Marching Out From Ultima Thule: Critical Counterstories of Emancipatory Educators Working at the Intersection of Human Rights, Animal Rights, and Planetary Sustainability

Richard Kahn, University of North Dakota, United States & Brandy Humes, Toronto, Canada

Abstract

It is not altogether uncommon now to hear environmental educational theorists speak of the need to develop pedagogical methods that can work both for ecological sustainability and social justice. However, the majority of the socio-ecological turn in environmental education has failed to integrate nonhuman animal advocacy as a serious educational issue. In this essay, then, we critically inquire into the theoretical practices of these environmental educators and thereby offer the future promise of a total liberation pedagogy that works to further critical intersectional literacy on behalf of all oppressions and ecological sustainability. We then introduce and contextualize the practices of nine new paradigm educators at work in both formal and non-formal arenas.

Résumé

Il n'est pas tout à fait rare maintenant d'entendre les penseurs de l'éducation écologique parler du besoin de développer des méthodes pédagogiques qui peuvent servir à la fois la durabilité écologique et la justice sociale. Cependant, en majorité, le virage socioécologique de l'éducation écologique n'a pas réussi à intégrer la défense des animaux en tant que question éducative sérieuse. Dans cet essai, nous faisons ensuite des recherches sérieuses dans les pratiques théoriques de ces éducateurs de l'environnement et de cette façon, offrons la promesse future d'une pédagogie de la libération totale qui travaille à l'avancement du point de rencontre critique de la litéracie contre toutes les oppressions et pour la durabilité écologique. Nous présentons et contextualisons ensuite les pratiques de neuf éducateurs nouveaux paradigmes à l'oeuvre dans des arènes à la fois formelles et non formelles.

Keywords: critical intersectional literacy; humane education; ecopedagogy; counterstorytelling

While environmental education often stresses a variety of physical, affective, imaginative, and moral methods of learning from and about the environment, it is hardly a controversial statement to say that environmental education is

additionally a way of making a form of critical inquiry into the world. Minimally, there is the expectation that students need to inquire into the workings of nature and pose questions about the nonhuman order that can in turn be experienced and evaluated in order to generate knowledge that will serve the betterment of civic society. Environmental literacy so defined reaches back to the field's beginnings, as in the formulation given by Stapp (1969). The U.S. Office of Environmental Education, created under the George W. Bush administration, also now promotes a related form of critical environmental literacy.[1] Considering that this is a political administration that has been deemed the most environmentally unsound in history (Pope & Rauber, 2004), and which has routinely moved to block scientific findings that may support sustainability as well as overturn or ignore important environmental regulations on corporations and the military (Kellner, 2005), current State-endorsed critical environmental literacy frameworks must therefore be judged as suspect (at least in the United States). Alternatively, well meaning reformist programs of outdoor education, like those promoted by the No Child Left Inside Coalition and writers such as Richard Louv, tend themselves to reduce environmental education to a single-issue focus that over-privileges under-theorized states of nature and wilderness. In this way, environmental educators can adopt problematical epistemologies and work ideologically against the aims of emancipatory multicultural movements and anti-oppressive education. As a reified form of environmental education it likewise becomes curricularly tethered to the natural (and not the social) sciences (Kahn & Nocella, in press).

Increasingly then it is becoming clear that if contemporary environmental educational literacy practices are not themselves made the object of critical inquiry, they are at least as liable to work on behalf of a social hegemony involved in the domination of nature as they are to work against it. In other words, environmental education—as with the world in which it attempts to work—now stands in a moment of *crisis*, a concept that implies the need for our informed collective judgment and diagnostic deliberation. As Fritjof Capra (1984) has remarked, such crisis implies both measures of danger and opportunity hanging in the balance. But, crucially for this paper, it is also "a moment of decisive intervention…of thorough-going transformation…[and] of rupture" (Hay, 1999, p. 323).

Despite environmental education's potential limitations as a critical field of study, significant theoretical inroads have been made over the last 10 to 15 years that have sought to intervene and reconstruct it as an advocacy pedagogy capable of transformatively engaging with the socio-political and cultural contexts of environmental problems. It is thus not altogether uncommon now to hear critical environmental educational theorists speak of the need to either develop pedagogical methods that can work both for ecological sustainability and social justice or mount critique of environmental education from an oppositional variety of racial, class, gender, queer, and non-

ableist standpoints. Institutionally, this has translated into the recent emergence of education for sustainable development as environmental education's heir (Gonzalez-Gaudiano, 2005) along with attempts to blend forms of environmental education with work hailing from the tradition of critical pedagogy (for examples, see Andrzejewski, 2003; Bell & Russell, 2000; Cole, 2007; Fawcett, Bell & Russell, 2002; Gadotti, 2008; Gruenewald, 2003; Gruenewald & Smith, 2007; Kahn, 2002, 2006, 2008a, 2008b; McKenzie, 2005; McLaren & Houston, 2005; O'Sullivan, 1999).[2]

While some of this work, like that of Julie Andrzejewski, Anne Bell, Leesa Fawcett, Richard Kahn and Connie Russell has been concerned with the need for a critical literacy of nonhuman animals, the majority of the socio-ecological turn in environmental education has either ignored nonhuman animal advocacy issues or has worked only ambiguously on nonhuman animals' behalf through an attempt to teach non-anthropocentric values. Though deconstructions of anthropocentrism are no doubt useful towards reconstructing educational frameworks, they have however been deployed for different and sometimes contradictory ends by a variety of groups. Hence, a curriculum of deep ecology might critique anthropocentrism in order to establish norms of greater equality between species and to challenge human identities through an attempt to foster biocentric or ecocentric literacies of planetarity. This could work well with outdoor education and other wilderness-oriented pedagogies. Animal welfarist educators, by turn, might promote reformed visions of humanity as a good steward for life on earth and thereby uphold human rights to use nonhuman animals within an ethics that is less imperialist and more paternalistically familial. The curricular model here could question painful or needless dissection exercises in science education or promote the value of using classroom pets to teach character traits of responsibility and non-violence. Yet, neither of these theoretical perspectives, despite whatever positive outcomes they may tend toward, entail the production of knowledge about the ways in which the plight of nonhuman animals is structurally necessitated by our current system of political economy based on exploitative capitalism, violent militarism, and industrial technics. Moreover, they do not demand that we understand the subjugated status of nonhuman animals in our society as related to or concordant with the historical reality of oppressed human groups as well as with the domination of nature generally.

Without seeking to limit the multiple pathways that liberatory pedagogy may presently take—that is, we recognize that differences between sociopolitical struggles even as we seek to promote recognition of their common causes—our feeling is that a new paradigm[3] of what might be inclusively termed "total liberation pedagogy" is now at hand and beginning to be more fully articulated in the practices of a vanguard of educators. This total liberation pedagogy attempts to work *intersectionally across and in opposition to all oppressions* (including those of nonhuman animals) and *for*

ecological sustainability. Producing what Donna Haraway (1988) has called "situated knowledges," total liberation pedagogy may in any given instance favour analysis of the primacy of one social antagonism over another, or one set of antagonism over the others, in generating inequalities of power and privilege. Again, there is still room for the application of ecofeminist educational theory, for example, and it need not give way to the universalization of vegan Third World ecofeminist anticapitalist Queer disability (etc.) pedagogy, no matter how much we might welcome the latter.[4] But total liberation pedagogy, following the advances of multicultural educational theory, views oppression in systematic and complex terms, what Patricia Collins (2000) has termed the "matrix of domination." This not only allows for a more refined analysis of the ways in which power circulates throughout nature and culture, to the systematic advantage of some and disadvantage of others, but by increasing the number of epistemic standpoints from which to teach and learn we free a potential multitude of educational subjects from the culture of silence generated by the dominant mainstream pedagogical and political platforms.

To backtrack, save for perhaps lacking a strong commitment to the moral challenge that society's treatment of nonhuman animals now poses for robustly democratic educational theory, those taking the socio-ecological turn in environmental education already tend to integrate intersectionality into their analyses. What distinguishes total liberation pedagogy, then, is its normative requirement that we also educate against what intersectional social psychologist Melanie Joy (2008) calls, "arguably the most entrenched and widespread form of exploitation in human history: speciesism" (p. 17). This would be to go beyond, for instance, teaching non-anthropocentric values. For by developing educational platforms that illuminate the socially constructed nature of "species," total liberation pedagogy does not seek to just destabilize human power in the abstract, but roots this in the need to support cultural and political practices that actively seek to overthrow speciesist relations across society.

To put speciesism on the agenda in a major way is crucial now for a number of reasons. First, we live in a time of a mass species extinction event such as we have not witnessed on the planet for nearly 65 million years.[5] The zoöcidal eradication of unprecedented numbers of mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fish, insects, and other animals that is now fully underway is analogous to the mass murder of American bison or the great whales that took place during the 19th century. Only there, species were driven to extinction at the direct point of the gun and harpoon; here, we must learn the ways in which speciesist ideology is folded into and intersects with nearly every array of social relations and institutional practice, including the institution of education proper (Kahn, 2007). A second reason to take up speciesism within intersectional pedagogy involves the exponential growth over the last few decades of the industrial factory farm model of animal agriculture as a

worldwide standard. As animal advocates like Peter Singer (1975) have made famously clear, the ubiquitous low price and high availability of supermarket meat comes at a tremendous cost to the sentient nonhuman animals themselves, who spend whatever lives they have being tortured until their brutal slaughter in order to provide such meat. More recently, people are becoming increasingly aware of the environmental effects of factory farming—including its role in deforesting the Amazonian rainforests for soybean monocrops, its toxic effects on streams, water tables, soil, and the air local to such farms, and its being recognized as a primary cause in aggravating global warming. Moreover, recent books like Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation* (2005) and Gail Eisnetz's *Slaughterhouse* (2006) reveal how the nightmare of factory farms extends into is role as an exploitative and racist labour industry as well as its corrupting influence on public health in the name of maximized profiteering. Still a third reason we believe that it is important to demand an intersectional, anti-speciesist pedagogy at this time is because we believe that exactly this form of education has been developing within grassroots activist circles in recent years. What is more, slowly but surely, the "cognitive praxis" (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991, p. 44) of this movement pedagogy has started to become established within formal education across its various levels and to challenge prevailing approaches to environmental education and critical pedagogy. Yet, it is ultimately our argument that intersectional critical literacies forged from the practices of anti-oppressive/critical pedagogues, ecological educators, and nonhuman animal advocates remain, unfortunately, a potential to be far more powerfully realized in the future.

In this essay, therefore, we draw upon a series of interviews that we conducted with nine new paradigm educators in order to chronicle and contextualize the challenges to their work across elementary and secondary education, higher education, and nonformal education sectors. By so doing, we do not seek to describe their total liberation practices in detail. Neither do we wish to suggest that each is the possessor of specific pedagogical attributes (beyond their commitment to the development of the kind of critical intersectional literacies we hope for) that therefore allow us to create a character sketch of a total liberation pedagogue. None of these educators self-identifies to our knowledge as being "total lib," and while we believe that all demonstrate anticipatory elements of, and problems for, a total liberation pedagogy built upon critical intersectional literacy practices, we also desire to let them speak for themselves as much as possible.

We do aspire, however, to call attention through their stories to the crisis now faced by the form of total liberation pedagogy we theorize, even as we maintain that such pedagogy represents a coherent attempt to respond to the crises of contemporary environmental education, critical pedagogy, and animal advocacy in kind. By so doing, we aim to provide a kind of critical counterstorytelling (Yosso, 2006)—tentative and introductory in scope—that may serve as a seed for future dialogue on the issues pertinent to these

educators with a wide variety of more majoritarian environmental educators, as well as with their colleagues working primarily for either social justice or animal advocacy in education and other fields.[6]

Humane Education in Elementary and Secondary Schools

Anyone interested in intersectional total liberation pedagogy simply must study the history of the humane education movement, which represents its original form.[7] Emerging circa 1870 along with the formation of humane societies, humane education initially worked at the juncture of animal and child welfare, attempting to encourage public sentiment for abandoned or neglected children and nonhuman animals. While the increase of social service agencies in the 20th century led to the narrowing of humane education, such that it became a pursuit largely concerned with ending domestic animal cruelty, the last two decades have found humane education reinventing and revisioning itself, at times in radical ways. In the 1980s, for example, humane education broadened its scope to include wildlife issues as well as to question the use and treatment of nonhuman animals in institutions such as zoos, aquariums, and circuses. Moreover, when the 1990s saw a surge of interest in the animal advocacy movement by citizens concerned with achieving progressive change across society, key humane educationalists such as David Selby and Zoe Weil responded by articulating how humane educational theory could integratively incorporate environmental and human rights issues alongside its ongoing focus upon the violence, exploitation, and injustice done to nonhuman animals (Weil, 1998).

According to Rae Sikora, who co-founded The Center for Compassionate Living (ultimately to become the Institute for Humane Education) with Weil in 1996, there were also strategic reasons for moving the field to an intersectional focus. For despite Sikora and Weil having developed a thriving certificate and M.A. program in humane education through the Institute that has trained over 1200 elementary and secondary-level educators, humane education has been described somewhat accurately as the "Ultima Thule" (Selby, 2000) of education—a far-away, unknown region, barely if at all recognized by emancipatory educators working in related endeavours such as environmental education or critical pedagogy because of its advocacy for nonhuman animals. Thus, Sikora believes that intersectionality has made it easier for humane education "to be seen as more consistent and credible" and that "more doors open for the work when it incorporates all life" (R. Sikora, personal communication, July 21, 2008).[8] Indeed, in the 32 years that she has been involved in catalyzing this work, she has witnessed it ripple outward from being virtually unpopulated to the point where many of the programs she designed now occur under others' names, and she is sometimes contacted by students who unknowingly communicate workshop or website ideas to her

for which she was the original impetus (R. Sikora, personal communication, July 21, 2008).

But a critical problem for humane education remains its lack of adequate resources and school or other stakeholder support. For example, Dani Dennenberg, who obtained an M.Ed in Humane Education from the Institute for Humane Education and founded Seeds for Change (a non-profit humane educational organization), found that her work as an adjunct faculty member and director of a small educational non-profit organization equated to less than $30,000 annually with no health care, benefits, or savings plans available to her to draw upon (D. Dennenberg, personal communication, July 28, 2008). Further, when private funding for her organization expired after 6 years she was forced to retire her operation despite the success of having created one of the first high school courses devoted to examining global ethical issues from an intersectional humane perspective. The Canadian humane educator Lesley Fox, who helped to found the Power of One secondary education program through the Vancouver Humane Society in 2006, provides additional evidence of humane education's chronic resource problem. Fox discovered that with a little ingenuity it was surprisingly easy to gain access to Canadian schools and to network with the Ministry of Education in British Columbia. As such, her program grew quickly to provide a wide-range of intersectional curricular offerings for any and all takers. However, as she relates:

> Our program was part of a small non-profit organization with a limited budget. There were no resources in terms of staff to help with presentations and grant writing and fundraising. The program became too much for one full-time staff person to manage. The demand for the presentations and resources could not be met. Ultimately, the program was such a success it became its own undoing. (L. Fox, personal communication, July 15, 2008)

In our opinion, if the critical intersectional literacies of humane education can become better integrated into environmental education standards and frameworks, it will undoubtedly serve to more sufficiently support humane educators who might then realize the added benefit of stable employment opportunities within school districts. While we do not imagine that many schools consider themselves more cash-positive than the majority of animal advocacy non-profits, it still must be the case that with greater legitimacy within formal education institutions the work of humane educators can more fruitfully advance and proliferate in a timely manner.

Critical Intersectional Literacy Developments in Higher Education

In order to achieve the developments that we would like to see happen in schools of elementary and secondary education, as well as in the ranks of grassroots activism, there will have to be a correlative shift in the sphere of

higher educational discourse to develop and teach critical intersectional literacies as part of a total liberation pedagogy movement. If environmental education degree programs integrate social science such that students are trained in issues of the brown agenda[9] and environmental justice, or the ecological effects of globalization, this should translate into more critical forms of environmental studies for youth in schools that can supplement curricular forays privileging nature walks and outdoor appreciation exercises. What is additionally required, though, is that the "animals agenda" not be left out of the equation. Too often forms of conservation science are still offered uncritically as a form of pedagogy that implies that nonhuman animals are natural resources that can be managed to produce maximum sustainable yields or harvests. Relatedly, more and more students are asked to explore how invasive species are ecological threats without a corresponding demand that students question the histories of colonialism and world trade that have produced the invasive species problem. What is more, with its known advantages in contributing to a low ecological footprint, should any environmental educator be allowed to graduate today without having seriously investigated the ecology and politics of veganism? But how common is this practice really in higher education?

Connie Russell, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University and co-editor of the *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, seems to us to be a leader in environmental education who is working to transform the field in light of the total liberation-oriented problems we here raise. In her own work, she consciously organizes the curriculum to focus on "the interconnections between social and environmental justice and animal issues" (C. Russell, personal communication, July 15, 2008). She is careful to point out that, in her opinion, this does not require the formation of a new educational field of study. Rather, Russell believes such critical intersectional literacy can emerge reconstructively within present forms of environmental education, including outdoor and experiential approaches:

> [T]here is a subset of outdoor educators out there who aren't making connections to social issues and whose work seems too overly science-education focused, or about pursuing adventurous or recreation-oriented activities outside. But on the flipside, I also see many environmental educators who seem to have little experience with other animals or the more-than-human world. So I guess I get nervous when I see what almost looks like a discounting of outdoor experiential education approaches. For me, tackling anthropocentrism means paying some attention to natural history and getting to know the places where we live and our more-than-human neighbours. It is not an either/or approach, a zero-sum game, but a broadening of our horizons. (C. Russell, personal communication, July 15, 2008)

Another intersectional educator we contacted is Julie Andrzejewski, who has explored the possibility of a new field for this work. Andrzejewski co-founded the M.A. program in Social Responsibility at St. Cloud State University in 1995, which she now directs. In recent years, Professor

Andrzejewski has worked to radicalize what could otherwise be a social justice-oriented program through in-depth examinations of how the animal rights movement offers an inclusive standpoint for the emancipation of oppressed persons and the restoration of environmental justice. While she finds that students increasingly have some familiarity with nonhuman animal issues, and overwhelmingly respond to her courses by changing their life practices and engaging in collective activism, she also guardedly believes that, "Very few others are doing this work and there are very few support systems for it" (J. Andrzejewski, personal communication, July 28, 2008). In 2006, Andrzejewski therefore attempted to organize a Critical Interspecies Special Interest Group (SIG) within the American Educational Research Association in order to gather educators around these issues and provide them with a platform for ongoing research. However, the SIG proposal was rejected, ostensibly because the application committee believed that the subject matter was already covered thematically by the SIG for Ecological and Environmental Education.[10] Whether or not this is correct, and in Andrzejewski's opinion it is not, we believe that this is further confirmation of the need for environmental education to step forward and demonstrate a leadership role on total liberation issues in order to accord critical intersectional literacies wider institutional legitimacy.

The case of highly influential ecofeminist, Greta Gaard, supports this conclusion. Despite having produced a large body of important feminist work, she has found Women's Studies itself to be an unwelcome home and thus has often had to strategically find courses in Interdisciplinary Studies, the Humanities, or English in order to teach. As she told us, "teaching ecofeminism has always been difficult since most introductory Women's Studies textbooks still ignore the environment as well as the vast body of work produced by vegetarian (eco)feminists, and there is still no single introductory textbook for a course on ecofeminism, women and ecology, or feminist environmentalism" (G. C. Gaard, personal communication, July 15, 2008). If teaching critical intersectional courses has proven difficult for Gaard, though, finding receptive colleagues who will not punish her for her radicalism has been harder still. While she remarked that her tenure at Fairhaven College, a place known for cutting-edge interdisciplinary pedagogy, was a warm experience, in another teaching appointment at the University of Minnesota-Duluth she felt that her politicized intersectional coursework was tolerated only because it was offered as a summer option that served to generate revenue at a time when other faculty did not care to work. More shocking still, the recent release of Gaard's book, *The Nature of Home* (2008), was pointedly ignored by her colleagues in English at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, who then added to their protest, she said, by voting "overwhelmingly against retaining me due to my excessive emphasis on environmentalism, feminism, and creative writing" (G. C. Gaard, personal communication, July 15, 2008) on matters such as the suffering of animals.

As we consider these stories about a total liberation pedagogy that works to include social, ecological, and animal justice issues in higher education, we must conclude that critical intersectional literacy is gaining ground but continues to encounter resistance. As the examples of Russell, Andrzejewski, and Gaard intimate, this new paradigm of pedagogy is excitedly surging forth on campuses across both Canada and the United States. Yet, there is also significant fear of and attempts to repress it (Kahn, in press). For the time being, critical intersectional literacy practitioners will undoubtedly continue to face opposition in their professional and personal lives. Still, we are hopeful that a moment has finally arisen in which future perspectives on this struggle are starting to coalesce and to have the ear of ever more allies in academia and beyond.

A Movement for Cognitive Praxis

As previously noted, a major impetus to transformative change in higher education is coming from scholars who have one foot in, or ear open to, emancipatory grassroots social movements. As Connie Russell mused with us, "I entered academia as an activist and have remained one, just a different type of one than I originally envisioned…any social movement needs some members who can step back and analyze the work we are doing, and academics are in a unique position to do that. That is the beauty of academic/activist collaboration" (personal communication, July 15, 2008). With this in mind, then, we would like to briefly relate the current efforts of three emerging academic-activists that we believe are on the cutting-edge of furthering the type of critical intersectional literacy work representative of total liberation pedagogy.

Breeze Harper is doing research on critical food geographies at University of California Davis and considers her scholarship a kind of "literary activism" (A. B. Harper, personal communication, July 9, 2008). Several years ago, Harper came to examine the role diet had in her health as a black American woman and came to the opinion that she was a member of a demographic suffering environmental racism, one whose diet was colonized by brutal corporate agendas designed to exploit life. She took this knowledge to a practical level and "decolonized" (A. B. Harper, personal communication, July 9, 2008) her diet by rejecting the Standard American Diet and instead adopted a whole food, plant-based diet instead. She also began to organize other vegan females of the African diaspora through a project called "Sistah Vegan!".[11] This has resulted in an anthology (Harper, in press) of black female voices "who resist and/or combat the systemic oppression that has manifested as diabetes, uterine fibroids, obesity, depression, environmental pollution, and the inhumane treatment of non-human animals" (A. B. Harper, personal communication, July 9, 2008). More than a statement of identity politics, Harper hopes that this book can stimulate dialogue on issues of public

health, environmental justice and sustainability, and the corporate food industry's role in establishing the Standard American Diet.

For her part, Lauren Corman, a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, has used her position as long-standing host of the radio show Animal Voices (CIUT 89.5) to put "environmental, social justice, and animal advocacy issues in conversation" with one another and with current scholarship (L. Corman, personal communication, July 15, 2008). Interviewing myriad major activists and academics whose work she believes informs the animal rights movement, Corman is very interested in using her medium as a form of public pedagogy to encourage "a cross-fertilization of ideas" (L. Corman, personal communication, July 15, 2008). Specifically, she hopes the Animal Voices show can work pedagogically and politically to make:

> academic ideas more accessible to a wider audience, or…provide an entry point into theories while it simultaneously pushes scholars to demonstrate the practical relevance of their research. Additionally, it introduces the public and other animal activists to the burgeoning field of animal studies. Among the most important contributions, though, is that the radio show ekes out a space within the public sphere for critical perspectives on animals, while disrupting the stereotype that all animal activists are terrorists, humourless, self-righteous, hysterical, exclusively white and middle-class, North American, etc. Crucially, too, it demonstrates to other social justice and environmental movements that many animal activists and scholars are not single-issued in their approaches, which hopefully provides incentive for coalitions. Similarly, it promotes critique and reflexivity within the animal movements, and foregrounds a diversity of perspectives.

Lastly, we would like to call attention to the work of Anthony Nocella, a doctoral student in Syracuse University's Maxwell School for Social Science and co-founder of the *Institute for Critical Animal Studies*.[12] Nocella has served in the past as an organizer for Earth First!, animal rights and prisoner support campaigns, and has drawn upon his penchant for intersectional political collaboration as an editor of two path-breaking books on the animal liberation and revolutionary environmentalist movements, *Terrorists or Freedom Fighters?* and *Igniting a Revolution* (Best & Nocella, 2004, 2006). Containing contributions from an extremely diverse mix of radical scholars and activists who are variously pushing for social or environmental justice as well as animal rights, Nocella sees these publications as an attempt to forge solidarities between oppressed groups by effecting dialogue on issues of mutual (or potentially mutual) interest. Another way in which he has attempted to link academic research and intersectional activism is by creating a non-profit organization, Outdoor Empowerment, which he described to us as "ecopedagogy in action—dedicated to providing alternatives to violence, environmental awareness, and empowerment skills in an outdoor setting for urban community members" (personal communication, July 9, 2008). Currently, the organization works with youth in a detention center to critically explore their lived

environments, practice conflict resolution exercises, and experiential methods for living according to what Nocella calls "the 5 Ss—safety, simplicity, sustainability, service, and social justice" (A. Nocella, personal communication, July 9, 2008).

Concluding Remarks

As should now be clear, it is a misnomer in some ways to label the educators we have here chronicled as either elementary/secondary, post-secondary, or movement educators. Those with present or future careers as university faculty almost invariably have an interest in mobilizing their pedagogy amongst children and youth, and many of those involved in providing curricular materials and presentations to elementary and secondary schools either have been or are involved with developing formal graduate degree and certificate programs in fields such as humane education. Additionally, most if not all of these educators are involved with practice on the boundaries between formal and nonformal education, are teacher-activists, and should be regarded as cognitive praxists—public intellectuals who are integrating social movement theory, practice, and values into academic discourse as well as attempting to bridge such discourse with the everyday needs of community organizations or concerned citizenry. This ability to resist being standardized and confined within a particular educational sphere strikes us as a particularly crucial aspect of the form of total liberation work that is our interest.

As the critical educator Paulo Freire remarked, education is not itself the lever of social change but it can play an important role to the degree that it works curricularly to generate counterhegemonic knowledge and stir the feelings of socio-political protest in students (Shor & Freire, 1987). In our opinion, the new paradigm of total liberation pedagogy that we have here attempted to highlight should be understood as part of an evolving social movement that has been struggling to emerge over the last couple decades—one whose militant advocacy is informed by a holistic respect for life up to and including the planet and which strongly rebukes the ongoing instantiation of classism, racism, sexism, ableism, speciesism, and other "dominator hierarchies" (Eisler, 1988). Liberation pedagogy offering critical intersectional literacy has thus far been blocked (i.e. Selby's "Ultima Thule") from formal educational circles, in part, because it has critiqued the ideological blind spots of much that is considered legitimate educational discourse. Moreover, its transdisciplinarity and desire for affecting qualitative change in students' identities pits this new pedagogical paradigm against mainstream discursive demands for specialization and quantitative accountability.

But the time for critical intersectional literacy has finally arrived. We feel certain that a pedagogy for total liberation is no longer locked in the remote Hyperborean imagination of the ultra-radical Left but is rather flooding like rays of light into the dawning work of a new generation of environmental and

ecological educators, social justice-oriented critical pedagogues, anti-oppression teachers, humane education instructors, and other faculty with an abiding interest in the pedagogical aspects of realizing a better world for all beings. In other words, we believe that a conscientization of these fields is underway, which should produce significant changes both within the academy and the world-at-large. Yet, without dialogue across these fields, as well as between those working in other educational settings (be they elementary, secondary, post-secondary, or non-formal), the transformative possibilities resulting from these pedagogies will remain limited.

What is more, the dialogue that we feel is necessary does not translate merely into trading syllabi or thoughts on what constitute emancipatory "best practices." Instead, it must foster the kind of critical encounters that best relate the situation of the school to that of society, as well as that analyze the structural forces that disrupt attempts to alter the institutional status-quo of our everyday lives. We also seek dialogue toward what the philosopher Steven Best (2003) has termed "interspecies alliance politics," or the organization of solidarities across a wide range of educational actors that should in turn propel them to occupy spaces of power. In order for this to happen, however, those working for environmental education and animal rights need to begin to robustly engage with political issues such as white supremacy and class privilege, even as it suggests that those working for the benefit of peace and equality between human groups need to critique their own potentially speciesist and/or industrialist-urbanist assumptions.

Undeniably, it still is not easy to think, much less work, intersectionally without quickly spiraling into a bevy of contradictions. But these contradictions should become the foundational context for new progressive theories and literacy practices, not the *raison d'etre* for debunking them. We must try to unravel the systemic causes of the present misery and end our future peril. That we can now name zoöcide (Kahn, 2006) as the historical condition for our work in environmental education means that we possess both the necessary and sufficient condition for the field's radical reconstruction in accordance with a total liberation ethic. The massive desecration of our planetary ecology that is now taking place, a crime that includes an unparalleled attack upon the great mass of nonhuman animals and the generation of global social upheaval that equates to dire poverty, disease, starvation, and the unending threat of armed violence for many billions of people, simply demands that we aspire to nothing less.

Notes

1 See http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/basic.html.

2 For additional scholars exploring the crossroads of environmental education and critical pedagogy, see Greenwood (2008, p. 338).

3 By "new paradigm" we do not mean to assert that the work that we chron-

icle does not have a significant history of theory and practice, rather that this history is finally now beginning to affect a Kuhnian paradigm shift in others' theories and practices.

4 As McKenzie and Russell (in works previously cited) both note, ecofeminism in its many variants has been an important influence for an intersectional pedagogy that works against social oppression and to increase the moral status of nonhuman animals and nature. There are shades of grey, however, with more and less compelling approaches to the form of intersectional analysis we feel is now required. A poor example would be Noddings (2003), whose animal welfarist-tinged approach to the pedagogy of care provides an inadequate model for total liberation pedagogy. Gaard (1993), whom we interviewed for this essay as an illuminative trendsetter. Also noteworthy within the ecofeminist tradition is the work of anti-nuclear and peace activist, Joanna Macy, who has helped to create ritualized intersectional educational practices such as the Council of All Beings (Seed, Macy, Flemming & Naess, 1988).

5 For more information on this and an educational movement centered around it, see Species Alliance (http://www.speciesalliance.org/video.php).

6 Environmental education's potentially primary role in this critical diplomacy process cannot be overstated. As Gray-Donald & Selby (2008) have written, "Environmental education is well positioned to be a unifier, to bring together different disciplines and galvanize them into unified action" (18).

7 For a careful and robust study of the history, philosophy and practice of humane education, which is beyond our scope here, see Humes (2008). Important humane education texts include Gray-Donald & Selby (2008), Selby (1995, 2000), and Weil (2004).

8 However, humane educator Lesley Fox also told us that intersectional humane education can be a problem for some people with single-issue orientations who "believe that it is too 'broad' in scope—and they would rather focus on one specific topic such as human rights as opposed to introducing other elements/angles" (personal communication, July 15, 2008). Still, she agreed that when elementary and secondary curricular frameworks lack demands for dealing with nonhuman animal issues in the classroom, covering the environmental and human rights concerns of topics like slaughterhouses or factory farms provides a way to be invited in as a speaker.

9 Sustainable development literature distinguishes between the traditional "green agenda" of environmentalists concerned with preserving wilderness or conserving natural resources and the "brown agenda" of how environmental issues like waste water treatment, air pollution, or soil degredation may affect people's quality of life. See, for instance, Allen & You (2002).

10 This despite the fact that the EEE SIG voted at its annual business meeting to officially support the new SIG and the vast majority of proposed members of the new SIG were also EEE SIG members.

11 See http://sistahveganproject.com.

12 On critical animal studies, see http://criticalanimalstudies.org.

Notes on Contributors

Richard Kahn is an Assistant Professor of Educational Foundations & Research at the University of North Dakota. The Chief Editor of *Green Theory & Praxis: The Journal of Ecopedagogy*, he is the author of the two forthcoming books, *The Ecopedagogy Movement: Ecoliteracy, Critical Pedagogy, Planetary Crisis* (Peter Lang) and *Ecopedagogy: Educating for Sustainability in Schools and Society* (Routledge). **Contact:** Additional information can be obtained from his website http://richardkahn.org or by email at richard.kahn@und.edu

Brandy Humes has a Masters of Education from the Feminist Approaches to Social Justice in Education program at the University of British Columbia and a Bachelor of Environmental Studies from York University. She is currently coordinating an urban agriculture project involving vulnerable youth for a non-profit environmental and social justice organization in the Parkdale community in Toronto, Ontario. **Contact**: brandyhumes@gmail.com

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