisciplinary landscape of learning. Moreover, several chapters beautifully couple the themes of story and ecology. Jardine's piece on birding with old friends reads like an ode both to storytelling and to the importance of ecology in education. In their piece on indigenizing curriculum, Kulnieks, Longboat, and Young stress the import of storytelling in articulating human belonging to natural systems to ultimately make a sustainable culture. The authors go on to propose the inclusion of an eco-justice framework in environmental curricula. In his chapter on curriculum and the creation of consumers, Iannacci suggests that students tell stories about the importance of handmade gifts as a strategy to combat economically driven discourses. Iannacci also urges teacher educators to explore how taken-for-granted consumerist practices impact ecology. In her chapter on close writing, Kapler ponders how learning from others' stories through narrative research helps to shape curriculum theory. Kapler also discusses ecology of language, which she defines as understanding writing as embedded in a system of relationships with the human and more-than-human world.

*Contemporary Studies in Canadian Curriculum* is an important work for scholars and activists alike. It offers readers a glimpse of how social justice, environmental, Indigenous, and other perspectives shape contemporary

Canadian curriculum, while offering implications for future directions in theory, research, and practice. The book is more of a sample platter than a buffet, however. Full volumes could be written to elaborate any of the perspectives addressed within. The addition of further perspectives, and in particular a Francophone perspective, would be welcome. In the book's foreword, renowned curriculum theorist William F. Pinar recommends next steps, also calling for the integration of curriculum studies in Québec, as well as scholarship on new immigrants and continuing historical research. Ideally, this will be just the first in a multivolume series exploring Canada's diverse, contextually situated, and ever changing curricular landscape.

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