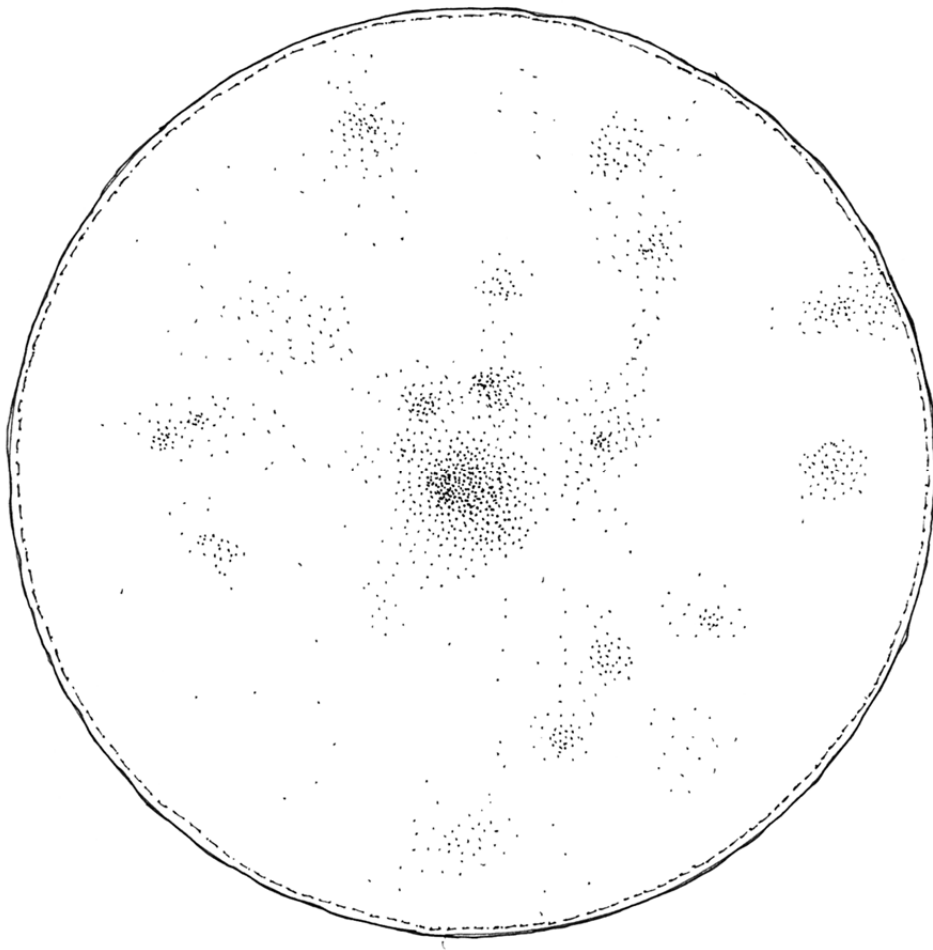


EMPATHY IN THE TIME OF ECOLOGICAL APARTHEID

*A SOCIAL SCULPTURE PRACTICE-LED INQUIRY INTO
DEVELOPING PEDAGOGIES
FOR ECOLOGICAL CITIZENSHIP*

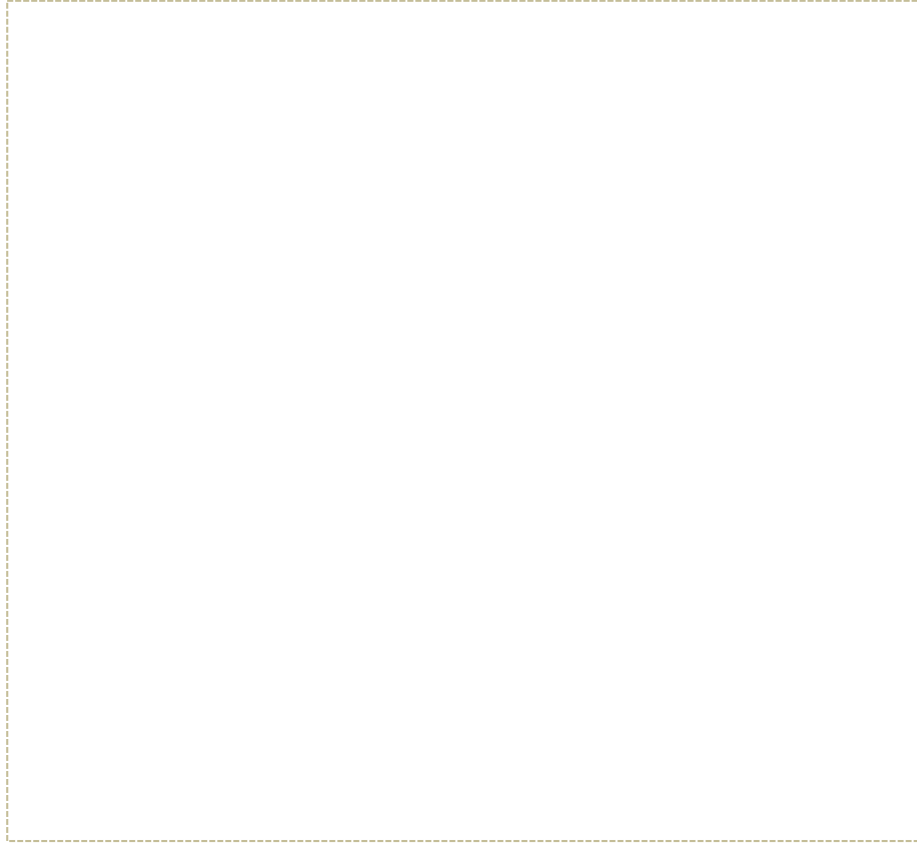


DOCTORAL THESIS SUBMITTED BY DYLAN MCGARRY
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, RHODES UNIVERSITY
SUPERVISED BY HEILA LOTZ-SISITKA

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*For Reza,
who introduced me to the art of being*

*Before turning the page
please take a moment to close your eyes
and be aware of an extraordinary space,
that which exists behind your eyes,
the place where you dream and contemplate.*



*Before continuing, please take another moment
to watch the summary video (Appendix E) on the attached CD.*

ABSTRACT

Considering the ecological crisis and the increased disconnection between human beings and nature, this study attempts to find the social and aesthetic educational response needed for developing ecological citizenship for the 21st century. In this transdisciplinary study I articulate what at first seems a clumsy attempt to enable the capacities of the embodied ecological citizen, and which later emerges as an alchemical 'social sculpture' approach to learning that expands the range of capacities available to the citizen and the citizen's immediate community. This learning bridges the gap between purely biocentric and technocentric forms of education, and addresses the ambiguity of concepts and forms of action such as 'sustainability'. My primary focus is enabling both communal and personal forms of agency: new ways of 'doing' and 'being' in the world as it changes radically. I argue that this demands constantly reflecting on and engaging without understanding, place and perception of the problems we see.

Attending to a call for the importance of complex learning processes, that deepens our understanding of sustainability, and the need for methodological and pedagogical approaches to accessible forms of learning socially in the era of climate change and environmental degradation, this study offers a particular insight into the education of an ecological citizen. In particular I examine a form of learning that enables individuals to explore relationships between themselves and their ecologies (both physical and social), and that encourages personal forms of knowing so that each person's values can be cultivated within the experience and intuitive expression from both inner and outer realities. Central to my research focus is addressing the difficulties inherent in 'ecological apartheid', which is defined as a growing separation of relationships that include the human being's relationship with the natural world, as well as disconnections experienced within one's own inner and outer capacities. Subsequently I investigate forms of learning that encourage agency that most appropriately enable citizens to respond personally to both inner and outer forms of disconnection.

'Personal' and 'relational agency' are defined and investigated through an initial twelve-month collaborative participatory contextual profiling exploratory research period in South Africa (phase A), where I explore various forms of multiple-genre creative social learning practice that develop an accessible set of methodologies and pedagogies for the ecological citizen. Through this exploratory research, I place significance in the relatively unknown field of social sculpture, which I investigate through a self-made apprenticeship with Shelley Sacks, an expert in the field. This is documented through a rigorous ethnographic inquiry over a period of 18 months. Following this I undertake another two-year collaborative, practice-based research study across South Africa (phase B: 17 towns, with a total of 350 citizens) and eventually abroad (United Kingdom, Germany, USA and Belgium).

The focus of this study was the implementation of a collaboratively developed citizen learning practice entitled Earth Forum developed by Shelley Sacks as a progression from her work “Exchange Values: voices of insivible lives” and my collaboative exploration into Earth Forum and its further development draws heavily from social sculpture methods obtained during the apprenticeship, and applied in 36 different incidences. I further explore the efficacy of this practice in enabling and expanding the capacities of participants, particularly those that encourage the development of personal and relational agency. This was achieved through a pedagogical development and expansion period (phase C). A primary finding through the iterative phase (phase D) was the value of imaginal contemplation, attentive listening, and empathy as capacities that enable an ecological citizen's overall capability. I ascribed this to Nussbaum and Sen's (1993) capability theory and the need to enable the articulation and implementation of a citizen's valued 'beings and doings'. Through this iterative phase, specific attention is given to listening and intuitive capacities in enabling personal and relational agency, and specifically I observed the fundamental role of imagination in this form of learning.

Particularly valuable for the educational contribution of this study is the pedagogical development of the Earth Forum practice that enables an accessible, socially constructed form of learning. This contributes specifically to exploring 'how' social learning is undertaken, and I argue that an aesthetic approach to learning is vital for the education of the ecological citizen. I carefully describe how one can conduct collaborative practice-based research that utilises creative connective practice in agency development. This collaborative approach, with regard to learning socially and capacity development for ecological citizenship (that focuses its attention on addressing ecological apartheid and separateness), is articulated through a multiple-genred text. I found that empathetic capacity in ecological citizen education is relatively unexplored, and within listening and as well in empathy theory, that the role of imagination in listening and empathy development, requires greater attention. I attempt to reveal how connective practice considers aesthetic form and shape in expanding capacities of human beings, and introduce novel expanded forms of developing pedagogies that encourage personal and relational agency in the context of ecological apartheid from the arts-based field of social sculpture. Finally, I aim in this study to share the potential value found in social sculpture theory and practice into the field of environmental education and social learning through a reflection on the current context of education and social learning, and its potential enrichment via social sculpture processes.

Cover image is my own sketch: Ink on paper 12cm x12 cm, March, 2011

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I am indebted to Heila Lotz-Sisitka for guiding me through this long study/adventure. Her careful and thoughtful counsel continually got to the root of my questions and she always maintained an extraordinary balance between firm guidance and an empathetic lightness. At the same time she provided me with the room to imagine, and then helped me secure the resources to explore. I will forever be grateful.

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Finally this work is dedicated to my beloved friend and spiritual guide Reza de Wet, who in life and in her dying, taught me many things, especially the art of being. I hope she approves of this work.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
A	EARTH FORUM HANDBOOK	The Earth Forum Handbook developed as part of the apprenticeship process.	End of thesis: p. 323 and in CD: Folder title Appendix A.
B	UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF RIGHTS FOR MOTHER EARTH	This Universal Declaration for the Rights of Mother Earth was developed in May 2010 in Bolivia. It formed the basis of the Draft African Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth/Nature.	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix B Or online http://www.naturerightsafrica.org/mother-earth-declaration.html
C	DRAFT AFRICAN CHARTER	The Draft African Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth that was developed during the Climate Train Project. Included is also the commentary from the Draft African Charter (which is located on the CD: see folder Appendix C, not available online).	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix C Or online http://www.naturerightsafrica.org/draft-charter.html
D	CLIMATE EXPRESS NEWSLETTER	Three editions of the Climate Express Newspaper, which was produced during the Climate Train project, to document the entire event.	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix D
E	SUMMARY VIDEO	A short video clip of the activities that took place during the course of this research study, it is a summary of the other videos in the appendix.	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix E
F	50/50 VIDEO	Two videos shot by 50/50, a local South African environmental television show on the Re-imagining festival which was part of COPART as well as the Arkwork Circus project.	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix F
G	EARTH JUNKIES VIDEO	A video of the Earth Junkies Project which formed part of the programme on the train	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix G
H	CLIMATE FLUENCY EXCHANGE VIDEOS	Videos from the CFE in Cape Town that were streamed to Mexico during COP16 each day	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix H
I	COPART BLOG	The COPART blog with relevant excerpts that are mentioned in the thesis text.	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix I
J	CLIMATE FLUENCY EXCHANGE WEBSITE	Including schedules and the CFE report	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix J
K	REZA DE WET PAGE	Image of the page from Reza de Wet thesis	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix K
L	10 GREEN BOTTLES BOOKLET	A booklet created for the 10 Green Bottles Project, mentioned in Chapter Three.	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix L
M	ARKWORK COLLECTIVE	News clippings and other materials	Attached CD: Folder title Appendix M

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"Nature is not a thing, a source of resources. Nature is a system, a home, and a community of living and interdependent beings."

Pablo Solon (2011)

1.1 A NATURAL NARRATIVE

Our learning takes place in a new world of bright lights, blinking screens, sanitised homes, police sirens, car alarms and climate controlled rooms. We learn in a globalised culture of competition, contest and consumerism. If we are not learning in that world, then we are probably learning in an unpredictable world of hunger, thirst, depression, alcoholism, landlessness, drought, storms and cultural dislocation. Only a few get to enjoy the middle ground, with the majority languishing in the latter scenario. If we are lucky, we get to learn in supportive communities, in ecologically dynamic environments, where our inner imaginations and values are validated. Often our learning is constrained by the institutional cultures and practices of education and how it has come to be practiced. The 21st century is facing a harsher world than the century before, with the global climate inflamed and seething across the globe. While I write this, hurricane *Sandy* (the largest storm to hit the USA in recorded history) is slamming into the eastern coast of North America and the Caribbean at 90 mph (144 km/h), and at the same time president Evo Morales of Bolivia announces a new national policy recognising the rights of nature. We are living and learning in a time where our disconnections from, and connections to, nature are ever more pronounced and at odds. Responding to the overwhelming big picture of climate change and environmental decline leaves most of us paralysed or numb, unable to respond as we are weighed under feelings of guilt or apathy.

This research project aims to explore how we can respond in these various circumstances in ways that are sincere to our own personal circumstances and socio-cultural-ecological location. In what ways can we enable our own freedoms to act in ways that are personal but also contribute to collective action and democratic forms of progress? These are questions to

guide an investigation into the education of the ecological citizen in a time of ecological apartheid (see 1.2). Through various exploratory and rigorous forms of practice-led research, drawing from several disciplines and genres, I explore forms of learning that encourage agency¹, or an ability to act in a given circumstance, particularly '*personal agency*' in South Africa and the United Kingdom, with a smaller case study in Germany. Later I begin to articulate '*relational agency*' which is founded on expanding personal agency. My understanding of the concept of personal and relational evolved as the study unfolded, and can be tracked throughout the thesis, with personal agency development emerging in Chapter Three and expanding into relational agency understanding in Chapters Four and Five. While the wider insights and developments of personal and relational forms of agency are discussed in their entirety throughout this study, a full summary of personal and relational agency is captured Section 6.8.

This doctoral research has been a privileged adventure into sharing and exploring the experiences and imaginations of almost 700 human beings from across these different regions. Considering the nature of this alchemical process – that of using *questions as a force*² to direct my constant iterative process through cycles of practice-led inquiry and refining and honing this work – I track the entire story, a growing natural narrative, that aims to capture my own lived experience, while also showing (in their purest undiluted form) the experiences of others.

At the heart of developing pedagogies and learning practices for the ecological citizen within a time of ecological apartheid, I discover specific capacities that are needed in a *connective practice*¹ (social sculpture) approach to learning socially, as alternatives and expansion of the current field of social learning theory and practice. Undoubtedly the most significant is enabling the development of empathy and empathetic imaginative contemplation in an active

¹ The reader might notice that my understanding of agency evolves throughout this work, but essentially explores the capabilities and conditions that enable a person to act or respond to their circumstances in a personal, social and ecologically meaningful way. I realized that agency was influenced by both an ability to act personally from enabling reflection, or responding to personal circumstances, as well as an ability to act socially or relationally, improving a person's capacity to act socially or collectively. The reader will find my understanding of agency is further nuanced by questions of being, and how one's actions or ability to respond are primarily informed by being. Capacities that enable agency were of particular concern.

² I borrow these terms from Shelley Sacks (2012) and explore them in greater detail later in this chapter and further expand on them throughout this thesis.

approach to listening. I also discover the fundamental necessity for imagination and imaginal practice in the learning process, and how this enables forms of ecological literacy, as well as encourages the evolution of personal agency and *moral intuition*. Drawing on the pioneering work of Professor Shelley Sacks at the Social Sculpture Research Unit, whose theories, pedagogies and actions are located in the interconnected work of Rudolf Steiner, Johan Wolfgang von Goethe, Martin Heidegger, Fredriche Schiller, Joseph Beuys amongst many others, I refine and adapt my own exploratory research practice into the application of social sculpture theory and practice in the development of an accessible and universal pedagogical practice for the development of an ecological citizen.

As Shelley Sacks is a key figure with whom I interacted personally throughout in this research project I refer to her both as Sacks and Shelley. Being a collaborative research project, discerning where my work ends and where another's begins could have become an issue. I have considered this carefully and tried to ensure the nature of my unique contribution to the field of both social learning, social sculpture and environmental education is clear. Yet as much of this research is a collaborative inquiry, I hope these disinctions are discernible throughout. The reflexive research project presented in this thesis is entirely my own rigorous exploration into the inner works of the field of social sculpture and connective practice in the context of Environmental Education and the capacity development of the ecological citizen. Both my field practice and theoretical analysis has been entirely my own undertaking, yet reflections of participants and others, including those of Shelley Sacks, are used to corroborate and add to the growing evidence in this study. I prefer to describe this doctoral research as a form of artisanal apprenticeship that grows into an applied creative implementation and adaptation within a specific context (South Africa), as well as within the context of ecological citizen education. My self-created apprenticeship in social sculpture enabled me, as a researcher in education, to not only understand the field, but also to carefully critique it through my own reflexive application and adaptation. The unique characteristics of social sculpture practice determined this approach which led to an in-depth investigation into Sacks' published work and my own application of her methods and connective practices in a practice-led inquiry. This is set against, and emerges from a critical reflexive review, of my own early pre-social sculpture explorations, and through a theoretical

iterative analysis alongside this process.

The specific capacities explored in this work could not have been fully realised, articulated and explored without my full embodiment into these capacities and without my own auto-ethnographic (or in this thesis “engaged crystallisation”) study. I therefore refer to significant incidences in my personal life as they had a profound effect on my understanding of capacities such as empathy, imagination, intuition and active listening. During the course of this research I met my fiancé, moved extensively around the country and outside of South Africa and most significantly nursed my closest friend and adopted Godmother through her final battle with Acute Myelogenous Leukaemia, and her subsequent death. These personal accounts are not intended to be egoistic or self-absorbed rambles, but rather carefully considered contributions to my investigations into the embodiment of ecological citizenship, and the capacities required to enable this.

Central to this research is the development of a social sculpture project entitled Earth Forum which was conceived in theory and practice by Shelley Sacks, and emerged through practice-based research she conducted in her earlier work in the social sculpture project *Exchange Values*. Earth Forum was then further developed collaboratively with Sacks, through my own implementation in South Africa and my exploration into developing a pedagogy for this project. After our initial week-long collaboration, Shelley left and I began working with a somewhat new project, and over the following 18 months I refined it in a South African context with her (through the participatory/practice-led inquiry reported on in this thesis) into a complete social sculpture practice for ecological citizenship. At the same time Shelley was applying this work in the United Kingdom and Germany through her own practice-led inquiry. We maintained contact via email and Skype over this period, and drew from each other’s research findings. In this thesis I detail mainly my own research process, but do mention some aspects of Shelley’s research in the United Kingdom and Germany. The thesis reveals how this process allowed for enhanced reflexivity in the context of my own research.

Finally at the end of this chapter I offer a detailed layout of the structure of this body of work, and also offer short cohesive descriptions of each section of the thesis.

1.2. ECOLOGICAL APARTHEID AND WICKED SOLUTIONS

Cormac Cullinan, an environmental lawyer and advocate and researcher of wild or ecological jurisprudence used the term 'ecological apartheid' in a talk he gave in Durban, South Africa at the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)³. He said this, not while speaking within the formal negotiation space within the UN convention (although he also participated there) but on the edges, within a modified boardroom in a train carriage, at the Durban train station. He was speaking as one of many contributors to the beginning stages of the *Draft African Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth*⁴; an African interpretation of the wider *Universal Declaration for the Rights of Mother Earth*⁵. The Draft African Charter had been developed with the input of hundreds of citizens over a 44-day journey across South Africa via the *Climate Train*⁶ (a modified mobile social mobilisation and ecological citizenship initiative). Cormac spoke of his experiences in South Africa as a young activist, and reflected on those who came before him in the 1960s who were facing the oppressive solidifying *formative forces*⁷ of the apartheid government at the time. It seemed unimaginable to most that this social, economic and political reality would change, indeed the control of the white majority seemed so strong and so established, there was very little one could do to change anything.

Apartheid was originally a word used to describe the established policy of separation based on racial discrimination, yet at its core it refers to separateness, and has been used in other contexts outside that of racial segregation. Ecology, on the other hand, is traditionally seen as the study of relationships, of intimate and indirect connections and influences within living beings, but also between living beings and natural phenomena and physical place. Ecology is indeed distinct from 'environment', as it is fundamentally interested in the relationship between beings and the wider natural world, whereas environment is a word used in a more

³ Cormac's speech is quoted directly in more detail in Chapter Four.

⁴ The Draft Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth can be accessed from www.naturerightsafrica.org

⁵ The Universal Declaration of the Rights for Mother Earth was first drafted in Bolivia, April 2010, and can be accessed from www.therightsofnature.org

⁶ The Climate Train is further explored and described in Chapter Four.

⁷ A term I use here to describe the hardening reality of the socio-political system of apartheid, yet the term 'formative forces' was originally used by Joseph Beuys in describing his unique expanded theory of sculpture, which I discuss further in this chapter, and in more detail in the proceeding chapter.

liberal sense to refer to all manner of domains and surroundings that an organism lives within or contributes to, such as a habitat or territory and their associated conditions. While the word environment is used to refer to the natural world, it has also been used to describe other manmade physical and conceptual spaces. Both 'environment' and 'ecology' as words have become extremely politicised and versatile in the lexicon of 20th and 21st century (Gonzalez-Gaudiano and Buenfil-Burgos, 2009). In this thesis, however, I prefer to use the terms 'ecology' and 'ecological' to refer to the sphere of the natural world, with reference to that which is explored in the field of deep ecology⁸. Deep ecology favours radical conservation-related stances and occasionally evades the social sphere (Gonzalez-Gaudiano and Buenfil-Burgos, 2009); my use of ecology is with reverence to indigenous forms of knowing and naming the natural world. Therefore in the context of this research, ecology refers to human life as merely one of many equal components of a global ecosystem, yet recognises the tremendous responsibility and effect human activity has on the ecosystem. It is a definition of ecology that does not exclude the human being. I refer also specifically to the human being as emergent within the natural world, a perspective held by Bhaskar (1975; 1979) and referred to by Cormac in his talk (something I later discussed with him in person).

The term 'ecological apartheid' used by Cormac resonated deeply within me, mainly because both words deal with relationship or connection in one way or another: 'ecological' refers to inherent relationships, and 'apartheid' refers to the extreme separation between, and therefore the obvious lack of relationships. The term also seemed to resonate in an intuitive embodied sense of nature/social disconnection. I imagine this to be the case as I had witnessed firsthand the segregation of racial apartheid in South Africa as a child. Through moving from a childhood home in a relatively ecologically pristine smallholding in the tropical east coast of South Africa, to a nearby industrial port city as a teenager, I also understood the physical and emotional separation from plants, animals and natural phenomenon that was replaced with concrete, manicured parks and outdoor advertising.

⁸The field of *Deep Ecology* emerged as a form of biocentrism or ecologism, that responded against the technocentrism or anthropocentric approach to environmental education of the past. As an environmental movement and philosophy it regards human life as just one of many equal components of a global ecosystem, yet it has been criticised for evading the social phenomena entirely (Gonzalez-Gaudiano and Buenfil-Burgos, 2009).

With the growing industrial market economy, and various social, cultural, political histories that are embedded in our lives, we have stepped into the 21st century with an ever more obvious discord between human beings and the rest of nature. This is articulated in various forms in the literature from the early work of John Muir (1954) and Rachel Carson (1962), to scores of contemporary academic journals exploring the debate. This disconnection is also revealing itself in many serious social and individual ailments that are reported on in the literature (Cheng and Monroe, 2012)⁹. A recent most disturbing example is the rise of, and global concern with, what is being termed 'children's nature-deficit disorder' in many Western countries (C&NN and IUCN, 2012). And so the symptoms of ecological apartheid are being addressed on every front, yet with seemingly little tangible progress.

In 1973 Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber chose the word 'wicked' to describe the complexity of social and environmental problems which could not be solved by purely scientific-rational approaches. For them the utter complexity and wild nature of these problems prompted them to see this challenge as something truly wicked. When I think of the warming of the planet through human-induced interference in the Earth's climate system, and its effect on uncertain changes in weather, intensity of storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts and floods (IPCC, 2007), the word 'wicked' seems apt. The word can also be ascribed to the intractable matter of supporting those low-income communities around the world to not only cope with the current impact of floods, droughts, storms and subsequent socio-economic degradation intensified by climate change, but also to work towards building robust and resilient communities to survive at the frontline of the even more wicked assault of climate change to come (Schipper and Burton, 2009). The situation looks grim, and this is where I, and I am sure many of us, feel completely debilitated and lost in the overwhelming big picture of climate change.

Elizabeth Fletcher, a friend of mine¹⁰, reminded me that the word 'climate' has two

⁹The following studies all explore various effects of the disconnection from nature, mostly profiling the rise of what is now termed 'Children's Nature Deficit Disorder': Clements, 2004; Turner et al, 2004; Pergams & Zaradic, 2008; Huh and Gordon, 2008; Schulman & Peters, 2008; Brown et al, 2009; Cordell et al., 2009; Rideout et al., 2010; Faber Taylor & Kuo, 2011; Tucker, 2008; Staempfli, 2009; Skár & Krogh, 2009; Karsten, 2005; Wen et al.; 2009; Veitch et al., 2010; Laaksoharju & Rappe, 2010; Cleland et al., 2010; Patved-Kaznelson, 2009; Bringolf-Isler et al., 2010; Muller & Pansa, 2009; Lederbogen et al., 2011.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Fletcher contributes further to this work in collaborating with me in developing the various

interpretations, either: 'the weather conditions prevailing in an area' or 'the prevailing set of attitudes in society'. The symptoms of climate change can be traced to the prevailing disconnection in our public opinion or culture, that being the fallacy that the human being has power over nature (Irwin, 2010). Further reflection and reading of Rittel and Webber (1973) revealed another key insight through exploring their ten criteria for 'Wicked Problems', where they uncover the complex reality of trying to fix wicked problems, where one can never truly track if a solution is successful or not, neither can one avoid the possibility of the solution giving rise to new problems. Despite this reality we often respond to the symptoms of ecological apartheid through tinkering with the structural or technical elements of our system, aiming to 'fix' the problems as if they only have a single component 'broken'. This seemed to me a real challenge, and led me to the question "how can we go beyond trying to fix problems?" Gonzalez-Gaudiano and Buenfil-Burgos (2009) described environmentalism and the environmental education terrain as consisting of predominantly two forms: either conservation education which can be equated to ecologism and biocentrism (that which places humans within ecology while negating social realities) or science education in which people are foregrounded and made superior (anthropocentrism) and technological agency is prioritised (technocentrism). My thinking was thus: if one responds with an overtly technical or scientific approach to sustainability, one can quickly overlook the need to work with the fabric of our social consciousness or cultural climates and explore the areas where consciousness is lacking, i.e. the place where our disconnection or apartheid (with each other and the ecology we form part of) develops and materialises into problems like pollution, over-consumption, inequitable sharing of natural resources, to name just a few. It seems that we fall into the trap of responding to environmental degradation and ecological disconnection by either viewing it in the same way as fixing a broken toaster, or we try to fix it by removing the human being from the picture all together. Where was the middle ground? This was a question that fascinated me.

In my experience, when I spoke to people (friends, family, colleagues) about how we work at the root of the problem, the answer I usually received in reply was "raise awareness". Indeed that is what motivated me to begin a doctoral study in education, as trying to 'fix' the technical elements of a system no longer satisfied me. I was becoming more aware that in Southern

Africa (or indeed anywhere), raising awareness or behaviour-change models are simply not enough.

This was supported by Heila Lotz-Sisitka (2009) who described environmental education in southern Africa as tending to favour capability-centred, agency-based positions to learning and adaptation, with specific attention given to social and situated learning in environmental education. The trend towards cultural-historical approaches to learning approaches proved more useful, particularly in the Southern African context, as these enable reflexive engagement with contradictions and tensions that have the potential to enhance capabilities and social change processes (O'Donoghue, 2007), especially those on the frontlines of climate change which can be seen as one of the many symptoms of ecological apartheid. Considering then the various wicked problems in contemporary society, especially those exacerbated by the complex reality of ecological apartheid, and the affinity to focus on simply 'fixing' problems with simple solutions like 'raising awareness', I was eager to search for alternatives.

I discovered I was not alone. Paul Hawken (2007), in his book *Blessed Unrest*, explores the massive diversity and complexity of new social movements that are emerging around the world. These new social movements are collectively, but in very different ways, responding to global systematic problems within social and environmental contexts in ways that go beyond just fixing problems. So over the past five years I have found myself adrift in such a movement, which began as a peculiar, personal inner movement, and has propelled me into a rich collaborative exploration with many fellow citizens into collectively exploring difficult questions around climate change, sustainable development and what constitutes a meaningful response.

Ecological apartheid seems like an impossible challenge to overcome, but as Cormac said in his aforementioned speech¹¹, racial apartheid in South Africa was challenged, and has been transformed into a non-racial democracy. I was eleven years old when I watched the nation begin to transform, I remember sitting together with my family surrounding our television, captivated as we watched Nelson Mandela walking free beyond the prison gates in 1990. I witnessed also first-hand the reintegration of my school and this seemingly miraculous transformation. I suppose witnessing such a massive social change as a child, has left me

¹¹See Section 4.5.2 for Cormac Cullinan's speech in full.

with the indelible sense that massive social change is possible, and something indeed can be done to transform ecological apartheid into an ecological democracy, by enabling inspired ecological citizens.

1.3. CAPABILITIES FOR AN ECOLOGICAL CITIZEN

While I knew I wanted to approach the phenomenon of ecological apartheid, I was still unsure how I would go about this. In my attempt to locate the specific focus of this research project, I came across the term 'ecological citizen'. What drew me to this term, was that it seemed to go deeper than the word 'environmental': instead of seeing the ecosystem as a machine of parts, standing on the four pillars of society, economy, biology and physical forms, (as I was trained in my Environmental Science undergraduate degrees), 'ecological citizen' seemed to recognise the relationships and subsequent influences experienced within ecology. My initial response to the term made me think of a citizen that is embedded in ecology of relationships, and recognises an equality to 'other-than-human' citizens as well. This interested me immensely, and instinctively I began to see that a response through education would need to consider learning within the context of relationships and capacities that enabled navigation of complex relationships and interconnections.

First, I came across Andrew Dobson's (2003) idea of the ecological citizen which he differentiates from environmental citizenship; he sees ecological citizenship emerging from a form of post-cosmopolitan construct of citizenship. His emphasis on ecological citizenship is that it entails duties of citizenship, while environmental citizenship tends to focus on rights, and can be linked to environmental justice (Dobson, 2003). This is refuted by others such as Tim Hayward (2006). Dobson (2003) sees the citizen's political space as an experience of the ecological footprint, which warrants a sense of responsibility and obligations. Dobson (2003:116) considers ecological citizenship as emergent and maintained through horizontal relations between people, including civil society organisations outside of conventional politics. Biagi and Ferro (2011) tested Dobson's model of ecological citizenship in two Argentine cities. According to Dobson's (2004) model, the citizen is directed by strong internal values that transpire into environmental care behaviours that are expressed in their personal and public environments, and are lodged in a fervent civic meaning. This personal commitment (which is located within their obligations in the community) relies on the internalisation of ecological

values and rules, and it rests more on self-control and informal controls than on normative control. Yet Biagi and Ferro's (2011) study shows the weakness of citizen self-control, and citizens' relative inability to articulate values into pro-environmental behaviours. Hayward (2006) finds Dobson's (2003) definition vastly removed from conventional understandings of citizenship, and claims ecological citizenship instead should be offering distinct substance to existing forms. Part of my own struggle with Dobson's definition of ecological citizenship is that it is still defined as action located within institutional arrangements and community bodies acting on structural or technical problems. But what about the individual human being, their personal ecological citizen and their own individual or personal agency?

Biagi and Ferro (2011) conclude that while Dobson's (2004) model is a useful response to the ethical and theoretical questions of citizenship in response to global environmental risk, but they feel there is much research needed concerning the concept of ecological space debt that leads to a community of obligation. These sentiments are echoed by Godrej (2012) who, along with Dobson (2003), himself seeks more intellectual resources to examine and build the idea of such (ecological) citizenship within civic discourse. Godrej (2012) seems to offer a more personal exploration of the embodied ecological citizen through using Gandhian non-violent activism and ascetism as a form of ecological citizenship. There is much merit in this approach to citizenship, particularly in the embodiment of agency through ascetic practice which undoubtedly has effects on disrupting political dispositions. Yet the agency expressed in Godrej's (2012) vision, while promising in its physical embodiment of the ecological citizen, seemed somewhat extreme (e.g. hunger strikes) and difficult to expand into the wider social sphere. None of these explorations into ecological citizenship articulated for me the expression of personal agency out of inspired individual motivations, and the personal experiential picture of ecological citizenship that I had intuitively been attracted to in my early discoveries of the term 'ecological citizen'. I needed to understand and ground this idea of personal agency in order to develop pedagogies that enable personal ecological citizen development. I did however discover a better definition in the work of Reid and Taylor (2000) entitled *Embodying ecological citizenship*.

Reid and Taylor (2000) provided a more suitable examination of the ecological citizen as one

in which citizens embody their particular places of ecological experience with common concerns (and concerns grounded in the commons), potentially leading to expansive spatio-temporal horizons of responsible action. They raise concerns over the discarding of human embodiment of the environmental imaginary, quoting historian Sellers (1999), who argues that mainstream environmental policy and discourses in dominant environmental non-governmental organisations have become blind to the ecological citizen. Reid and Taylor (2000: 440) also argue that although the field of deep ecology emerged as a critical response to technocratic managerialism of the ecological crisis, they contend that deep ecology does not go far enough with regard to developing suitable ecological citizenship as it fails to attend sufficiently to body, place, and politics, especially as these are understood as different modes of engagement with the world within history. Reid and Taylor's (2000) definition of an ecological citizen, is one who is embodied, and deeply interrelated with the natural world, but who is able to act and locate him/herself within the given socio-political and historical realities of the industrial-capitalist world we occupy. While reading this I imagined the trickster, personified as the jackal in many African stories, one who is able to move between worlds, in this case the existing hardened socio-economic and political histories that we respond to daily, while maintaining a deeply connected and sensorial relationship with the wider natural ecology. It also made me think of a saying my Godmother had mentioned of Christ: "be as innocent as a dove, but as wily as a serpent"¹².

David Abram (1988:92) in his reading of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1968), developed what he calls "the movements toward an ecological awareness" where he eloquently described how we have withdrawn from our non-human nature, both in our speaking and our senses. He also claimed that a sustainable Earth is unattainable until we recognise and enable these sensitivities and realise that social and natural freedom are reliant on one another. Merleau-Ponty (1968) saw nature as the object within which we have emerged, where he uses the term 'flesh' to describe the substance of nature to which we belong, and from which we come to understand our relation to nature and our relationship to self and being. This 'flesh' is seen by Merleau-Ponty (1968: 147) as the formative medium of the object and the subject, as he puts it " the invisible hinge upon which my life and the life of the others turn to rock, into one

¹²"be shrewd as a serpent and innocent as a dove" (Matthew 10:16)

another, the inner framework of intersubjectivity" (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:234). Reid and Taylor (2000) included also the work of Edith Cobb (1977) and her anthropological study of childhood imagination in articulating the argument that ecological citizenship emerges within a social and ecological continuity. Cobb (1977) came to see the child's body and imagination as an ecology and the site of her 'field study'. She found the aesthetic logic of nature expressed in the lived imaginative experience of a child, where there is no beginning or end between the natural world and the child's experience and expansion of their self-consciousness.

Abram (1996) wove a detailed description of this understanding of ecology and the ways in which we can approach equilibrium through the development of self-sufficient communities. While contributing to the restoration of the sensorial sensitivities to nature, Abram's (1996) contribution to citizenship was criticised by Reid and Taylor (2000). Abram (2007:267) considered the political and economic dimensions as short lived forces that are merely abstractions. This 'side stepping of history and power' by deep ecologists was seen by Reid and Taylor (2000:452) – at the time of the article – as deep ecology offering limited contribution to an articulation of an embodied form of ecological citizenship within the social, political, historical and economic realities of a citizen's everyday existence. While of course they saw the value of these descriptions of the embodied phenomenology of our lived being as ecological, they argued that they could not become only idealised practices of sensation in purified natural settings, but needed to be able to include the lived experience of the world we live in today, with its socio-economic and historical struggles (Reid and Taylor, 2000: 452) which sets the framework for the core contribution of this study. I intend to address this problem by exploring and enabling embodied practices of the ecological citizen within specific socio-economic and historical contexts, which simultaneously recognise the human being as a part of the ecology, as well as the social sphere as an extension of the ecosystem.

The work of Reid and Taylor (2000: 452) in exploring Merleau-Ponty, Abram and Cobb (among others) helps to describe an approach to ecological citizenship that is embodied, where the citizen goes beyond abstract ideas of 'natural rights' to conceptions that recognise that we are 'dwellers on the land', which they cautiously relate¹³ to Heidegger's work on the concept of

¹³ While Heidegger's work is useful in this context, Reid and Taylor (2000) noted the danger of linking

'dwelling'. I would think then that an ecological citizen therefore dwells both within the land they occupy, but also within the political space of the ecological footprint described by Dobson (2003). Yet we could go further and describe the political space that the ecological citizen is potentially also able to dwell in, as within the imagination, as explored by Cobb (1977), where the imagination is an extension of the ecological system, and indeed can also be seen as a place. This is something Reid and Taylor (2003) explore in a later article where they examine John Dewey's aesthetic ecology for an "environmentalism of daily life".

Reid and Taylor (2000) show how the cultural and political "body-blindness" is connected with the disparagement of local knowledge and personal forms of knowing and capacities not only in the policy system but in education and even in the larger environmental movement. The body-blindness that occurs in contemporary technocratic managerial ideologies of industrial capitalism is seen by Reid and Taylor (2000) as complexly entangled in the Western history of thinking in subject/object dualisms, such as voluntary/involuntary; male/female; white/black; rational/emotional; mind/body; middle-class/working-class; human/animal; new/old; urban/rural; free/dominated; culture/nature; space/place (Reid and Taylor, 2000: 453). They offer in a later article in 2003, the philosophy of art developed by John Dewey (1925) as a valuable contribution to developing non-dualistic understanding of the individual within a matrix, and connecting this to democratic freedom (Reid and Taylor, 2003). The aesthetic dimension of public culture is seen by Dewey (1934) as central in overcoming crippling dualisms of Western modernity that impair participatory engagement (Reid and Taylor, 2003). This is also something I explore in greater depth later.

The forms of citizenship that emerged from modernity leave the citizen as abstracted into these particularities and differences, and therefore exist in this state of binaries (Reid and Taylor, 2000). Their definition of ecological citizenship however exposes these dualistic tensions, as can be seen in the work of activists who are exploring new kinds of citizen politics, which interweave identities as political actors with identities as dwellers within an

questions of citizenship with Heidegger as he has a controversial history involving an explicit political involvement with Nazism in the 1930s (Wolin, 1992). Despite this I go on to talk about Heidegger's work later in this thesis as I find it useful in articulating several questions around 'being' and citizenship. This is not to say that I condone his involvement with Nazism. In further research I discovered a clandestine love affair between the Jewish anti-fascist political theorist Hannah Arendt and Heidegger, which makes me think there is more to this controversy than I or anyone else other than Heidegger or Arendt could explain.

ecology (Reid and Taylor, 2000: 454). This leaves the embodied ecological citizen a nuanced dynamic member of an ecological system.

Considering the body-blindness that takes place in institutions of higher education, as well as the associated blindness to place, politics, and history, of technocratic managerialism, Reid and Taylor (2000) propose institutional transformation of contemporary academic practices toward place-based scholarship and teaching, as well as partnership with "local knowledges," as a necessary and neglected part of our struggle for a sustainable and equitable world. This is later echoed by the work of David Greenwood (2009: 275) (formerly Gruenewald), where place-based inquiry and direct encounters with communities lead to democratic participation and social action within the local environment. McKenzie et al. (2009: 7) also describe how culture and place are deeply intertwined resulting in places and geographies being profoundly pedagogical themselves. I examine later experiments with the place-based pedagogy of Earth Forum, a social sculpture practice which enables 'place-making' through 'place-based' inquiry, with subsequent contributions to the development of ecological citizenship. Central to Reid and Taylor's (2000) description is exploring new ways to join "local" knowledge to "expert" knowledge and building relationships between academics and community-based, citizen self-education and research. Reid and Taylor (2000: 462) argued that to achieve the ontological transformations necessary to respond to the global environmental crisis, we must think deeply about the roots of science and how "expert" knowledge has been used to disempower ecological citizenship. This sentiment can be associated with Lotz-Sisitka's (2009) call for adaptive practice-based education in Climate Change Education in South Africa, and the call for radical new forms of environmental education at the Fourth International Environmental Education Conference in Ahmedabad, which I mention in detail later.

1.4. BEING AND DOING

Equipped (somewhat) with Reid and Taylor's (2000) definition of a citizen I was able to begin an examination of what constitutes an ecological citizen, which I consider to be key in developing strategies that enable the specific capacities needed to develop personal agency. Something that resonates clearly for me (that is associated with the enabling personal and

relational agency of the ecological citizen) is enabling personal freedom. One's capabilities can enable a person to be more free, but how does one encourage capabilities for freedom?

Economist Amartya Sen and philosopher Martha Nussbaum's (1993) book entitled *The Quality of Life* worked with the Capabilities Approach¹⁴ which is essentially an approach to human well-being and social justice that focuses on an ethical recognition of an individual's entitlement to capabilities, which they described as the ability to freely live out one's valued 'beings' and 'doings'. The idea is simple, if we are able to listen, engage and recognise what people value being and doing, we are able to build on an individual's already existing capabilities and expand the suite of capacities they have access to, thereby enabling personal freedom.

Valued beings and doings could include spending time with our loved ones; being able to express ourselves openly and sincerely; being part of a supportive community; having access to a healthy body and life; learning and exploring the world and its mysteries; being able to appreciate beauty; to work meaningfully in our communities; to play; to transcend difficult social problems; to appreciate other forms of life; and to be able to move and travel freely. These are fundamental 'beings' and 'doings' that most of us share, and their value transcends money and they are intrinsic to human flourishing (Kronlid, 2009). This made me very hopeful, because here are economists saying there is more to life than money, and what we must value is what we want to *be* and *do* in our communities, and this allows us to flourish as human beings. Sen was taken seriously, so seriously that he won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998 and the Capabilities Approach has been adopted by the United Nations Human Development Index as a measure for human freedom and health. The Capabilities Approach has been taken up by many different researchers in economics, sociology, education and politics and it offers a useful framework for ethical development and consideration of human well-being. Yet if this approach has been welcomed by so many different disciplines including economics, why then were aspects of the Capabilities Approach

¹⁴Sen has helped to make the capabilities approach predominant as a paradigm for policy debate in human development where it inspired the creation of the UN's Human Development Index (HDI: a popular measure capturing the freedom and multidimensionality aspects of human development including health and education). This has greatly expanded a narrow economic measure of human development.

overlooked in global climate change policy responses? Kronlid's (2009) review of the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report (IPCC¹⁵, 2007), criticised the IPCC for addressing only some intrinsic values of human well-being. The IPCC (indirectly) relates elements of the generic set of lists of capabilities: Life, Knowledge, Work but excludes appreciation of Beauty and Play (something I later describe as essential in developing capabilities for ecological citizens).

Kronlid claimed we need to find ways of expanding people's ability to act, their ability to explore their capabilities, and their expression of their valued beings and doings. Kronlid (2009:34) went on to say:

... learning takes place in spaces of capabilities, in expanded spaces of beings and doings, in people's concrete circumstances of adaptation and vulnerability. Hence, learning is possible and learning conditions are likely to be improved if learner's spaces of capabilities are expanded and enriched. This means that we need climate change education research that can help us identify how learners' spaces of capabilities may be expanded and enriched in different social, ecological and economic contexts.

We face a reality that requires a new way of responding, that is adaptable, emergent, embodied, entirely innovative, radical, and new. The International Conference on Environmental Education of 2007 called for educational processes that assist in a radical altering of our economic and production systems, and ways of living. It was known formally as the Fourth International Environmental Education Conference and took place in Ahmedabad, India, on 26-28 November 2007. The document *Moving forward from Ahmedabad: Environmental Education in the 21st Century* synthesised the voices of over 1000 environmental educators present from around the globe and called for a new paradigm that needs to "recognise that we must live within the limits of nature's systems and that we need to 'know' nature in order to transform societies to live sustainably in happiness, peace and with dignity, amongst themselves, and in relation to Planet Earth". The recommendations suggest that such a shift "demands fundamental changes in the creation, transmission and application of knowledge in all spheres and at all levels". What is needed essentially, is a "fundamental paradigm shift" (ibid.), in how we respond to complex social and environmental problems.

¹⁵ The International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) is the leading scientific body for the assessment of climate change. Chaired by Rajendra Pachauri, the IPCC synthesises current climate change research in its assessment reports.

Blenkinsop and Egan (2009) echoed this call for alternatives by describing underlying modern western education theory as having limitations in responding to the ecological crisis as it emerges from a historical need to socialise workforces, the Platonic theoretical approach to education for rational cognition that surfaces universal truths, and Rousseau's experimental practice of psychological development. They called these the 'three big ideas' that underlie contemporary educational theory and that seem to constrain and restrict innovations in environmental education. Blenkinsop and Egan (2009: 92) argued that these theories limit environmental education and that the current educational tools available are incomplete and even incongruent with the purposes of environmental education. They cautioned that if environmental education continues to draw from general education theory, it has the potential to find itself in conflict with environmental education's own goals. Blenkinsop and Egan (2009: 92) concluded that what was needed was alternatives from the "pragmatic muddling ahead" and an emancipation of environmental education from the constraints of "old theories that always constrain one's abilities to think effectively and imaginatively about problems". It is clear that the type of education that we will need to cope with the new complex world we have inherited, will require a trans-disciplinary form, that is able to accommodate a variety of knowledge systems and practices, as the response requires diversity, as well as inter-relatedness, and as Reid and Taylor (2003) as well as Blenkinsop and Egan (2009) suggested, this will be improved through imagination and innovations in art.

In my training as an environmental scientist I always had the impression that sustainable development comes in the form of an end product, a solution that we need to achieve; yet as Wals et al. (2009) suggested we need to see sustainability as a process, not a product. Perhaps we can see this process of sustainability as a new way of not only 'doing' but also 'being' in the world as it radically changes. This also demands that we are constantly reflecting and engaging in our understanding, place and perception of the problems we see. Others have argued for the importance of complex learning processes that deepen our understanding of sustainability, such as Scott and Gough (2004). Understanding this offers a particular insight into the education of an ecological citizen: it would require a form of learning in which relations that exist between people and their ecologies, encourages personal forms of knowing that are mobilised internally in each person, and values that require cultivation

within the experience and intuitive expression of each human being.

1.5. SOCIAL LEARNING

We do not develop our capabilities in isolation; we are social and constantly relating our selves into the social organism, and so we learn and become more capable through social interaction. What does this mean for the education of an ecological citizen? In seeking to find an answer to this question I began to explore theories and methodologies that looked at learning in a social non-institutional form, and within education discourse, social learning theory has been seen as a response to non-institutional learning through social exchange. Up to this point my personal experience and understanding of education was that which was institutionally maintained through schools, universities or short courses, where a few teachers worked with many students, who were consciously and actively engaged in the learning. It was to me a systematic, organized and predetermined approach to learning, yet my experiences in reconciling my artistic impulse with my scientific training, revealed another kind of learning that happened through exchanges between friends, family, and strangers, it was not organized, or pre-determined, and was governed by my own inner thinking and reflection. Of particular interest to exploring this other form of learning and answering my ecological citizen question was the work of Wals et al. (2009) who explored how social learning can contribute to enabling a learning society that can engage with developing a more sustainable world. They highlighted how social learning is instrumental in developing a “learning system in which people learn from and with another and, as a result, collectively become more capable of withstanding setbacks, of dealing with insecurity, complexity and risks” (2009: 11). They went on to say that it is within the tolerating and drawing from the differences and tensions within the group that learning is enabled.

This would undoubtedly develop capacities within individuals and while they do not offer detail into these specific capacities, I later go on to explore what these capacities might consist of through participatory and practice-led inquiry. This advancement of social learning into the realm of sustainable development by people like Wals et al. (2009) offered me a gateway into how social learning could enable a new way of tackling the challenge of developing pedagogical instruments and practices within the context of ecological injustice, that went beyond raising awareness, and trying to 'fix' problems with mainly technological solutions.

Social learning theory, according to Wals et al. (2009), aims to develop social capital through enhancing existing learning systems and expanding people's capacities. But my question remained: what are these specific capacities? To answer this question required getting to the heart of cultural-historical forms of learning, focused on by researchers such as Wals (2007), O'Donoghue (2007) and Lotz-Sisitka (2009). In particular, Lotz-Sisitka (2009: 87) called for social learning responses to climate injustice that:

... Embrace emancipatory globally reflexive conceptions. It shows too that this needs to be consciously developed and resourced, a framework for climate change education that is simultaneously critically transnational and globally reflexive while also supporting situated social learning processes that are contextually located and oriented towards agency, capability, and risk negotiation in the everyday.

While mulling over the individual human being's experience of this form of learning, I came to consider our tendency of relying on education and learning to transport us to a desired future state where we have solved all our problems. Yet within the immediate personal experience there is also a need to transform how we come to understand our place in the world as it is now, and how we better equip ourselves to respond meaningfully to what exists presently.

Irwin (2010) in her book *Climate Change and Philosophy: Transformation possibilities* explored the finitude of climate change with reference to Heidegger's (1927) philosophical work around the nature of being. She drew on Heidegger, who contradicted the general belief that we will 'progress' beyond our current knowledge, and our scientific and technological prowess will transport us to the ideal state of technological perfection, and we will finally able to perfect mastery over nature. Irwin (2010: 71) stated further:

Heidegger's point is that imagining survival "past" the line of nihilism is counter-productive. We need to embrace the life we still have, and use our knowledge of its finitude and precarious delicacy to assess and alter our current norms accordingly. The agency necessary to do this is not simply a feat of technological innovation, economic indicators, or democratic policy. It is more profound than any of these things ... climate change is a crisis of mastery over nature ... and it is becoming increasingly clear that human mastery over nature is a fallacy.

Similarly Bonnett (2009:183) saw an approach to environmental education as one that is present, unpossessive and loving. Bonnett (2009) saw human flourishing as neither occurring from an insatiable mastery, nor subordination to the ecosystem, but rather as a genuine creative receptivity and responsiveness to the natural world that we encounter in lived experience. Bonnett (2009:178) referred to the work of environmental philosopher Jim Cheney (1999: 141-142):

Missing in modern conceptions of knowledge is a sense of active and reciprocal communication with the nonhuman world. On an older understanding, knowledge emerges from a conversation between world and person, and our human part in the genesis of knowledge in its most essential aspect, is to prepare ourselves esthetically and spiritually for the reception of knowledge.

In light of this, my frame of reference for the education of an ecological citizen focused on enabling meaningful reflexive activity in the present. This would surely rely on a process that stimulates and resonates with our concerns with the undeniable situation of climate change, and environmental decline as a lived experience of ecological apartheid. This would also require a direct receptivity to sensorial, inner reflective experience and outer non-human phenomena that enable a person to encounter their own concerns, and their own articulation of their valued beings and doings within this always also relational context. The learning that enables this would need to accommodate intuitive, embodied experience that deals with the immediate reality of our circumstances, which are not elevated, ideal or abstract, but an integrated part of everyday consciousness, and located within our own cultural histories and ecologies. I imagined this learning to not only point toward the future but also to enrich the present, calling each person to vivid attentiveness, and devotion to the tasks at hand. As Irwin (2010) suggested, this does not advocate abandoning new technological approaches to climate change, in order for new forms of classification, meaning, and language to evolve. In addition to this Lotz-Sisitka (2010) reiterated this form of learning when she considered Nancy Fraser's (2008) work on reflexive justice, and the implications for the way in which social learning is framed within a climate justice context. Lotz-Sisitka (2010) saw this process as needing not only to enable creative and materially significant adaptation practices that emerge from situated learning engagements, but also relying on exploring climate change justice questions that consider the local/global and present/future features through sophisticated deliberation and reflexive engagement.

This type of learning should live or co-exist with transitional concepts and theories. If we recognise that what is needed are methods that expand individual capabilities, that emerge via individual values, and that should enrich our immediate actions, into such relational contexts, then we need to radically transform how we enable and construct and mediate such learning. I felt that I should examine and explore social learning as a possible means for this. Holding these various facets together in a type of learning system that is social involves our personal valued beings and doings, and reflexively explores the wider social spectra. It

seemed like a tall order; yet if our world is constructed by each of our own prevailing set of attitudes or cultural climates as Elizabeth helped me realise, then the realm in which this work needs to emerge is within our own imaginations, our own peculiar and personal valued beings and doings which could be surfaced through developing our empathetic capacities.

1.6. AN AESTHETIC RESPONSE TO SOCIALLY FACILITATED LEARNING

In 1992, Shelley Sacks began developing what is now her longest running work entitled *Exchange Values: Images of Invisible Lives*¹⁶ (2007a), a cross-continental social sculpture project that has been running and enabling a unique form of ecological citizen development for two decades. The methods she employed in this work had been in the making since the 1970s through working between Germany and South Africa throughout the seventies and eighties to develop new forms of work and non-formal education, in the framework of the *Free International University*, founded by Joseph Beuys and Heinrich Böll. To explore the social sculpture ideas, she remained in dialogue with Beuys until his death in 1986 (SSRU, 2012). As the title to the work and the book accompanying the process created by Sacks': *Exchange Values* suggests makes visible the invisible connections between consumer and producer in a sensorial and connective exchange between citizens. The connective practice that Sacks employed guided citizens in exchanges that enabled new social arenas in which conversation, imagination and collective thinking were connected to real embodied objects, in this case bananas and their economic journey from the banana grower to the consumers shopping basket. The early Exchange Values events of Sacks travelled throughout the United Kingdom¹⁷. The sculpted social space that she constructed consisted of several thousand dried, blackened banana skins sewn into shapes reminiscent of canvasses or animal hides which hung on the wall of an exhibit space¹⁸ (see Figure 1). Below each hanging banana hide was a metal box with earphones and a serial number. This serial number is the original source number linked to a specific farmer in the Winward Islands who grew the bananas that constitute the hide (Sacks, 2002). This project's origins emerged even further back in the

¹⁶www.exchange-values.org

¹⁷Exchange Values travelled throughout the United Kingdom, and then later in Germany and Switzerland. It was also exhibited in Johannesburg during the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. Each event also worked with various citizens and stakeholders in the banana industry to explore their personal motivations, imaginings and encounters with the banana economy, and use these to further deepen their understandings of the contemporary world economic system. The exhibitions and round tables (See Figure 1D) were usually housed in galleries, as well as in museums, and University Departments and gallery spaces in institutes, such as the Goetheanum in Switzerland.

¹⁸Description from cultural geographer Ian Cook (2000).

1970s when Sacks began drying banana skins, unable to throw them away, as she remembers: “I would stand with a skin in my hand, wondering where it had come from, who had grown it, what the life of this person was like. Each skin had so much life in it, it seemed a pity to throw it away” (Sacks, 2002: 5).



Figure 1: *Exchange Values: Images of invisible lives.* Images courtesy of Shelley Sacks, from www.exchange-values.org. A) The dried banana skin canvases with earphones, and box with serial number below. B) Sacks collecting banana skins with banana-eaters in the UK through a connective exchange. C) The exhibition space showing the 20 skin panels and audio boxes, with the 10 000 unknown skins in the middle of the space. D) The later development of the Exchange Values on the table: A round table social sculpture exchange. Images sourced from www.exchange-values.org

Through social sculpture connective practice (explored in depth in Section 1.6) Sacks engaged consumers, producers and other citizens in group conversations that were linked to specific bananas and their reference numbers. Together they explored various questions that surrounded the complexities and invisible qualities of the world economy, the banana always existing in these processes as the connective artefact that citizens engaged with, as it moves through the economic ecology on a daily basis. Sacks (2002:6) described her inspiration:

I found myself possessed by an image of sheets of blackened banana skin, strung up around the walls of a gallery, like dark uniform rectangles of minimalist art. On closer contact, one might realise that these apparently seamless and silent forms (that echo the ways we have collected and pinned out, not only butterflies, but lives and

cultures) were skins, the skins of people's lives and of an economic process in which the interconnections between consumers and producers are manipulated and concealed.

Sacks collected the final set of banana skins that were to be transformed into banana pelts in 1996 over conversations and exchanges with people on the streets in the UK who collectively ate over 3000 bananas (See Figure 1B). Assisted at the time mainly by her young daughters Rosa and Khanya (among others) they gave each 'banana-eater' the corresponding serial number for the banana grower. While eating the bananas, Sacks and the volunteer citizens who came across the event would together explore questions about who the banana growers might be and what their lives might be like. Using these skins collected she created 20 large banana skin pelts corresponding to each banana grower's number (See Figure 1A).

Sacks later travelled (accompanied by her eight year old daughter Rosa) to the Windward Islands to attempt to make contact with farmers who grew these specific bananas. She took with her a small sample piece of her tanned and cured banana skin pelt. She found the farmers by tracking them down through the serial number that was connected to the bananas they grew. She reports standing in the rain, in the banana orchards, sometimes sheltering from the blistering sun, the pair openly explored the questions, challenges and desires of the farmers themselves, as well as sharing the struggles of being a consumer in the west, who is unable to know the person who grew the food we eat or understand the struggles of the grower¹⁹. Recordings from these conversations between consumer and grower could be heard through earphones underneath each dried skin made from the bananas from each farmer²⁰ when the hides were eventually exhibited in galleries and other venues across Europe and South Africa. If you were to stand in one of these exhibit spaces you would see twenty such banana panels filling the room. In the centre of the room, covering the floor (and from 2008 encased in a large round table) are over 10 000 unknown skins with no numbers, boxes or voices.

As part of this work, Sacks over the years invited various different stakeholders, as well as ordinary citizens to sit around the table of 10 000 unknown skins (see Figure 1D). In these sessions each person was able to explore their questions, concerns and ideas of the world

¹⁹ Personal description from Sacks (2012), at the Social Sculpture Research Unit, Oxford Brookes University.

²⁰ These recordings can also be heard online at www.exchange-values.org

economy in a new form of conference or round-table discussion. The only difference was that the invisible participants were embodied in the centre of the table through the dried unknown skins. In this way each participant seated around the table was drawn in to imagine the people behind the invisible story of the world economy. With no particular outcome planned, Sacks guided this process, in the role of what she referred to as 'Responsible Participant' as she claimed "there was no facilitator necessary, there was nothing to moderate or mediate"²¹.

In these discussions Sacks guided a new form of social exchange, within which participants could come to locate themselves in the contemporary world economy through their own imaginations, and their own motivations, within an entirely new social arena. Absent from this arena were the traditional social norms of conferencing, or meeting; instead there was an embodied exchange between each participant, which illustrated the ecological nature of our economy through a connective experience. I say 'ecological' as it was an experience of the interconnection of relationships. Significant to the inspiration for this process were the early ideas of Joseph Beuys (who influenced Sack's work substantively and the wider field of social sculpture research), who claimed that: "Every human being is an artist, a freedom being, called to participate in transforming and reshaping the conditions, thinking and structures that shape and inform our lives..." (Beuys, quoted in Nairne, 1987: 9)

With a specific and expanded understanding of these ideas, and with a wealth of experience in developing methods that could enable Beuys's expanded conception of art, Sacks had enabled each participant to encounter their imaginations, their ability to listen and explore questions and their conversations as forces that can transform their inner realities, while also having an effect on their personal agency. I was attracted to these processes in this research, and was interested to – through applied, embodied reflexive experience - examine whether such processes could be viewed as social learning processes, and / or be seen as a methodological development of expanding capacities for embodying ecological citizenship, of which I provide further evidence for, and discussion of, in the body of this thesis (see also

²¹ First mentioned in a recording of Exchange Values in Switzerland this concept of 'Responsible Participant' was articulated through work Shelley Sacks developed via observations her daughter Rosa van Wyk made of how people participated in these conversations. I explore in depth this concept of Responsible Participant in my own reflexive and applied implementation of social sculpture practice, and other forms of facilitative practice in Chapters Two, Three and Five. The purpose of this reflexive applied work was to engage in a fully embodied experience of social sculpture, in order to understand its power and potential as a social learning process (see Chapter seven).

Chapter seven. As I saw it at the time of conducting my research, *Exchange Values* was and is essentially a potentially interesting form of social learning²² process that rigorously explores the personal imaginal and empathetic experiences of each human being seated around the table. At the time Sacks (2007a) had no idea that this work would inspire and engage so many people from so many different worlds and disciplines. Since it began it has contributed significantly to the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, the development of the World Banana Forum housed in the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) in Rome, as well as helped organisations like Banana-link²³ improve relationships between the Winward Island's Farmers Association and European consumers. It has also made some significant contributions to the Fair Trade movement²⁴, showing its wider social learning impacts, even though these are not named as such by Sacks.

When Sacks (2007a: 1) reflected on *Exchange Values* she described it as:

... not simply a catalyst for discussion or an instrument for promoting an issue ... but rather as a social sculpture and an imaginative space where inner and outer work coincide. Working actively with it in all these different contexts, over such a long period, has borne this out and provided the opportunity to further explore the social sculpture ideas, in particular, connections between the aesthetic and eco-social responsibility. Many people, including farmers' representatives, activists, artists, academics, citizenship educators and of course, consumers, have engaged with the project at each venue, and participated in discussions about the economic, social and ecological issues involved; about our notion of progress; about agriculture and our relationship to food; about the way the project works; how one assesses its 'effectiveness'; and the value of forms of engagement that do not depend on discursive information alone.

Sacks, who worked closely with Beuys and his original works, and subsequently went on to further expand and develop his idea of 'social sculpture' into an entire research field, has made some specific contributions to various disciplines, but of particular value to my research is her unique approach to learning and agency of the ecological citizen; which I was

²²While this process resembles a form of social learning practice and is guided by a Responsible Participant who takes over the role of facilitation using an alternative connective practice methodology, it must be mentioned that the approach is significantly different to conventional facilitation. This unique approach to facilitation is explored in detail in Chapters Two and Three.

²³Banana Link is an organisation set up in 1996 (during the *Exchange Values* project) with the aim to campaign for a fair and sustainable banana trade. The World Banana Forum was created later in 2009 as a space for governments, researchers and civil society to discuss the various problems facing the banana sector and to work together to find common solutions. Allistair Smith, the co-founder of both of these organisations participated in the *Exchange Values* project in depth and agrees that the round-table and social sculpture methods were highly influential in how they later conducted their round table discussions in the setting up of these organisations.

²⁴This I discovered in interviewing various participants who engaged in this process such as Allistair Smith from Banana Link, and the ethical trading initiative, Renwick Rose the coordinator of the Winward Island Farmers Association and James Marriot from Platform UK. These interviews were part of my iterative reflexive inquiry into the field of social sculpture.

particularly interested in, given my concerns with the problem of ecological apartheid, expressed in Chapter 1. As I will show in the iterative and embodied, reflexive applied research process that I followed, drawing inspiration from the work of Beuys and Sacks, Sacks created an entirely novel and accessible approach to the capacity development and the 'learning socially' of an ecological citizen, which has application to other contexts and to a wider theorising of social learning as I propose in this study (see Chapter seven). Here it is important to note that I use the term 'learning socially' as I do not want to conflate Sack's social sculpture connective practice with the field of social learning, as Sacks, at the time of my research-based interactions with her, was predominately unaware of the field, and therefore developed her approach to social forms of learning and agency development independently from social learning theory. I return to this in Chapter six and seven of the thesis where I consider the embodied, reflexive approach that I took to the exploration of social sculpture and social learning in more depth.

In particular, in this research I describe the application and further development of the work of Sacks (and Beuys by association) and some of the methods and theories that have emerged from the latter work of Sacks in a South African context, in the context of an emergent pedagogical practice as being located in, but emergent from the field of social sculpture practice-based inquiry as modelled through Exchange Values. Before I go into detail into Sacks' development of learning and agency for the ecological citizen, I must mention two specific works by Beuys, which contributed also to some of the finer details of developing capacities for the ecological citizen, which Sacks drew on in the development of her own work. Sacks further expanded these from their early collaborations together between the 1970 and 80s (Sacks, 2004). I see my work as linking into this 'chain' of emergent scholarship in some way, and am therefore as indebted to the earlier work of Beuys as I am to the more recent development of this work by Sacks.

The first action that Beuys developed is *Honey Pump in the Work Place*, a social sculpture exhibited at Documenta VI in Kassel in 1977 and led by Joseph Beuys (described in more detail by Sacks, 2004). She explains the work was installed around the staircase of the Fridericianum Museum, and consisted of a series of tubes running into rooms adjacent to the staircase, through which two tons of liquid honey was pumped by a motor (see Figure 2). The

production of honey and the organisational system of bees in the hive were seen by Beuys to reflect human social systems. In this event, work towards developing the Free International University was developed; this was later founded collaboratively in 1972 (Tate Modern, 2012). The aim of this university was to enable Beuys' expanded concept of art, specifically the idea that 'everyone was an artist' and to promote the potential for creativity within each individual in response to social, economic, environmental and historical challenges. For 100 days Beuys (Sacks was involved for 90 days ²⁵) and many others who came and went, created a 'permanent conference' in which different agendas and proposals were explored through a detailed deliberative democratic process each week, while the honey moved through three different levels, from the basement, in the central conversation space, and up into the ceiling. The honey was continuously moving through the space and was a physical embodiment of Beuys' alchemical theory of sculpture (which I will elaborate on in Chapters Five and Six, and later on in this chapter). In Beuys' (2004: 46) words: "Since the Free International University is also engaged very intensively with the circulation of capital, this is a very good symbol for this work: an organic, material circulation, or an organic circulation of money like a human being's blood circulation ...". The honey pump, enabled a 'connective practice'²⁶ that encouraged a unique form of social exchange and possibilities for learning. The honey pump, like a heart, enabled an emergent specific atmosphere and imaginative inspiration in the permanent conference, as Beuys (2004: 46) described:

... one can say the heart with its circulation represents a sensing, feeling, movement principle, and the head is the form principle, then the will element was still missing. So, with this machine one could say: all three important creative factors, the three most important structures were represented: thinking, feeling and movement and the power of the will. One didn't need to be familiar with such concepts or be able to identify them. One could just experience them; many people experienced them...

²⁵I discovered this through a personal communication with Sacks in September 2012, at Oxford Brookes University, in a lecture she gave to her MA class to which I listened.

²⁶A term Shelley Sacks uses to describe Social Sculpture's approach to working with aesthetics and agency which I explain in detail in Chapters Four and Five.



Figure 2: Joseph Beuys' 'Honey Pump in the Work Place'. A) Discussions and exchange in the central space with the honey in the circular pump in the background. B) Beuys setting up the honey pump in the basement. C) Beuys setting up the honey pump circulation system into the ceiling. Pictures sourced from Tate Modern, 2012

Around the same time (1971) Beuys co-founded the *Organisation for Direct Democracy*²⁷, and worked fervently using nearly all his exhibitions, actions, and lectures to explore his theory of sculpture with others, and attempted to further these ideas through new forms of social exchange (as described in more detail by Sacks, 2004). Sacks explains that between 1982 and 1987 in Kassel, Beuys created his last major work titled *7 000 Oaks*. Barnum (2012) explained that this social sculpture action was seen by many as an attempt to somehow approach the troubled psycho-social trauma left behind by the Third Reich and enable a citizen-led process to transform the conditions and consciousness that kept this trauma alive. Sacks (2012) however, clarified that it was actually intended as a deeper capacity development practice for citizenship, aiming to enable particular sensorial and

²⁷The Organisation for Direct Democracy was established by Beuys and others to initiate conversations on a range of topics including politics, economics, education, agriculture and art (Sacks, 2004).

reflective sensitivities of people in relation to their world (Sacks, 2012).

Barnum (2010) describes how in a square in the centre of the city, Beuys assembled a mound of 7 000 irregular, human-sized basalt columns. The columns were laid in such a way that they represented the thousands of bodies that were heaped in the square after the 1943 bombing of Kassel (Barnum, 2010). Each stone was purchased by donors, and over a period of about five years each stone was moved to a specific location in the city, decided on by the citizens, positioned upright and a young oak sapling planted next to each stone (Barnum, 2010): the stone equating death, the tree a symbol of life. He goes on to explain that the installation of the 7 000 oaks required a great deal of investment from the citizens of Kassel. His explanations reach into the current day, and he describes how the trees today tower over the stones, and have transformed not only the form of Kassel's sidewalks and roads, but also the collective feelings and attitudes associated with these places, enabling many people to 'come to their senses' or become aware of other capacities. Thus from these descriptions it is possible to see that Beuys's 7000 oaks continue to grow after his death, and this living phenomena he conjured remains within the hearts and minds of the citizens of Kassel. Barnum (2010) summarises this by suggesting that Beuys, was not only working with the stones and trees, but he was working with the relationship of the people with their environments, and the prevailing set of attitudes associated with memories of places in Kassel. In essence he used the physical sculpture of the ancient Druid practice of working with stones and trees, and promoted a social sculpture where people were able to engage with their environment (Barnum, 2010). My reading of this is that their ideas and values were surfaced through a rich exchange that enlivened their imaginations and their consciousness, and developed a form of socially facilitated learning which enabled participants to approach their own inner values and expression of citizenship.

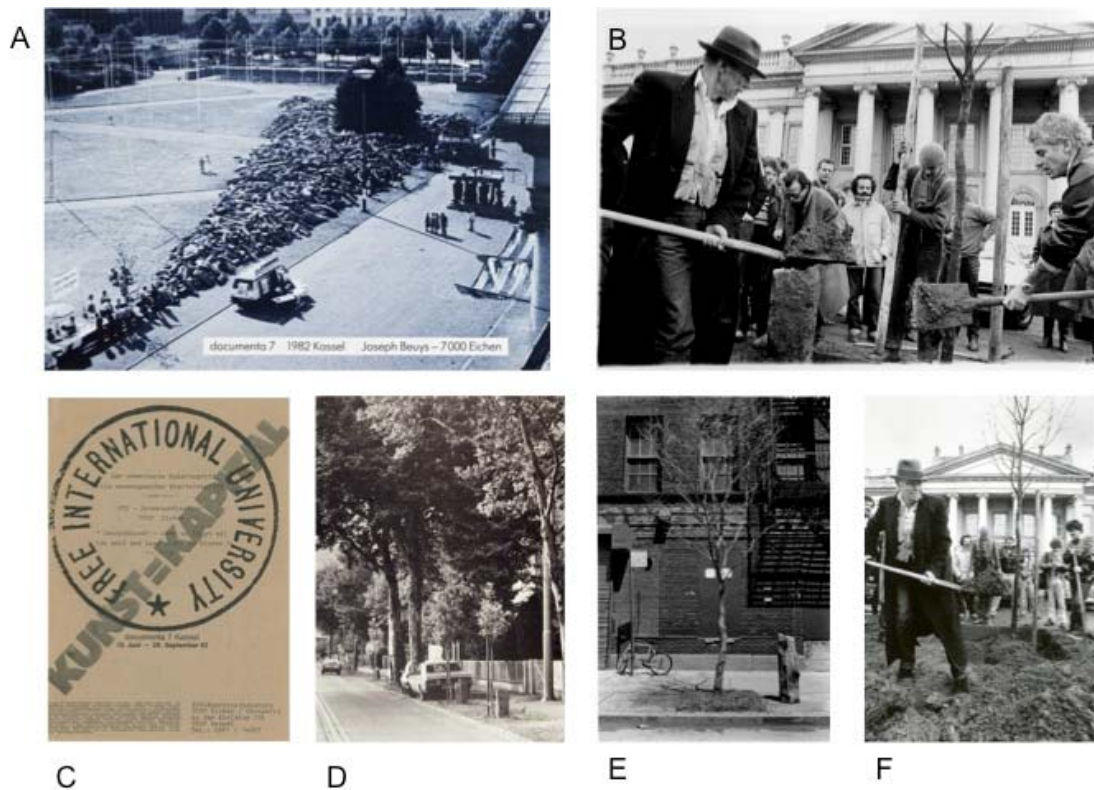


Figure 3: Joseph Beuys' 7000 oaks. A) 7000 granite pillars before planting, B) and F) Beuys and other citizens planting the first tree. C) The Free International University flyer for 7000 oaks, E) A tree standing with pillar beside it. Pictures sourced from Tate Modern (2012).

From this it is possible to see that in the establishment of social sculpture projects like the Free International University and the Organisation for Direct Democracy, and through actions like Honey Pump in the Work Place and 7000 Oaks, Beuys began to build the theoretical framework for a new approach to citizenship, which according to Beuys himself (2004) was founded on the idea that everyone was an artist, and that through the recognition and manipulation of 'invisible materials' such as conversations, inner motivations, the imagination, questions and so on one was able to actively transform the outer conditions that shape our lives (Beuys, 2004: 9). Yet it was the work of Shelley Sacks in various actions and social sculpture projects (before and after Beuys' death), and in the founding of the Social Sculpture Research Unit (SSRU) at Oxford Brookes University, that specific pedagogic strategies and other associated learning practices were developed from this earlier work. Sacks also expanded the social sculpture discourse through specific practice-led inquiry using social sculpture methods that she developed over the years which can be seen in her published work (Sacks, 1997;1998; 2004; 2007a,b; 2011a,b,c,d), in her social sculpture projects such

as Thought Banks²⁸, Exchange Values, University of the Trees²⁹, Ord des Treffens and in her masters and doctoral programme at Oxford Brookes University. It can also be seen in the support that she provided me in the exploratory work that I conducted in this research to develop the Earth Forum social sculpture practice as a mechanism for my interest in the reflexive embodied exploration of this form of social learning. The details of the generous support she provided me for this exploratory form of research is captured in Chapter three where the methodology and process of this study is explained in more detail.

For the purposes of my research and research interest, I consider Shelley Sacks' most significant contribution to developing pedagogies for ecological citizenship, to be her redefinition of an aesthetic that involves evolving a new exploration of what freedom means, and how freedom is attained by the citizen. Inspired by 'connective aesthetics', a concept developed by Suzi Gablik (1992), Sacks (2011d) further evolved this theory into methodology and expanded social sculpture theory. Aesthetics for Sacks is now termed 'connective practice' that enables an 'ability to respond' (2011d). Taking the problems with traditional questions of citizenship where agency emerges from moral imperatives, Sacks (2011d) further saw that real agency must emerge from the human being's own motivation or 'inner necessity' (a term Beuys used). In a redefinition of the word 'responsibility', Sacks asks the question: what does it mean to be *response - able*? From the description above, one can trace a close emergent 'connectivity' between the work of Sacks and Beuys, which is also based on her actual participation in the practices that he developed. This was of methodological interest to me, in my explorations into social learning as outlined in this study.

Sack's work raised for me the question of how one develops a human being's capacity to respond from an inner motivation or inner necessity? In Sacks' (2011d) view, responsibility is not an ethical imperative or value one is taught, but rather emerges from our own inner abilities to act or respond; this enables an exploration of freedom through an enlivened embodied inquiry. This had significant methodological implications for my study, which is why I established it as a reflexive, embodied enquiry as explained in Chapter three.

²⁸ Explored in detail in Kelley (2007: 145)

²⁹ <http://www.universityofthetrees.org/>

The meaning of 'aesthetics' from Sacks' (2011d) perspective comes from the root of the word, meaning the opposite of 'anaesthetic' or 'numbness'; hence the term takes on meaning which goes beyond questions of taste or beauty synonymous with our traditional understandings of art and aesthetics. Sacks' definition of Social Sculpture connective practice refers to anything that enlivens or engenders inner activity within the human being³⁰ (Sacks, 2011d). In this interpretation of responsibility (as an ability to respond), freedom and responsibility are intimately intertwined, as this *response(ability)* emerges from an inner necessity or could be related to what Sen (1993) referred to as "valued beings and doings" (Sacks herself has not related her work to the capabilities theory of Sen).

This personal agency is at the same time embedded in societies, with specific social-cultural histories, but from which emancipation is achieved through a connective practice. In my view, this can be seen to relate to Sen's (1993) capabilities theory which concerned itself with the idea of 'ethical individualism'³¹. I explore in more detail in Chapter Six the concept of 'moral intuition' and 'moral imagination' that emerged through the work of Rudolf Steiner, Fredrique Schiller and more recently Wolfgang Imitdick and how they relate to this body of work too.

I found Sacks' contribution to be distinct however (as I will show through my own reflexive and applied exploration of her methodology and theories in South Africa) as she is ultimately concerned with developing methods, pedagogies and connective practices, while also expanding theory. She seeks to enable an approach to learning and personal agency development that lends itself to collective agency development, and the facilitation of an accessible embodied ecological citizenship for the 21st century (although her work also extends beyond the focus of ecological citizenship). I considered Sacks' connective practice in developing *response(ability)* as a potentially effective and particular methodological and pedagogical response to the embodied ecological citizenship called for by Reid and Taylor (2000), and as also explored and expanded on in this thesis and in my reflexive and applied research work building on the earlier work of Beuys, Sacks and related scholars such as Sen,

³⁰ This enlivening practice of Sacks is an expansion of the concept of Schiller (1965) and his 'aesthetic education of man', in which he refers to this enlivening characteristic as 'play'.

³¹ Ethical individualism postulates that individuals are the ultimate units of moral concern, but does not disconnect individuals from society (i.e. should not be conflated with ontological individualism) - in Robeyns (2005)

Steiner and others.

1.7. WARMTH WORK: AN ALTERNATIVE THEORY OF SCULPTURE

The artist Joseph Beuys³² said “Before we discuss how we should act, we must discuss how we must think”. Similarly Sacks (2012) mentioned in an interview: “human beings are capable of dancing together, singing together, playing together, cooking together, but really seem to struggle to think together [in new ways], and so our work in Social Sculpture is to enable and develop new ways of thinking together”.

Val Plumwood (2002) called for people who can open our culture to self criticism and make us think harder about our big assumptions, to think differently as we begin to cope and respond to the challenges of climate change. Foucault (1986), in his work on genealogy, knowledge and power, highlighted the importance of exploring how and to what extent it is possible for us to think differently, so that we do not continue to legitimise what is already known. I would add that, with regard to the education of the ecological citizen, and drawing on the insights gained from exploration of the work of Beuys and Sacks (reported above) that there is a need to enable intuitive, personally located forms of thinking. Seeking ways of engaging with, and providing this is the contribution of this thesis and is explored extensively in Chapter Six and Seven.

Beuys' theory of sculpture attended to the practice of thinking differently that provides the theoretical foundations for social sculpture and can be applied to developing alternative pedagogies for the ecological citizen. Inspired by the work of Rudolf Steiner (1924) and Goethe (1952a) among others, Beuys' theory of sculpture resembles that of an alchemical process. This theory is further expanded on in Chapter Two, but essentially incorporates three states of being: 'chaos – movement – form', which are related to the alchemical stages of sulphur – mercury – salt (Sacks, 2007b). As explained by Sacks (ibid), in this theory, the human being has the potential to move (movement/mercury) between states of unlimited potential to be shaped (chaos/sulphur) to states of hardened attitudes, habits, perspectives, systems (form/salt) (see Table 1). The mercurial force is cultivated in developing an 'inner

³²Beuys' statement dated 1973, first published in English in Caroline Tisdall: *Art into Society, Society into Art* (ICA, London, 1974), p.48.

necessity' or personal motivation, and is related to our sensorial capacities, reflexive abilities and the interplay between these and developing response(ability) (Sacks, 2012).

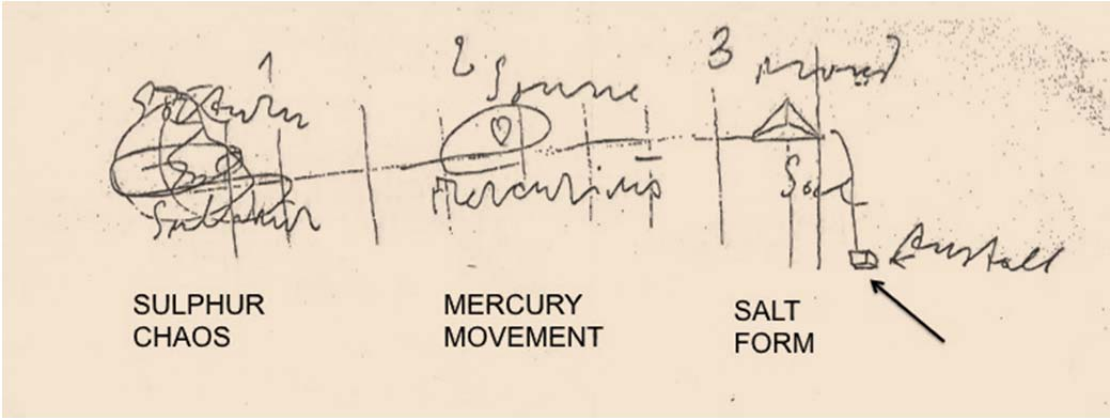


Figure 4: Sketch by Joseph Beuys on his theory of sculpture. Incidentally the arrow on the bottom right shows a square box, where Beuys has written “Ausfall” which directly translated means ‘failure’ or in this case a falling out of evolution. Sacks (2012) described this as a result of when formative forces extend beyond natural laws and human beings create something that cannot be re-integrated into nature, such as nuclear waste. It is also important to note that although sketched as a linear phenomenon, Beuys indeed described the movement into these different states of being as interconnected, and possible in any dimensions (Sacks, 2012). Image sourced from Shelly Sack’s social sculpture handout notes at the SSRU.

Table 1: The states of being experienced in Joseph Beuys’ theory of sculpture (as described by Sacks, 2007b). I added to this list through personal communication with Sacks (2012).

CHAOS	MOVEMENT	FORM
SULPHUR	MERCURY	SALT
UNLIMITED POTENTIAL	ABILITY TO TRANSFORM	HARDENED REALITIES
WILL	FEELING	THOUGHT
SATURN	SUN	MOON
COLD	WARMTH	COLD
FEET	HEART	HEAD

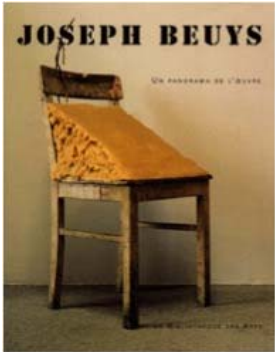


Figure 5: Joseph Beuys: 'Fat Concept': A) Fat chair. B) Fat in a corner, the darkness around the corner of fat is the fat seeping into the wall. The fat in this instance is made from margarine. Both embody Beuys’ theory of sculpture and the possibility for mobilising and ‘warming up’ solidified forms.

As Sacks explained in her lecture at the SSRU in 2012, the mercurial aspect, or the movement aspect within this continuum of possibilities, is what Beuys described as ‘warmth work’. Sacks explains further that This is the potential of each human being to enliven and transform conditions in their lives,

including the invisible attitudes or agendas that exist within ourselves (Sacks, 2012). The formative forces, as well as the chaotic potential in our society and in our physical world, has the potential to be transformed through 'warmth work', not to mention the chaotic and formative forces within our own mindsets or personal dogmas. The connective practice or response(ability) that Sacks (2007b; 2011d) defined as engendering of inner activity, or cultivating an ability to respond, is an example of warmth work, and indeed can be seen as an evolution of Beuys' theory of social sculpture and alchemical understanding of sculpture. Beuys (1977) also spoke of the "the warmth character of thought" which can be seen as the warmth that softens fat or wax³³, and does not refer to sentimental emotional warmth, but rather to the ability to enliven, transform and warm up cold formative forces or – through wilful action – distil chaotic disordered forces. From my perspective, it would seem that this lends itself to how we approach learning in social settings, and the development of ecological citizenship, as it is possible to surmise that the pedagogy required is one in which 'warmth work' (that is enabled through inner mobilisation) can be experienced and enabled into action. While this conception may be seen as abstract, it has been embodied early on in Beuys' sculptural actions in fat, wax and felt, which were seen as embodied concepts (see Figure 5), but also later on in his development of the Free International University, and even later in Sacks' projects, Exchange Values and University of the Trees. It was something that I was interested in for the development of the Earth Forum social sculpture practice which became a core focus of this study as explained in Chapter Three.

1.8. ETHICS OF REPRESENTATION

This doctoral research spans 18 months pre-doctoral exploratory practice-based inquiry, and three more formal years of practice-based inquiry explorations as reported in Chapter Three. This journey was one in which I explored various different genres and crossed disciplines in order to explore the questions of enabling ecological citizenship, in South Africa and ultimately in wider places in the world. In order to document this process in a meaningful and articulate form, I drew heavily on Laura Ellingson's (2009) theory of crystallisation for

³³ The warmth work concept was explored through specific embodied artworks developed throughout Beuys' life. Two examples are offered in Figure 5 A and B. These were not expected to be understood rationally, but instead were attempts at embodying and sensing the conceptual theory of social sculpture conceived by Beuys (Sacks, 2012).

methodological and reflexive guidance (explored in more detail in Chapter Two when discussing my methodology), Ellingson (2009) responded to the shortcomings of grounded theory, arts based enquiry and auto-ethnography in researchers' abilities to accommodate and meaningfully represent multiple ways of knowing. I found this multifaceted approach to tracking an evolving phenomenon (in my case an evolving reflexive and embodied practice and iterative journey through theory) extremely useful. This thesis is what Ellingson (2009) would describe as a multiple-genre text, within which a shifting tone emerges in different chapters in order to capture various nuances in the specific learning experiences, that of the participants and collaborators I worked with, but also within my own learning.

Due to the fact that this research accommodates multiple ways of knowing through multiple genres, it also challenges the prevalent representational forms of standard academic discourses. Sandra Kourtizin, Nathalie Piquemal and Renee Norman (2009) explored qualitative research that has challenged the orthodoxies of standard academic discourses, and through their case studies they investigated a wide range of interdisciplinary traditions and practices, and how these are translated into alternative forms of academic discourse. In light of such work, I aim to present this thesis in a similar way and have relied on Ellingson (2009) and Kourtizin et al.'s (2009) work to form a cohesive methodological support in the structure of my writing that accommodates the vigorous and multifaceted components of this work. The way in which I have captured the experiences of participants in this work also aims to ensure I do not misrepresent the experiences of those human beings that contributed their personal insights and experiences of learning. My methodological approaches for writing and analysis were strongly influenced by the strategies Ellingson (2009) used for ethical decision making in crystallisation:

- When making claims, I did so with the trust and the permission of the participants, and mindful of my addition to the collective body of knowledge in the discipline;
- I continually reminded myself of the structured nature of all accounts and the ethical responsibility to do no harm, and to write in ways that promote social justice;
- I resisted easy categories: I aimed to avoid oversimplification, provide space for marginalised voices, contextualise claims to illustrate the complex of individual experience with larger social realities;

- I conducted member checks: I invited participants to respond to my findings (written, film and audio versions of the work);
- I shared my process: I demystified my research process, by creating autoethnographic accounts of the process; and
- I was constantly reminded that no innocent position exists: I resisted the urge to romanticise the participants' voices.

Ethical considerations for fieldwork were influenced by the social learning research group practices developed at Rhodes University within the Social Learning Research Network (Kulundu, 2010^b, drawn from Bassey, 1999) as well as work conducted by Sacks (2012):

- Take care to be as open and honest about the details of involvement as possible;
- Put emphasis on the voluntary aspect of involvement;
- Be sensitive to social diversity and complexity and various dimensions of social difference;
- Make sure that personal explorations into abilities to respond are kept confidential, and if personal narratives are to be used in analysis, participants are consulted, and identities protected (those who are named in this thesis have given their permission);
- Filming, voice recording, and other forms of documentation, were practised with the informed consent of the participants;
- Continual reflection on the part of the Responsible Participant and with participants to encourage thoughtful action;
- Being devoted to 'being present' (Scharmer, 2007) in my engagement as a Responsible Participant (Sacks, 2012).

It must also be noted that within my intuitive ethical approach (which I examine both in Chapter Two and in Chapter Five) and my practice as a Responsible Participant, I have been influenced by Steiner's (1995) conception of an ethical imagination. This is a concept of Sacks (2011f) that I further developed through my own exploration into moral intuition or what Steiner (1995) calls "moral imagination". In addition to this, and considering the participatory and emancipatory nature of this work, I also drew guidance from the 'Grounded Collaborative

Reciprocal Empowerment' concept developed by Piquemal and Allen (2009)³⁴. It explored ethical engagement as a shared responsibility and shared authority between research and research participants, or in this case Responsible Participant and participant citizens. The practices that I engaged with and explored in this work did not see the participants as vulnerable subjects without their own moral intuition, but rather sees informed consent being developed through a process that is constantly negotiated by all those involved in the practice as it evolves.

1.9. CORE FOCUS AND QUESTIONS

At the foundation of this study is an in-depth exploration of how a citizen learns to be an ecological citizen in the 21st century, within the context of ecological apartheid. The question of how is perhaps the primary and consistent formative force of this study and is what has guided my approach throughout. At the heart of this study was a question of methodological and pedagogical development. Some fundamental aims were established in investigating this central research question:

- *To create a new methodology that engaged a creative or arts based approach to social learning.* (This is mainly explored in Chapters Two and Three; and reflected on in Chapter Six and Seven).
- *To address personal and relational agency in response to ecological apartheid both within our inner natures and which we experience in the outside world* (i.e. our political and economic systems, our approach to education and environmentalism). (This is an essential key question which is explored throughout the thesis.)
- *To develop an intuitive and creative agency among ordinary citizens as a way of responding to inner disconnections, as well as enabling relational or social agency for transforming the conditions of the outer disconnections we experience.* This is later described as Response(ability) after Sacks (2011f). (This is explored throughout the thesis, with particular emphasis in Chapters Three, Four and Five.)

Exploring an effective and particular methodological and pedagogical response to enabling

³⁴ Piquemal and Allen (2009). Whose Story is it Anyway? Chapter 9 in Kouritzin, Piquemal and Norman (2009).

the agency of the embodied ecological citizen called for by Reid and Taylor (2000); as well as the need for environmental education in South Africa that is capability-centred and agency-based as called for by Lotz-Sisitka (2009), are explored through examining both my own intuitive and collaborative social learning practice and then later, Sacks' unique approach to learning and agency of the ecological citizen through social sculpture methodology, as applied to a new emergent social sculpture practice (Earth Forum) in which I played a strong leading generative role, supported by Sacks and others along the way.

It was clear through the early phase of exploratory research that response(ability) uses one's empathetic senses, personal and relational perceptivity and intuition to determine one's response or expression of agency, and so *how is this enabled and developed by a person was a methodological question I try to answer throughout the study*. Specifically:

- *In what way can I develop or enliven empathy and intuitive imagination (or what I later articulate as the 'I' sense) in myself and also in others, and how can this be achieved through a connective arts-based approach to social learning? (explored throughout the thesis, with particular emphasis in Chapters Five, Six and Seven).*

This study and the methodology it produced attempts to go beyond conventional forms of social learning for sustainability, and aims to expand, through connective practice, that which is intuitive and engages a connective aesthetic capacity development approach to 'learning socially' and also to social learning (as explained in Chapter Seven):

- *How this can be done in accessible, replicable and non-institutional settings was an important aspect of the research question for this study, and remained the greater educational question of this work (explored in Chapter Four).*
- *Considering this, I also was concerned with how this form of pedagogical development and expansion contribute to participative parity and reflexive justice (explored in Chapter Four).*

This was addressed through an in-depth reflexive and embodied collaborative practice-led inquiry with citizens in a wide variety of contexts, combined with an iterative practice of location, in which actions and findings were constantly reflected on and compared with other

research. In the case of examining social sculpture practice, this was done through interviews with social sculpture practitioners, predominantly Shelley Sacks, as well as examining the available literature (see Chapter Three), and through ongoing embodied reflexive engagement with the emergent social sculpture practice named 'Earth Forum' which was co-operatively developed, although I played a leading generative role in its creation (see Chapter Three).

Throughout the body of this text, the reader will notice a hive of activity present in the form of footnotes. The footnotes track my iterative process of locating this work in the wider theoretical landscape, and this forms part of my auto-ethnographic examination of my own learning (reflexivity in relation to embodied experience). It also contributes to the multiple-genred text. One can see these footnotes as artefacts of learning and of agency development, something Gell (1998) would have called 'indices of agency'.

1.10. RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCESS

This study was conducted in four distinct phases, with each phase a progression of work achieved in the previous phase. While these research areas are distinct, they are also deeply interconnected, as some aspects of the work were re-examined in each phase, with either greater depth, different contexts, or alternative emphases. These four phases included an initial (A) exploratory research phase, (B) a trialling phase, and (C) an expansion phase, with (D) an iterative stage.

- A. *Exploratory Phase*: This consisted of a reflection on the earlier practice work and problems; it included contextual profiling, literature research and methodological exploration which allowed for the major set-up of the study. This earlier work focused mainly on attempting to conduct social learning facilitation in a more creative way, with a particular concern for enabling personal agency (explored mainly in Chapters Two and Three).
- B. *Trialling Phase*: This phase consisted of further developing methods that were explored in the previous phase, and then expanded. At this point a basic Earth Forum methodology and basic pedagogy were collaboratively created, and then trialled through the Climate Train journey across South Africa (explored mainly in Chapter Four).

- C. *Expansion Phase*: Through deep rigorous personal and collaborative reflection on what occurred in the previous phase, a deeper exploration into the pedagogical process and question of learning through apprenticeship, was explored. This further expanded the Earth Forum methodology itself as well as the wider implementation of the Earth Forum pedagogy (explored mainly in Chapter Five).
- D. *Iterative Phase*: The final phase consisted of a deep reflection on the work, through a combination of systematic examination of personal ethnographic reflections, interviews and reflections of participants and participant researchers, audio recordings, and filmed data to contribute to a wider reflection within the theoretical landscape, and from the privileged perspective obtained through hindsight. This iteration knitted together the phases into a coherent systematic examination of the initial questions around agency development and creative forms of socially constituted learning (explored mainly in Chapter Six and Seven, but the iteration can be seen throughout the thesis). In the final analysis, this study makes its contribution to the the field of education and learning in its widest meaning sense, and this required a final reflexive review of the study's contribution to this area (Chapter Seven³⁵).

In addition to these phases, a pre-registration short contextual profiling project in 2008 contributed to formulation of my initial research questions for the proposal development. This came in the form of the '10 Green Bottles of Colesburg' project, which is described in Chapter Three. Figure 6 below provides a graphic representation of the temporal setting of the four distinct research phases.

³⁵ This expanded reflexive view of the study as a whole from an educational perspective (see Chapter seven) was requested by one of the thesis examiners, and therefore forms part of the auto-ethnographic reflexive orientation of this study.

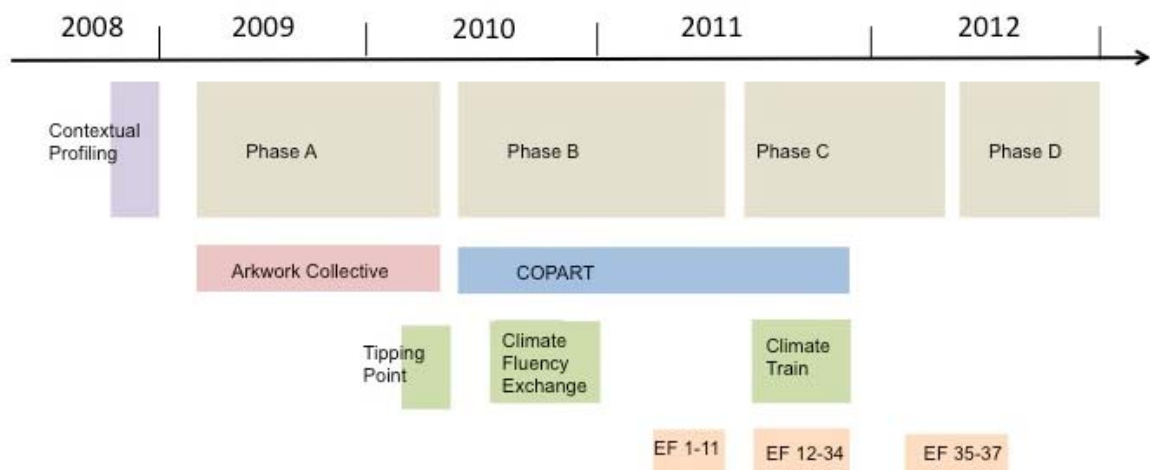


Figure 6: A graphic representation of the four major phases of the study, including details of projects and practices that occurred in the study which will be elaborated on in the subsequent chapters. Phases - A: Exploratory Phase; B: Trialling Phase; C: Expansion Phase; and D: Iterative Phase. EF = Earth Forum, the associated numbers refer to the specific individual Earth Forums which are documented in Tables 4, 5 and 6.

The entire study was tracked using a **case record**, which included a variety of physical data sets. These included audio recordings and associated transcripts (a total of 86 hours, with 29 hours dedicated to interactions with Shelley Sacks and the Social Sculpture Research Unit at Oxford Brookes University); video recordings (which can be seen on the attached CD, as well as on youtube links); creation and co-creation of five separate websites and blogs; stored email dialogue between various collaborators in the project including Shelley Sacks, Maria Honig, Elizabeth Fletcher and others; handouts and notes from lectures and seminars I was invited to at the SSRU; a systematic journal recording everything that occurred from the beginning of the research study, right through to the final iterative stages of writing³⁶; and finally a documentation of my own personal inner conversation that is reflected in footnotes and thoughts through various drafts of completing the thesis. This case record was used to keep track of the different stages of learning I undertook through this process, as well as a means to differentiate the different contributions and ideas as they emerged in the collaborative inquiry. The case record was a vital component of the project as it enabled for systematic reflection and a rigorous reflexive approach to the developments of the research. The case record also offered me a valuable opportunity to restate my ontological position, by exploring the narratives and happenings from various perspectives.

³⁶ This journal also included when and where I came across different literature and ideas, concepts and theories, as I was then able to track how these influenced my thinking and agency, and what role these theories and concepts played in the direction in which the study tended.

1.11. THESIS LAYOUT

Chapter One, is an introduction to the theoretical landscape within which I locate this work, beginning with the introduction of the specific challenge of responding to ecological apartheid, and the subsequent aesthetic education of the ecological citizen that is needed. Special reference is made to the field of social sculpture, and its underlying methodologies that show promise in enabling learning and agency of the ecological citizen. An examination of the multiple-genre approach of this text, as well as the iterative auto-ethnographic practice embodied in the text is highlighted. Chapter One provides a wide, yet superficial description of the research design and process, and mainly focuses on aspects of phase A (exploratory research).

Chapter Two provides the methodological outline, which shows both the methodological approach of this study as well as the exploratory methodological examination of the reflexive practice-led research approach that I undertook. I include details of both the iterative process, as well as the auto-ethnographic documentation of the process. I also include a detailed description of the most significant and wider applied method of the Earth Forum social sculpture which became the core research process of the study. This chapter mainly describes aspects of phase B (trailing) and C (expansion), as its main focus is on the Earth Forum methodology; however several aspects of phase A are covered in this section.

In Chapter Three I explore the journey leading up to Earth Forum and the development of my own reflexive practice-led inquiry into alternative forms of learning socially through a connective aesthetic approach. I first consider this research process as clumsy and later discover through iteration and personal implementation of social sculpture practice, that it can be described as alchemical, within Beuys' theory of sculpture context. I also explore the early developments and implementation of Earth Forum in different communities and regions of South Africa. This chapter explores mainly phases A and B.

In Chapter Four I track the implementation of Earth Forum across South Africa in twelve different towns on the Climate Train social mobilisation and environmental education project, which I helped to establish. I document specific Earth Forum processes as a means to

articulate the finer details of the process, and describe how these contribute to ecological citizen development. I offer detailed reflections of participants, as well as evidence from my own auto ethnographic writing. This chapter is primarily a documentation of phase B (trialling).

Chapter Five sees the exploration into pedagogical questions I came across in developing Earth Forum as a learning programme. Within this I carefully detail the specific capacities that are focused on in Earth Forum itself, and how these contribute to the development of the ecological citizen. Specifically I explore active listening, imaginal and empathetic literacy, as well as the concept of moral intuition and moral imagination. Chapter Five is mainly a documentation of phase C (expansion).

Finally, in Chapter Six and Seven I summarise some of the key lessons emerging from this work, and examine the applicability and efficacy of Earth Forum as a pedagogical instrument and practice for the education of the ecological citizen. I explore what potential contributions the field of social sculpture may offer social learning theory and alternatives to activism. I also examine social sculpture theory through my own reflexive, embodied, practice-led inquiry into this field, concluding with final notes on the relationship between learning and agency within the context of this research and in the development of an educational practice for ecological citizenship. Chapter seven further explores several assumptions of education and provides a new context and perspective of education for the ecological citizen. This phase reflects back on all the phases of the study, with also a deeper reflection on phase D (iteration).

CHAPTER TWO

EMPATHY IN PRACTICE

“What Nature leaves bare the human psyche fills.”

Butala, (1995:88)

2.1 SUMMARY

This research project seems ambitious, as it seeks to research subtle, seemingly invisible capacities that I and others³⁷ consider fundamental in the agency development of intuitive ecological citizens in the 21st century. These capacities are inherent in each human being, yet have been silenced or undervalued in various ways in our contemporary society in our response to complex social and ecological challenges, which as explained earlier are either dominated by technical approaches to sustainability and ecological activism (technocentric), or by removing human beings from the picture (biocentric) (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Gonzalez-Gaudiano and Buenfil-Burgos, 2009; Irwin, 2010). In this chapter I explore not a predetermined methodology, but an unfolding, emergent reflexive methodology, which I describe through an iterative process that aims to find an alternative to both technocentric and biocentric responses to sustainability. While I did indeed start this research with some very clear questions, that I have held throughout, I also started with a basic approach or practice that I knew would be shaped and transformed through my action, as in action research. Yet in this process I moved away from the traditions of action research and entered into the realm of aesthetic agency, connective aesthetics, connective practice and reflexive practice-based research as articulated mainly in the field of social sculpture. Keeping track of my own learning, and subsequently the learning of others throughout, is perhaps the major methodological issue examined in this chapter. The methodological transformation of this research is however also reflected on in later chapters in order to distill distinct ideas and concepts, within specific contexts.

At the very core of this methodology is researching the relationship between inner and outer observation through imaginal thinking (Sacks, 2007-2011) and contemplative observation. I

³⁷These include Beuys (1974, 1977, 2004), Sacks (2007-2011), Kaplan (2002), Zumdick (2011), Zajonc (2003, 2006), Scharmer (2007) and Hilman (1998).

explore distinct forms of phenomenological practice that have been developed in the field of social sculpture, in order to understand social learning in my various small and large research actions over the past three years. As I mentioned in the previous chapter I also show how I used a combination of auto-ethnographic writing and Ellingson's (2009) multiple-genre approach to writing for qualitative research and the use of collaborative reflexive exchange with participants in my research and with other researchers in field of social sculpture and similar fields. With this I was able to iterate and place my actions and findings into a methodological and theoretical landscape. Throughout this thesis, footnotes are used to reflect on the iterative journey I travelled in articulating my lived personal experience and practice through the existing research of others that spans various different disciplines and methodologies. I end this chapter with describing in detail the exact methodology of Earth Forum, the refined methodological form that developed into the primary focus of this thesis. The story of how I came to develop this final form, supported by others including Shelley Sacks, is described in detail in Chapter Three, which is referred to as a 'clumsy alchemy'. As mentioned already, I later discovered this iterative form and process to be similar to a form of social sculpture practice-based research used in aesthetic education. However, as this research sought not only to implement this form of practice-based research, but also to reflexively review it, I refer throughout to the research approach as **reflexive** practice-based research.

2.2.INNER AND OUTER REFLECTION

This research project was in a constant state of flux, or as Kaplan (2002) would describe, an unfolding process that accommodated emergence. My primary goal was to seek out methods and strategies that could contribute significantly to developing and enriching capacities that encourage ecological citizenship, with any person, in any context. This required a constant contemplative and reflexive process that would ensure I could keep track of the developments (both subtle and obvious) in the research, hence the emphasis on reflexive practice-based research outlined above. I therefore employed several different strategies. Some I kept working on throughout the entire process; others I dropped, as I did not find them useful. In Chapter Three, I show what at first seemed like a clumsy process of refining and developing a methodology, which I, only in hindsight, was able to articulate as **reflexive practice-based**

research, an alternative to *action research*³⁸. Throughout the course of the three years I maintained a deep reflective practice in the form of documenting with journal writing and sketching, as well as consulting with the ancient Chinese text: the *I Ching*³⁹ or *Book of Changes*, almost every day. The journalling process allowed me to track everything, from conscious to sub-conscious thoughts, feelings, impulses, ideas, images, and dreams. Nothing was off limits in this journal⁴⁰, and it helped me notice subtle changes in my thinking along this personal and communal odyssey. I have been working with the *I Ching* for the past seven years and have always found it incredibly helpful, in making decisions, considering complex ideas, reflecting on a conversation, or trying to make sense of dreams. I have found with each hexagram I explored that intuitively some aspects of the text would resonate with me, while others would not; this allowed me to carefully locate, identify and further reflect on impulses or thoughts, and see how these were more significant than others. I liked to see my journals and the *I Ching* as a mirror for my imagination or inner space; they reflected things I could not usually see in my own inward gaze, therefore offering a new form of objectivity or what Hurssel (1929) describes as intersubjectivity.

Another process I adopted was reflection in verbal exchange with my partner, friends, family, and as the research progressed, with various other citizens. I was able to follow through with an idea by exploring it with someone I trusted. This allowed me to follow an impulse that has always fascinated me: the phenomenon of the social substance between each person. Acknowledging this substance and working with it, as well as exploring real opportunities for learning, offered specific insights into empathetic and imaginative listening capacities. I used these methods in tracking the transformative effects of the work I was doing as well as to help me research the specific learning that was taking place in others through noticing my own learning.

Through the work of Shelley Sacks and Wolfgang Zumdick (2011) and their deep interest in the philosophy of freedom through social sculpture practice, I became increasingly aware of

³⁸Practice-based research is seen in this context as a fundamental research process located within social sculpture theory. It differs from action research in various ways as can be seen in Section 2.4.1.

³⁹The *I Ching* is the world's oldest book that is still used in contemporary culture. It is the most widely used and revered book of Chinese wisdom and can be traced as the root of both Confucianism and Taoism. It contains the accumulated experience of over 2 500 years of diviners and sages, and beyond that of ancient oral traditions. I work with the Richard Wilhelm (1951) translation.

⁴⁰This journal forms part of the extensive case record of this thesis.

the relationship between our inner nature and the outer nature, not as separate entities but as interwoven components of each other. Both Sacks and Zumdick explore deeply the inner realities in relation to the outer world, and the consequences of working and developing the connections between inner/outer, individual/community, imagination/known in the development of a just ecological viable and more humane world. Sacks (2011d) considered that all challenges or crises, such as the ecological crisis, are 'opportunities for consciousness', and that these challenges are given to us; they can be seen as gifts and give us the opportunity to become free. Yet, as Sacks (2011d) explained, to fully obtain this freedom the human being needs to develop and enliven certain capacities that can contribute to intuiting and determining appropriate action, such as empathy and perception of interconnections, to imagine or to work with insights into what needs to be done. Yet this can only occur through an 'imaginative perception' (Sacks, 2011d) or what Zumdick (2011) calls the 'poetic continent' that we live in and with to see what needs to be done and to develop new forms. As Zumdick (2011) explained:

Instead of perceiving the world as outside ourselves, in a way that leads to manipulation and its use, we are more able to understand what is seen, to let the images of the other world grow in us, to let them free. Outer forms will then be there in and for themselves, and not so much as things for our use or abuse ... things become more interesting to us, because we now can live them, and 'move' them in ourselves, see new interconnections, compare them, look for similarities and differences, research them in an artistic, imaginal way.

It is this inner/outer imaginal research process that I have employed through this project, and which is the primary capacity that this research in education is aiming to develop through pedagogies that enliven subtle unseen inner capacities that have a significant role to play in enabling the ecological citizen. These include but are not limited to: empathy, our ability to listen with our imaginations, our capacities to 'care at a distance'⁴¹ and moral intuition. These are capacities that are difficult to 'see' in traditional forms of research. But having a means to navigate my own inner realities and their interconnectedness to outer phenomenon was fundamental for this form of research. As Zumdick (2011) continues:

Our thinking itself is an organ, a thought organ, which lives and grows in the world of ideas and thought, because of this it is able to create an extensive inner world on one hand and come closer and closer the outer world on the other ... the more that things

⁴¹ 'Care at distance' is a term originally coined by James Hillman (1998), and used by Sacks to describe the imaginal empathic capacity developed through social sculpture practice. This concept is also contained in the notion of reflexive justice of Fraser (2008) and used in relation to climate change education (Lotz-Sisitka, 2009).

that surround us, are allowed to speak in us and reveal their wonder, the more we begin to uncover our connection to them ...

In 2011 in an address to the UeberLebenskunst events in Berlin, Sacks⁴² said: “Sustainability without the ‘I’ sense⁴³ is non-sense”. What she means is that without an inner understanding of oneself, one is unable to understand the needs of another, regardless if it is a human being or a tree. In this sense, having a deep clear understanding of my own inner processes, was fundamental in my ability to track the empathetic and imaginal learning opportunities in others.

As explored earlier in Sacks (2011d), developing capacities for ecological citizenship requires a form of learning that is not encouraging people to follow moralistic guidelines or regulations, but rather to develop their own ‘moral intuition’, which I explore in further depth in Section 6.1. This requires developing intuitive sensitivities, which Zumdick (2011) in his work on aesthetic education and poetic imagination of the human being for the 21st century described as the third force or third key capacity for social and ecological change. He explains that the first two forces of imagination and inspiration that occur through inward reflecting and experiences of inner and outer worlds are not fantasy or escapism, but really a phenomenological encounter⁴⁴ with the substances of both realities. They are preceded by this third intensified force of the ‘will’, which he described as what occurs when we are closely connected to an encounter. He also explains that our thinking and feeling is enhanced and we are mobilised and motivated internally in a way that propels us to act, which is derived from real encounters with the world, and so enables us to be less frantic and more confident in ourselves, to be more confident about what needs to be done, and we shift out stance from one of manipulation to one of reciprocity (Zumdick, 2011). This can also be linked to Sack’s work towards developing practices that encourage capacities for moral intuition.

⁴²The ‘I’ sense statement was first developed for a social sculpture process as part of the University of the Trees project for the UeberLebenskunst events, hosted by the Haus der Kulturen der Welt and the Bundeskultur Stiftung, Berlin, in May 2011. Sacks uses the ‘I’ Sense/Non-sense concept in a social sculpture action and has also used it other talks and events, such as at the Heinrich Boell Stiftungs’, Radius of Art, and international conference, Berlin 2012.

⁴³The ‘I’ Sense is one of the 12 senses articulated by Rudolf Steiner (1995) as a fundamental capacity for encountering another; it is explored in further depth in Section 2.2.4 later in this chapter.

⁴⁴I explore the phenomenological encounter and other forms of phenomenological practice later in this chapter, see Section 2.2.

Zumdick (2011) described our world today as a huge laboratory, where millions of people are looking for new forms of living, new forms of participation, new materials, and new techniques⁴⁵. Yet, as he argues, this laboratory also has to change from the technical, scientific, political and economic sense into a laboratory that also researches our inner abilities and potentialities: that investigates *Imagination*, *Inspiration* and *Intuition*. Zumdick (2011: 5) explained: “If we are able to realise this, our relationship to the outer world will become more and more responsive, and might better serve us in developing what is usually described as a sustainable future.”

In this research I sought to maintain a contemporary phenomenological vigilance to my own inner substance in relation to the outer world and inner experience of others as a strategy to observe and research the learning and capacity development of abilities for empathy, contemplative enquiry, listening, imagination, intuition and ultimately the agency or unique ability of an ecological citizen. This formed the core of the ‘embodied reflexivity’ that I refer to in relation to the practice-based inquiry involving the development of the Earth Forum social sculpture practice (also in this research an experiment in social learning). I did this inspired by Zumdick’s (2011) aesthetic education of the human being, which is a contemporary adaptation of Schiller’s (1965) idea of aesthetic education of man in the 18th century. This also inspires Sacks’ contribution to the expansion of the field of Social Sculpture, and draws on some of the strategies for reflection on inner and outer contemplation and action that I learned from her in theory and practice, and what I later came to understand as being influenced by Goethe, Heidegger, Steiner, Schiller, Beuys, Hillman and others.

2.3 A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EMPATHY

At the beginning of the 20th century Edmund Husserl (1929) articulated the philosophical discipline of phenomenology which would turn toward ‘the things themselves’, towards the world as it is experienced in its felt immediacy (Husserl, 1929 in Abram, 1996). According to Husserl’s (ibid.) description of phenomenology, it seeks not to explain the world, but to describe as closely as possible the way the world makes itself evident to the awareness, the way things first arise in our direct, sensorial experience. Phenomenology in its articulation at

⁴⁵As explored by Hawken (2007) in his book *Blessed Unrest*, which examines the many new responses emergent around the world.

the time led to some specific criticism of being 'inherently solipsistic' or in simpler terms, isolating the researcher inside his/her own solitary experience, leaving her trapped inside her own mind (Abram, 1996). This was a significant challenge, as how can looking inwardly offer any insight to the experience of another? Husserl dealt with this criticism by implicating the body itself, as well as the body of the other. As Abram (1996: 37) describes:

The body is that mysterious and multifaceted phenomenon that seems always to accompany one's awareness, and indeed to be the very location of one's awareness within the field of appearances. Yet the phenomenal field also contains other bodies, other forms that move and gesture in a fashion similar to one's own. While one's bodies are experienced from outside; one can vary one's distance from these bodies and can move around them, while this is impossible in relation to one's own body.

Husserl (1929) recognised that there was a bond between one's own body and the bodies viewed without; these other bodies 'echo' or mirror one's own bodily movements and gestures, which we experience outside of ourselves. Husserl (1929) called this process 'associative empathy', where the researcher is able to try to understand the other's experience through embodying the other through their inner experience. In this way, one is able to begin to describe other subjectivities, other than one's own, through a mediated use of one's own inner experiences. This allowed for multiple subjectivities, or what Ellingson (2009) today calls multiple ways of knowing. This intersubjective approach is primarily experienced through our capacity to empathise, to use our imaginations, our inner experience to begin to investigate the experiences of another, and so the phenomenal field is not seen as the isolated experience of a solitary ego, but a collective landscape created by other experiencing subjects including other forms of life other than humans and not limited to oneself (Abram, 1996). In my research the experience of empathy, and in what ways it can be encouraged, enriched, developed and expanded was of primary concern: it is seemed to be a fundamental capacity in listening and learning socially which I describe in further detail and offer evidence for in Chapters Four and Five. A phenomenological and/or embodied approach to observing the empathetic experience itself, both my own, and the experience of others was of primary importance (i.e. reflexive embodied approach). Through both my own embodied experience of empathy, and my deep exploration into the experience itself, as well as through reflections with others, and their experience, I was able to investigate the necessity and value of this capacity in how we engage socially, and how we find appropriate forms of agency as individuals within communities facing difficult challenges.

While Hurssel (1929) was the first to give phenomenology a specific name in philosophical discourse, he was not the first person to discover it. It was through the work of others prior to Hurssel that I was able to situate my own form of phenomenological empathy that emerged in practice.

2.3.1.DELICATE EMPIRICISM

Through the work of Alan Kaplan (2002) and Shelley Sacks I was introduced to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749-1832) rigorous yet gentle observation of nature, which can be described as having migrated away from quantitative, materialist science to an intimate first-hand encounter between researcher and the thing studied (Seamon and Zajonc, 1998). For the most part, Goethe's phenomenological approach to science was mainly ignored in his time, and it was only once phenomenology was articulated in the 20th century did philosophers and other researchers begin to take notice of this aspect of his work (ibid., 1998). A phrase that Goethe used to describe his method at the time was 'delicate empiricism' or in German '*zarte empirie*', which he defined as the effort to understand a thing's meaning through prolonged empathetic experience grounded in direct experience (ibid., 1998). In Goethe's *Scientific Studies* (1952a: 37): "There is a delicate empiricism which makes itself utterly identical with the object, thereby becoming true theory".

Goethe used this first-hand encounter with natural phenomena in a considerate yet meticulous way to come to understand the thing itself. This approach is replicated both in my observation of my own inner thinking, imagination, reflections and so on, but also in how participants and I explore the natural ecology, our inner ecology and the ecological connections of each other through a handful of soil or humus in the Earth Forum process. It is through this immediate empathetic experience that is grounded in the direct connection to the humus itself, that each of us participating in this social exchange can begin to develop our own empathetic capacities, and understand the other human through the humus⁴⁶. Having

⁴⁶ Hildegard Kurt, a researcher in the Social Sculpture Research Unit, in a personal communication, made me aware that the root of the word human has connections to humus: Latin had changed human to *homo*, *hominis* "man". 'The root here, hum-, seems to have originally referred to earth or dirt but also appears in *humanus* 'humankind', as earthlings. This suggests that our earliest forefathers perceived humans as originating in the soil. In addition to this the root appears in other words too such as

this direct yet kind experience with a natural object itself was to Goethe necessary not simply to understand the object for scientific sake but to respect the object inherently, thus opening oneself to the experience and to one's own empathy. In Goethe's (Colour Theory in Matthaei: 57) words: "Natural objects, should be sought and investigated as they are and not to suit observers, but respectfully as if they were divine beings."

In this intimate encounter with that which he was observing, Goethe placed great value in the human being's own capacities of perception (Seamon and Zajonc, 1998) rather than removing himself from the thing. He saw the human being's individual senses as "the most exact physical apparatus that can exist" (Goethe, 1952a: 311). Rudolf Steiner (1924) further developed Goethe's phenomenological empathy and delicate empiricism in his book *The Theory of Knowledge implicit in Goethe's World-Conception* where he emphasised the need of the perceiving organ of intuition in order to understand the natural and etheric (or enlivened) world. We could thus see Goethe's approach and consideration of the human being as an 'exact physical apparatus' as a capacity development process, one in which through empathetically encountering another being or object, one develops an entirely new and more robust sense organ. As Seamon and Zajonc (1998) described, Goethe maintained that, as a person's abilities to see outwardly improve, so do his or her inner recognitions and perceptions become more sensitive (Goethe's *Botanical Writings*, 1952b:235): "Each phenomenon in nature, rightly observed, wakens in us a new organ of inner understanding."

Developing 'new organs of perception' is what Sacks (2011c) has been working with over the last two decades in expanding the field of Social Sculpture, as has Arthur Zajonc (2006) in developing the field of 'contemplative enquiry' and Otto Scharmer (2007) in working with the concept of 'presencing'. And so, regarding my primary research question of developing and expanding effective particular methods and pedagogical forms to enable personal and relational agency of the embodied intuitive ecological citizen, I was interested in developing new empathetic and imaginative 'organs of perception' through my own phenomenological

'exhume'. There is also a possible link to the same root that we find in 'humble' and 'humility'. I see it as significant that through looking into the humus, we are able to develop a fundamentally human (and humble) capacity: empathy.

observation of the inner and outer experiences, and in using these to develop forms in which I could collectively explore this with other citizens.

Important for understanding the constitution of this study, this insight was made available through Shelley Sacks offering the opportunity to work with a basic form and some social sculpture strategies that she introduced to me briefly in May 2011. I had been experimenting with social sculpture via other practitioners and after arranging a workshop in South Africa to which Sacks was invited, I was inducted into a new practice that Sacks had tried out once before, which interested me. Early on it was called "*Ways of Engaging with the Bigger Picture*"⁴⁷, but through our collaboration and my ongoing generative engagement with the process, this became named 'Earth Forum', a social sculpture connective practice which was supported by Sacks, developed in a large part by myself in interaction with her and others, and also tried out and used and further developed by Sacks at the same time in a parallel process in which we were in constant communication (see section 2.7.9 for further description of the details of the process). Through this process, which in itself was a reflective, interactive and collaborative process, I was able to further investigate my existing questions through a practice-based form. It is important to note here too that Sacks encouraged me to become engaged in the development and emergence of this practice, and actively supported me to do so over a period of three years. As I explain in detail in the next chapter, it was taking some basic understandings of working with fundamental elements of social sculpture action, and through phenomenological observation of these actions in the world with other beings, that I came to deepen my own 'organs of perception', a process through which this study was constituted as a reflexive practice inquiry; the practice component of which was also highly collaborative.

Including this delicate empiricism in my practice enabled the maintenance of a constant reflexive praxis between the inner and the outer experiences through my own ethnographic writing, drawing and experimenting with social sculpture forms. I noticed that through gathering this substance I maintained a certain level of freedom without having the constant need to fully articulate these experiences into a specific intellectual structure. Goethe

⁴⁷ This was the original name developed by Sacks as a proposal for a grant for the TippingPoint award.

emphasised that perhaps the greatest danger in the transition from seeing to interpreting is the tendency of the mind to impose an intellectual structure that is not really present in the thing itself; Seamon and Zajonc (1998: 275) quoted Goethe (Scientific Studies): "How difficult it is ... to refrain from replacing the thing with its sign, to keep the object alive before us instead of killing it with the word".

The experimentation with seeking out appropriate embodied forms through social sculpture practice, helped me to move ahead carefully when making this transition from experience and seeing, to judgment and interpretation, and again maintaining delicate yet meticulous phenomenological observations of my experiences. I was able to intuitively move forward, adjust my actions and methods, without having to immediately articulate this experience. Thus at times even the word reflexivity may not be adequate to fully capture the research experience and process.

Sacks (2011d) described social sculpture practice-based methodology as allowing the researcher to work and evolve through the process of doing and exploring from 'inner necessity'. She explained that this emphasis on finding appropriate form also frees researchers from getting locked into working in established genres or a discipline, using only what turns out to be appropriate. Sacks (2011d) went on to say that this is a process of getting closer to the gesture of things – from individual forms to complex natural and social organisms – which she argued clearly enhances our sensitivities and perceptions. And so it has been only through the (auto) ethnographic commentary, through the writing of this thesis, that I have been able to iterate these understandings and locate them in the theoretical landscape and discursive histories that underpin social sculpture practice. I cannot imagine doing this research in another way, as I sense I would not have been able to carefully acquire specific understandings inherent in the theories and methodologies: I might have 'killed them with a word' before they had a chance to be fully realised. The difficulties of capturing phenomenological experiences in words have been noted by others. For example Brighurst (1999: 15) says that: "Reading works of oral literature is more like reading [musical] notes and reading paintings than it is like reading books".

2.3.2 RESEARCHING PEDAGOGICAL FORMS

As this is a doctoral study in education, specifically environmental education, it has always been necessary to keep an eye on the pedagogical questions that arose in my research actions, and the meaning of the whole for education (see Chapter Seven). As Goethe (in Lehrs, 1958: 85) pointed out: with this form of accurate observation or delicate empiricism it is important to be aware that all observers are not equal in their ability to 'see' the phenomenon (Seamon and Zajonc, 1998), or to put it in another way, not everyone is as sensitive to these subtle inner capacities at first glance. This meant that whatever process or action I took, I always carried particular questions with me, regarding how this would translate into educational practice and educational meaning. The question of greatest concern was how could I make this experience and thus the empathetic/imaginative capacity development, accessible to everyone or at least to a broader group than I could engage with myself. It was important that each person had the opportunity to enter into their own inner imaginal form of thinking, and experience their basic empathetic capacities regardless of their background, language, ethnicity, or other social, economic or demographic differences. As Seamon and Zajonc (1998) stressed in their reflection of Goethe's delicate empiricism: each person must develop his or her perceptual powers through effort, practice, and perseverance.

It was only by experimenting with different intuitive and inventive pedagogic forms, supported by Sacks and others, that I was able to articulate some understandings of what might be the most appropriate way of participating in an Earth Forum apprenticeship, which I explore further in Chapter Five. This approach seemed to align with Goethe's thinking on the matter: as one becomes more familiar with the phenomenon, consider it with greater empathy, concern and respect; the method reveals where it is more effective and the qualitative meanings are revealed as well as empirical sensual content (Seamon and Zajonc, 1998).

Developing new pedagogies with this sensitivity as Sacks (2011d) explained, was explored by Joseph Beuys in his outline curriculum for a Free University which would enable and prepare students to become social artists of a humane and sustainable future, which he first articulated in his famous lecture *Eintritt in ein Lebewesen* (Entry into a Living Being) (Beuys, 1977). The Free University (according to Sacks, 2011d; and idea which she continues to use

in her own work e.g. in the University of the Trees social sculpture practice) was developed to enable people to engage with an emergent holistic paradigm, one that had to do with facilitating new organs of perception, and with ethics of interconnectedness and the shaping of an ecologically viable and humane society as both process and goal. Sacks (2011d: 80-81) continued:

In this radical school - supported by friends like Heinrich Boll and with echoes of Kandinsky's much earlier proposal for an interdisciplinary school where inner work and outer work would be linked by an anthroposophically inspired phenomenology, a study of ecology, and an exploration of new social and economic forms. Draw as a means of understanding, as opposed to representation or expression, would enable students to "see the phenomenon" and come closer to the "organising ideas" in forms. Theory of knowledge (epistemology) would be studied as the basics of holistic science and other integrative modes of engaging with the world. A curriculum for enabling and ecological way of being; for enabling a new kind of art.

As mentioned in the first chapter, this expanded conception of art saw 'every human being as an artist', each with the capacity to transform the conditions that shape their lives (Beuys, 1977). With this understanding, my pedagogic questions were carried along throughout the process, alongside deeper questions: 'what is knowing?' how do I accommodate 'multiple ways of knowing'? as has been recently articulated by Ellingson (2009). These questions were held inside me alongside the recognition that each person I came into contact with and who participated in actions or social sculpture forms that I was developing, had these basic capacities in them that we could build on together. The reality of the reflexive practice research that I engaged was 1) my pedagogical development of a specific process needed to lift out these capacities (supported by Sacks and others), 2) make them visible in some form, and 3) then work on them collectively as a group, and 4) describe them and assess their meaning for education and ecological citizenship development.

The role of connective aesthetics (Gablik, 1992) and Sacks' (1998) further expansion of aesthetics as what she describes as the process of 'enlivening' which is the opposite of 'anaesthetic', played a considerable role in lifting out these capacities and making the invisible visible. Sacks' (1998) redefinition of aesthetics, and its direct relationship with ethics and agency⁴⁸ was possibly one of the most influential contributions to how I approached my pedagogic questions.

⁴⁸ See Chapter One, in which Sacks describes responsibility as not something that emerges from moral imperatives, but as the development of a moral intuition, i.e. responsibility is an 'ability to respond', and

2.3.3 THE 'I' SENSE⁴⁹

In May 2011 at the *UeberLebenskunst* events in Berlin, Shelley Sacks as part of her introduction to her social sculpture project *University of the Trees* boldly stated:

“Sustainability without the ‘I’ sense is nonsense.”

Here Sacks (2011) was referring to the ‘I’ sense defined by Rudolf Steiner and later further developed by Joseph Beuys and herself, as one of the twelve senses or world outlooks that Steiner (1995) described. The ‘I’ sense is classified by Steiner (1995:139) as the higher outer sense linked to the senses of hearing, language and concept/thought sense, which are the senses linked to empathy. The middle senses include taste, smell, vision and warmth (distinct from touch); and the inner physical senses are the senses of movement, balance, touch and life. All the senses, although distinct, are interrelated and can be experienced synesthetically. The ‘I’ sense is the ability to sense another person’s ego or presence (not as the development of one’s own ego). Ego here is distinct from a selfish definition of ego, where someone is thinking highly of themselves, or has a sense of self-importance, but rather refers to the conscious thinking being. So essentially it is through my ‘I’ sense that I am capable of understanding and recognising the ego of another; this is the fundamental sense needed for empathy. Reflecting on Sacks’ statement that without this ‘I’ sense, sustainability is nonsense, brings forth several valuable emphases for my primary research question regarding a methodological approach to developing and expanding pedagogical processes for the capacity development of an ecological citizen, specifically: How do I develop the ‘I’ sense capacity through a connective practice?

this ability or agency is nurtured through social sculpture instruments that enliven and make visible latent capacities or abilities.

⁴⁹ As noted earlier, I attribute this concept to Sacks (2011), but I later found that she uses this concept from Steiner as discussed in this section.

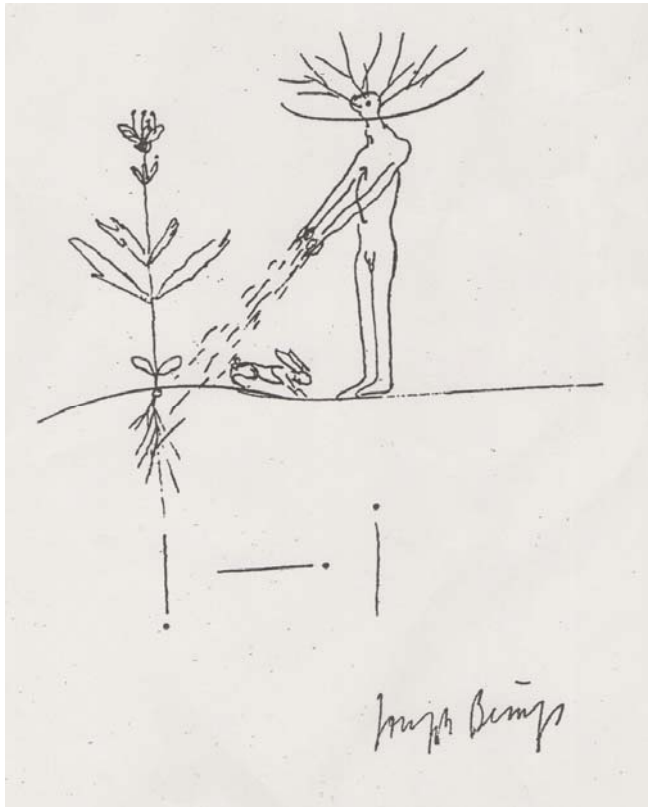


Figure 7: A sketch by Joseph Beuys showing the 12 senses of a human being as described by Steiner. The antlers on the head and line passing through the neck represent the different senses. Below the flower, rabbit and human are symbols that look like the letter 'i'. These are representative of the 'I' sense existent in each, and the human being uses his senses to empathetically conceive the experiences of the plant and rabbit. Picture source: Sack's (2012) SSRU lecture handouts.

Sacks (2007b) explained in a book about Steiner's and Beuys' blackboard work⁵⁰ that, through 'imaginal thought processes', one could engender inner activity in the other and become sensitive to non-visible aspects of another. Sacks (ibid.) described how Steiner was able to extend Goethe's 'exact sensorial imagination' beyond the visible world to include that territory not visible to our ordinary senses. She explains that the 'I' sense is one such sensing capacity that is

capable of attentively noticing non-visible unseen aspects of another and that this sense allows for one to investigate further into the world of

interrrelationships and also to perceive the etheric or enlivened dimension that the spiritual traditions have long claimed possible (Sacks, 2007). Additionally, she explains that Steiner's and Beuys' blackboard work is like traditional science as they deal with the unseen and the supersensible, enabling us to know these formative forces and subtle realities, but differs with its non quantitative perspectives (Sacks, 2007).

Nancy Kresin-Price (2010) linked this idea to Steiner's theory of freedom or what he called 'ethical individualism' (Steiner, 1995) to these particular sensitivities. This referred to the idea that the degree of freedom possible within a social process is deeply dependent on one's willingness to experience awakened consciousness, which would include the twelve senses, an enlivened imagination, and specifically as Sacks (2010) pointed out, the 'I' sense. If I see and understand you, I am more freely able to respond to you in warmth or love (Kresin-Price,

⁵⁰A series of concepts and theories Beuys produced on blackboards with direct reference to Steiner's blackboards.

2010) which would undoubtedly influence a wide range of possibilities for improved negotiation, decision-making and other necessary social forms required for sustainable development, and on a personal level, valuable capacities for an ecological citizen, namely empathy and attentive listening as discussed in more depth in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Kresin-Price (2010) also claimed that in learning to observe more closely, forming personal relationships to the world and others using this capacity, human beings uncover their own potential for transformation.

The 'I' sense according to Sacks (2011b) offers each of us a chance to practise and participate in this etheric seeing of ourselves, and therefore to truly see each other. As indicated by Sacks, as far as sustainability is concerned, without the 'I' sense, we are unable to truly practise empathy, or come to understand the needs of another human being, without considering the needs of a tree, a river, a mountain, or the ocean (all concerns for an ecological citizen). Her point is that with this frame, sustainability without a deepened capacity for empathy, would indeed be nonsense, and this understanding was a significant guiding force in my research. Within my primary research question of how a citizen learns to be an ecological citizen in the 21st century within the context of ecological apartheid, I became specifically interested in the following question: 'In what way can I develop or enliven empathy (or what I later articulated as the 'I' sense) in myself, and also in others?'

2.3.4.BEING

During the course of this research I lost my Godmother to Acute Myelogenous Leukaemia. I nursed her for the last few months of her life, and through her dying process I witnessed her own transformation, as well as my own. While extremely painful to reflect on, this is of significance here because this experience enriched my understanding of being. I experienced various aspects of what it means to be, be-with, be-in, and what Heidegger referred to as 'Being'. What I learned was that this 'being' and 'Being' are intimately connected to our empathetic capacities or the 'I' sense. My empathetic capacities during this time (described by a close friend Taryn as 'death midwifery') were honed in a way that is painful to consider here. Despite this, I am compelled to mention my Godmother in this chapter as her guidance and delicate mentorship during her life and in her dying, and ultimate death, played the most

significant role in my intuitive, contemplative and empathetic approach to this research. In many ways this research project was also a personal exploration into finding a way of living in a fully embodied sense; it was a long process that started many years before this PhD, a process of awakening into being.

My Godmother had an intuitive and robust understanding of Heidegger's work, and in her cancer-free days she guided me carefully through Heidegger's ontology of being, and Steiner's 'I' sense, not through reading or exploring these concepts in text⁵¹, but through direct experience in our relationship, and how I found myself in her presence. She considered it incredibly significant to truly experience and come to know the 'transparent nature of being' (although not articulated directly to me in these words, until a mysterious incident described below). This is what she wished for me. Before I mention Heidegger's work, I briefly mention therefore a section of text from her master's thesis. This specific page fell out of her writing desk the day after she died, while her daughter Nina and I were tidying up her room (see Appendix K for an image of the page). It reads (de Wet, 1978):

"This concept of freedom is echoed by Herbert Marcuse when he writes in 'Eros and Civilisation' that 'the true mode of freedom' is not related to the incessant activity of conquest', but to 'the coming to rest in the transparent knowledge and gratification of being' (her emphasis). Elaborating on this idea of freedom as a state of being, Aldus Huxley determines the nature of this 'gratification of being' when he relates freedom to an awareness of cosmic otherness, and enslavement to a denial of the mysterious life-forces:

'The greater non-human world, which exists simultaneously within and without is governed by its own laws – laws which we are free to obey or disobey: Obedience leads to freedom; disobedience to a deeper enslavement (16).

If, as I have illustrated, freedom can be related to a passive state of 'transparent being', as opposed to the masculine sphere of doing and 'incessant activity' then freedom must, by my definition, be seen as a feminine mode of existence. In Huxley's terms, this feminine condition of freedom, of psychic equilibrium, is achieved by obeying the organic laws of the cosmos."

I have read this piece of text hundreds of times over the past ten months, and I have held it in my being, contemplating it constantly. For me it has many facets, and has been a guiding force in how I have subsequently understood past experiences with her. During her dying days, she was so selfless, concerned that her dying would affect my PhD, despite my constant response: "You are way more important ... shhhhh!" As if she wanted to help me

⁵¹ I only came to understand the theory later through the articulation of this thesis, and through my time at the Social Sculpture Research Unit, at Oxford Brookes.

articulate in my thesis my lived experience of awakening into 'transparent being' with her, the exact piece of text, in her own words, fell into our hands. For me there could not be a more shining example of a 'mysterious life-force' or 'cosmic otherness'.

As I mentioned in the previous chapter with my introduction to Heidegger in this research, I set out in my PhD proposal two years ago to conduct a process of exploring the role of artists and artful practices in the response to the prevailing disconnections in our social consciousness or culture. I wanted to examine through my own practice the work of pioneering creative practitioners who are working as embodied human beings, with the very disembodied problems orbiting climate change and environmental decline, in order to develop a new pedagogy for the ecological citizen. I set out to explore ways in which learning can be deepened, and our ability to act and do from our valued ways of being⁵², rather than from our expectations of an uncertain future. I asked myself what role personal learning plays in adapting and responding to the impact of climate change, through expanding the space of learner's capabilities, and focused on what it means to be and do in the 21st century. I set out to explore this type of learning, by considering the creative contributions from artists who work at the frontline of social change, and rigorously critique our cultural assumptions, who offer ways of not only doing, but also ways of awakening to the reality of what a personal valuation of 'being' means.

As I knew back then, and understand better now, fundamental to the understanding of ecological citizenship is placing oneself in an ecosystem, but at the same time being aware of one's own being ('being in' and 'being with'); this is fundamental in understanding the process of Earth Forum which I go on to describe in the course of this work.

In *Being and Time* (1927) Heidegger observed that we and our activities are always "in the world", our being is being-in-the-world, and so we do not study our actions by separating ourselves from the world; but rather we make sense of our activities and the meaning things have for us by looking to our contextual relations to things in the world (Woodruff, 2011). This echoes the idea of being part of an ecology. As with Sen's (1993) capability theory, in order

⁵² As articulated by Amartya Sen (1993) in his capabilities theory.

to create real possibilities for social freedom, we need to encourage individual's capacities to not only do, but also to be, specifically their valued understanding of being. Heidegger (1927) called his approach to phenomenology "fundamental ontology", where he distinguished beings from their being; one is able to investigate the meaning of being and in our case through examining our own existence in the activity of '*Dasein*' or personal conception of being.

Heidegger's ideas differed from Husserl's ideas on consciousness and subjectivity, including how perception presents things around us: he stated that it was through our basic relating to things, through practice and a specific action that the phenomenology reveals our 'being' in a specific context, and sometimes through 'being-with-others' (Woodruff, 2011). I will later show that this is significant in the conception of the Earth Forum practice, which aims to enable this relation to things and ourselves. Heidegger's (1927) unique approach to phenomenology was somewhat poetic, with his hermeneutic (or interpretation of written text) approach; he explored the etymology or word history of 'logos' and 'phenomena' to mean "let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself" (Heidegger, 1927: 7C). This practical, or practice-centred approach to phenomenology and understanding being, had specific influences on my own methodology, and how I approached this research. Later as I became more familiar with social sculpture practice, and its approach to practice-based research, this concept further solidified and influenced my method.

2.4. BEYOND ACTION RESEARCH: DEVELOPING PRACTICES AND PEDAGOGIES

In this section, I explore the development of a practice-based research approach, which differs from traditions in action research, as it emerges from research in visual arts, but has been further developed and refined by the research and development of Shelley Sacks and others at the Social Sculpture Research Unit. I later further developed the notion of practice-based research and named the research that I undertook reflexive practice-based research to encompass the reflexive processes that are documented across and through this thesis.

I also introduce the idea of '*instruments of consciousness*', which Sacks sees as a vital component in practice-led inquiry, that encourages participants to work with a connective aesthetic or engage in connective practice.

2.4.1. PRACTICE BASED RESEARCH AND PERSONAL APPRENTICESHIP

As explored in the previous chapter, Sacks (1998) described the centrality of imagination in practices that seek out to achieve ecological sustainability. She redefined responsibility into a question of agency, and turned the word around, defining it as an 'ability to respond'. She was concerned with how this agency is interwoven with the aesthetic as 'enlivened being' and as the opposite of anaesthetic, or numbness (1998: 82). In her descriptions of developing practices and pedagogies she describes how the key component of her social sculpture practice is concerned with teaching new forms of connective aesthetics (1998: 82). At the Social Sculpture Research Unit (SSRU) that she founded at Oxford Brookes University, she developed a practice-based Masters and PhD programme in Social Sculpture. Through permission to sit in on her classes, and through various interviews with her, I was able to learn that the strategies she teaches are concerned with developing a more sensitive and observant connection with the world that surrounds us. These strategies include: listening and hearing strategies, strategies for uncovering agendas, for shifting attention; strategies for encountering our values, our attitudes and our presuppositions; strategies for entering what is difficult and for discovering what each person feels needs addressed (Sacks, 1998: 83; case record interview data). These strategies are considered by Sacks (1998) to be the foundation for uncovering intentions and motivations that are our own; i.e. they are a basis for working with an 'inner necessity', which in my view could be related to Nussbaum and Sen's (1993) idea of 'valued beings and doings' as well as Steiner's (1924) 'moral imagination'.

Through these strategies an individual researcher in Social Sculpture is able to discover what needs to be worked on, or "what needs warming up⁵³?" (Sacks, 2012). Through the use of these strategies, the researcher (or students in the social sculpture programme) is able to begin developing a series of low-tech interventions that are inspired by the idea of 'small-acts: profound meanings' (ibid). This is the beginning of a practice-based research process, and differs from the idea of trying to test out an existing hypothesis, or trying to examine the functioning of a conceptual practice through action-based research. Sacks (1998: 83) found this process valuable as it takes the researcher into new terrain, and she explained that

⁵³ 'What needs warming up?' is a question developed by Shelley Sacks, inspired by Joseph Beuys' idea of warmth work, and becoming sensitive to warm and cold processes. She relates this to finding 'energy to enter the wounds of our world' (Sacks, 1998: 83), which she relates to the *I Ching* hexagram – 'To work on what has been spoiled', in which it describes difficulty or crises as synonymous with opportunity.

people are often surprised with what discoveries, questions or new insights emerge through these small acts. Alongside this, the researcher is able to explore differences between information, logical argument and experiential knowing, and explore various forms of knowing from sensuous, rational, empirical and phenomenological forms of knowing, which are explored through text but mainly through practice (Sacks, 1998: 84). Sacks holds further that as the research progresses, they are able to continue with the energy developed through their reflexive practice of small acts, uncovering agendas, assumptions and exploring different modes of seeing. In such a way the researcher is in a constant engagement with a transforming research process which resembles that of an alchemical process that underlies Joseph Beuys theory of sculpture, which Shelley Sacks subsequently developed and expanded; a process which I sought to reflexively apply in this research project.

As described briefly in Chapter One, the theory of sculpture incorporates three states of being: 'chaos – movement form', which are related to the alchemical stages of sulphur – mercury – salt (Sacks, 2011d). As Sacks (2011d) described, the human being experiences these states with unlimited potential to be shaped (chaos/sulphur) at one end of the spectrum and the formed, sometimes hardened attitudes, habits, perspectives, systems (form/salt) at the other. These are brought into a dynamic relationship by the third mobile force (movement/mercury), which is the part of ourselves that is able to feel, see, hear, imagine and thus perceive what needs to be done, in one's own thinking and action, and in the world. This third force is that which is able to warm up, transform and change sometimes static, hardened thinking, attitudes, or social systems into new possibilities. The interplay between the unlimited potential of something and the static form of another is able to be sculpted or transformed by the human being, all of which can be explored with the imagination, and through the use of connective practices. As Sacks (2011d) described, this third force is what Schiller (1965) called the 'play force' and what James Hillman (1998) called the 'thought of the heart'. This is knowledge that does not emerge from reasoning alone, but through embodied experiencing of what needs to be done, and seeing what is incomplete, or what is in pain; these are what stir and motivates the mercurial/movement force within us. As Sacks (2011d) described:

Carried forward by the force of will that grows from such lived experience, this

connective force brings movement into the world of oppositions: warming and loosening inappropriately hardened forms; setting in motion new dynamics in the world of fixed opinions, attitudes and concepts.

When I first met Shelley Sacks, she had some ideas of how we could use some of these strategies in developing a series of small actions, that would begin the journey of developing forms, working these forms with others, and then refining them, as a practice-led process that eventually became the primary focus of my research and the development of the Earth Forum practice, and associated pedagogies. (See Chapter Three for the full narrative of how this was undertaken.)

Yet this practice-led inquiry in the arts is not only a conception developed by Sacks. Carol Gray (1996) explored the concept of 'practice-led' research (research initiated in practice and carried out through practice) in the arts. She described the process of conducting a 'practice-led' project as her formal research for higher degrees, in her case a PhD. According to Gray (1996) practice-based research became a research strategy in the 1970s and early 80s when artists and designers saw the potential for this form of research in exploring and developing practice through the process and framework of higher degrees. The UK Council for National Academic Awards regulated this form of disciplined inquiry and extended its research regulations to allow the inclusion of artefacts/artworks (elements of practice) as part of a submission for higher degrees, legitimising practice, and not only 'reflection on practice', as a research activity (Gray, 1996). Gray (1996) however saw the development of 'practice-led' research strategies as having been slower than anticipated and she suggested that the root of this potentially lies in the tensions between professional practices and 'academic' education and research, and the limited incidences of real inquiry through practice. It may also be because such forms of research are extremely difficult to capture and represent, as noted above, and are thus difficult to present in higher degree forms. This was indeed a difficult process for me too, and I tried to do this via sharply focused reflexive processes and honest and clear descriptions of that which occurred within the collaborative theoretical and practical processes involved in this research, and my responses to these.

Gray's (1996:3) defined practice-led research as research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, and challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and

practitioners. Furthermore, the research strategy is carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and specific methods familiar to practitioners in the visual arts. Sacks (1998) took this further and expanded practice-based research from the traditional approach to visual arts, and evolved the research potential of practice-based inquiry through an expanded concept of art as defined by Joseph Beuys. Social sculpture as a field offers practice-led inquiry into a myriad of disciplines and social systems in the world, through the use of a redefinition of aesthetics as enlivened being, and the role of the connective aesthetic in agency, and by accommodating various forms of knowing (ibid). In this study, I carry this forward into environmental education research as is reflected on in Chapter Seven in more detail.

Through this process of reflecting on the practice of the Earth Forum, and my constant reflexive questioning of seeking out appropriate ways in which I could conduct this research, I found a re-articulation of the theory of social sculpture, and the reflexive practice-led approach offered a specific validity to the process I undertook. The various artefacts scattered along the path of this practice-led inquiry remain as artefacts of my learning or 'indices of agency' and reflexivity as described by Alfred Gell (1998). In these subsequent chapters I will make reference to the specific artefacts in the form of websites, video clips, images⁵⁴, and finally the physical Earth Forum cloth, a social sculpture 'instrument of consciousness' (as it was first referred to by Sacks when we produced it).

In addition to this, my understanding of practice-based research was something that I developed intuitively and reflexively alongside my sensing, feeling and thinking. Yet this occurred through a collaborative participatory exchange with others, and in many ways was a self-evolved apprenticeship given the close learning centred relationship that I established with Sacks around the Earth Forum Practice, which she was generous enough to support, and which later we developed as a practice that I could share with others as she had shared her knowledge and experience with me. (I refer to this as an apprenticeship; see Chapter Five⁵⁵.) I had found myself working closely with others and learning through a mainly intuitive

⁵⁴ These artefacts are also captured on the attached CD; see table of contents for more details.

⁵⁵ The full details of this 'apprenticeship' experience are captured in the case record of this thesis which involves many hours of conversational data, communications, video material and various forms of

process of exploring new methods and concepts that were emerging in other people's work in my own way, and reflecting on them deeply through thinking, dialogue⁵⁶ and feeling, while also remaining perceptive to what I was thinking, feeling and experiencing through the use of my sensations and intuitive impulse. Stephen Harding (2006: 30) refers to Carl Jung's (2001) work on the nature of the psyche to describe the value of thinking, feeling, sensing and intuition. Harding (2006: 30) calls Jung's description of these four aspects of the psyche the Jungian 'Mandala', where thinking and feeling are arranged as opposites, with sensing and intuition as opposites on the other spectrum. Thinking was seen by Jung (2001) as an interpreting force, behaving in a logical, rational manner, while feeling evaluates according to good or bad. Sensing perceives direct experience through the body and intuition yields a sense of its deeper meaning through unconscious content and connections. In this way sensation and intuition make us aware of what is happening without interpreting or evaluating; they are perceptive (Harding, 2006). It was the whole experience of both perceptive intuitive and sensorial experiences, alongside an interpretative and constant evaluation that became part of my apprenticeship. Yet there is a fifth dimension that neither Jung nor Harding described in this 'Mandala' which is the substratum or the field in which this all occurs: the imagination. Harding (2006) did however mention the work of Goethe who described it as 'exact sensorial fantasy', yet this is in the specific context of a form of Goethean observation. Through embodied experience, and through reflective dialogue with social sculpture researchers, including Sacks, I came to realise that my practice-based research was held together in my imaginative space, in which my feeling, thinking, sensing and intuition was housed which is also where reflexivity occurs according to Archer (2000). This imaginal space was a limitless expanse in which all manner of experiences, thoughts, feelings, senses and intuitive insights could be mixed together and influence each other. My imagination was indeed a dynamic learning arena that I could utilise in my practice-based research. This approach to my own practice-based inquiry thus hinged on my ability to engage this inner imaginal space reflexively to draw direction from the compass points that were my thinking, feeling, sensing and intuition. This process was my personal apprenticeship and this later

evidence showing how I interacted with a range of people over the period of the research, and with Shelley Sacks, who generously supported my learning via this process (See section 1.10 for details of the case record).

⁵⁶ A total of 189 emails and 29 hours of recorded conversations capture this dialogue in detail and were used to explore these conversations reflexively. See section 1.10 for details of the case record.

became the foundation for the development of a pedagogy that enabled a similar learning process with other citizens, which I explore further in Chapter Five, and reflect on in relation to the wider context and field of education in Chapters Six and Seven.

2.4.2. RESPONSE(ABILITY)⁵⁷

I consider Sacks' (2011f) definition of agency as an 'ability to respond' as fundamental in the construction of the concept of 'Responsible Participant'⁵⁸ and the development of a refined understanding of personal and relational agency. In this thesis Sack's notion of response(ability) is explored carefully as a set of sensitivities and capacities that are intuitively developed through experiential learning (which is described in more detail later in this section). Response(ability), as used by Sacks (2011f) and as further developed by me in this study, describes the intuitive capacities that are used to enable an interplay between a personal and relational agency, that draws from an individual's moral imagination or moral intuition, rather than on a set of trained techniques or conceived forms of 'best practice'. An exploration into the pedagogies needed to encourage the learning and capacity development of an intuitive response(ability) are mainly examined through my own ethnographic observation of learning through experience throughout the thesis (mainly in Chapters Three and Five).

It is through my own development from a facilitator into what is defined in this study as a Responsible Participant that I was able to come to understand the intuitive education that is crucial for social sculpture practice, and for the development of egalitarian, socially accessible learning arenas that are needed for the education of the ecological citizen. Response(ability) here is seen as the opposite of instruction, obligation and duty; it is rather an intuitive freedom to respond imaginatively using one's empathetic senses and personal and relational perceptivity to determine one's response or expression of agency. How this is enabled and developed by a person is a methodological question I try to answer throughout this study (as

⁵⁷ As noted above, I also attribute this concept to Sacks (2011f).

⁵⁸ The concept of Responsible Participant was developed by Sacks (2011f) in her work "Exchange Values", particularly in the development of a handbook in which participants could replicate the work in her absence. She felt that this idea could be carried into the Earth Forum process, and should indeed be an area worth investigation in Social Sculpture practice itself. She encouraged me to work with this idea further, and I explored my own learning as a responsible participant, as a means to develop my understanding of the potential of this concept to be applied in Social Learning practice, and to broaden our understanding of participation and facilitation.

articulated in the formation of my research question). Agency in this thesis is not so concerned with noticeable physical action, but rather with the subtle more invisible intuitive responses and actions undertaken by a person in response to a wider relational context. For example attentively listening, imaginal contemplation, the use of empathy and other subtle 'inner' actions are considered vital contributions to understanding the primary impulse that influences more noticeable action. As I have articulated in my research question, this study is primarily concerned with the methodological 'how', when it considers response(ability), and I aim to offer a clear contribution to the methodological concerns of response(ability) and the pedagogical requirements to develop an intuitive personal and relational agency. This could potentially shed light onto the education of the ecological citizen for the 21st century in the context of ecological apartheid. While this work is clearly closely associated with the work of Bueys and Sacks, I see my contribution not so much in evolving the field of social sculpture and its concepts (which is the work that they have done and are doing), but rather in testing these valuable concepts and approaches out for strengthening and expanding social learning theory and approaches, and for educational and environmental education meaning.

The current educational theory I employ in this study to examine the potential of response(ability) is experiential learning. According to David Kolb (1984) knowledge is continuously gained through personal and environmental experiences. Experiential learning describes learning process for the individual, and considers the process of making discoveries and experimenting with knowledge first-hand, instead of hearing or reading about other's experiences (Kolb, 1984). For this learning to occur, the learner needs to be actively involved in the experience; she should have the ability to reflect on the experience, as well as the necessary analytical skill to conceptualise the experience; and finally, Kolb (1984) maintains that the learner needs to possess decision making and problem solving skills in order to use the new ideas gained from the experience. According to Rodrigues (2004), a facilitator can contribute meaningfully to a learner's experiential learning, but a facilitator is not always essential for experiential learning to occur. Rodrigues (2004) argued that the primary mechanism needed for experiential learning is the learner's own reflection of the experience and their use of analytic skill. A primary contribution of this study is adding to the capacity set of the learner through intuitive and imaginal capacity development needed beyond analytical

and rational skills to fully benefit from experiential learning. This is explored mainly in Chapter Five through the development of a pedagogy for the *Responsible Participant*, and is further detailed in Chapters Three and Four, and is reflected on in Chapter Seven in more depth.

2.4.3. INSTRUMENTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS⁵⁹

Sacks (2007c) explains that in our conventional understanding of art making, we instinctively view art as the process of making aesthetic objects to be placed somewhere, they are 'objects for our attention' (Sacks, 2007c). Drawing on Beuys, she suggests that in social sculpture practice there is indeed the shaping of an aesthetic, but how the aesthetic is used and shaped is somewhat different. As opposed to 'objects for our attention' social sculpture practice develops connective aesthetic objects or actions, which act as 'instruments of consciousness' (ibid.). Thus, in this context, the aesthetic object has an expressed purpose and is used by participants to enable particular forms of agency. These instruments are used to establish a connective practice and unique social arena in which participants can work in a different way (Sacks, 2007c). She explains further that instruments of consciousness simultaneously enliven new thoughts, ideas and imaginings of an individual and also sculpt a new social space in which these inner-enlivened-thoughts can be made visible or tangible and possibly shared with others. These instruments develop means that Sacks (2007c) explained "... enable one to become internally active through imagination and thought, where the heart and thought are both engaged and enlivened".

As mentioned earlier Joseph Beuys drew heavily from the work of Goethe who aimed to accommodate a way of knowing that did not remain outside the thing or being to be known. It was a process of developing a new way of seeing, which he referred to as 'new organs of perception' which encouraged a holistic way of perceiving a phenomenon, that has influenced the shape, form and practice of social sculpture (Sacks, 2007b). The social sculpture method of using 'instruments of consciousness' was therefore informed heavily by Goethe's concept of new 'organs of perception'. In reflecting on this, Sacks suggests that our other sense organs such as eyes, ears, and tongue are relatively well developed at birth; other organs of

⁵⁹ This concept is attributable to Sacks (2007) in her work "University of the Trees" in which she developed it to explain the difference between aesthetics in social sculpture and conventional perceptions of art.

perception (like the ability to empathise, to develop a conscience, or to see the organising idea in things and the interconnections in the world) need to be developed through practice (Sacks, 2007c). The specific instruments of consciousness used in this thesis can be seen in the clearest most tangible form in the oiled-round cloth of the Earth Forum (see Appendix A). Before the collaborative development of this cloth, I did explore the use of various other 'instruments' in the form of bottles, puppetry and theatre (which are not instruments of consciousness in social sculpture terms, but formed the beginning of my understanding and exploration into this concept). I later used more social sculpture-like instruments in the Climate Fluency Exchange and in specific collaborations in the COPART network, which I explore in detail in the next chapter. By the time I met Shelly Sacks, I had already encountered the field of social sculpture and had been working with a number of such instruments in collaborative work with colleagues in Cape Town. Thus the further development of the Earth Forum, which was a strong collaboration with Sacks as explained in the methodology chapter, was a 'natural evolution' of my earlier research practice, and part of the reflexive practice journey explored in this study.

2.5 ENGAGING CRYSTALLISATION

Laura Ellingson (2009) developed her theory of *crystallisation* in response to the shortcomings of grounded theory, arts based enquiry and auto-ethnography in researchers' abilities to accommodate and meaningfully represent multiple ways of knowing. Ellingson (2009), in search of a method in which she and others could approach the problem of understanding a multifaceted evolving phenomenon, developed a multiple-genre approach to qualitative research, where knowledge is represented across many different points along the qualitative methodological continuum (ibid.). One can see this as a continuum of understanding, where art and science are not seen as dichotomies but as anchors at either end of the continuum. In our daily lives we use various mechanisms within this continuum (sometimes intuitive, sometimes logical tools) to understand the world. Describing these multiple ways of knowing is a challenge and so through the use of different genres the researcher is able to achieve depth "through not only compilation of many different details but also through different forms of representing, organising and analysing these details" (ibid.:10).

Understanding that we all view and know the world through different mechanisms, I needed to be able to represent these different ways of knowing without diminishing them through my own representation of each form of knowing. By employing Ellingson's (2009) crystallisation to analyse and develop the research text, I used a combination of various writing styles throughout the proceeding chapters. In addition to this I use direct quotes of participants, and other researchers I have interviewed along the way. I also include links to websites and blogs that I developed through my research journey to make my social practice possible. I use sketches and other images to not only provide a descriptive interpretation of my findings, but also to offer insight into the gesture, impulse, feeling that exists within these discoveries, to attempt to lift out subtle, nuanced details that emerged in my research experience. Finally, I also make reference through images and website descriptions to specific connective aesthetic forms, and later distinct social sculpture instruments, such as the Earth Forum oiled cloth.

Due to the fact that this research needs to accommodate multiple ways of knowing through multiple genres, it also challenges the prevalent representational forms of standard academic discourses. As briefly mentioned in Chapter One, Kourtizin et al. (2009) explored novel research that has challenged the orthodoxies of standard academic discourses in qualitative research, and through their case studies they investigated a wide range of interdisciplinary traditions and practices, and how these are translated into alternative forms of academic discourse. The work of Ellingson (2009) and Kourtizin et al. (2009) formed a cohesive support for how I approached the challenge of presenting this research that can accommodate the vigorous and multifaceted components of this work.

Crystallisation can offer deep, thickly described, complexly-rendered interpretations of meaning that create space for contrasting ways of knowing that interweave and blend by drawing upon more than one way of expressing the world (Ellingson, 2009: 94-95). This is vital for the transdisciplinary nature of this project, and the need to find possible interconnections between the field of social sculpture and past and contemporary pedagogical responses to the environmental crisis. Kruger (2012: 21) noted the prevalence of such multifaceted approaches in art practices that aim to shift the boundaries of art, and noted that they often manifest in multi-disciplinary and collaborative art processes.

This research process was a continuous personal and collaborative learning practice, that required rigorous and in-depth field work, collaborations, conversations, exchanges, and the continual exploration into new appropriate forms in which I could refine and distil an appropriate pedagogy for ecological citizenship for the 21st century. My representation of this journey therefore takes an unorthodox trajectory. My writing itself is a detailed research process, and is used as a way to further critique what I thought I had come to know. Kruger (2012) in her masters thesis described her writing as the cultivation of an 'aesthetic way of knowing'. She made reference to Irwin's (2003: 64-65) 'aesthetic of unfolding' which exists in the active space between the fold and the not yet folded, and therefore reveals gaps, which offer opportunity to think, imagine, reflect through writing. This is what Irwin describes as occupying 'dynamic living spaces of inquiry', which Kruger (2012) relates to Kaplan's (2002: 65) concept of 'threefoldness', where one learns within the tension and balance that holds the energy that exists between polarities.

Kruger (2012), writing for a MA in Fine Arts, considered the research and writing of her thesis as part of her creative process, and in her thesis the emphasis is on writing for research, as opposed to writing for presentation. She argues that this approach poses the challenge of keeping writing open to what is emergent or hidden and allowing space for chaos, while acknowledging the need for a certain type of structure and form. Kruger (2011) drew from Kaplan (2002: 65) to further articulate this, aiming 'to be flexible and fluid yet focused, and principled'.

In many ways I adopted a similar approach, with Chapters Three, Four and Five, as distinct examples of exploring my work, and further reflecting on it in a deeper more embodied way. The process of phenomenologically investigating the unfolding narrative, created opportunities for me to iterate and add depth and richness to the research, making the writing style seem familiar, but at the same time thickly described and complexly-rendered as articulated in Ellingson's (2009) crystallisation.

As the key capacities for an ecological citizen that I aimed to develop in this research include

empathetic listening, imaginal observation and moral intuition, I explored the writing process by drawing from my own experience of these capacities, holding the reader in my mind constantly, imagining different people reading this text, and considering in what ways I could offer an experience in which they would come to realise that their imaginations are what is at work when they read. A reader will notice warm and cold qualities in the text, and in so doing, notice a warm or cold sense in their own being. Aiming to make these capacities noticeable to the reader, I came to understand another quality to these abilities through writing in this way. As Vaslav Najinsky (1999) asks at the beginning of his diary, I ask you to be aware of the feeling in the text and not just the content. I ask you to be aware of this imaginative capacity you have when you close your eyes. Instead of feeling trapped behind your skull, become aware of a wide expanse full of possibility. You can picture the past, the present, the future; you can see images, colours; feel warm, feel cold; taste; smell; sense inner movement etc. – all inside this space you carry with you. You can also try to observe your 'I' sense, in order to understand my impulse and distinct gestures offered in the proceeding text. Your imagination is indeed this space that you use to understand the symbols on this page, and transform them into an entire, rich experience.

2.6. DATA CAPTURE AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

All processes were conducted after full disclosure of the research had been provided and informed consent was given by the participants. It was also made clear that at any stage of the process if participants did not feel comfortable, they were free to stop and leave. No obligations or pressures were placed on the participants; they were free to come and go as they pleased. While in the Earth Forum process I asked people to commit to the full three hours of the process, I also made it clear that for any reason at any stage a participant felt uncomfortable and wanted to stop, they were more than free to do so. I also constantly checked in all my early exploratory processes and in my trialling and expansion phases, if participants were comfortable in each stage of each process to gauge if they were happy to continue; I would not continue unless I had received this assurance from the group. This is discussed in more depth in Chapter Three.

The data collected in this study included ethnographic writing and journaling in which I

captured my own internal reflections and personal observations as a participant and researcher. It also included recordings of processes both through video and audio recordings, as well as interviews and discussions with Shelley Sacks and other social sculpture specialists, and participants directly after processes, and the subsequent later interviews between two to six months after the processes had taken place. Contextual profiling and Phase A (exploratory data) was systematically organised according to the phase it was captured. The data was organised according to process title, number of participants, place, time, and a description of my own reflections of the experience, with detailed descriptions of the place itself, and noteworthy incidents and details. All data (from all phases) was also managed according to the genre, i.e. video footage was separated from audio footage, and written descriptions. Data captured in phases B and C was assigned numbers and titles to ensure the same data for the same specific Earth Forum event, or specific events in the exploratory phases were consistent. I would then review this primary phase A and B data and write deeper reflections on specific aspects of my observations, labelling sections according to theme: i.e. Responsible Participant, Agency (personal); Agency (Relational); an experience of freedom; pertaining to soil; pertaining to intuition; pertaining to imagination; pertaining to empathy; experiences of capacity development. After this phase of reflection I followed up with a second phase of interviews (captured in phases C and D), in which I contacted previous participants and collaborative researchers and interviewed them asking specific questions relating to these themes. I later developed a further expansion of the pedagogical process, and then applied it with willing participant researchers who become Responsible Participant apprentices. Working with Responsible Participants I was able to conduct several group reflections, which were all audio recorded (permission offered in each circumstance). These allowed me to reflect more deeply both on my own experiences and the experiences of others. I then compared group reflections with my own personal ethnographic reflections. Final in phase D, the data was further iterated through a theoretical corroboration.

During all of these processes a full description of the research aims and intentions were provided to participants along with the potential ways in which this information would be used, after which I would ask permission if I could record or film the processes. This was undertaken in each phase of the project, and with each group I worked with and was repeated

for each new event. As each group of individuals was different, I was sometimes not permitted to record audio, and only permitted by the group to write about my reflections; in other cases I received full consent to film and record. Therefore my data has a multiple genre quality. Respecting those who preferred not to be recorded, I was only able to reflect on work for which I had received participant consent. The shifting of consent and therefore data capture forms also influenced my focus in each case. For example in those Earth Forums that I was able to record audio I was able to go into depth regarding participants' personal reflections while in the process, and their pictures of progress. In situations with video footage I was able to focus on the group's concentration, and the efficacy of the shape and form of the process. Those situations when I was reliant solely on my own reflections meant that my focus shifted on my own capacity as a responsible participant, and specific incidents I remembered from the process. I was able to replicate the Earth Forum 37 times and this meant that I was able to repeatedly focus on various aspects of the methodology as I examined the heterogenous data. Tables 4 and 5 show that the focus placed on each Earth Forum is somewhat different, as in some cases I was able to obtain consent for recordings, while in others I was unable to record, due to no consent.

In addition to this, those people who are named personally have consented to have given their consent for this; in other cases I have fabricated names to protect specific individuals who preferred to remain anonymous.

During phase A (exploratory research and the pre-contextual profiling work in preparation for my proposal development), I worked within the Environmental Learning Research Centre's general ethical protocols for contextual profiling and social learning research. As the study was still in formulation at this premature phase, it was important to work from an ethical foundation that was protecting the participants involved. Specifically, during the contextual profiling that occurred during the '10 Green Bottles of Colesburg' work I ensured that all the participants were aware that this work was eventually contributing to the development of a larger formal research project in the form of a doctorate, and only proceeded after I had received their full consent.

As can be seen from the descriptions in this chapter and in Chapters One and Three, the thesis drew heavily on inspiration from the field of social sculpture, particularly Sack's work on connective aesthetics, response(ability), responsible participant and instruments of consciousness, all of which she openly shared with me and willingly and encouragingly explored with me through collaborative actions and reflective interviews and emails. I used a number of key concepts that have been developed in the field of social sculpture, and the reflexive practice-enquiry was in many ways shaped by this, especially also by the more recent social sculpture work of Shelley Sacks, whom I have mentioned in detail above. After a visit to Cape Town (mentioned briefly above, and described in more detail in the next chapter) the COPART group that I was working with formed a partnership with Shelley Sacks to develop the Earth Forum social sculpture practice. The Earth Forum practice became a key focus of my research as explained earlier. Ethically, I have tried to reflect this collaborative relationship with partners, and with Shelley Sacks carefully and honestly across this thesis, attributing origination where it is due, and explaining collaborative contributions where they occurred. I also engaged in many conversations with Sacks which were recorded with her permission each time (a total of 29 hours of recording), and the communications that we had over the period of the research have influenced the study as can be seen across the text, especially in the practice-based phase where the Earth Forum pedagogy was in development. I have tried to honestly reflect this engagement throughout the research report, and via the reflexive reporting on the processes. I also regularly sought her feedback on my interpretations of concepts and practices. Throughout I received generous and positive encouragement from her and her contributions have helped me to refine interpretations and meanings, and the practice of Earth Forum itself, as reported on in the study.

2.7 EARTH FORUM AS A PRACTICE-BASED ENQUIRY INTO ECOLOGICAL CITIZENSHIP

2.7.1 AN APPROPRIATE FORM

My entire research journey has been one in which I have constantly been seeking 'appropriate forms', a term Sacks (1998:84) used in referring to the appropriate active use of connective aesthetic and social sculpture strategies, practices and potential pedagogies. As a practice-based approach akin to, but different to action research, this project relied on a rigorous process of trying out different connective practices and pedagogical forms in which I

could create new spaces for learning socially, and encourage and develop specific capacities that would be beneficial for the development of an ecological citizen, I call this process **reflexive** practice based enquiry. As this chapter explores my specific methodologies, it seems important to clearly describe the final social sculpture practice (also a methodology) I came to use in this research. It is for me the most 'appropriate form' that encourages an intuitive form of ecological citizenship that makes visible and builds upon a human being's capacity to listen empathetically, observe and pay attention through active imaginal work and also to develop a personal moral intuition. This section therefore carefully outlines Earth Forum as a specific social sculpture form, and is an edited version of the Earth Forum handbook which I developed together with Shelley Sacks (contained in appendix A). How this form came into existence, is further explored in the proceeding chapter.

2.7.2 BEING AN EARTHLING AND THE EARTH FORUM PRACTICE⁶⁰

As mentioned earlier, with the relationship between the words 'human' and 'humus', to be human means to be of the earth, to be an 'earthling'. As earthlings we have access to distinct capacities, and of particular interest to me and to this research is our capacity to dream and imagine, and how we use this ability to reshape our own lives and transform our environments. We do this together, and we achieve much when we share our ideas and knowledge. The word best used to describe this sharing is 'forum'. This is when humans come together to meet, to learn and where ideas and views on a particular issue can be exchanged. The word emerged from *fores* to be outside. So when we gather as a forum, and exchange and learn from each other we are essentially 'earthlings (of the soil), gathering outside to exchange and learn'.

With this understanding I realised we could not use the words 'human' or 'forum', without indirectly considering earth, soil and our surroundings. One cannot be human without the soil and the earth, and we cannot be part of a forum, in the traditional sense of the word, without being outside. Yet today most forums, learning, and exchanges happen indoors, with the earth usually excluded from the forum, and typically we exclude the earth and the soil from

⁶⁰ This section has drawn significantly on the handbook developed by Sack's and myself for Earth Forum. The handbook itself drew from an earlier draft of ideas for a handbook for Exchange Values produced by Sacks. Through practice-based enquiry, and subsequent **reflexive** based enquiry, these ideas were further refined and expanded.

our definition of what it means to be human. Our ancestors must have really valued the soil and the outdoors, because when it came to picking a name to encapsulate who and what we were, we chose to be 'beings of the earth'. When I thought about it, I shouldn't have been surprised. Everything we eat, drink, breathe or own has come from the earth and when we die our bodies return to soil. Yet today we are all too quick to wash out the dirt, with whitening detergent, and sanitise our homes and children with a cocktail of chemicals. We somehow managed to use every little piece of the earth in our daily lives without providing ourselves with the time or space to include the earth in our forums, and in our plans for progress.

Considering again that each of us dreams, imagines, and reshapes our lives and immediate environments every day, we do not always realise it, but we are all practising artists sculpting our worlds with as much creative freedom and artistic vigour as any artist does in our traditional understanding of art. Our capacities to imagine and to listen and learn from each other are what have enabled us to achieve so much. Perhaps forgetting to use these capacities, as well as forgetting we are earthlings has led us into the era of ecological separateness or 'ecological apartheid' that births problems like climate change and environmental degradation.

The Earth Forum methodology detailed in this chapter emerges from the territory of social sculpture, with particular aspects of this practice enriched by the work of Joseph Beuys, and was developed through a *collaborative inquiry process* I shared with Shelley Sacks and others in May 2011, as already mentioned. How this collaboration emerged, as well as how my exploratory research process led to the development of the methods outlined in this methodological chapter through ongoing collaboration with Shelley Sacks and a widening network of social sculpture practitioners is explained in Chapter Three.

Social sculpture practice works towards developing new fields of awareness, through creating practices, instruments (of various shapes and forms) that engage our imaginations and artistic capacities to help transform our consciousness through a specific social exchange, a social sculpture. Earth Forum aims to offer new ways in which people of every age, gender or ethnicity can meaningfully develop their capacity to imagine, attentively listen and create

an exchange about how they might live on this Earth. It is a novel approach to learning, with specific aims to contribute towards a useful pedagogy for ecological citizenship in the 21st century, and in the context of separateness or ecological apartheid.

In this section of the chapter I outline the specific instruments and objects used in Earth Forum practice. I detail the specific shape and form of Earth Forum, by providing the context of how connective instruments are used in practice, with particular attention to how to shape and sculpt the social space in which participants will practise together. Earth Forum is not a facilitated space, but rather a socially sculpted learning practice that creates a new arena for exchange. It does not employ the traditional mediation of a facilitator but instead draws from the guidance of a 'Responsible Participant', which is explained and outlined briefly in this section, but explored in further detail in Chapters Three, Four and Five. The practice explores details of how to invite participants and questions around participation. This section also outlines the vital capacity building practices of active listening and imaginal work employed in Earth Forum. I also describe here what specifically a Responsible Participant should consider when guiding this learning arena, through step-by-step guidance on shaping the practices applied in Earth Forum. Finally I give a brief description of the pedagogy of Earth Forum, specifically the structure of the Responsible Participant apprenticeship process. The application of Earth Forums in South Africa is explored and documented in Chapter Four; and in Chapter Five I document the implementation and development of the Responsible Participant apprenticeship in South Africa and in Europe, as developed both by myself and Shelley Sacks; although the focus is mainly on my work in this area, conducted with her support throughout.

2.7.3. THE OILED CLOTH INSTRUMENT⁶¹

Earth Forum encourages the development of 'new organs of perception' in the exploration into discovering our place in the natural world, and seeing the invisible relationships within ourselves, within other people, and within our wider ecology. Making these relationships visible creates the opportunity for the expansion of new distinct capacities: imagination and

⁶¹ The oiled cloth instrument was developed in collaboration with Sacks, primarily we developed the idea to oil the cloth through an exploratory process we undertook in South Africa in which we conducted small initial processes as a means to develop an 'appropriate form' for Earth Forum.

empathy. I, together with Sacks, see this as contributing to what I like to call an imaginative and empathetic literacy, vital for the development of a moral intuition, and what is needed in working in complex social groups and in ecological systems. Earth Forum employs a very specific 'instrument of consciousness' that encourages participants to 'see' their inner thoughts through a process of careful, attentive observation within their imaginations. The primary instrument used for this is an unbleached, natural calico cotton, oiled, circular cloth (1.5m diameter) and a handful of earth. Each participant works with the earth (soil, rocks, plant matter, humus) collected from the area in which Earth Forum is being conducted. The earth plays a central role in creating the shape and form of Earth Forum and is the tangible form that the participants are able to connect with; it is the primary connective aesthetic. The participants place the individually collected earth on the cloth as part of a practice that encourages a reflexive way of imagining and thinking, essentially enabling the beginning stages of developing new organs of perception, or put simply, connecting with the invisible qualities of their empathetic and imaginative capacities.

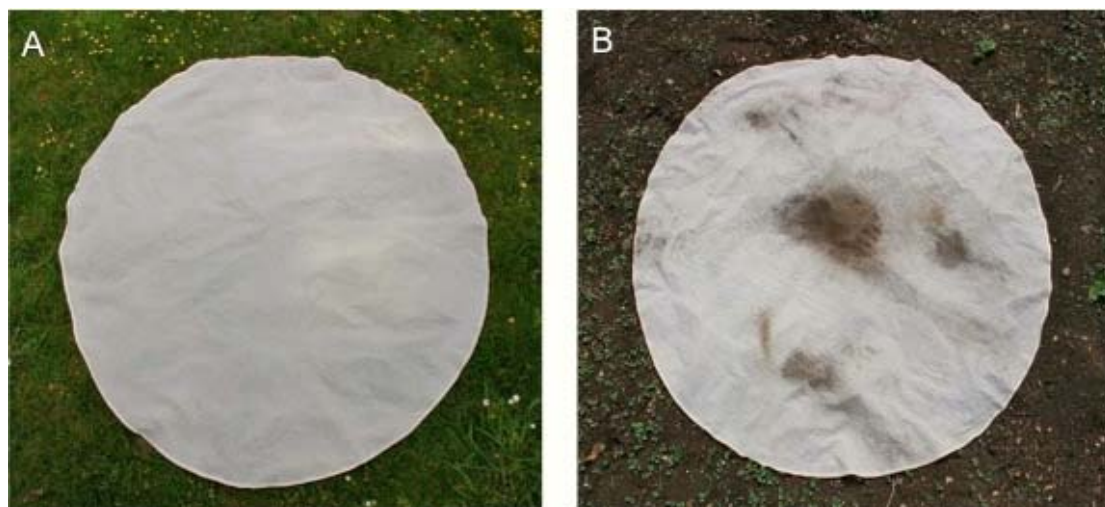


Figure 8: Earth Forum cloth. A) A prototype cloth that has been oiled before use, B) After a single Earth Forum. The cloth is made from 100% natural calico cotton, and is 1.5m in diameter. Source: own photography

The cloth is placed either on a round table or upon the floor, with the participants seated in a circle around it. Within this shape and form the participants proceed with the creative exchange outlined in Section 2.5. The cloth will, over time, collect the traces of earth within its oiled fibres from each forum. The soil mark embodies each participant's listening, sharing and learning. Sack's and I (along with Elizabeth Fletcher and Maria Honig) used the cloth to

explore the value of experience and imagination, to create a space and an instrument that allows participants a way of sincerely listening to each other. Through this meaningful exchange, each individual is encouraged to 'see' the other participants' hopes for the Earth, their personal insights and ultimately this can be used to gather together different ways of approaching progress. In this way the cloth holds different ways of knowing.

Shelley Sacks (2011d) described a social sculpture instruments as something that is used in a collaborative practice that enables participants to meaningfully uncover their own agenda and their own ways of dealing with their particular situation. This also has discernible effects on one's ability and motivation to engage with difficult and sometimes overwhelming aspects of living in a climate change era. Sacks (2011d) saw imagination playing a significant role in our work towards acting as ecological citizens, specifically because it is the vital space in which we can develop an ability to respond or 'moral imagination' as suggested by Steiner (1995). This can be closely linked to the aesthetic dimension of Earth Forum and the cloth instrument, and how it engages and simulates our imagination, our inner artist, to see the world we have lived in, live in now and the world we would like to live in.



Figure 9: A) A young learner from a local school in De Aar (Northern Cape South Africa) holding his handful of earth, B) The various collections of earth from participants in this group, resting on the oiled cloth, each small handful of earth leaves a trace in the cloth, held by the oil suspended in the cotton fibres. (Field work photographs from my journey on the Climate Train – own photography)

2.7.4. THE SHAPE AND FORM



Figure 10: The Earth Forum travelling table I designed and made to take with me across the country on the *Climate Train*, the bottom right image is the table in action during an Earth Forum in Kimberley. (Photographs are my own)

While Earth Forum in its basic form consists of an unbleached oiled round cloth, I personally found in my experience that it could be enhanced by the addition of a round wooden table, identical wooden chairs or stools, and a canvas tent that can allow the participants to work in any context with relative comfort and protection from the elements. Participants are seated around the table and/or around the cloth placed on the ground, and proceed with the creative exchange (details below), working with the physical form of earth in their hands to start with and then, the handful of earth is placed

upon the cloth for the duration of the practice. I developed a portable table for my application of Earth Forum across South Africa (Figure 10, but have not prototyped the tent or chairs yet). Sacks did not use a table in this sense, and preferred to keep the cloth on the ground.

Both Sacks and I found that the process is more comfortable and has greater impact for the length of time dedicated if people are seated on chairs as opposed to sitting on the floor. If no chairs and stools are available then sitting on the floor on a large square unbleached natural canvas (approximately 4x4m) is preferable (This is something I experimented on my own in South Africa). Both Sacks and I found that it was important to ensure equitable seating arrangements for all who participate in order for them to be seated equally and at the same level, ensuring eye contact was level. While I found it also preferable to use seating made from wood or natural materials, but when this was not possible, I concerned myself more with ensuring the seating was identical. In general, I needed to work with what was available in the space in which I was setting an Earth Forum, and in my experience across South Africa in different contexts I became more adaptable with these arrangements, always ensuring a sense of equity between participants. I have found the key components of seating must be selected in this order: identical seats, comfort and naturally made.

I found it preferable to seat the participants around a round wooden table that can comfortably fit the 1.5m diameter cloth. If a round table is not available, then a square table can do, but a rectangular one is not advised (it seemed to take away from the circular shape and form of the gathering). I found that when a group was not in this shape and form, the practice suffered⁶². Participants seated in a perfect circle seem better equipped to listen, speak and view each other in an equitable egalitarian way, Sack's reported this to be the case in her experience as well. Conducting an Earth Forum on the floor will work for those who are capable of sitting on the floor, i.e. children or younger participants. I found the ideal shape and form included a round wooden table, with identical seating, that could make a recognisable circular shape of seated individuals. Having the table available made the 'earth' contributions to the cloth more visible and the effect of placing soil on a shared table, raised or elevated the status of earth's presence in the exchange. The cloth instrument, however simple, is a significant component of this methodology, and in Chapter Four its efficacy is critically examined.

2.7.5. SELECTING THE SPACE

As mentioned previously, 'forum' in its original context was a gathering outdoors, and for Earth Forum the most ideal setting is outdoors. While it is a practice that develops the capacities of participants to act meaningfully as ecological citizens, the outdoor space need not necessarily be an ecologically intact or green space like a park, garden or wild area. It can quite easily be an urban or industrial area. I, supported by others as described in Chapters three and four in more detail, have conducted these practices on noisy train platforms, in busy city squares, and in moving train carriages. I found that selecting a space that is unusual and strange is significant, this is something Sacks suggested would be useful in our earlier discussions. I found that the space should be one which people would usually consider as a traditional space to hold meetings or workshops. In our earlier collaborative exploratory actions Sacks and I found that it was important to steer the Earth Forum away from a regular outdoor lunch or gathering place into something curious. I, supported by others (see Chapter four). I personally have conducted Earth Forums in a number of different environments: dry river

⁶² See Chapter Four for more detailed descriptions.

beds; road sides; city pavements; public parks; buildings entrances; amphitheatres; lecture theatres; and in more traditional seminar-room settings (however lecture theatres and seminar rooms were not ideal, as they had no element of surprise; they were not 'suitably strange'). Earth Forum can potentially work in any setting, and seems to function better when an unusual space is chosen, as can be seen in chapter four. The physical context has considerable influences on the practice and helps establish the shape and form of the social sculpture. I constantly kept in mind that this is a gathering of people thinking carefully and deeply about what it means to live on the Earth and so choosing a site that might reveal how we are connected or disconnected from the Earth was crucial to the process.

2.7.6. RESPECT FOR THE SPACE

While it may seem that in the Earth Forum one is working with what are traditionally everyday objects like an ordinary table, cloth, table and chairs, in an Earth Forum, each of these instruments have a particular purpose and sense of being in their shape and form. I found that it was important to ensure that participants did not use the table and cloth in a traditional sense, i.e. to hold cups, books or bags, this was something that emerged out from advice given to me by Sacks' to keep the space 'suitably strange'. The cloth's sole purpose is to hold the soil, and embody the forum and I felt it should be respected for this. When welcoming the participants, I would make them aware that the chairs, table and cloth were very particular instruments we would use in the process, and asked them please to respect them for this purpose. I also tried to ensure that people did not sit down in the designated space until everyone was present and ready to do so as a group; this aided in establishing a sense of respect for each other, and therefore seemed to create an atmosphere in which all the participants would respect the space. It was also important to ensure that outsiders did not disturb or enter the circle that the group created; this is very disruptive.

2.7.7. THE 'RESPONSIBLE PARTICIPANT'⁶³

Social learning practice is usually led by a facilitator or moderator. In the Earth Forum process we (Shelley Sacks, myself and our team of collaborators on EF development) have found it helpful to think of this person as a Responsible Participant, following the use of this term in Sack's earlier work as explained above. The person does not facilitate or moderate in a traditional way, doing this somewhat differently by including guidance of the process with a connective practice that aims to encourage personal freedom and expression. The role of a Responsible Participant is different from that of a facilitator, and can be seen as an expansion of traditional facilitation or moderation, where the Responsible Participant is attempting to ensure he or she does not stand outside the process as a 'facilitator', but actively participates in it, as a recognised participant. The Responsible Participant is also subtly different from a moderator (this is something emphasised in Sacks, 2011f). Less emphasis is placed on moderation of an Earth Forum, and more on open empathetic exchange by all those involved; in some ways this empathetic exchange is guided by other means than the Responsible Participant: by the social sculpture connective practice which in an Earth Forum creates a specific learning arena. I show in the application of the process (Chapters Four and Five) how the shape and form of the social space allows the group to self-moderate. Understanding the need to lighten the responsibility and pressure of the facilitator (which I describe in detail in Chapter Three), the duty of a Responsible Participant is to expand facilitation into a space where participants are more self-facilitated, and guided by other facilitative forces set up by the Responsible Participant using social sculpture practice. At the heart of this is the aim to ensure there is no separation between the Responsible Participant and the other participants, and instead a real sense of equality and shared action. To be a Responsible Participant means to actively participate in all the processes oneself. Whatever everyone else around the cloth explores, the Responsible Participant explores too. The reason for this is to ensure the Responsible Participant maintains an equal status with everyone else, striving for a truly egalitarian practice. The Responsible Participant has thoughts, feelings, doubts, confusions just like everyone else. The difference between the Responsible Participant and the others

⁶³ As mentioned earlier, the concept of Responsible Participant first emerged in Sacks' work "Exchange Values". Sacks encouraged me to further investigate and explore this idea through my own practice-based enquiry in developing and expanding the Earth Forum process in and for this PhD. While Sack's initiated these concepts, I spent a great deal of time exploring them myself first hand, and reflexively expanding our understanding of responsible participant, by becoming one, through practice based enquiry. Also I later expanded the concept even further by developing a way to guide others in the process of responsible participation.

participating is that as well as participating in the process, she also introduces the process and makes sure that everyone knows what to do. She only intervenes if no one knows how to go on, or if people have forgotten some important aspect of the work, like actively listening to each other or find themselves slipping into a discussion or a debate and not an active listening exchange. In this way the Responsible Participant needs to develop an intuitive capacity and sensibility to know when to guide the group back, and when to let the social sculpture connective practice enable the group to guide themselves. The pedagogical processes developed to enable this intuitive capacity are explored in Chapters Five and Six.

I found the Responsible Participant's role was sometimes different from the others in the group, and that it is important that she explains the idea of the Responsible Participant at the beginning. I found, as a Responsible Participant myself, it was important to state upfront that most of the time the Responsible Participant will be participating like everyone else, but if it is necessary I would step out of this role for a moment and take some responsibility for moving things on, this pre-emptive act was something Sack's developed in Exchange Values, and something I found very useful in further work. At the beginning of the practice the Responsible Participant sets the shape and form, and reveals the framework for the process. Once all participants are aware and comfortable, the Responsible Participant participates in the process just like everyone else.

2.7.8. THE PRACTICE

One would think the practice itself was the most important component of this methodology. In social sculpture however, the carefully sculpted shape and form and the instruments used, are as equally important as the actual practice, as explained in Chapter One via the examples of the work of Beuys and Sacks. Understanding the particular shape, form and the context in which the instruments are used in Earth Forum is important. The practice is carefully constructed to work within this shape and form and, with these instruments, focuses particularly on the capacities to listen and the practice of engaging our imaginations.

2.7.8.1. ACTIVE LISTENING

According to Shelley Sacks listening is not a passive process. In her handbook for her social

sculpture *Exchange Values* she said this about listening (Sacks, 2011f:4):

When I listen to you it creates thoughts and images, one could say, movements, in me. But these movements usually have to do with my response to what you think and see. I agree with some things that you say and disagree with others. Some of what I hear relates perhaps to my own ideas and thoughts. So whilst listening to you I already go off into my own world. Perhaps I do not even hear properly what you say, because I am so involved with liking and disliking or adding my own points of view. Often I can hardly wait for you to finish so I can put forward my point of view. And if we then start discussing what you have said we can quickly get into a to and fro of arguing, trying to persuade, debating the pros and cons of what we each are saying. This kind of listening has – one could say – mainly to do with antipathy and sympathy. But to really hear what another has to say we have to remove the agreement and disagreement. We have to try and stay with the person, with their pictures, with their thoughts, and see what they see and feel, without agreeing and disagreeing and letting our own thoughts run on internally. A good way to do this and focus more sharply on what someone is saying – to become a more active listener – is to consider what is being said in three ways. We can listen for the content of what is being said, we can listen to the feeling with which it is being said, and we can try and get a sense of the impulse or motivation in what is being said.

This understanding of listening is at the heart of Earth Forum, and I explore active listening and its role in empathy development in depth in Chapter Five. In many ways I realise that the majority of the work participants do in this process is not speaking, but listening. Perhaps this is what makes Earth Forum different to many other traditional social learning practices; listening is at the heart of the practice, and is one of the key capacities that is actively being developed in the participants.

2.7.8.2. THE CAPACITY TO IMAGINE

I have mentioned the role of imagination already in this chapter, yet for clarity within the context of this methodology section, imagination is seen as one of the key capacities that is worked with during an Earth Forum⁶⁴. It is not necessarily the imagination we use for fantasy or escapism, but rather the ability to picture circumstances, objects, feelings, colours, etc. in one's mind/heart and use this imaginative capacity in how we listen, or pay attention. This is an active process of putting one's own thoughts aside while listening, for example, and using one's imagination to picture the narrative of another, without judgment, without agreement or disagreement: participating in an active co-imagining of what one is hearing. Our imaginal capacity is also very useful in the process of exploring a context, and walking out into an

⁶⁴ Beuys, who in turn was inspired by the Rudolf Steiner's conception of imagination, initially introduced imagination in this context. Sacks has further expanded the use of imagination through social sculpture practice, and this capacity and insight was initiated by her mentorship. I further explored this through my own experience and came to understand imagination and imaginal reflexivity in this sense through my own experience. In this way my understanding of imagination that I describe here is both inherited from Steiner, Beuys and Sacks, as well as through my own experience through practice.

environment and observing the relationship between inner thoughts, ideas, impulses and gestures, with outside phenomena, like a tree, people walking by, a strange shadow cast by a building, or the small earthworms one discovers in one's handful of earth.

2.7.8.3. EVERYONE SHOULD PARTICIPATE

In an Earth Forum everyone should get a sense that we are all participants in our world, even if we feel invisible and helpless (inspired by a quote from Sacks, 2011f). The process must be structured so that everyone has a chance to participate. A question that arises is: how to make this possible without people feeling compelled to participate and that they are not free? Even if it is difficult for some people to speak because they are naturally shy, or not very talkative, it is important to use a process that encourages everyone to speak and to feel at ease. If we do not set up a process that invites and encourages everyone to speak, only the few who usually speak, will contribute. They will fill the space whilst the others observe in silence. And those who observe in silence might also not just be quiet because they are shy, but also because they are a bit lazy to formulate their thoughts, or because they are not really interested in sharing what they think with others. A good way to enable the participation of everyone is to emphasise at the start that every person sees something when they look at a situation. Everyone has something to contribute, even if it is their questions. It is very important to ensure that there is enough time for this process. Giving things enough time is about allowing things to unfold. Giving ourselves and each other the space to go beyond what we already know; to go beyond our habitual points of view. It is also important to stress that there are no right or wrong things to say and that one does not need to share everything one thought or felt.

2.7.8.4. INVITING PARTICIPANTS

Inviting participants to an Earth Forum requires some thoughtful consideration and one should be very specific and clear about the requirements for participation. These insights were mainly developed through our (Sacks and myself) initial exploratory processes in South Africa. In order for an Earth Forum to work well one should suggest the following in the invitation:

- **TIME DONATION AND COMMITMENT** – Each participant should donate at least three hours of their full attention for the process to be effective. It is recommended that the group should not exceed more than 25 people. Each participant should be well aware of their time donation and commitment to the process and cannot take phone calls, notes or film an Earth Forum. If a participant leaves before the process is complete this does not allow for an effective Earth Forum for all those involved; in this case one can request that the participant attends another scheduled Earth Forum to which he or she can commit for the full duration.
- **ANONYMITY** – In using Earth Forum with a group that are in conflict or struggling over a contested issue, I considered it important to offer anonymity to the participants from the start. Unlike workshops and talks, participants need not introduce themselves during or before the process, but can do so if they want to.
- **OUTCOMES** – The outcome will be an exploration into developing new capacities that help one truly listen to someone else, as well as create an imaginative and innovative way of seeing how others live in this world. One can assure invitees that an outcome will come from attending and participating in the process, this is something Sacks would often like to say when inviting people to join in on the process.
- **RESEARCH ETHICS** – Within my context I also needed to describe the research aims of the Earth Forum process, and that I was in the process of developing methods and pedagogies for the education of the ecological citizen. In order to get informed consent from participants I would need to give a clear description of my research and describe in what way participants could take part. This would entail explaining how I was going to reflect on this process and use it to inform the wider research aspects of the work. I also asked if the participants were comfortable with me recording and writing about this work. In some Earth Forums I was able to make audio recordings, or cite people by name; in other Earth Forums I did not get permission to make recordings, but was granted access to reflect on the work, keeping participants anonymous.

2.7.9. GUIDING AN EARTH FORUM: STEP BY STEP⁶⁵

The Earth Forum begins with a gathering of people between 8 and 20, standing behind a circle of chairs which have been placed in a chosen site, a dry river bed, a traffic circle, a train platform. Everyone sits down and acknowledges each other just with a gesture of saying “hello with their eyes”. The Responsible Participant is somewhat like a facilitator who both participates in and guides an Earth Forum. In order to participate and guide, Responsible Participants must be as present as possible. Their role is to inspire a sense of calm composure, using a firm but gentle approach, reminding participants to keep to the tasks at hand and ensuring that the time allocated is used wisely. 'Being present' refers to maintaining an awareness of both one's own thoughts, feelings and impetus as well as those of the individuals in the group and how they are responding to the tasks given to them. The Responsible Participant needs to be empathetic to the needs of the participant and sometimes might need to adjust the process to accommodate individuals in the group (I have taken these from the handbook I developed for Responsible Participant apprenticeship with Sacks. Appendix A: Pages 9-11 see below). The Responsible Participant begins with describing stage 1 and 2 to ensure everyone is comfortable. Stage three she introduces the imaginative capacities, after which each person (including the Responsible Participant) is invited to go gather a 'handful of earth' in the surrounding environment (Stage 4) and to use their imaginative capacities to take note of what they are thinking and imagining, they do this in silence. After which they return, seated back in the circle the Earth Forum cloth is unfolded in the centre of the circle. Each person holding in their cupped hands their handful of earth/soil/ hummus/etc is introduced to active listening (Stage 5). Each person then shares something of their experience, while the rest of the group actively listens without responding (Stage 6) after sharing they place their handful of earth on the cloth. In Stage 7, each person is invited to reflect for about 5 minutes what their hopes are for the earth, or the land/place that they live, and this is shared again through another round of active listening, with an added detail to the listening process (listening to the feeling of what is being said). In Stage 8, the final question is explored for 5 minutes in silence by all participants, which looks at how their hope could be connected to anything they are doing, or could do in their lives, and this is

⁶⁵ This step by step process was developed in collaboration with Sacks, Elizabeth Fletcher and Maria Honig. It was initiated through our earlier exploratory research, and then further refined and developed through my own application and expansion of Earth Forum across South Africa. These stages were developed under Sack's intellectual guidance, in the form of consultant feedback that she provided while we were drafting the Earth Forum handbook (which I contributed substantively to).

shared again adding the final layer of active listening (listening to what is not being said, the impulse) . Finally in stage 9 participants have the opportunity to reflect and respond openly in a less structured way, however active listening is still encouraged. After the Earth Forum the group democratically decides what to do with the earth on the cloth, and it is usually taken back to where it was found, while people often pair off in smaller groups to reflect on their experience. Some people keep a stone or a feather as a memento. Further detail of each stage is provided below:

“GUIDING AN EARTH FORUM: STEP BY STEP⁶⁶

STAGE 1: Time requirements and housekeeping: It is important before you start the Earth Forum that all the participants are comfortable and relaxed. You can recommend that they visit the toilet, eat and drink before the process, knowing that two to three hours will lapse without any disturbance. Make it very clear that if participants are due to leave before the process is complete, they should rather participate in another Earth Forum that can be scheduled in the future, and if not, will not be able to attend at all. Earth Forum has nine stages that can be followed easily, to help guide and shape the exchange. We suggest that you follow this template as much as possible, but realise that the process can be flexible depending on the individuals in the group.

STAGE 2: Introducing the responsible participant: Start by explaining carefully and clearly who you are and how you as the responsible participant will guide the process:

“Earth Forum is led by a responsible participant, who helps shape and guide this imaginative exchange. A responsible participant is not a facilitator, negotiator, mediator, or moderator as there is nothing to negotiate, mediate or moderate in Earth Forum. The responsible participant’s role is simply to participate in the exchange, but also to assist participants in developing their capacities to imagine and listen. I will therefore come in and out of the process as necessary.” Also describe how the group will stick to time limits.

STAGE 3: Every human being has the capacity to imagine: The next step is to introduce the imaginative capacities we all have and to explore carefully how these can be used.

“Every human being has an amazing ability to make pictures in their mind, to imagine the past, present and even look into the future. We each have access to this space in our minds, a dome within which we can all make pictures and creatively explore the world. This imaginative capacity allows us to experience each other’s worlds and to appreciate the differences.”

STAGE 4: Collecting a handful of earth: When instructing the participants to collect their handful of earth, remind them of their amazing capacity to imagine and visualise and ask them to use this capacity during their collecting experience. They will have about five minutes to explore the surrounds and find their handful of earth. When everyone has returned to sit, ask the group to hold their earth and quietly shape their picture of their experience in their minds. Also ask the participants not to speak to each other during this process. Once all the participants have arrived back with their handful of soil, remind them about working with their imaginative space to collect their thoughts and shape their picture of their experience. This takes time, so give the group about five minutes to shape their pictures. It might feel like a long time to sit and work in silence, but it is important that each person has the time and space to shape their own pictures.

⁶⁶ Sourced from the Earth Forum handbook (Appendix A) developed by myself and Shelley Sacks.

STAGE 5: Developing the capacity to actively listen: Before people begin to share their pictures, their experiences, feelings and other thoughts about collecting their handful of earth, it is important to talk about developing the capacity to actively listen.

“In this space we will work towards trying to really listen to each other and see each other's pictures. To do this will require using your own space, your imagination to picture what the other person is saying. Listen without judging, reacting or responding to what the person is saying. Try to stay with that person's picture.”

STAGE 6: Sharing your picture: After some time has passed, invite someone to share their picture. Suggest to the group that responses need not come consecutively in the circle, but rather when the participant feels ready. The participants are welcome to use as much time as they need, but the responsible participant might guide them if they go off on a tangent, or ask them to wrap up if they are taking too much time. Find the right time to share your picture/experiences; as the responsible participant, you must also participate. After each person shares their picture they can place their handful of earth on the Earth Forum oil cloth.

STAGE 7: What are your hopes for the Earth?: In the next round, ask the participants “what are your hopes for the Earth?” This may seem like a simple question but is extremely difficult to answer. You can suggest that they can use their imagination, their workspace or their “dome” to imagine the answer. Also this question does not necessarily apply to the future but can be visualised in present. If they are finding it difficult to connect with this question or visualise their pictures, then suggest another question. “What are your hopes for this place/town/city/land?” You can give the group at least five minutes to reflect on this question and then check with the group if more time is needed. Explain to the group that they should use their imaginative space to visualise what it might look, feel and sound like and to describe some of the experiences and feelings they have.

Before the participants share their pictures, remind them about active listening – to try to stay with the person, to use their workspace see the other person's picture and to not judge or respond to what they are saying. In addition, the participants should listen to not just the content of what the person is saying, but also to the feeling, and the impulse from where the person is coming.

STAGE 8: Developing the second question: A variety of questions can be developed and asked in this round, taking the group to constructive creative exchange, building on the first two rounds. Suggested questions:

“In what way do your hopes for the Earth link to anything you are doing or would like to do?”

“Considering your hopes, and the substance that has been gathered so far, what would you consider to be progress towards your hopes?”

We spend a great deal of time rushing into 'doing stuff': we are constantly thinking about what we should do, and how we should do it; but how often do we give ourselves the time to think about how our 'doings' link to what we value being. The first two stages encourage participants to experience being on/in the Earth. The Earth Forum provides the space and time for each participant to slow down and consider what they value being, and what they value about the place and world they are in: linking this to actual opportunities for action can be very productive and useful.

STAGE 9: Working with the materials: In this round, there is space to share a thought or question for the future. , The participants can draw from the great deal of material and substance that the group has produced through the process and try to clarify a clear question or aspiration for future Earth Forums. The question could also be taken and considered by each participant to apply in their daily lives. This round is available for an open exchange, but unlike most discussions, debates or conversations, every participant has developed their capacity to imagine and listen and so the exchange is a thoughtful, sincere and empathetic experience.”

2.7.10. THE APPRENTICESHIP

Being a Responsible Participant is being an empathetic and considerate participant, who through experience is able to guide an Earth Forum. Those who are willing to practice Earth Forums in their community and in their own life, can participate in an apprenticeship process of intensive three-day learning, details of which are explored in Chapter five, in which I describe how I expanded this concept of apprenticeship of the responsible participant. Once an apprentice Responsible Participant is feeling comfortable with the practice, working with the instruments and familiar with the particularities of being a Responsible Participant, he or she can use the Earth Forum handbook (see Appendix A: page 13) to help guide and remind them of the basic and finer details of this process. It would also be useful to run an Earth Forum periodically with other Responsible Participants and get feedback from each other's experience to help improve capacities and to contribute to subsequent editions of the handbook.

2.7.11. EARTH FORUM ETHICS

Earth Forum is a collaborative practice with the primary goal of equitable sharing of responsibilities and shared ecological citizenship. It is important to ensure Earth Forums have built in them a standardised core set of ethics and moral practices, such as informed and collaborative consent in all activities. This means that all participants, (children and their guardians as well as adults) need to be carefully consulted and made aware of the Earth Forum non-extractive process. This means a Responsible Participant cannot use any content emergent from the Earth Forum without the informed consent of the other participants involved in the practice. This informed consent does not necessarily need to be in written form. We have found that there is a history in South Africa and in Africa of indigenous people's signing away their land, and so in our experience we have found that people are sometimes reluctant to sign waivers or consent forms (McGarry and Shackleton, 2009a). It is therefore important to create ways of receiving consent that do not necessarily require a written signature. This can include verbal agreements as used by McGarry and Shackleton (2009a) in work with vulnerable rural children. In this case conversations discussing the aims, objectives and outcomes of how the content emerging from the Earth Forum will be used, including all perceived possible pros and cons, were important.

As this is a deeply democratic and collaborative initiative there will sometimes be circumstances that require a more collaborative ethical strategy. Therefore participants need to decide if and in what way they would like to participate and what happens with materials that are produced together. This form of ethics has been drawn from *Grounded Collaborative Reciprocal Empowerment* developed by Piquemal and Allen (2009). Therefore ethical engagement becomes a shared responsibility and shared authority. Earth Forum does not see the participants as vulnerable subjects as this takes away their own voices and their right to self-determination, but rather sees informed consent being developed through a process that is constantly negotiated by all those involved in the practice as it evolves.

2.7.12. DOCUMENTING EARTH FORUMS

I advised newly apprenticed Responsible Participants not to record Earth Forums as in many ways they exist in a particular time and place, and what should remain of them is left in the oiled fibres of the cloth. Records of the exchanges are fine, if required, as long as everyone in the group is comfortable with being recorded. My favoured photographic method for documenting the Earth Forum is to photograph the Earth Forum cloth before it is used, and then again after each Earth Forum conducted. The Responsible Participant can place the cloth on the ground where the Earth Forum was being held and, stepping half a metre away from the cloth, take a photograph from shoulder height. The Responsible Participant should take the photo each time and not anyone else; this should ensure a consistent set of images. In this way, the Responsible Participant is able to gather a series of images of the cloth holding new traces of earth after each practice, and witness its growth and aging. I encouraged new Responsible Participants to email these images to me; I then added these to the Earth Forum website (www.earthfora.org) on which citizens can follow the growing traces on different cloths in different regions.

2.8. METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION

In this chapter I have outlined the particular methodological framework used to conduct this study. This was not predetermined; instead it unfolded and emerged, through a process of practice-based inquiry and subsequent **reflexive** practiced based inquiry. This methodology

aims to find an alternative to both technocentric and biocentric responses to sustainability and environmental education practice, and enable a personal and relational agency of the ecological citizen experiencing ecological apartheid. Central to this process of methodological development is an attempt to address the problem of exploring and enabling embodied practices of the ecological citizen within specific socio-economic and historical contexts, that simultaneously recognises the human being as part of the ecology, as well as the social sphere as an extension of the ecosystem.

I have also shown that this methodological approach recognises the value of the human being's imaginal capacity, and considers ways in which inner and outer realities are engaged and enlivened, as a foundational approach to personal and relational agency development. Along with this, is the attempt to develop an 'I' sense or empathetic capacity, which I argue as a vital capacity development process that enables personal and relational agency, or what Sacks' calls a *Response(ability)*. I also relate this particular expression of agency and agency development to Sen's (1993) capabilities theory and explore what methods and practices enable an individual to encounter their own valued beings and doings, which I see as central to the expansion of personal and relational agency.

A phenomenological approach to tracking empathy development, both of the participants and my own, through the implementation of the practice is described in relation to Goethe's 'delicate empiricism', where first-hand encounters with phenomena in a contemplative, considerate way offer a meticulous and embodied understanding of the phenomena. I have also described how methodological development of this study was a constant exploration into seeking appropriate pedagogical forms that enable personal and relational agency. I investigate social sculpture methodology in relation to other earlier exploratory methodological inquiries (described in Chapter Three, phase A of the study) and these are observed and meticulously explored through practice-based enquiry, as an attempt to find an appropriate form for the education of the Responsible Participant.

I have also shown how the thesis structure itself, and the methodological approach used in analysis and reflection drew mainly from Ellingson's (2009) qualitative crystallisation research

process; my phenomenological investigation became an unfolding narrative, allowing for a reflexive iteration of the work, and creating a thickly described and complexly-rendered multiple-genre text. In Chapter Four I provide further details of the actual Earth Forums that were held, and how I documented the interactions and reflections on these, as part of the research methodology and approach (Phase B: trialling of Earth Forum pedagogy). First, and before I provide the detailed story and analysis of the development and implementation of the Earth Forum pedagogical practice in South Africa, I need to explain its emergence as a methodology within this study which I do in the next chapter (Phase A: exploratory phase). I have ended this chapter by describing and articulating the Earth Forum process itself, and what occurs during the process. While this offers a general overview, the next four chapters provide a clearer and more thickly described view of how this social sculpture process is carried out.

CHAPTER THREE

CLUMSY ALCHEMY: THE STORY OF AN EMERGENT METHODOLOGY

"What you seek is seeking you."

Rumi

3.1. GROUNDED COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

In this chapter I share and reflect on the somewhat clumsy process of refining the methodology for Earth Forum, and describe in detail the early methodological approaches I employed in my exploratory research. I say that it was clumsy because in many ways it was. I often did not know what to expect, considering that I was working in complex learning environments, with a variety of different participants, who were all attempting to negotiate their own roles and responsibilities. I had learned in early exploratory research work (examined in Section 3.2) that rigidly established processes would not allow for creative social exchange. Also they offered me very little insight into social learning opportunities. Intuitive and more flexible approaches, however, would yield emergent collaborative constructed spaces for learning, despite the unexpected tensions that would arise on occasion. Throughout my intuitive and reflexive research journey I have observed my thinking and practice transform, purify, and simplify, as if it was a coarse mineral that was being refined through alchemy. Yet this alchemy was often unplanned, intuitive and sometimes inelegant; hence I like to refer to this journey as 'clumsy alchemy'. What it lacked in grace it made up for in its honest and empathetic approach to fine-tuning and purification by a group of concerned citizens.

In this chapter I map out the route of my academic and personal life that created the spaces and opportunities that forged my research path and the methodological development of a new social sculpture, one that contributed to a novel approach to learning for ecological citizenship and justice. To understand this social sculpture's methodological approach, it is crucial to understand the process that produced it. This process was indeed a grounded collaborative research project, and relied on strong relationships forged with others who were asking similar questions and exploring similar fields of inquiry. It was the reflexive exchange we offered each other that helped forge this work.

Piquemal and Allen (2009) challenge traditional orthodoxies in qualitative research in their use and defence of grounded collaborative research, move beyond the over-reliance on 'objectivist' models for ethnography, and instead represent multiple voices with the understanding that knowledge is socially constructed, and thus can be collaboratively investigated. I too relied on people's values and real-life experience to help guide this work, which attempts to create a pedagogy that is applied socially, outside of formal institutions and is aimed to address the complex realities of environmental degradation, climate change and contemporary society's separateness or apartheid from nature, as articulated in my primary research question. And so, while I was indeed the primary researcher, I relied on the advice and experiences of robust 'critical friends' who were able to explore certain aspects of researching learning and agency development as together we attempted to create a new methodology that engaged a creative or arts-based approach to social learning as mentioned earlier in Chapter One. Considering that this research was partly intuitive and my direction was deeply influenced both through a personal and relational reflexive exchange with my critical friends, you might ask "whose work is it anyway?" I would say that it is 'ours' and that I am merely the responsible collaborator that attempted to document this story; I am the primary clumsy alchemist. While I write this narrative, the story it tells, and the material it offers is collectively owned, and so is a valuable instrument for all of us, citizens of the Earth.

In Section 3.2 of this chapter I recount the early research journey through my work with the Arkwork Collective, and the collaboration between researchers at Rhodes University, and a group of informal waste collectors in the Eastern Cape. In this section I outline specific milestones and lessons learned in attempting to develop an arts-based social learning practice. I begin to discover that as I attempted to work more collaboratively I found myself better equipped to develop a more 'socially' constructed and socially meaningful methodology, while at the same time finding myself at a loss with how to cope with tensions and conflict. I also found myself struggling with how to 'see' learning happen. In Section 3.3. I identify two crucial tipping-points that contributed to the alchemical process of refining and distilling, not only the arts-based social learning methodology I was trying to construct, but also how I approached this research, as an individual and as a contributor to a collaboration. I also begin to reveal my early encounters with social sculpture methodology and phenomenology. In Section 3.4 I outline the emergence of the Earth Forum social sculpture and a deep reciprocal

collaboration between myself and an authority in social sculpture, Shelley Sacks. I also explore the early application of social sculpture methods, and draw from the reflections of other participants who draw from their Earth Forum experiences (Section 3.5). In Section 3.6. I reflect on what had been gained through the clumsy alchemical journey, and recap on what I had gained, both in methodological and phenomenological insight through this process.

In this chapter I outline a series of different exploratory practice-based research processes which are reflected on throughout this chapter. The table below outlines various different activities, practices, actions between July 2008 and September 2011: this covers the entire exploratory research phase of this study (see Table 2). Included in this chapter are the boundaries of this doctoral study, and the development of my research questions which attempt to develop a pedagogical approach to the capacity development of the ecological citizen, that enlivens empathy or the 'I' sense, and develops a personal and relational response(ability). This chapter is primarily concerned with seeking appropriate pedagogical forms that can be applied socially, outside of formal institutions and aimed to address the complex realities of ecological apartheid. Prior to my proposal development, I participate in a collaborative practice that inspired the beginning of this doctoral study; the project was called '10 Green Bottles of Colesburg' (commissioned by the Cultivaria festival in Stellenbosch). This led to registering for a PhD in Environmental Education, and I received a grant from a wider South African Development Community (SADC) regional programme, for contextual profiling and proposal development. During this process of the exploratory research (phase A) I worked under the Environmental Learning Research Centre's (ELRC) ethical guidelines in contextual profiling, as much of the work conducted in this research centre requires initial contextual exploration into specific social, ecological and methodological contexts. This exploratory phase of my research consisted of investigating various available methodologies and applying them in different contexts, following carefully the ethical protocols established by the ELRC that were approved by the Ethics Higher Degrees Committee (EHDC). Table 2 is a systematic overview of the various stages of the doctoral study, with specific reference to the contextual profiling and proposal development, and the data sources for each section.

Table 2: A list of data sources from the exploratory phase of this study, July 2008-September 2011.

ACTIVITY/ACTION	DATES	DETAILS	DATA SOURCES
PREDOCTORAL			
ARKWORK COLLECTIVE: <i>10 Green Bottles of Colesburg</i> Puppetry Colesburg-Cape Town	July 2008-October 2008	Artist Mary-Ann Orr and I worked with a group of ten people whose livelihoods were mainly dependent on what they could forage for on the Colesburg municipal waste dump, in the Eastern Cape.	http://arkwork.yolasite.com/the-10-green-bottles-of-colesburg.php 10 Green Bottles Booklet: See CD Appendix L Personal journal
BEGINNING OF FORMAL DOCTORAL STUDY (PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CONTEXUAL PROFILING)			
ARKWORK COLLECTIVE: <i>The Quagga and the Unicorn Banraku puppet project</i> . Grahamstown, Eastern Cape	February 2009- July 2009	A participatory experimental learning project with six young informal waste collectors from Grahamstown landfill using mostly plastic waste.	Website: http://arkwork.yolasite.com/upcoming-events.php http://arkwork.yolasite.com/research-and-development.php News clipping (Appendix M) Personal journal
ARKWORK COLLECTIVE: <i>The Arkwork Circus</i> . Puppetry. Grahamstown, Eastern Cape	February 2010-July 201	Continuation of the work from the previous project, with the addition of four more participants. This also included three other collaborators to join the project and contribute to facilitation and reflection.	Website: http://arkwork.yolasite.com/upcoming-events.php http://arkwork.yolasite.com/research-and-development.php 50/50 videos (Appendix F) Personal journal
<i>Tipping Point</i> gathering in Stellenbosch, Western Cape.	May 2010	The Tipping Point gathering was not a project I led as an exploratory social learning initiative but it did contribute to significant understandings in my work, and the development of the COPART movement.	News clipping: See Figure 13. Tipping point website Personal journal
COPART: development (Cape Town, Western Cape)	June- November 2010	The early development of COPART consisted of four meetings and round table discussions between June and November 2010. They consisted of a variety of different citizens that range from artists to scientists.	www.dontcopoutcopart.blogspot.com Archived by date: See June-November 2010, total of 27 blog posts Personal journal
COPART: Climate Fluency Exchange (Cape Town, Western Cape)	December 2010 (10 day process)	The Climate Fluency Exchange saw the beginning of my exploration into Social Sculpture practice and other collaborative/participatory processes that relied on creative imaginative exchange. I was stepping far away from my puppetry practice and into an expanded use of art in socially constructed forms of learning and exchange. The Climate Fluency exchange lasted for 10 days and ran concurrently with the COP16 climate negotiations in Mexico.	http://www.dontcopoutcopart.blogspot.com Archived by Dates: See December 2012 for daily posts on the Climate Fluency Exchange. Also see www.climatefluencyexchange.org/videos Videos (Appendix H) This site contains pictures and videos. I created this site as a way of sharing our work with the United Nations Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Mexico. The videos were shared daily on a screen inside the negotiation space and in the people's exhibition space. Also see testimonials (tab title: Testimonial) from participants in the climate fluency exchange. Personal journal
COPART reflexive gathering (Farm retreat in the Western Cape)	January 2011	This was a three-day process working with the core coordinating team of the climate fluency exchange and the COPART volunteers. It was where I first met Shelley Sacks, and refined Social Sculpture practice as a primary focus for this study.	www.dontcopoutcopart.blogspot.com See January 2010 post number 1 Personal journal
Trip to the UK and the SSRU	February 2011	My first visit to the Social Sculpture Research Unit and conversations with Shelley Sacks regarding Earth Forum.	Personal journal

PROPOSAL ACCEPTED: ETHICAL FRAMEWORK APPROVED BY THE EHDC			
<i>EARTH FORUM</i> ⁶⁷ exploratory development via the first train trip Cape Town (EF1) , Laingsburg (EF 2, EF 3 and EF 4), Johannesburg EF 5)	16-20 May 2011	Shelley Sacks flew to Cape Town and joined Elizabeth Fletcher, Maria Honig and myself on a train for a week travelling from Cape Town to Joburg (Gauteng) via Laingsburg (Karoo). We trialled the new Earth Forum practice in these towns with a variety of different citizens, reflecting as a group, and using the opportunity as a form of apprenticeship in Social Sculpture. After this week Shelley Sacks left.	www.dontcopoutcopart.blogspot.com See May 2011 post number 7-10 Personal journal
<i>EARTH FORUM</i> in Johannesburg with the Climate Train Steering Committee (EF 6)	21 June 2011	I conducted an Earth Forum in Johannesburg with the steering committee of the proposed climate train. It was our first meeting as a steering committee and I used the opportunity to try out being a Responsible Participant. Maria Honig helped me set it up, and gave me feedback after the process.	Personal journal only
<i>EARTH FORUM</i> at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown (Eastern Cape) (EF7 and EF 8)	July 2011	I conducted two Earth Forums in Grahamstown during the National Arts Festival. These are captured in a two-part series documented for a local TV show entitled 50/50. It was my second and third attempt at being a Responsible Participant.	See CD insert: 50/50 film (Appendix F) Personal journal
SECOND TRIP TO THE UK to visit the Social Sculpture Research Unit and refine the Earth Forum practice	July -August 2011	In the second trip to the UK I combined a fundraising mission with an opportunity to interview Shelley Sacks as well as get access to readings and other published material about her work.	Personal journal
APPLICATION OF REFINED <i>EARTH FORUM</i> practice in Grahamstown at the Research Learning Symposium at the Environmental Learning Research Centre (EF 9 and EF 10)	September 2011	On my return to South Africa I conducted two Earth Forums (EF 9 and EF 10) in Grahamstown with people attending the Environmental Learning Research Centre's (ELRC) Research Learning symposium. Each Earth Forum was large with 23 and 22 participants respectively.	Personal journal Interview reflection with participant Georgina Cundill.
GIPCA HOT WATER symposium in Cape Town where I presented my work and also conducted an Earth Forum with participants from the symposium (EF 11)	October 2011	After the Research Learning Earth Forums in Grahamstown, I travelled to Cape Town to attend the UCT GIPCA Hot Water symposium, where I gave a talk and conducted an Earth Forum.	News clippings http://www.artlink.co.za/news_article.htm?contentID=28294 http://www.uct.ac.za/usr/calendar/2011/hot_water_programme_05_10.pdf Personal Journal Interview with Andrea Van Maygaarden and Daniel Robinson who attended the Earth Forum
DEVELOPMENT OF THE <i>EARTH FORUM</i> WEBSITE	October 2011	After the GIPCA event I worked on a website for Earth Forum, which helped me refine and further develop how I describe and visually represent this work.	www.earthfora.org
END OF CONTEXTUAL PROFILING (END OF PHASE A: EXPLORATORY RESEARCH)			

⁶⁷A content summary of the exploratory Earth Forum development is provided in Table 3

3.2. PUPPETS AS RESEARCHERS

As part of my pre-doctoral practice and exploratory research, after completing my Masters in Environmental Science, I began seeking out a means to apply my training in sustainable rural development in a more creative way. As an artist I always found myself feeling somewhat divided between science and art, and up to that point had found little opportunity to work as a fully embodied person, drawing on all my capacities. I didn't want to be half an artist, half a scientist, half a dreamer and half a realist. Working as a fully embodied person was indeed my primary objective, and I wanted to work in a socially responsible way. Embodiment for me meant being able to draw from every facet of my being in order to act. I was trying to find a way to be and do in the world that did not compromise me, nor the world around me. During this time I spent some quality time with my close friend Mary-Ann Orr, a visual artist and sculptor who was working mainly with reclaimed and found objects she sourced from landfills in the Eastern Cape area. I spent two weeks travelling with her from landfill to landfill and could not ignore the many people who were living off what they could collect from these massive fields of garbage. I was shocked and conflicted by many aspects of life on the dump, most noticeably the health impacts of sifting through hazardous and toxic artefacts of the nearby town.

During the South African winter of 2008, Mary-Ann and I decided to work closely with a group of people who frequented the Colesberg landfill in the Northern regions of the Eastern Cape, as practitioners and not researchers. This group of people were descendants of the indigenous !Xam people, who were rapidly losing facets of their culture, particularly their language and their traditional stories; they were being marginalised, forced to live in informal settlements, forage in landfills, and move away from their traditional livelihood practices. Using the waste we collected from the landfill as the primary medium for communication and exchange, we began to construct kinetic sculptures and puppets that resembled significant symbols in !Xam stories, such as the white springbuck, the ostrich, the tortoise, and the baboon. We called this project *10 Green Bottles*.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ You can read the entire story of ten green bottles on www.arkwork.org.za - click on the 'installations' tab. There is also the ten green bottles booklet to download or see Appendix L.



Figure 11: *Ten Green Bottles* process and final installation and performance. Top images show the early workshops, and story telling processes that Mary-Ann and I conducted. The bottom images show the final performance and installation that emerged from these workshops. Images are my own.

Our time on the Colesburg landfill showed us the value of using creative arts-based practice in creating new means for knowledge exchange and storytelling. Mary-Anne and I decided to register a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) entitled *The Arkwork Collective*⁶⁹, to house and implement further art-based development projects such as this. Using the NPO we could raise funds and investigate this work further. It was clear to me that after completing the Ten Green Bottles project that there was a great deal I had not explored in my own capacities that

⁶⁹ The Arkwork Collective was constructed as a collaboration of contemporary artists, in the visual, theatrical, and musical arts. The collaboration drew from a unified interest in creating holistic artistic experiences with marginalised communities, which supports creative experiences amongst people who usually do not have the opportunity to engage with their daily lives and personal histories using arts based processes. While creativity can be socially and culturally located, the Arkwork Collective aimed to develop spaces in which un-defined or not-yet-articulated concepts of creativity can be explored. While of course the majority of the people involved arrived and participated in ways they believe to be creative, the project considered the socio-cultural context in which the participants defined their own creativity. Of particular concern was ensuring that the empowering process of reflexivity and learning was achieved by nurturing the participants' own agencies. We developed an ethical framework in which to conduct this work, that relied on participant consent and ensured constant transparency and reflexivity of all involved in Arkwork practice. This being said, I realised that a doctoral research project would help expand and further develop this ethical framework. See www.arkwork.org.za.

I could use in sustainable rural development. I noticed that adopting different creative genres to navigate complex and difficult territory was a fascinating and perhaps very useful approach to environmental education and sustainable development; I was also interested in developing an ethically sound research project that could investigate this further. My question to myself at the time was: "What role can creative practice and arts-based research play in environmental education and sustainable rural development in South Africa?"

At the time my primary motivation was to work in an embodied way, and to find creative ways of addressing the environmental injustice I was noticing in landfills in the Eastern Cape. Witnessing first-hand the legacy of political apartheid in South Africa, I could see wider ecological separateness or apartheid experienced as both a legacy of the political history of my country, but also the wider capitalistic 'throw-away' society that is the result of a wider form of ecological apartheid. The intersection of these two realities had a powerful affect on my willingness to begin this study. I decided to attempt a trans-disciplinary PhD in Environmental Education. Using this question as my 'north star', I began exploratory research into the role of puppetry and masked theatre in responding to difficult or socially complex situations, as well as the application of arts-based methodologies in environmental education, as part of my contextual profiling contribution to the SADC regional study, and as part of the ELRC PhD proposal programme. My thinking at the time was that arts-based methods (particularly the use of puppetry and role playing) created a proximal or virtual space within which collaborative investigation can take place by both the researcher and the participants. It created a virtual landscape and virtual identity from which participants could explore facets of the complex situations they found themselves in, and then seek out ways and means to respond and enable their perceptions of progress. The next step was to investigate this idea of virtual learning and apply it with a group I had met at the Grahamstown landfill, using the Arkwork NPO as a base from which I could implement these methods and fund this work.

Through preparatory exploratory research I discovered that arts-based research is an emergent valuable new form of inquiry in the field of education: it has spread beyond

disciplinary boundaries and has forged new pathways between education, art and research (Piantanida et al., 2003). This emergence can perhaps be traced back to art's ability to capture reality in a multifaceted way (Huss, 2007). In particular, the use of arts-based research in understanding the perspectives of impoverished and disenfranchised communities has created detailed and nuanced descriptions of what economic and social difficulties are truly like (Huss, 2007). The reasoning I found for the application of such a creative approach to research was that it offers the researched individual or community the opportunity to create the content of the research, and interpret this content themselves in a supported and dialogic environment. The research participant is both empowered and able to provide a research content that is indigenous, exact and explicit; such interpretation draws on emotional, cultural and cognitive forms of knowledge (Huss, 2007; Sarasema, 2003; Sclater, 2003).

Equipped through my work as an affiliate researcher at the ELRC, and working with the protocols and practices for social learning research ethics established by the centre, I was able to work on refining my question which at this point looked something like this:

- How can I develop an arts-based methodology for a collaborative inquiry process that contributes to community innovation and sustainability?
- Can I create a virtual practice and space needed to discover indigenous and socially located forms of research and intervention that fit the unique contours of developing South African communities?

It was a mouthful, and held within it were many different questions. It was big, yet at the time I had no idea how big it was. Equipped only with an approved ethical framework, and basic exploratory research methodology, I was somewhat ignorant as to what I was getting myself into. I began an exploration into puppetry as a method for social learning interaction, with a particular focus on African masquerade puppetry.

I was drawn to African puppet theatre as it has served as political instruction, celebration, initiation, religious ritual, and as social commentary for most of African history (Kruger, 2006;

Tillis, 1992; Arnoldi, 1988). Traditional puppet theatre in Africa is described by Arnoldi (1988: 124) as serving a pivotal social tool, as it is often the only forum within which people can express social criticism without condemnation:

“... operating a wooden image, puppeteers can safely risk opinions and display conduct normally forbidden for individuals. In the African setting, puppets operate with the guidance from the spiritual realm and thus act or speak with extra-human authority. By dramatic portrayals, they reinforce accepted customs and tactfully introduce changing values.”

The robust and dynamic nature of African puppetry enables people to freely improvise in their expression without losing either individual or group identity (Dagan, 1990). This was significant as it was a fundamental aspect of formulating a foundational aspect of my research question; I began to realise the value of developing capacities that could develop a *personal agency* that would enable a person to engage meaningfully in social dialogue and action, i.e. a *relational agency*. It was through realising that the puppet offered an extra-social means for a citizen to express themselves and engage in public discourse and social change that I realised the real value of creative instruments in enabling reflexive justice. The puppet seemed to me an instrument that enabled relational agency. Understanding this, I believed that by investigating traditional African puppetry as a social research tool in the context of sustainable development in South Africa would be advantageous for the following reasons:

- Puppetry creates a **safe forum** in which participants can **engage with difficult or challenging questions, ideas or memories**.
- Participants **can feel free to speak with ‘extra-social’ authority**.
- Participants can document and express ideas in forms that **expand beyond direct spoken or written media**, broadening the **accessibility of the research to illiterate or formally uneducated persons**. This also creates a multifaceted description of an issue, which often times eludes conventional research methodology.
- **Puppet theatre broadens the forum in which the researcher and the researched can communicate and interact**, which enhances the reflexivity in the research. In this way negative research attributes such as research fatigue and objectification can be carefully negotiated.
- Using an entertaining and creative traditional African custom as a research tool increases personal incentive for participants to get involved, while fostering and

nurturing local social capital.

- Traditional African puppets are usually created by local found objects (Muller and Muller, 1999); sticking with this tradition we intended to only use recycled waste items to create the puppets, **making the process inexpensive, universally accessible and ecological responsible.**
- Puppetry exposes participants to a variety of disciplines (e.g. puppet craft, music, dance, theatre, storytelling, environmental knowledge, etc.) that can be incorporated into the whole, i.e. the whole (story) becomes greater than some of its parts (individual narratives). These acquired skills can be used by the participants after the research process as potential livelihood options.
- The educational potential for using puppetry as a research tool is very promising, as there is literature that documents the use of puppetry as an educational tool (Rawlings, 2003; Bonifacio, 2002; Baily-Synovitz, 1999).

It was these specific qualities listed above that I kept with me all the way through my exploratory research process. At this stage I felt confident that working with puppets would indeed enhance and deepen my understanding of learning and agency and what instruments and practices could be developed to deepen individual capacities of citizens to have the abilities needed to be and do in a meaningful way, but it was also my attraction to puppetry that would blind me to other emergent forms of learning.

3.2.1. A MISSED OPPORTUNITY

To begin with I worked with a group of five young men that I had met at the local landfill who were engaged with a variety of different livelihood activities through informal waste collection. Some collected copper wiring for sale at scrap metal dealers; others collected glass and cans for recycling; and some were sifting through the garbage as opportunistic waste collectors. While they did engage in other livelihood activities, such as washing and guarding cars in the city centre, they supplemented their daily income and resources from what they could collect from the landfill. I managed to secure a little grant to create a small street production for the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown. I used this opportunity to explore puppetry as a



Figure 12: Puppet characters constructed out of plastic waste from an Arkwork Collective facilitated process entitled 'The Quagga and the Unicorn' in 2009, for the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown.

medium with which I could open up new dialogue and exchange spaces among this vulnerable group.

Their livelihoods and backgrounds were fraught with hazards. These included gang related violence induced by turf fights over prime car washing sights, to skirmishes over 'fresh' garbage arriving at the landfill. Other

hazards included exposure to toxins and pathogens on the landfill and consuming food found amongst the waste. I was eager to offer a safer opportunity for mediated communication and hopefully opportunities for learning. I approached the group with a proposition to partake in a project for the National Arts Festival. Understanding that employing the group would severely affect the nature of our relationship and automatically transform the dialogue space I was hoping to create, I set up a scholarship system through the Arkwork Collective. Essentially offering a short six-month scholarship to participate in a open creative training and social learning project, with the transparent knowledge that this was also a research project, I attempted to keep the space as egalitarian as possible and isolated myself from the role of 'boss' and/or 'project manager' to facilitator and co-creator of the show. With my research intentions clear and open, and only after full informed consent from the young men (aged 18 – 22 years old), did we begin the work. I invited them to participate in the project before mentioning the prospect of the scholarship, as understanding their vulnerable situations I did not want them to make a decision to participate and volunteer in the project based on financial reward, but rather on the impetus that they could create a new space to learn from each other and develop new capacities. Only after they had all agreed to participate without the prospect of financial contributions, did I inform them of the scholarships. With the clear understanding that we were all researchers and all exploring and investigating the value of these puppets in being able to learn from each other and to find new ways of expressing ourselves, this was my first attempt at grounded collaborative inquiry (Piquemal and Allen, 2009). The key objective of this process was to explore the applicability of puppetry as an

arts-based social learning instrument that assisted participants in navigating complex learning environments, through offering extra-social authority and enable personal and relational agency. My aim was to simply co-create puppets from waste we collected from the landfills and then use the puppets to explore their perceptions of personal and social progress, essentially how they could improve their situations with their existing means, and look at what way these means/abilities could be further enriched or developed.

My thinking was that the puppets created by the participants would act as artefacts or instruments that could create a new social space within which they could confront challenging aspects of their lives, and perhaps develop new capacities that would contribute to reaching their perceptions of progress. Daniels (2008) mentioned how Vygotsky too stated that people master themselves through symbolic cultural systems, and that it is not the signs, tools or artefacts themselves which are important for thought development but the meaning encoded in them. I assumed that the puppets would also be instruments that could simplify the social space and make absent more complex facets of the learning landscape. This could free up the group to explore new ideas and concepts, and give them the means and space to try them out. Would the puppets themselves also act as artefacts of people's learning and agency development? Alfred Gell's (1998) work *Art and Agency: an anthropological theory* describes these as 'indices of agency'. He sees art objects as vital tools in anthropological research to explore learning and agency development through history. Looking at both aboriginal art as well as modern and contemporary artists at the time, Gell (1998) showed how artful practices and art objects create 'indexes of agency' or, in other words, artefacts that reveal the learning and the agency of the artist at the time. Would these puppets would be such artefacts?

Developing new capacities in the form of constructing puppets out of waste, and the confidence boost from being part of a troupe performing in public, did seem to be valuable outcomes for the participants. There did, however, seem little learning other than an improved cohesion within the team, with noticeably less disagreements and competitiveness, and more cooperation and communication. Perhaps there was a relational agency developed through

the process, but I realised that I didn't actually know what I was looking for. I was unable to see when and where learning was taking place; I wasn't even sure how I might recognise learning when I saw it. I suspect it was because I was just too close and embroiled in the entire process. At the time I felt that I had not done enough to significantly transform the social space that would accommodate and encourage each participant in the group to deepen their personal abilities. Constructing the project and participating in the project, as well as the institutional expectations from the National Arts Festival, meant that it was difficult to use the puppets and the process in the way I intended. In many ways I see this attempt as a great lost opportunity to research learning: I could see changes in how the group worked together and how they interacted with people outside of the group over the three months, but I was unable to see what specific practices, instruments or processes led to that change.

3.2.2. THE CIRCUS

With continued confidence in the theoretical application of creative practice and my unwavering confidence in the role of puppets as social learning instruments, I made a second attempt to construct a project that would allow for a collaborative storytelling process. It would use puppets and other creative theatre practices to encourage personal and relational capacity development. This time, however, I endeavoured to distance myself from the practical, hands-on application of the process, and raised funds to employ two skilled facilitators and an administrator, leaving me mostly free to help design the process, and observe and reflect on it with the facilitators as a *grounded collaborative inquiry*. In this second attempt I invited ten young men and women (including two from the previous project – the others from the original group were unavailable) to participate. At the time I defined this attempt as a collaborative meaning-making initiative using puppetry and theatre as instruments that would accommodate what Ellingson (2009) described as multiple ways of knowing. Leading the facilitation was Injairu Kulundu, a theatre maker who at the time had recently completed a Masters in politics. A seasoned facilitator and expert in non-violent communication, Injairu had much experience with working with vulnerable youth. I was confident and very grateful to have her by my side. I had much to learn from her and was eager to learn *with* her. We also enlisted the help of Mbaza Klaas, an artist and student in

Anthropology to assist us, both as an isiXhosa speaker⁷⁰ and as an assistant facilitator as he had some experience in creative facilitation. Finally I enlisted the help of Jamie Alexander, a Masters student in Anthropology, to assist in documenting and observing the process, and together we constituted a collaborative research group.

We called the project the *Arkwork Circus*, and taking into consideration my experiences of the first attempt described in the previous section, we tried to leave the space more open and receptive for emergence. A circus was an important part of our inspiration: usually they consist of a collection of often many different, unique and peculiar range of talents or capacities, that are expressed together and share a common stage, despite their differences. The circus for us in many ways embodied a space that could hold multiple ways of knowing, (Ellingson, 2009). Drawing from my previous experiences, and my theoretical ideas, we developed a process that we could reflect on together throughout the month. We placed specific attention on how we would work together. We ensured that Injairu and Mbaza would have the freedom and space to make informed, intuitive decisions on how they would facilitate the process, and together we would reflect on each day and try to sift out from our observations where learning was taking place with regard to personal and relational agency. This time, I felt I would not 'miss' anything.

Through the use of storytelling, thematic story construction, creative play, African masquerade and puppetry, we attempted to draw out the participants' own unique creative expression. This workshop process lasted for three weeks, and ended with a week of performances during the National Arts Festival. While the funding we received was to create the final street performances, we used this opportunity to focus primarily on the methods and processes we engaged through the development of the final shows. Keeping our attention primarily on process, we allowed for the final performance to emerge through its own means. The themes that we explored aimed to navigate the complex learning environments that the participants experience in their daily lives whilst also looking at issues that are a part of their broader environment. Ethically, we maintained constant vigilance on whether the participants were

⁷⁰All the participants could speak relatively good English; it was important, however, for them to have the option to speak in their home language.

always comfortable with the process, and constantly reminded each person of the non-obligatory aspect of this work; they were free to leave and so participated voluntarily. We constantly reassured each individual that they could share as much or as little as they liked. We also offered participants the opportunity to speak and work in the language with which they were most comfortable. They were fully aware of the research implications and aims of the project, and had given informed consent for the research aspects of the process to go ahead. We conducted reflective processes in which all the participants were aware of our research focus, and we collectively reflected on the methodology together; in this way those involved in the practice were also participant researchers in this collaborative project.

We conducted an initial workshop in which the participants experienced what it meant to be a waste collector as they cleaned up a designated area of their community (while some in the group had experienced being informal waste collectors before, others had not). In this workshop the participants, armed with gloves and black plastic bags, got to grips with the issue of rubbish collection from the point of view of those who 'invisibly' collect our rubbish on a daily basis. This experience gave the participants some insight into what this work entails. Group reflection and exchange after this activity led to a deepening of their empathetic capacities, with participants commenting that the people who collect rubbish are "often treated as rubbish themselves making it a job that one cannot easily be proud of, a difficult unseen job that if not acknowledged adequately could greatly frustrate those who do it" Kulundu⁷¹ (2010^a: 2-3).

Further workshops worked with 'rubbish' as a metaphor for those in society who were invisible, overlooked or undermined. The rubbish acted as a connective artefact that enriched the conversations greatly, with issues such as discrimination of the poor, alcoholism, substance abuse, sexual abuse, sexism and xenophobia, emerging through this process. The group then were encouraged to link these issues together into a form of narrative, which combined their experiences of the 'real' world with imaginative narratives. In Injairu's (Kulundu, 2010^a) words: "The battle to attain respect and power struggles between different

⁷¹These quotes come from a report compiled by Injairu Kulundu, with Jamie and myself as supporting authors. Injairu later went on to publish a paper drawing from this report (Kulundu, 2010^a).

fantastical characters revealed a world of conflicting interests where justice inevitably settles the score.”

Through our reflections we discovered that there were two narratives emerging through this process: the first was the theatrical contrived story that was collaboratively growing through negotiation and exchange of the group; the second narrative was emerging from the complex dynamics of the group. Injairu's (Kulundu, 2010^a:2) reflections offer insight into this second narrative:

Collectively the group had to negotiate power dynamics, gender dynamics whilst the facilitators tried to encourage a sense of ownership and creative agency in the participants. Additionally, bureaucratic constrictions and insufficient time and resources created added pressure in this process. Many valuable lessons have been learnt from this initiative including the power and politics of choice and ownership, the value of providing a rehearsal space where gender dynamics and non-violent communication can be upheld...

It was clear that while we were attempting to create an open space where the participants could exchange, reflect, negotiate and act, via their own means, our own facilitative influence seemed to weaken the participants' sense of entitlement of the space. It was clear that a more egalitarian and balanced space was needed, that was democratic and less controlled by the power of the facilitator, but how to create this space seemed far from our grasp. As Injairu (Kulundu, 2010^a: 2) considered:

When it comes to the act of creating as a group it seemed essential that the group came to terms with its dynamics as they collectively negotiate the story being created. Often this important work came to a deadlock when the facilitator was present supposedly acting as a 'watchdog' over a procession of wills. This experience revealed that the act of creation requires private deliberation outside of the eyes of those who are ready to consume the piece of art. At certain points in the programme, it became apparent that for the story to be created, the facilitators needed to step out and let the group order itself and express itself in the way that it saw fit – without supervision. A secret trade-off ensued in these moments; the facilitators in doing so relinquished control of the dominant forces of the group and allowed the hierarchy of the group to manage itself in the creation of the story. This is said with the belief that an unsupervised group will succumb to its own ecology, perhaps leaving those less vociferous players at the margins. It is inevitable that when you bring a new group together different personalities emerge, some which are at odds with each other. Knowing what this might mean we were forced to question our practice. Was it good enough that a play was creating and a conclusion was drawn at whatever cost? At this point we deliberated that perhaps this was not so bad considering that the performance of the piece itself might provide ample space for each character to do their special part towards the realisation of their script. Perhaps there would be enough space at that point to give attention to each player and encourage their own interpretation and development of their character. This proposition proved true as the politics in the creation of the production gave way to personal struggles towards performing the play, with each person largely concentrating on their specific role. This

created a greater sense of group ownership of the process not only through the collective writing of the script, which may have favoured particular voices, but primarily through an understanding that each participant was challenged towards animating the characters that they would play.... We hoped that by challenging the participants to write the play and perform the characters that they had created, the group would grow towards trusting their thoughts and reflections on the environment they see around them. Keeping this ethic in focus proved to be a difficult task peppered with instances where general frustration about the levels of agency required from them arose. The high level of participation that was required was exhausting because it clearly put focus on the young ones as the 'experts' and challenged them to bring their best thoughts and actions towards this initiative. To get to the point of doing this the participants had to begin with cooperating with each other which was an exasperating challenge.



Figure 13: The Arkwork Circus, preparations and performance. Jamie (middle top photograph), Injairu (top right) (own images)

The realities faced by the facilitators in this project were overwhelming, and far beyond our initial expectations. As I am not a trained facilitator, I observed and constantly reflected with Injairu (who was a professional facilitator and researcher herself), learning from how she intuitively responded to emergent differences in the group. She removed herself from the space at opportune moments, and it was in these moments that we could see self-mediated learning in the group. The participants were forced in these situations to face challenges and

tensions drawing from their own capacities. Injairu and Mbaza would only enter back into the space as facilitators when the group needed assistance, when they (the participants) felt their own capacities were not enough to negotiate the tricky terrain. It became our priority to be constantly concerned and vigilant that we ensured that there was a safe space for each individual in the group to instinctively express their own agency, particularly through creative impulses that could accommodate different forms of knowing. This meant that they would automatically also have to develop a relational agency, when negotiating their way of knowing and doing, with others in the group when tensions arose. This was a significant milestone in my understanding of relational agency and of the role of a facilitator in creating the space needed to engage it.

I finally saw how their actions and the space they crafted was the backbone of the entire process. Yet I struggled with this reality. Far too much was expected of the facilitator. In my experience a good facilitator requires a firm yet gentle approach, and is someone who maintains a constant equanimity, and is trusted completely by the group: essentially an emotional genius with the equanimity of Zen master! Injairu was indeed a talented and natural facilitator and we were lucky to have this expert in our company. Yet surely there was a way of creating a practice that was less reliant on the individual talents of a facilitator. Further reflection led me to wonder if there was a way of creating an egalitarian process, where the group self-facilitates. Theoretically these instruments and practices would offer the room for each individual to express their own agency, as well as navigate the expression of others.

Through our post-project reflection, Injairu and I both realised that there was great validity in seeking out the right space, process and set of instruments which participants could use to engage in an open exchange. This needed to allow them as individuals and as a group to balance difference, and perhaps transform the role of the facilitator, but how? As Injairu (Kulundu, 2010a: 3) reflected:

It is my contention that the provision of this space provided the space for the young participants to thrash out their issues and try to find constructive ways of dealing with conflict. Even though it was a challenging process, a lot of learning went into it for all of us, teaching us the value of open communication and dialogue. Much later in the process, moments of group solidarity and the joy the participants felt in being able to be part of the festival accentuated the bonding that took place, not in spite of the

frequent conflicts but perhaps because of them...

...When looking at the journey that we all went through, it became apparent that the sense of ownership that we hoped to facilitate amongst these youth became a tricky terrain filled with unforeseen dynamics. These dynamics did not necessarily dilute the objectives of this project but rather created further spaces in which learning could happen. The young people managed to respond to issues that they see in their environment, and even though this particular aspect of their experience was not completely dominant, it became apparent that the group dynamics provided an additional stage in which the health of the group as a whole could be considered. So, apart from only speaking out about the things that they see in their environment and using their own creative expression to illustrate these issues, the participants were greatly confronted with the struggles they faced as a group. They had to tease through challenging reflections of themselves and others as part of their learning. The moments when all of this came together in an animated performance highlights the coalescing of wills and the powerful potential that each individual harnessed in thrusting themselves boldly towards the same purpose.

I am indebted to Injairu, Mbaza and Jamie for their assistance in the Arkwork Circus as they offered me the opportunity of working in a group, which allowed me to become more of an observer with the freedom to reflect with them on the forms of learning that were emerging, and to help identify agency development together. In hindsight when I look back at this project I see that it had many flaws; in many ways, although armed with theoretical guidance from Wals et al., 2009) in social learning practice, we were still fumbling around with how we were facilitating the learning. Despite my naivety, and thanks to the expertise of Injairu as a facilitative leader, as well as her gifted intuitive approach, I managed to gain a great deal of insight into what kind of methods would support learning that developed the capacities of the participants in such a way that their personal and relational agency had shown noticeable improvements, however small. The list below outlines the key components of the process that I found particularly useful, as well as key insights I gained from participating and research the Arkwork Circus process:

A) The facilitator should not be the only 'facilitative force': I realised that the process I need should not rely entirely on the skills or talents of the facilitator alone. One cannot always be blessed with a great facilitator and so the methodology needs to be sound and universal, so that it can be applied by anyone who goes through a simple orientation or apprenticeship. A learning project that encourages the development of capacities that enable people to contribute meaningfully as ecological citizens, and that allows them to improve their personal and relational agency, needs to be able to be

applied by anyone, despite their educational level, their background, their home language or ethnicity. This linked to my primary formative research question guiding this work. It was clear to me that the shape and form of the methodological process needs to be the primary 'facilitative force' and the facilitator is a guide and constructor of the shape and form. There is a strong need for the group itself to self-facilitate and balance difference, especially if one wants to encourage the development of relational agency, which I described earlier (see Section 3.2) as vital for reflexive justice. The space that is created within which the group works is as important, if not more, than the facilitator herself, as it can carry a lot of the negotiation that is needed, freeing up the responsibility placed on the facilitator.

B) The value of tension: Tension and disagreement were important factors in deepening learning and encouraging capacities that supported personal and relational agency development. While instinctively we have a fear of confrontation, facing tensions and navigating through differences through non-aggressive means, was a valuable learning space for the group. Tensions also included difficult or challenging questions or personal revelations, not necessarily only tensions with other participants. The tensions were not necessarily bad forces; they could be constructive forces that, if navigated and negotiated through an empathetic and calm process, could have valuable influences in developing relational agency and reflexivity. While tension was not always dealt with in the best way, and although sometimes it required time and some outside facilitative force in the form of an individual neutral facilitator, in many situations the group itself managed to resolve the conflict through empathetic means, move towards their desired goals and find a negotiated medium between conflicting ideas of progress. Used in the right way I began to see that tension cannot be avoided, and indeed should be expected in a socially mediated learning space, as is proposed by various social learning theorists (Wals, 2007, and Engestrom, 2001).

C) Expanding my ideas of what is art-based practice: I feel that participating in the Arkwork Circus as an artist, and attempting to create spaces in which the participants

were able to express themselves through creative means, meant that I would often paradoxically find myself applying my idea of what was artistic or creative into the space, and by so doing inhibit emergent forms of creativity from the individuals themselves, especially in the first attempt mentioned in Section 3.2.1. I was looking at art too literally. I was also choosing mediums and genres that were familiar and natural to me and not allowing the group to express themselves in their own way. While I knew that the arts-based process was valuable, I did not plan to offer spaces in which more accessible forms of creativity could emerge naturally. Upon reflection, I see now that part of the problem was my obsession with puppetry, which at the time, I saw as the 'divine' medium through which participants could speak with 'extra-social authority'. While these forms of puppet artistry do allow for this to occur in many different cultural practices around the world and particularly in Africa, they did not come naturally to the youth group we were working with. Performance and storytelling did perhaps come more naturally to the group, but adding puppetry to the process seemed to be forced and clumsy. I realised then that what I needed was to create a process where the shape and form of the social learning process not only acted as its own facilitative force, but also encouraged creativity to emerge naturally from participants. In this way each person had their own practice and instruments that allowed them to speak with their own constructed extra-social authority.

D) A facilitative force that absents: It was clear to me that the process was flowing well, and participants felt free to explore and develop their own abilities when we were able to absent or set aside all the complexities that they were experiencing in their own lives. Creating a new social space within which they could act out and explore isolated incidences, narratives or experiences, without having them complicated by other issues, or forces, meant that individuals and the group as a whole were able to build on their own personal strengths and further develop other capacities. Absenting the complex problems allowed for the simplification of the learning landscape, and made it more accessible and unique from traditional spaces that the group was used to.

E) Naively fumbling through: At the end of the Arkwork Circus project I became increasingly aware of my naivety, and just how much I was fumbling to create an arts-based methodology that encouraged a social mode of learning that developed personal and relational agency. What specifically were the capacities that needed to be developed? I was still pretty clueless here! To be an active citizen, that is able to act meaningfully to protect, nurture and heal ecological processes, as well as be able to actively negotiate the social landscape to meet perceptions of meaningful progress, one would seem to need a wide range of capacities. What these were I did not know, but I did have a rough idea. I knew that creativity and creative expression were valuable capacities that needed to be developed. I was also aware that good communication capacities were needed to support the development of a good citizen, but what more was needed? There was no doubt in my mind that what I had done up to this point was clumsy and naïve and that I really needed to consider a new, more carefully thought out approach. The methodological mineral, although somewhat refined, was still very coarse.

3.3. TIPPING POINTS

3.3.1. THE FIRST TIPPING POINT

Through the lessons learned and insights gained from the Arkwork Circus I was ready to move towards further developing art-based social learning methods that were not entirely reliant on a facilitator's skills, and did not rely on puppetry. Instead I aimed for a less didactic process that encouraged a social space in which each individual's personal imagination was fostered, cultivating personal creative agency. I was interested in a methodology that was able to accommodate and work constructively with tensions and conflict, and that was able to absent the complexity of immediate physical and social environments, and simplify the learning landscape through creative means. These insights and my questions of how to go about constructing a process like this were fresh in my mind, when I discovered the TippingPoint⁷² conference (May 2010) and weaselled my way into this 'invite only' event

⁷²Taken from TippingPoint's website <http://www.tippingpoint.org.uk/> : *TippingPoint's guiding principles are simple: we believe that, through their creative work and through collaborations with scientists, artists can play a vital role in exploring and pointing the way towards the cultural, societal and behavioural*

through credit we had received through Arkwork. TippingPoint was a trans-disciplinary meeting point of a variety of people from across Africa. It was organised by a UK NGO called TippingPoint, and was funded by the Commonwealth Foundation and British Council.

The organisers had invited professionals from many different disciplines, from those familiar with working in more positivist spaces such as climate and environmental scientists, to people familiar with more constructivist practices such as visual artists, poets, educators, film makers, musicians and dancers. TippingPoint also invited journalists, political cartoonists, environmental lawyers, television producers, activists, people working in the NGO sector and other civil society representatives. It was a rich melting-pot of different people with very different ways of knowing, who had chosen in their own professional capacities to spend more time in one specific region of the art-science continuum that Ellingson (2009) had described. The aim of this gathering was to reflect on climate change in South Africa, and to consider what would constitute progress.

While there was nothing significant or groundbreaking in the facilitation style, or the type of space the organisers created, there were common values and threads emerging over the two days. There was a lot of energy and enthusiasm developing through the process, and at the end of weekend we had clear outcomes. I did not however feel that my capacities had been developed in any particular way in this space, nor had I developed or improved my personal or relational agency, something I naively expected from such open-forum platforms. Yet something significant did occur when it came to developing common ground. Perhaps it was the common concern for the Earth that brought everyone together so strongly, as we were all reflecting on our own personal questions and concerns for the future of the planet, and the future of humankind in the climate change era. Perhaps it was our common African identity. I cannot be exactly sure what brought everyone together so closely, but it seemed that our collective concerns and thoughts were like dry kindling and what TippingPoint offered was a space and a spark to start the fire.

shifts needed in a world subject to a rapidly changing climate. Through intense two-day gatherings taking place globally we aim to precipitate dialogue between artists, scientists and others close to the heart of the issue – with the objective of starting initiatives of all types that can play their part in bringing about these shifts.

Artists and scientists work together on a love letter to the planet

ADRIENNE SICHEL

THE LOGO printed against ghostly aloe proclaimed (in suitably slanted typography): "TippingPoint: A Unique Interaction between Artists and Scientists opening our minds to the challenge of Climate Change and its consequences for Africa."

The sponsors were the British Council, the Fynbos Foundation, Spier, Commonwealth Foundation and Ford Foundation.

Then there were the 87 (invited) participants who gathered for three days on Spier Estate in Stellenbosch last week for a conference with many differences.

In the late afternoon of Tuesday, Africa Day, Kenyan activist Achien'g Mburu, who had been very articulate all morning about the ravages of climate change and the realities of affected communities, grabbed a microphone.

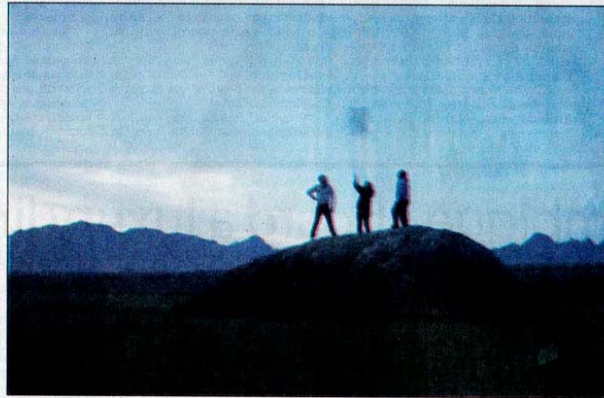
To introduce herself, the chemistry graduate and Master of Philosophy (environmental studies) unleashed her Kora Award-winning Afro-jazz singing voice which could coax rain out of the most stubborn clouds and lure birds back from extinction.

Fellow TippingPointers, staid scientists, activists and edgy artists, joined in the chorus of "This is our life, this is our world, what we do determines our future."

"That's what I do," was the activist artist's parting shot, to loud cheers.

The next member of the continental contingent was Mohamed Siam from Egypt. "I can't sing or dance. I'm a film-maker, art manager and animator," he said.

Starting footage followed from a film, which he co-produced,



GROUNDBREAKING ENCOUNTER: TippingPoint participants Dylan McGarry of Arkwork Collective, (left), Environmental Monitoring Group's Taryn Pereira and Such Initiative's Hannelie Coetzee brainstorming, with a plastic-bag flag, at Spier before sunrise.

about Cairo's City of the Dead, reflecting the lives of 1.8 million people living in a cemetery.

Cape Town theatre-maker puppeteer and documentary filmmaker Jacqueline van Meygaarden showed her short film shot in Madagascar, featuring the personalised environmental impact, in their own words, of vanilla farmers. Her next project focuses on rooibos tea farmers in the Cape.

Driving this unusual, but complementary, mix of scientific and artistic energies, skills and approaches were TippingPoint co-director Peter Gingold, who start-

ed this difficult-to-define initiative five years ago, and leadership consultant Dick Robertson.

"It looks like a conference," explained Gingold at the outset, "but what we are all about interaction."

That it certainly was. The delicately structured activities, which didn't dictate topics but gently extracted them from the participants, were centred on the Open Space sessions in which an unlikely team of people brainstormed and had (environmentally friendly) light-bulb moments. Discussion points included:

Where does science meet spirituality? The creative economy and climate change. Where do I stand as an artist? How do we influence politicians?

The statistics and scientific data were made very accessible for non-scientists. Part of the wake-up call about impending global meltdown was the fact that 3.6 percent of carbon emissions are produced by Africa. South Africa, in the top 20 percent of carbon emitters, is responsible for 1.5 percent of it.

And Sasol Secunda is not only the single-highest point source of

greenhouse gases on the continent, but the planet.

One of the most memorable quotes was from UCT applied climatologist Peter Johnston (who supplied these statistics). Referring to the clearing of natural vegetation for agriculture, he remarked: "Renoster veld – you can't eat it, or even get drunk on it, but everything is connected. We've got to start living smarter."

Part of that strategy, as the TippingPoint team have encountered in other meetings like this in New York recently and thinking ahead to Australia, is to mobilise creativity in both camps. To harness creative storytelling via various forms of media.

Noting that centuries ago there wasn't a divide between scientists and artists, Gingold has a winning formula.

"I am convinced good artists and scientists are similar – they are intuitive. Great art and great science is done by intuition, only the details are different."

One of TippingPoint's tangible, artistic outcomes is a network of theatres, under the banner of 2010 Thin Ice, which has just been granted €2 million (R18.8m) by the European Commission.

Gingold and Robertson weren't sure of that they could expect in the African encounter. The verdict: "It was so magnificent. Especially the participation of the young people." They included a clutch of 2010 Standard Bank Young Artists.

The final Open Space encounter delivered perhaps this gathering's finest legacy. Motivated by the 17th Conference of Partners (COP) under the UN Climate Change Convention, to be held in South Africa from

November 28 to December 9 next year, an initiative was born.

Under the working title *Don't COPout, COPart!*, a working group (of artists, scientists, cultural and eco-activists) will pave the way for inter-disciplinary works at national festivals. These build-up activities and civil society discussion forums will culminate in an environmentally-sensitive festival or intervention on the allotted days at COP 17.

Whatever transpires, as Gingold noted, the biggest revelation to scientists is that artists "do research". Whether they are performance poets, choreographers, dancers, film-makers, photographers, visual artists, land artists, musicians, cartoonists, arts administrators or conceptual revolutionaries, they develop methodologies and networks.

One of the TippingPoint exercises was to create, in 50 words, a potent message about climate change. One group, which co-opted jazz artist Melanie Scholtz, produced a grimly funny spin on *Jingle Bells*. Another developed the slogan: "On common ground each of us gets our hands dirty to do something collectively groundbreaking."

A screening of stop-frame animation, shot by Joburg artist Hannelie Coetzee outdoors before sunrise, was accompanied by a bucket of mud. Everyone was invited to smear their hands then make an imprint, on a sheet of paper, creating a giant heart.

What emerged was an inspirational, perception-altering, heartfelt, interactive, love letter to the planet.

That's what artists and scientists can do – together.

● See www.tippingpoint.org.uk

Figure 14: Article by Adrienne Sichel of the TippingPoint weekend

With the build-up to the 17th United Nations Conference of the Parties or COP17, a multilateral international negotiation on climate change, which was to be hosted in Durban in December 2011, participants at TippingPoint were considering how they could use the COP17 event in the most meaningful way. What emerged was a plan to create a series of festivals or gatherings much like TippingPoint, that would allow for different practitioners from very different backgrounds to share, reflect and learn from each other. The thinking behind this plan was that, through creating a periodic space, the participants were able to reflect on issues surrounding climate change and environmental degradation, and that much could be learned and developed through this collaborative 'permanent conference' as Lara Kruger, a MA student at the Fine Art Department at Stellenbosch University, put it. I later learned she quoted this from Joseph Beuys, who had coined the 'permanent conference'⁷³ phrase in

⁷³I later came to learn that 'permanent conference' was seen by Joseph Beuys as constant social practice that allows citizens to consider proposals imaginatively as a group, through an open exchange, that relies on a methodology that does not engage argument or persuasion, but rather an open constant exchange. He felt that as a group we not only get a much more profound sense of the proposal, but are also able to make choices that are not reliant on a traditional yes/no binary (Sacks, 2007b). As Sacks (2007b) explored further "Every proposal has to be lived, considered and taken on in freedom, a

1969. I met several people at TippingPoint, who while I didn't know it at the time, would be fundamental in my own development, both as a researcher but also as an ecological citizen. Many of them were my teachers over the two years to follow, and helped me through not only my research but also through my personal struggles. It was Lara's introduction to Joseph Beuys' phenomenology and pedagogy that really had the greatest impact on the course of my research. Suddenly my investigation into collaborative inquiry, and my exploration into developing a pedagogy for reflexive ecological justice, could also be in themselves an expanded work of art.

Over the next few months, Lara and I started a study group, exploring the work of Joseph Beuys and particularly his pedagogy, social sculpture, which is covered in Chapter One. A year earlier, Lara had attended a short course on social sculpture in Wiemer, Germany, under the guidance of authorities in this field, Shelley Sacks and Hildegard Kurt. Lara introduced me to an entirely new and emergent field that was expanding the concept of art, and at the same time creating an entirely unique and radical approach to learning. Lara herself was working with this question: "How might I work in this world?" This question emerged as a subconscious need that eventually encouraged her to make this the focus of her MA research. Her study explored the possibilities for how one might work in this world aesthetically to contribute to the enabling of a human ecology through connection-making (Kruger, 2012). Her work inspired me greatly, and we helped each other carefully negotiate the theoretical terrain, as well as develop our respective methodologies. Lara is also an art teacher at a co-educational high school in Cape Town, which gave her valuable experiential knowledge to impart regarding my work, and my future endeavours in establishing a social learning space post-TippingPoint.

3.3.2 THE SECOND TIPPING POINT

April and May of 2010 were significant tipping points in my academic and personal life, and in many ways events that occurred over this time completely transformed the course of my research and the path of my PhD. While the TippingPoint conference was a significant event

freedom that is utterly compromised when we confuse freedom from with freedom to" (Sacks' emphasis).

on an academic level, a month earlier I had experienced a very emotional and difficult phenomenon in my life, which in a strange way primed me for being more receptive to dramatic change. My ex-boyfriend of five years, who had become a very close friend after our parting, had set me up on a blind date with his very close friend Timmy (who is now my fiancé), a month before the TippingPoint conference. In the early throes of love, I was somewhat irrational, impulsive, giddy and when I reflected my PhD against this giddiness, I struggled to make sense of what was really emerging through my research. I was also feeling very wary with how my work was progressing through the Arkwork Collective, as I was plagued by so many questions, particularly around issues that seemed to be failures at the time. With my new love living in Cape Town, 800km away from where I was in Grahamstown, I had begun to consider moving and transferring my field research to Cape Town to be closer to him. In the early stages of planning this move, my ex-boyfriend, also living in Cape Town, committed suicide. Writing this down still makes my hair stand on end, and my whole body tenses up. It was a massive shock and trauma for me and for Timmy. Even though we had parted ways romantically, he was still a very close friend. His death caused a significant upheaval in my personal life and deeply affected the pursuit of the rest of my PhD. After his death and drawn-out memorial (I was involved, as was Timmy, with organising his memorial and assisting in winding up his estate), I moved to Cape Town. In the aftermath of the suicide I began attempting to develop new field work opportunities in this new city, while at the same time mourning his death, and trying to come to terms with his violent and confusing end. In a matter of two months my entire life had changed, and I had reached a significant tipping point in which everything transformed, both in my immediate physical environment, but also within my own inner thoughts and perceptions. I cannot write about the subsequent events and developments in my methodological research without mentioning this significant personal tipping point as it played a vital role in how I came to make decisions and pursue certain aspects of the work from then on.

3.4. A CLIMATE FLUENCY EXCHANGE

Between August and October 2010, I established a series of gatherings for those who attended the TippingPoint conference to reflect back on what had occurred and explore what

would be needed to carry this idea of a 'permanent conference' forward. I was eager to participate in this collaborative initiative as I thought it would be a fascinating opportunity to work with a variety of different people, with very different ways of knowing, who were all concerned with meaningful ecological citizenship and who were all eager to be involved in some form of a social learning project. With the success of being part of a collaborative inquiry through the Arkwork Circus, I was eager to find a similar working group in Cape Town. While our intentions were honourable, these early gatherings were difficult, forced spaces, with a great deal of tension. Tensions were greatest around how this 'permanent conference' would be administrated and managed, with arguments over it becoming institutionalised, as opposed to being loosely governed as an open social movement. The spaces were still new, they did not have an identity, a shape or form, and they did not have anyone leading them. In some meetings, for example, contributors would have the freedom to explore their own concerns for a long period of time, until someone in the group had the conviction to halt longwinded monologues and take the forum onto a different topic. While it was not my intention to create a space like this, at the time I did not feel I had any form of authority or status to order or guide these gatherings. And so these were 'free-for-all' spaces that seemed to be regulated by the most formidable and self-assertive members of the group. It was a valuable time for my own understanding of social learning and I was able to gain a great deal of insight into what happens in a social space that is left to be self-facilitated with no specific shape or form, and no instruments available to contribute to the meditation.

Regardless of the tensions, there was indeed progress and consensus enough to call the 'permanent conference' COPART, which was both an acronym for 'Connecting Our Planet And Re-imagining Together' as well as a play on the COP17 event, where we hoped that people would 'COPART' rather than 'copout'. Over a series of these public meetings that I would arrange, it became increasingly clear that our need to ensure that the COPART forum was an open and freely accessible public space that allowed everyone a place to share and contribute, meant that it constantly felt as if very little progress was being achieved, which was noticeably frustrating for those involved. Despite this we always seemed to progress. There was still no clear leadership or facilitation, and while I was organising the events and

reporting on them on the COPART blog⁷⁴ there was still uneasiness with the way in which these spaces were being navigated, mostly around the lack of leadership or facilitation. I was afraid to take a facilitative role, as I had achieved so much from being an observer in the Arkwork Circus and also I knew just how difficult it was to facilitate such a diverse group. I was in conflict: as a researcher I wanted to participate but also observe myself participating, but as a citizen I was compelled to assist in leadership and facilitation. Regardless of the lack of leadership, and the constant emergence of new tensions, there was however an agreement that we should establish a small COPART festival or fair in Cape Town that would run con-currently with the COP16 event which was hosted in Cancun, Mexico. This event would allow South African citizens to participate in and contribute to these climate negotiations in a creative and socially responsive way. We raised funds through the Heinrich Boll Foundation and Artists Project Earth. In association with the Environmental Monitoring Group, the British Council South Africa and the Iziko Museum, we were able to organise a ten-day event we called *The Climate Fluency Exchange*⁷⁵.



Figure 15: *The Climate Fluency Exchange in Cape Town, December 2010, images courtesy of the climate fluency exchange, taken primarily by Lara Kruger, Elizabeth Fletcher and myself.*

⁷⁴ www.dontcopoutcopart.blogspot.com

⁷⁵ You can visit www.climatefluencyexchange.org to see video footage, testimonials, images and other information on the CFE. Also see Appendix J for schedules and a full report of the CFE.

It was free to the public and was implemented in several different sites across the city. Practitioners from several different disciplines were invited to contribute to the content of the exchange and offer workshops, talks or other interventions. The exchange was a huge success, and in many ways was a refreshing turning point for those involved with COPART and particularly for me. I felt able to research learning through such open social exchanges, which were diverse and managed by a variety of people. While I was a facilitator for some of the events, most of the processes were run by volunteer facilitator/artists who managed and guided their contributions themselves, all of which were participatory, open spaces enriched by a diverse group of participants. This meant that every form of exchange had its own guidance and its own methodology; this allowed me to be both a participant and an observer in most of the different practices, and to be able to reflect deeply on my own work in contrast to other approaches.

The work that particularly interested me were the social sculptures led by Lara Kruger. She offered two processes: the first was entitled 'Agents of Change' and the second, Drawing to Understand. What was significant about the early perceptions I had of being a participant in these spaces was how little Lara needed to traditionally 'facilitate' the process.

Much of what occurred and emerged through this practice came from the group itself, and how the group worked with each other and learned from each other. There was something at play in the social sculptures that I could not entirely pin down at first. After some time I realised that it was engaging our imagination in a way that allowed us to explore our own values with others, not through discussion, or a traditional dialogue, but through an expressive exchange.

Agents of Change (AoC) is a social sculpture practice developed by James Reed, and can be guided by different Responsible Participants, competent in the AoC practice. The shape and form consisted of a kit that included 15 life jackets, and long measuring sticks, which measured roughly where the sea level would be in a hundred years. In pairs the 15 volunteers would share their own questions, concerns, values and insights with each other,



Figure 16: *The Agents of Change social sculpture at Kalk Bay harbour, December 2010, Images courtesy of Lara Kruger.*

with the express purpose of attempting to 'actively listen' to the other participant. While one participant was speaking, the other would try capture what they were hearing in a notebook (the notebook contained a carbon copy sheet, therefore creating two copies of the conversation map). After a period of time, the participant engaged in active listening, would reflect back to the other person what they had heard, drawing from their conversation map that they had scribbled down. The pair of participants would then exchange roles and run through the process a second time. After this was complete each person was able to keep a copy of the conversation maps, with a copy recorded in the Agents of Change notebook archive. After this, each person was invited to stand along the shoreline (in our case we stood on a harbour pier, on a busy Sunday afternoon), spaced several metres apart (see Figure 16). We were to use the following 15 to 20 minutes to reflect on our exchange. With us we took the sea-level rise measuring sticks as well as our conversation map, while wearing the Agents of Change life jackets. We all stood quietly contemplating our conversations, our inner questions, and reflecting on those raised by our partners in the earlier stage of the work.

Standing on the pier I had such a sense of freedom, a limitless space in which I could reflect on my concerns regarding rising sea levels and my values that was imposed on by this climatic change. I say a sense of freedom, mostly because this was a social space that we had created through our participation where we could investigate material that we would not

usually give ourselves the time to explore. Also we were told that if members of the public approached us asking what we were doing, we could share with them the questions we were working with and holding in the space, and could explore similar questions with those that approached us.

This was an extraordinary experience for me, as I had never had the space or means with which to engage people on the street (or in this case on a pier) in such a thoughtful and empathetic way. After this stage was completed we gathered together again and as a larger group reflected on our experiences. It seemed unanimous, the sense of freedom each person felt, to explore even such a difficult issue as sea-level rise, in an open and imaginative way. We also felt such a strong sense of 'togetherness-ness' as one participant expressed it, as we were all sharing the responsibility of actively listening, and engaging our imaginations in such a unique way.

Similarly in 'drawing-to-understand' Lara created an open, democratic social space in which we were able to collectively uncover our own questions and agendas through the process of drawing and listening. Lara described it as an aesthetic tool that internalises and embodies conversations and insights that emerge through both artistic and social processes (Kruger, 2012: 48). She also saw drawing-to-understand as an instrument that could be used to develop a better understanding of our current relationships and connections (social, ecological, political and economic), while helping people develop an ability to respond to these relationships by imagining alternatives which can lead to action (Kruger, 2012: 48).

In a conversation with Lara while reflecting after this process, she mentioned how she appreciated the freedom she felt in using conversation and imagination as her art materials, they were 'invisible materials', a concept she acquired from Joseph Beuys. He used 'spoken forms' and 'thinking forms' as materials unto themselves in addition to material objects to create processes that extended participants beyond linear logic and integrated different forms of knowing and communicating (Harlan, 2004: 9). As Beuys, quoted in Harlan (2004:9), explained:

My objects are to be seen as stimulants for the transformation of the idea of sculpture, or of art in general. They should provoke thoughts about what sculpture can be and how the concept of sculpting can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone.

It was working with these 'invisible materials' that was so deeply fascinating for Beuys. They were equally fascinating for Lara and I, looking back from the future. Beuys was particularly interested in the "transformative potential of thought patterns, materials and substances, states of consciousness, and political and social realities" (Kupfer, 1983: 79). Working with invisible materials in the way he did, through a responsible and participatory use of connective aesthetic, he managed to harmonise diverse opinions and/or opposed ideas of progress (Kupfer, 1983). It was amazing to Lara and I that thought, conversation and exchange could be utilised in such a unique, collaborative and democratic way. Even more exciting for me was that I could see each person being offered the chance to express their own agency through their own use of the thought-work, imaginal-work and ability to listen. It was, however, my own agency, which was being crafted through the collaborative inquiry I shared with Lara, that was even more fascinating to me.

After witnessing and participating in these processes that drew heavily from social sculpture theory and practice, I became ever more fascinated by the role social sculpture could play in developing a methodology for my work. I realised that my question was much like Lara's, it was not only "how can I create a specific arts-based learning practice for ecological citizenship?"; even deeper than that was: 'how might I (Dylan) work in this world in order to get closer to this methodology?' I had to understand my own ability-to-respond in order to understand a collective-ability-respond that could be achieved by a set of instruments and practices that I might sculpt. Through this work, and through our own reflexive processes and open exchanges, Lara and I became aware that we were both shifting and changing, combining our collective capacities and merging our abilities. Lara confessed in her MA thesis (Kruger, 2012: 86):

During the process of conducting this research I became very conscious of my shifting and overlapping roles as artist, researcher and teacher. Initially I considered these roles as separate from one another, even though I acknowledged their mutual influence. As the research process unfolded, my work as artist, researcher and teacher interwove to form one transdisciplinary practice.

My research relationship with Lara was fundamental to my research direction and to my own personal learning. Iwrin (2003: 69) speaks of “entangled co-labouring[s]” that emerge from “personally and socially constructed, reverberations [that] activate openings to let other's work and words resonate' with each other”.

This is indeed what was occurring through both my personal reflections and exchanges with Lara, but also through being a participant in her drawing-to-understand practice. I was beginning to 'see' my own learning develop, yet I seemed to be able to see it only through a process of 'entangled co-labouring'.

At first my understanding of social sculpture was focused on how the instruments and practices it offered created an entirely new social space within which participants could uncover their own personal ideas, concerns and insights, share these with each other and deepen them through actual experience and self expression. It seemed a great deal of attention was placed on the participants' own capacity to listen, not only on the content and not in a passive manner. It was important to actively listen, and to engage their own imaginations in trying to understand the other person's state of being, their experiences, their inner concerns, their insights, their personal experiences and their thoughts of what might come to play in the future. All the while, each and every other participant was able to stay with each other through the process through a subtle facilitative force that seemed to encourage an emotional and mindful attentiveness.

What was not clear to me at the time was that the capacity that was being crafted and stimulated was *empathy*. It was only through the development of my own empathetic capacities, my ability to 'see' Lara's internal conversation, through imaginal work, that I was able to understand and interpret my own internal conversation⁷⁶. I can in hindsight now see how this exchange with Lara was an opening for an entirely emergent personal form of thinking and being. Yet at the time I knew that I had gained an insight and expanded a

⁷⁶Margaret Archer (2007) highlighted the importance of the internal conversation as a key aspect of reflexively making our way through the world. She considered the internal conversation as a key aspect of agency development.

capacity, but I was entirely unsure what capacity that was specifically; it was a feeling, a certain 'sensibility'. At the time, what I could see was still so new, shapeless and difficult to grasp confidently, I needed to hold it lightly and let it grow. What I did know immediately was that whatever I had gained in participating and mindfully observing social sculpture practice and Lara's responsible participation, that there was merit in how one could guide a completely unique and somewhat strange group dynamic, through a gentle balancing of differences, by employing attentive listening, reflection, and imaginative devices that allowed internal conversations to emerge in relation with empathetic interaction with each other. From my own experience, I had a sense that something subtle and small had been dislodged and a small insight was growing inside, thanks to Lara, Beuys and the other citizens involved in drawing-to-understand, Agents of Change and the Climate Fluency Exchange.



Figure 17: *Drawing-to-understand practice at Company Gardens, Cape Town, December 2010. Images Courtesy of Lara Kruger and the Climate Fluency Exchange.*

The social sculpture methodology by this point had completely captivated me, and I was by now fascinated by the many facets of this somewhat new and radical discipline. After the Climate Fluency Exchange, we had arranged during another gathering in January 2011 to reflect on what the COPART movement had achieved, and to plan for the future. A group of six of us from COPART gathered together for a weekend process that would allow us to

deepen our own understanding of what we were doing, and also learn from what mistakes we had made. We were grateful to have Shelley Sacks join us for this weekend as a co-facilitator, with two other facilitators, who I will call Adam and Sally here, who were hosting this event. The space was flush with seasoned facilitators, and I was hoping that a great deal of progress would emerge from this event. Unfortunately there was still some confusion and tension around the administrative processes around COPART; as a social movement it was moving quickly, but much of the work was placed on my shoulders and a few volunteers. I struggled in this reflective space, and was criticised for having taken on too much of a leadership role in the development of COPART, although this had been forced on me due to the lack of contribution from others who helped establish the group at TippingPoint. This had effectively burnt me out. I was particularly attentive to the facilitative styles adopted by Sally, Adam and Shelley. I found Shelley less concerned with facilitating the discussions, and she seemed more able to participate in the space. She really seemed to listen with such attentiveness, and speak sincerely from her innermost thoughts and concerns; in many ways it seemed she had decided not to facilitate but rather to participate. In contrast, Sally and Adam kept a noticeable traditional distance in their participation. Their approach was more predictable and somewhat heavy handed as they took the group from one space and into another, but they also seemed to be intentionally vague and obtuse in their responses, keeping their facilitative distance. When I compared Sally and Adam's facilitative force with that of Shelley's, I was able to see a clear contrast. During a recess between activities, I asked Shelley about her style of facilitation and she responded by saying: "I am not a facilitator exactly, I am a Responsible Participant".

This intrigued me immensely, as I had myself been afraid of what a facilitator is expected to achieve and hold in a process, and now what was expected of a *Responsible Participant*? Shelley and I went for a walk, and while sitting on a bench beside a small dam, she reflected on the process we had gone through that day. She could see my frustration, and seemed to understand or empathise with the peculiar position I had found myself in, with coordinating the COPART movement and trying to research learning within it. The two were dangerously conflated, and I was not going to achieve much if I carried on in this direction. I shared with

her my research aims (that I was attempting to develop an arts-based methodology that could offer meaningful learning opportunities for citizens in South Africa). I shared with her my questions around personal and relational agency, and the need to accommodate multiple ways of knowing through creative expression and through offering multiple genres in the methodology. I also shared with her my complete naivety when it came to facilitation and leadership and confessed that I did not feel much like a leader at all. After listening carefully for a long time, Shelley responded with something that Joseph Beuys had said to critics who questioned his pedagogy, saying that if he claimed that his social sculptures were democratic, why then did he guide and control the space in which they took place so obviously? Beuys responded by saying (Sacks, pers com, 2010): “a democracy is not devoid of leadership ... and a good leader is able to balance difference”.

After this weekend, I began to probe the work of Joseph Beuys and Shelley Sacks, and further scrutinised the social sculpture pedagogy, with my own practice up to that point. I stayed in contact with Shelley, and soon we had a plan to work together on developing a social sculpture practice that could investigate my particular questions; for her it would be an opportunity to refine some of her methodologies in South Africa (Sacks, email communication 2010). We planned to meet again in May 2011, to conduct a social sculpture that we would develop together via correspondence. I had found yet another willing collaborator, a gracious 'co-labourer' ready to get 'entangled'. Over the next few months, we communicated regularly by email, developing the instruments and practices we needed for this trial of a social sculpture we later called 'Earth Forum' (originally in the development phase Sack's called it "*Ways of Engaging with the Bigger Picture*"). At this point in the doctoral study, my proposal had been accepted to continue research with a particular focus on social sculpture and the development of Earth Forum, alongside an approval of my ethical framework for this final section of the exploratory research phase (phase A).

3.5. THE EMERGENCE OF EARTH FORUM

The preparations for Earth Forum with Shelley were mainly negotiated by email. For me this would be an opportunity to simplify and refine my practice based on what I had learned not to

do over the previous year, through my clumsy alchemy. I also allowed myself to let go of my obsession with puppetry, and more traditional skilled art practices, and rather considered the fundamental capacity all artists, and indeed everyone uses, *imagination*. The idea was to create a space where any citizen would have the ability to actively use their imaginations to access their innermost values, and relate these to how they saw themselves on the Earth and part of the Earth, both in relation to the forces of nature but also in relation to other people around them. As I had by now learned from Lara and from Shelley, the second major capacity that was needed was listening, to actively listen. To not just listen to content, but to listen to the feeling and impulse of others, and to engage the imagination in the listening, to stay with each person and to be able to listen without agreeing or disagreeing, without judgement.

Shelley had been developing social sculpture methodologies for a long time, through various works she had created such as Exchange Values⁷⁷ and University of the Trees⁷⁸ as explored in Chapters One and Two. During a process she intuitively guided in South Africa in early 2011, she used soil or earth as the connective aesthetic, and instinctively applied various methods from her previous work. When I asked what inspired her to work with soil, with the earth itself, she mentioned this process that she had been involved in, in the small Karoo town of Calitzdorp. There was a contested issue over how a piece of land was to be developed. She thought that we speak so often about sustainable development, but instead we should be exploring what each of us considers to be progress. It would be so powerful to create a space where citizens could actively listen to each other's ideas of progress, which would be linked to their innermost values that were directly connected to the Earth. She said that it seemed reasonable to work with soil from the land people were standing; it became the physical and symbolic substrate that the group was sharing and it worked well as the connective aesthetic for the entire group. What occurred in Calitzdorp was the beginning of Earth Forum's emergence as a collaborative practice-based enquiry: its shape, form, practices and instruments.

It was during this early stage that Shelley and I had met at the reflective weekend away. In

⁷⁷ www.exchange-values.org

⁷⁸ www.universityofthetrees.org

our early conversations we considered what would be the primary *instrument of consciousness*, the physical artefact to hold the group together. We agreed at the time that this instrument would need to collectively hold the soil, but also allow for traces to be left behind, that embodied what had happened in the process, and it needed to be stained with the soil.

With the preparations for COPART was the plan to have a travelling conference on a train, a month before COP17. As a trial for this train project (later known as the Climate Train) I managed to convince the British Council to fund a week-long trip on the national railway service, the *Shosholoza Meyl*. We planned to conduct prototype Earth Forums in Cape Town, the small Karoo town of Laingsburg, and Johannesburg. This trip would be an opportunity for me to work directly with Shelley as an apprentice in social sculpture methodology, while also being a co-labourer in what we had agreed would be a grounded collaborative inquiry, in a recorded reflective conversation Shelley said: “...it doesn’t matter who has the ideas, I am happy for you to have the ideas, I don’t see this as my own process, I see it as a collaboration”. We agreed that this would give me an opportunity to work with her methodologies and together develop a practice with a particular shape and form, and with particular instruments. I also wanted to learn how to be a Responsible Participant, which sounded to me the closest thing to being a responsible citizen who could engage in reflexive social learning, and Shelley agreed that this would be possible via the collaborative practice development process we had embarked upon, as Shelly says in the recording:

*I have explored it a lot through practice (referring to the Responsible Participant), but never yet written about it or had careful detailed dialogue about it, and over a practice, and if we can both keep a kind of auto-ethnographic diary process as we go along with this, it would be interesting for both of us to write, and you know you could do it for your PhD but we could also write something jointly...*⁷⁹

I was joined on this journey by two close friends, Elizabeth (Liz) Fletcher (who had been helping me with establishing the Climate Fluency Exchange) and Maria Honig (a marine biologist, and environmental educator). They were both free and curious to participate and learn.

⁷⁹ from recordings contained in my thesis case record (see section 1.10)

The first version of the Earth Forum instruments consisted of a square cotton cloth (1m²) and a large hexagonal canvas. The small cloth was used as the 'instrument of consciousness'. It was to hold the soil gathered in the process. The hexagonal canvas was used for the participants to sit on. In this first Earth Forum, I invited nine participants, who consisted of COPART practitioners in Cape Town, who were interested in social sculpture and in the future of COPART practices and methodology. We set up the Earth Forum in the Company Gardens in Cape Town city centre (EF1, 9 participants⁸⁰). I remember feeling somewhat excited and curious to see how Shelley would conduct the process, having read and learned about social sculpture for a few months prior to this. I had some expectations. The gathering in the gardens ended up consisting entirely of women, I had not had time to think about it, but out of everyone I had invited, the women were the only ones who turned up. We sat on a hexagonal cloth I had stitched for the Earth Forum, like a large canvas honeycombed picnic blanket.

Assembled there Shelley took us through the stages, and participated fully. It was remarkable to think how effortless she made it seem. She had just stepped off a flight from the UK a few hours before. Shelley confided in me beforehand that she was very tired, yet we would have never known it. Once we started you could see her relaxing and settling. I had learned later that through this process, as a Responsible Participant, the opposite happens to what I would have expected: it is relaxing. If I was leading or facilitating any other process I would usually feel anxious or under pressure the entire time, yet during Earth Forum processes I find myself with every step feeling more relaxed, more content and more present, existing more and more 'in the now'. I was surprised how a rich expression of our hopes and innermost concerns emerged with each round, and how more and more comforted I felt as we went along. What was also interesting to me was that we did not try to reconcile our concerns, or to try to come to a consensus. Yet through sharing these hopes and concerns openly in such an attentive and active way, we were able to listen deeply to the synergies between what we said. While we did have time at the end to respond to each other, having a space in which we did not respond immediately, but instead mainly listened, was indeed liberating and indirectly

⁸⁰I use a code such as this to catalogue each Earth Forum. See Table 3 for further information of each Earth Forum conducted to date.

constructive.

What emerged were concerns around the urgency in which we need to see collective change in response to environmental degradation and climate change. Also the need to keep at bay the existential fears collectively flowed from almost all the participants' expressions. However as the process moved on, a realisation of the need for slowing down, even in the face of urgency, was expressed. The need for thoughtful empathetic action was also noted. These did not emerge in direct response to what had been said, but out of a sincere expression of hopes for humanity and for other ecological communities, a sense of co-presence. We found ourselves aware of nuances and details regarding what had been said, that went beyond the spoken content, but also the feeling and impulse of what was being shared.

After leaving Cape Town, Liz, Maria, Shelley and I found ourselves comfortably settled on the train. We collectively reflected on what worked and what didn't work. We specified the need to focus participants' attention on the earth that they were on; we considered what our aims were for being on the train and participating in the Earth Forum; we discussed the Responsible Participant. At that early stage we knew some practical fundamentals. Firstly seating is needed. Sitting on the ground, even soft grass, was not comfortable for a two and a half hour process. The round shape of the seating worked well; ensuring each participant could see each other created a sense of 'togetherness'. In a reflective exchange with Liz⁸¹ later she explained that the Earth Forum felt as if we were sitting in a warm igloo. This imagined dome shape was very comforting and was easy to imagine from the shape and form of the seating arrangement:

I think it was my first Earth Forum and because Shelley was new to me, the consciousness and the following from my side and feeling as if I was in an igloo or a snow-globe was so strong... the physical set-up (the round seating arrangement) allows for that igloo of concentration, and the trust and willingness to go with Shelley, she was new to me and I felt such a respect for her, even though she was strange to me, yet I trusted her... I think that's the charm of a Responsible Participant. So there is the strange/trust feeling of the Responsible Participant, and the shape and form that creates an igloo-feeling.

On the train, between Cape Town and Laingsburg, we prepared our approach for the next

⁸¹This interview emerged from reflective exchange with Liz, Maria and Shelley after our train journey in Johannesburg, May 2011.

day. It was to be the municipal elections on the day of our planned activities, and we considered how we could work in this particular social setting, and if it would be advantageous to the process. In the morning of the elections, we set up a table on the Laingsburg dirt road leading to the hall where the elections were being held. On a chalk board we wrote the words 'EARTH FORUM'. On a table we placed the cloth and on the cloth we heaped a mound of earth we collected from an area of exposed soil under a tree nearby. We placed eight wooden seats around a wooden table. As people passed by we invited them to participate in the forum. We conducted two Earth Forums, the first with a family of four, and Shelley as Responsible Participant. Maria, Elizabeth and I were participants. It was conducted in English and Afrikaans. They were a farming family, with two children. Shelley seemed to guide them with such ease, and even their young eight year old son, felt comfortable to share his values of Laingsburg, his concerns for the future of Laingsburg and the future of the earth. I think his mother was surprised with his answers; she seemed somewhat awed by how he was able to express himself with perfect strangers.

The second group we worked with was a group of ten youth from the nearby informal settlement (EF3). Shelley was in a conversation with another person, when the youth group came to sit at the Earth Forum, and so we tried to be Responsible Participants ourselves. Maria, Liz and I shared the responsibility and each held the soil and explored each other's values and our hopes for Laingsburg, and what we would consider to be progress for the town. The group openly spoke about their struggles with drug and alcohol abuse and their fears around teenage pregnancy. They felt abandoned, and left behind and almost all of them felt there was no future for them in Laingsburg and wanted to leave as soon as they were old enough. The girls were very quiet and shy for the first half of the forum, but as time drifted along, and Maria and Liz encouraged them, they began to open up. After this Earth Forum we reflected with Shelley about how we felt it went. Shelley had listened to us, and spoke about the importance of a Responsible Participant. She explained how there needs to be a balance between what you share when you participate as a Responsible Participant, and how you share it. While of course you must sincerely share your inner thoughts, you must share them in a way that is accessible to the group you are sharing them with. It is important not to lose

the participants by being too verbose, or too metaphoric; you need to use your opportunity to share your experiences as a way of bring the group together and back to the task at hand if they are struggling with the process.

The final Earth Forum in Laingsburg we conducted in the dry river bed, which is a significant site as the largest South African flood in recorded history had occurred in Laingsburg, in the 1980s, where over 400 people had died. Alongside the river is the Laingsburg flood museum. We had invited a variety of the town's folk, from people in local municipality, people on the tourism board for the town and the youth group we had worked with earlier that day. We had invited them weeks in advance, through written and telephonic invitations. Yet none of the people we invited arrived. After waiting half an hour, we decided to conduct the Earth Forum as a group of five, Shelley, Maria, Liz, myself and a local artist from Laingsburg who was the only person who arrived from our invitations. This Earth Forum was for me the most powerful, and I look back on it as the one that seemed to have the perfect shape, form and use of instruments. I am not sure if it was because we formed a perfect circle; if it was because the site in which we were conducting it was suitably strange; or if it was because we were familiar enough with the process that we could go very deeply into the different stages of the process; but it seemed as if the space was stronger and more robust and Shelley and the group were better equipped to imagine, listen and to empathise.

I was understanding more and more that a Responsible Participant was an expanded form of facilitation or moderation, and it certainly was different to being a facilitator such as I had experienced through my work in Arkwork. I saw the shape and form of the Earth Forum becoming set, i.e. the shape of the circle where people sat around, the placement of the cloth, the use of the cloth to hold the soil, and the collection of soil by the participants from different spaces in the river, and all seemed to strengthen the process and free up the Responsible Participant from their assured or self-culturally imposed responsibility.

Soon after this Earth Forum was complete we had to quickly pack up and hop on the train that was heading to Johannesburg. After a busy and rich day we had the time to all reflect in our shared train cabin, on the three Earth Forums, what had transpired, what worked and what didn't work. The process was emerging, and seemed to us all to have more of clear shape and form, with specific stages. The first was to create a perfect circle that people are

able to sit around and see each person in the group clearly. Seating was important as sitting on the ground would be uncomfortable and not achievable by everyone, such as the elderly. The first stage of inviting everyone to go collect their handful of earth and bring it back to the table was crucial; it seemed to play an important role for each person finding and establishing their own space and right to sit at the table, and created a sense of citizenship to that specific location, that piece of earth.

As far as the process was concerned, it was crucial to explain the role of the Responsible Participant: that she was not a traditional facilitator, but also someone who was participating as much as everyone else, as well as guiding the group. So she would mostly be in the process participating, but occasionally have to come out of the space to help guide it. This of course was a form of facilitation, yet it relied less on her immediate reaction. It also relied on the social arena constructed by the Responsible Participant, as a means to help the group to self-facilitate and therefore expand a relational agency. Another key component was bringing the group's attention to the use of their imaginations as valuable capacities which everyone can use. Shelley referred to this space in our minds as a 'dome', a creative space that was 'ours' and only we have access to it. It also seemed to soften the atmosphere when Shelley shared how she believed everyone was an artist, as everyone had the ability to use their imaginations in this way. It also seemed to be vital to constantly make the group aware of active listening, that each person was trying to stay with each other, without judgement or agreeing or disagreeing, sincerely listening to the person that was speaking by using their imaginations to see what the other person was seeing and feeling. In many ways, each person was offering a picture; they were not dividing their hopes or concerns into specific actions or fragmented concepts, but were offering thought out, wholesome impressions, nuanced with an emotional context, and rooted in an impulse and impetus. These all seemed to be fundamental components of the Earth Forum at this stage. It felt as if my mind and heart were 'squinting' in the bright rich substance that was the Earth Forum. There was just so much to take in and consider; yet at first glance, and in the initial experience, it seemed so simple, subtle and quiet.



Figure 18: Early Earth Forum Development. Journey by train from Cape Town to Joburg, via Laingsburg in the Karoo. Bottom right image is the collaborative team (left to right): Maria, Liz, Shelley and me on the right, arriving in Joburg after our journey across South Africa. May 2011. Images courtesy of Elizabeth Fletcher

After arriving in Johannesburg and a full night's rest, we conducted the fifth Earth Forum (EF5) in the city centre, in a concrete square of the fashion district. We worked with three other participants, one was an environmental journalist (Emily), another (Dora) an activist and researcher for an organisation that explores the effect of climate change on women and children entitled Gender CC, and the third a woman (Kyla) who runs her own theatre company that specialises in environmental themed theatre work, both educational and high art. Shelley was the Responsible Participant, and Maria and I were the other two participants. We set up the Earth Forum, carefully considering what we had learned from Laingsburg. The process seemed to be very useful to the participants. In an interview with Kyla after the Earth Forum, I asked what her initial thoughts were when she considered the process, and she replied:

It was a friendly space with familiar faces but in an unfamiliar and quite awkward

setting. We had set up a table in the middle of Jo'burg's inner city fashion district and the cars were whizzing by. There were lots of distractions: cars, sun in my face, wind but it became easier to concentrate as the session grew deeper....I remember feeling that the spot we picked was a little forced and that I wanted to be inside where it was warmer and more comfortable. I did not want to be sitting in the middle of the city, being stared at by passersby just for the sake of it. Otherwise, I thought it was a beautiful process. Very human.

I also asked her what she felt of the cloth (was it important or significant for the process?).

She replied by saying:

Wonderful imagery, metaphor and a solid, tangible connection to the Earth. I also love the idea of Earth gathered from all over the country/globe by all the Earth Forums, made one by this sharing process...I think it is powerful beyond measure. Simple, gentle, meaningful and a safe space for people to reflect in whatever way they feel comfortable. I think it could afford to be treated a little more irreverently, be lighter of touch. I think that way people might open up to themselves and others even more.

I considered her suggestions carefully, and I realised that in these early stages we were somewhat precious with the specifics of the shape and form, and the 'strangeness' of the setting, which over time I realised should not overshadow participants' basic needs.

After the Earth Forum train journey Shelley left to go back to the UK, but before she left we all (Liz, Maria, Shelley and I) reflected on the week and tried to solidify and develop the methodology through our reflections, most of which you can read in Chapter Two, as the shape, form, instruments and practices laid out in those pages were drawn heavily from this collaborative reflection space. We spoke from our experiences as Responsible Participants and ordinary participants, as well as apprentice Responsible Participants, this was agreed to be useful for not only the development of the Earth Forum handbook and process, but also as reflective data for my PhD research, and joint publication as indicated in the quote of Shelly's above. What I have chosen to share here is some personal values expresses by each of us.

Liz looked back on this Earth Forum and shared this:

The best space we have had was in the river bed. The chairs and table certainly helped; because if we were sitting in the sand it would have been uncomfortable ... also perhaps it was the aesthetic form, of sitting at a table in this strange space. I think two of the most powerful things were the question and the location, which allowed for the trust and the content to emerge. That location was very special ... for me it is the silence of the Earth Forum, the invisible work it does below the radar is what I feel is the most useful aspect of the project. It is not flashy, or loud, and it's not asking for anything obvious, but is helping people in a way of thinking, imagining and listening. Even once just doing Earth Forum I felt that I could think deeper and communicate better in any situation. It's the quietness of the project that struck me. It is a special combination of the depth of the 'igloo-feeling' and the access of the

people ... I feel there is so much bullshit in South African development and education, with outcomes and stuff, if we could just go back to that level of depth and working with each individual, going back to the heart...giving adequate focus to each person...

Shelley had this to say during the reflective exchange (Johannesburg, May 2011):

Somehow without constraining or angling the discussion one is declaring upfront that this not just a discussion, a talk-shop, a negotiation, or even a traditional forum, it's something else. It is not focusing on a specific issue, or attempting to reach a specific outcome or consensus. For example it is not about how a town is going to improve tourism; it is always about what we are doing in the world. Whatever question we are dealing with it always relates to the bigger question, which somehow begins with the earth and ends or tends toward a focus about our relationship to the questions facing us as inhabitants in the earth. I remember somebody saying it beautifully... I think it was Kyla, that normally when people talk negatively about what humans are doing in the world, they say: 'humans are superfluous, and the nature will restore itself' and in response to this she spoke about the particular contribution humans could make by transforming ourselves, and expanding our capacities in a way of being a dignified and worthwhile species, and what an amazing species we are if we get it right... I think that view will come up around the cloth, perhaps not always have that degree of sophistication. What the question should do is explore how does this relate to us being in the world, and how we can expand our capacities to be better humans. ... if you want people to have equality you need a space that is symmetrical, that's why the circle is so important.

In Maria's reflection during this exchange she said (I share more of her reflection from this session in Chapter Six):

I think if anybody walked upon us while we were sitting together, they wouldn't feel uninvited...people have been drawn to Earth Forum when it's strange, when people are discussing something in a river bed for example it seems to deepen and achieve something... I learned that when you listen to someone you don't just listen with your ears; you listen with your eyes, your posture, and your imagination...

And so after this session I was alone; I still had support from Maria and Liz, but I really was in the deep-end. I had a theoretical understanding of social sculpture methodology (Chapter Two) and phenomenology (Chapter One), and some rough experience with Shelley from the train journey. I also had her encouragement to pursue the practice-based enquiry that would involve developing the Earth Forum practice further. My research supervisor also encouraged me to continue with my social learning explorations via social sculpture practice, and develop another layer of reflexive practiced based enquiry. Now I was to take what I knew, and apply, refine and develop a unique practice. I was nervous, but my excitement and enthusiasm seemed to overshadow any doubts.

The first Earth Forum (EF 6) that I conducted on my own was possibly the worst Earth Forum

I have ever participated in, but when I speak to those who participated, they were oblivious to my Responsible Participant *faux pas*(s). In fact they all confirmed they found it really useful. The struggle with this Earth Forum, other than it being my first time as a Responsible Participant, was the nature of the group. This experience was vital in developing my understanding of the Responsible Participant's agency, and what form a pedagogical process to develop a Responsible Participant may be developed (I address this in detail in Chapter Five). I had been working with a group of different representatives from a variety of different organisations that were either funding or fundraising for the Climate Train project⁸² that we had been developing for the year prior through COPART. I offered the Earth Forum as a process in which we could come together as the steering committee for the first time and listen to each other's values and questions and explore each other's ideas of progress for the climate train. I was however implicated in the process as I was also a member of the steering committee, and so would lead the process but also be embroiled in the process itself (I later learned that this does not matter so much, as long as everyone is comfortable with the concept and duties of a Responsible Participant who is primarily an equal participant, and only maintains the shape and form of the forum and practice where needed).

It was a real struggle to maintain a balance between being in the process and not letting my own issues with the group cloud my guidance of the process. Another factor that influenced the course of this Earth Forum (EF 6) was the environmental conditions; I had arranged to conduct the process in the Johannesburg Delta Park. I was committed to the process taking place outside, but I did not expect the late afternoon to get so cold (it was in the middle of winter, and despite it being a sunny day, as the sun dipped lower and lower and the process wore on it got colder and colder). While it was uncomfortable and unfair to keep the group in these conditions, when asked if we should move indoors, they were all willing to brave the cold to complete the process outside. As cruel as it may sound, the cold seemed to focus the group. I noticed this to be the case in the previous Earth Forum, where the loud noises from the bustling pedestrians, and the traffic in the city centre, also seemed to bring the group closer and made them more attentive to what each person was sharing.

The following Earth Forums (EF 7 and 8) I conducted were in Grahamstown during the

⁸² You can read more about this project in Chapter Four, which outlines the entire Climate Train story.

National Arts Festival. As part of the permanent conference for COPART, we hosted an event at the Environmental Learning Research Centre entitled “Re-imagining” with the subtitle “Creative practice in sustainability”. It was a gathering of various different practitioners from various different fields to explore creative practices that were contributing to sustainable environmental processes. During this time I was able to conduct two Earth Forums. The first was with a group of participants who were attending the Re-imagining festival (EF 7). It was bitterly cold, and I set up the Earth Forum under a sheltered amphitheatre in the building, and while we were covered from the rain and sheltered from the wind, it was still very cold. I bought six hot-water bottles for the process, people shared these throughout. I was far less clumsy in this Earth Forum, and was getting a better sense of what it meant to be a Responsible Participant, with the 'being' being more important than the 'doing'.

The second Earth Forum (EF 8) that I conducted in Grahamstown was with 20 youth leaders from across the country that had been selected by Project 90 by 2030⁸³. Also included in this Earth Forum were two facilitators, one of which would later become a Responsible Participant apprentice and conduct his own Earth Forums in the following year. This process was filmed by a local television show 50/50. I ensured that they would only film the first part of the process, but not film the participants' personal reflections. I was aware this would affect their imaginal work, and make them self-conscious and feel less safe. The cameraman tried to enter the circle to film the process, and I had to stop the process and get him to exit, along with the rest of the crew. It severely disrupted the protected warm space that we were all working hard to create. It was interesting to see how instinctive my defensive of this space was, no one should enter it that was not a committed participant (i.e. someone who had chosen to be part of the Earth Forum from the beginning). I also found being inside did change the shape and form of the process; it felt more like a meeting than something new and unusual.

After completing my first three Earth Forums as Responsible Participant, I had the opportunity

⁸³A non-profit organisation based in Cape Town that specifically aims to reduce the ecological footprints of communities, working mainly with young people. I worked with them further in my development of Earth Forum, and expand on their work in greater detail in Chapter Five.

to visit Shelley and the Social Sculpture Research Unit at Oxford Brookes University, in the UK. I was also blessed with the opportunity to attend part of the Social Sculpture Summer School that Shelley was running. This was an amazing opportunity for me to see and participate in other social sculptures, and also reflect and learn from other researchers in this field. I also managed to have three long sit-down sessions with Shelley to carefully go through the Earth Forum, reflecting on our processes in South Africa, as well as trying to refine and amend the instruments and practices that made up this early Earth Forum. One significant change we made with the instruments was to make the Earth Forum cloth round and much bigger, this would emphasise the circular, inclusive shape of the forum, as the participants would not only be sitting in a circle but would be sitting around a physical circle. Also we noticed that the cloth was not picking up the traces of the soil as we would have hoped. To combat this we lightly oiled the cloth, so the cotton fibres would be more absorbent and more likely to pick up soil particles more readily. We essentially were making the cloth more prone to attracting dirt, which would make the traces on the cloth over time become a stronger *connective aesthetic*.

During this visit Shelley and I also worked carefully on the Responsible Participant handbook⁸⁴, which essentially would be the 'text book' or 'how-to guide' on all aspects of what is needed to conduct an Earth Forum. We did this mainly through editing drafts of the handbook we emailed to each other, but also through recorded conversations in her office, reflecting on new insights each of us had had through our experiences applying Earth Forum. Through this process we decided that the Responsible Participant apprenticeship would require experiential more than theoretical knowledge, and so an apprenticeship⁸⁵ of some sort would need to be established. The apprenticeship would entail a Responsible Participant working with one to three volunteers who were interested in conducting Earth Forums on their own, participating in three to five Earth Forums together. After each forum the group would reflect and discuss the process, and critically analyse the process and the role of the Responsible Participant. It would be through these discussions, and their different

⁸⁴ Extensive notes on the handbook and on the methodological design can be found in Chapter Two. Appendix A is a copy of this handbook.

⁸⁵ Chapter Five is dedicated to exploring my implementation of an apprenticeship process, in which I actively induct three Responsible Participants through a collaborative, reflexive and experiential learning process.

experiences in the Earth Forum that the apprentice Responsible Participants would be able to develop a competence and confidence. We agreed that they would also carefully work through the handbook during the apprenticeship and after the apprenticeship they would have the handbook as a constant guide for conducting their own Earth Forums.

Table 3: A list of initial 11 Earth Forum processes around the country, including details of where, when and with how many people each Earth Forum took place. In some instances audio recordings were not permitted and the data consisted primarily of my own personal notes and reflections, as well as subsequent interviews with participants.

EF No:	PLACE & DATE /DATA	NO. OF PEOPLE	GROUP & BRIEF SUMMARY
EF 1	<p>Cape Town Company Gardens 16 May 2011</p> <p><i>Data: No recording of EF, Personal reflection (journal), and later group reflection with Shelley, Maria and Liz (recorded in Johannesburg)</i></p>	9	<p>COPART team (including Elizabeth and Maria). This was my first exposure to the methods that were foundational for the Earth Forum process. Shelley acted as Responsible Participant. In this first experimental Earth Forum we all sat on the ground, around the cloth. My first encounter with the process left me with a sudden relief that I had time to think and contemplate. The movement out to gather soil and to notice what I was thinking and feeling offered a sense of expanding and opening up. I noticed also the other participants out in the gardens, exploring the space, and I wondered if they were as deeply engrossed in the process as I was. I was immediately struck by Shelley's quiet yet firm guidance of the process, but also a great sense of equality and community in the space. Even though I had worked closely with most of the people in the COPART team before, I felt really moved just how much closer we seem to become, and how attentively we were listening to each other. There seemed to be a collective experience of slowing down, and with one participant mentioning that in the height of urgency, one needs to slow down to gain perspective, I felt the same way. I noticed also each person's deep connection with the soil, with each person finding a deeply personal and intimate experience when exploring the soil. My own experience was amazement of just how much life there was living inside the soil, from earthworms, to small grubs, mites and millipedes. In hindsight sitting on the ground was not comfortable for everyone, and it made the process look too much like a picnic.</p>
EF 2	<p>Laingsburg Outside the Town hall venue 17 May 2011</p> <p><i>Data: Personal reflection (Journal), and later group reflection with Shelley, Maria and Liz (recorded in Johannesburg).</i></p>	5	<p>A farmer and his family: In Laingsburg we (Maria, Elizabeth, and Shelley) had arrived the day before the provincial elections, and so had to consider how we could potentially work with people who were coming to and from the polling stations. We set up tables and chairs and gathered sand from the Laingsburg river bed and placed it on the cloth on the table. We then invited passersby to sit with us and consider the future of their land. The first to join us was a local farmer, his wife and two children. They did not experience the process of going out and collecting their own soil, but instead held the soil and explored their own hopes for the land. The farmer was concerned for his children and the recent droughts, as well as being able to provide for his children. It was interesting to see how Shelley guided the family, and how freely the young 7 year old son explored the questions, his mother showed her surprise at her son's openness and consideration of the task. There was less connection expressed by the family to the soil/earth itself, and I wondered if that had to do with them not gathering their soil on their own and encountering the earth while encountering their own experiences. I mostly observed Shelley's action as a Responsible Participant, the care that she took in listening to each person's experience was really noticeable.</p>
EF 3	<p>Laingsburg Outside the Town hall 18 May 2011</p> <p><i>Data: Personal reflection (Journal), and later group reflection with Shelley, Maria and Liz (recorded in Johannesburg).</i></p>	10	<p>Youth: A group of four young men, and three young women (18 and 21 years old), with Maria, Elizabeth and me sharing the role of Responsible Participant, Shelley observed this process from a distance. The process was conducted in Afrikaans. The men opened up with greater ease and spoke freely about their experiences of feeling isolated in their town, and the lack of opportunities for them. It took longer for the women to speak; they seemed shy of sharing in front of the guys, yet as the process progressed they showed more confidence. I had very strong sense of the unity that was created through the process, as we all seemed to open up as we all attentively listened to each other. After this Earth Forum, Shelley and I had a conversation, which shifted my understanding of what a Responsible Participant could be. We spoke about how important it was as a Responsible Participant to consider even in your sharing, the people who you are speaking to, so as not to lose their attention or to ensure they are able to follow your train of thought; this subtly helps the group to consider</p>

			their own listening. In hindsight I can see this Earth Forum was successful in building listening capacities, but the depth attained in the process was relatively shallow, perhaps again because the participants did not experience the step of collecting the soil/earth themselves, and entered into an imaginal contemplation.
EF 4	<p>Laingsburg Laingsburg dry river bed 18 May 2011</p> <p><i>Data: Personal reflection (Journal), and later group reflection with Shelley, Maria and Liz (recorded in Johannesburg).</i></p>	6	<p>Our team and a local Laingsburg artist: We set up the tables and chairs in the dry river bed in Laingsburg, and had invited a variety of local people from the town, from local municipality, from the museum, some farmers and other citizens. Unfortunately only one person arrived for the Earth Forum, and so we Elizabeth, Maria, Shelley, another anonymous participant and a local artist from Laingsburg attended. I attempted to lead this Earth Forum, but just before it started I felt that I needed to spend more time observing the methods and because the process was not entirely formulated yet, I felt it important to rather critically observe what the process still needed. In this process we all had the opportunity to gather soil, sand and other matter from the river bed in what became the standard five minute imaginal contemplation that we kept for the rest of the Earth Forum processes. The emphasis on the soil/earth and the insights these conjured up in each person's experiences was noteworthy. I noticed the intimate connections people made with the Earth itself, and how almost each person could reflect their own experience to the soil they held in their hands. I also used this Earth Forum to reflect on my experiences this far, and I what I had noticed in the process. What was significant for me at this point was my understanding of the Responsible Participant's role in the process, which was to keep the shape and form of the Earth Forum process intact, which was not about didactly telling people what to do, but ensuring the space was conducive for people to explore their own questions, thoughts, and ideas through their own deep contemplation.</p>
EF 5	<p>Johannesburg Public square in the centre of the city 20 May 2011</p> <p><i>Data: Personal reflection, and later group reflection with Shelley, Maria and Liz (recorded in Johannesburg). Also an interview with Kyla Davis three months later via Skype (recorded).</i></p>	6	<p>Women of Joburg: Kyla Davis from Well Worn, Environmental Journalist, Gender and Climate Change, Shelley, Maria and I. The noise of the city seemed at first as if it was going to be a distraction, I was also concerned that we would not find any soil in this concrete square in the central of Johannesburg. I was surprised at how the noise seemed to sharpen our concentration, and improve our ability to listen empathetically, this was my experience. Kyla however in an interview some months after EF 5 found it distracting and uncomfortable, a strain to listen; she did notice later however that this precisely improved our listening ability, although she felt the guidance was 'heavy handed'. I suppose the process was not fully formed yet and so required more work to develop a 'lightness of touch', something she suggested it needed. I was also surprised to see how personal some of the reflections became, and how participants reflected on how it unlocked or lifted out specific questions that were useful for them. What interested me was again a deep connection to the earth and natural world despite the fact we were mainly in a concrete environment devoid of life. Participants spoke of their soil as 'living' and described in detail the life worlds inside the soil and inside their own inner reflections. Personally I found myself looking at the buildings, concrete, tar and stone as reshaped mountains, and could even picture the water that was used to shape the city. I found my awareness to occupy three regions: a personal inward depth, an outward physical awareness, and then a collective awareness of what I was hearing and picturing from others in the group. I found Shelley's guidance noteworthy as she closed her eyes to listen which seemed clearly show how active she was in trying to picture what the people were saying.</p>
EF 6	<p>Johannesburg Delta Environmental Park 21 June 2011</p> <p><i>Data: Personal Reflection (Journal), and then a later reflection with Maria who participated in this process. I also have recordings from an interview with Christelle Terreblanche who participated in this crucial Earth Forum, as it was my first attempt at being a Responsible Participant.</i></p>	8	<p>Climate Train Steering Committee (Indalo Yethu and British Council). This was my first attempt at being a Responsible Participant. I had gathered together (with Maria's help) the steering committee for the Climate Train. This was their first meeting in person as the project began. There was some tension and misunderstanding in the group, and so it posed a real challenge for me. It was a late afternoon session, and mid winter, the cold affected the group, and in hindsight I should have chosen a warmer venue. Having said this some participants spoke of the cold and discomfort as a valuable embodiment of the discomforts experienced during climate change, and for vulnerable people, and encouraged a deeper sense of empathy for people struggling with environmental uncertainty. The group certainly developed a closer more cohesive atmosphere towards the end, and discussion post Earth Forum was very useful as we all had a very clear insight into each other's pictures of progress. Even though I was somewhat unsure with the process (having to check my notes constantly) Maria found it not unlike the experiences we had had in EF 1-5, meaning that a similar experience and personal outcome was achieved, for Maria at least. There was also some difficulty in the fact that I was not completely neutral as I was a member of the</p>

			steering committee and Maria and I were both concerned with this, and how it might have affected the participants' approach to the process. My major finding in this Earth Forum was the need to pace the process, to give participants more time to reflect and imaginatively contemplate. I also had one incidence of someone speaking too long, which I should have cut short, to get the rest of the group out of the cold sooner. I did however check constantly if we should move inside, and I was assured by all the participants that we should stay outside.
EF 7	Grahamstown Environmental Learning Research Centre/Botanical Gardens 3 July 2011 Data: Personal Reflection (Journal), and then a later reflection with Lara who participated in this process, not recorded, I took notes from our conversation.	11	Reimagining fest participants , Grahamstown National Arts Festival. Again another cold day, this time I tried to set up the space in a more sheltered spot but still outside. I also got hot water bottles for each participant, so that they were at least comfortable. I also asked them in the invitation to dress warmly. The most interesting component of EF 7 was an incident regarding the length of time of the Earth Forum. Ideally it was important to have all the participants to stay for the entire process, as losing a participant too early would break the circle, and also the sense of equitable listening would be lost. We felt in our early discussions and conceiving the process that participants should donate an entire three hours to the process. One participant, who asked to join just before we started was unaware of this, and after the first stage of introductions was unable to participate for more than an hour. This was a sudden challenge that I had to deal with intuitively. My instinct was to not turn her away, but rather suggest that she could either come to another Earth Forum, or she could stay and just participate intently on the listening aspect of the work. It had such a strong effect on her that a year later she ended up starting a PhD in Social Sculpture. Lara Kruger from the Climate Fluency Exchange also participated and felt the process was really useful, as it expanded her listening capacity, she did however feel that it could have been somewhat shorter.
EF 8	Grahamstown 4 July 2011 Data: Personal Reflection (Journal), and then a later reflection with Stephen Davis who participated in the process, and later participated in my development of an Earth Forum Responsible Participant apprenticeship.	18	Project 90 by 2030 Youth Forum , during Grahamstown Festival. This Earth Forum was fascinating, as I was working with a group of young environmental leaders who had the day before been involved in group activities and leadership exercises. All were very confident and outspoken and had participated in several processes before. I held this process indoors due to rain and cold, and also had the added complication of a TV crew wanting to film the entire process, which I limited to a small section at the beginning. The participants were all very descriptive and really entered each process deeply, carefully contemplating each aspect of their experience and listening deeply. They reflected afterwards that the active listening was very useful and deepened their understanding of each other's impulses and questions. The was also a very deep connection expressed all around regarding the soil, their connection to the earth and how this contemplative process deepened their connection to their inner questions. Also Stephen Davis participated in this process, and was taken by the simplicity of the process, and how quickly it deepened one's capacity for empathy.
EF 9	Grahamstown Environmental Learning Research Centre 19 September 2011 Data: Personal Reflection (Journal), and then reflections some months later with Fredrick Cooper, a participant in the process.	22	Research Learning Symposium participants . This Earth Forum took place at the Research Learning Symposium, hosted by the ELRC. It was an opportunity to work with a variety of people from across Africa, who were all involved in various forms of education practice. At this stage I was feeling more confident with my role as a Responsible Participant. I had made minor adjustments with the process, and was able to conduct each section from memory which helped keep the pace and flow of the process. During this Earth Forum a woman took out her phone to read a piece of scripture, in hindsight I realised I should have stopped her, as it was taking her away from her own experience of her imagination and inner contemplation. It seemed to distract the rest of the group. There was again a very strong connection to the soil/earth they had gathered and their inner reflections. Fredrick Cooper remembered this from his experience: "I felt a reconnection with my past, where I first experienced connection with nature. This process reminded me of that ... was the first time I voiced my view in a public group. That was self empowering, and reinforced within myself that I respect, and wish to be in harmony with, the Earth."
EF 10	Grahamstown Environmental Learning Research Centre. 20 September 2011 Data: Personal Reflection (Journal), and then reflections some months later with Georgina Cundill, a participant in the process.	23	Research Learning Symposium participants : This was the second group from the research learning symposium. The previous process had gone really well, and I got positive feedback from both processes. In this Earth Forum Georgina Cundill found the 'facilitation' of the process really interesting, and carefully constructed. She also had an epiphany regarding fragility of the human being in the wider ecosystem. I was again amazed at how 'fertile' the soil was that each person had gathered; again and again participants spoke about the life within the soil, and the interconnecting aspects of the world and their inner desires, fears, questions and thoughts. There was a strong sense of unanimity about the well-being of nature correlating to the flourishing of human beings, and the current situation as

			something that can be overcome. At first I was intimidated by this group of academics in Environmental Education, who had a great deal of experience with working with and in facilitated processes. One woman said that she didn't feel it was a facilitated process, but a real gathering and exchange; she mentioned a sense of personal freedom to explore, share and listen without feeling obligated. For me my experience of being a Responsible Participant was expanded as I could see the importance of trying to have as minimal interference with the participants' expressions, but at the same time ensuring that when any particular action affects the shape and form of the Earth Forum one must react quickly, and intuitively, without seeming forceful or didactic.
EF 11	Cape Town UCT Heddington Campus 15 October 2011 Data: Personal Reflection (Journal), and then reflections some months later with Elizabeth, who participated in the process.	21	GIPCA HOTWATER symposium: The participants were an interesting mixed group of people attending the symposium. Included in the process were Daniel and Andrea who later attended the trial apprenticeship for Earth Forum Responsible Participant which I explore in detail in Chapter Five. It was a fascinating Earth Forum, mainly because each person shared so openly and honestly, despite the fact that everyone save a few were complete strangers. Two participants commented afterwards on how close they felt to the other participants, using words like 'trust' and 'equality' to describe their experience. I also struggled with one participant who talked for over 15 minutes in the first session, and I eventually asked him if he could hold that thought, to give room for others. I assured him he would have time to continue in the other two rounds of the process, and I noticed how this shaped the length of his other conversations, which were more succinct, but still maintained the descriptive depth he had shown in the first round.

3.6. FEELING EQUIPPED

On my return from Oxford I set up two Earth Forums at the Research Learning seminar at the Environmental Learning Research Centre at Rhodes University, armed with a new cloth design and a sharper aptitude for responsible participation. It was a great opportunity to work with this diverse group who were also thinking deeply about how to research learning, but came from various different parts of the country and further afield in Africa. The Earth Forums (EF8 and EF9) took place on the same day, with the first group consisting of 22 people and the second, 18 people. It was in these two Earth Forums, that I began to feel satisfied with the methodology. It certainly was one that could encourage, uncover and strengthen latent capacities needed for participants to discover their own ability to act as ecological citizens. It was also the feedback and reflections from those who participated that contributed to my overall sense of satisfaction. All the participants were exploring in some way or another, how to research learning; they were thinking deeply into their Earth Forum experience. One participant remembered their experience some months later by saying: "It was the first time I voiced my view in a public group. That was self empowering, and reinforced within myself that I respect, and wish to be in harmony with, the Earth"

The fact that this person was able to share and voice something they did not have the means to do in a public setting prior to the Earth Forum, made me realise the strength in the social

sculpture's ability to literally 'sculpt' a new social space, a new form of social engagement that was able to deliver a person's outlook in an empowering way. Had the Earth Forum practice encouraged this person's agency to not only reveal their views in a public platform, but to feel empowered and reinforced by doing so, had their relational agency been expanded?

Another participant Dr. Georgina Cundill, who is a researcher in social learning practice, shared this about her experience:

I had an epiphany: we are not trying to 'save the planet'; we are trying to 'save ourselves'. That's pretty obvious, now that I think about it, but I hadn't thought of it that way before. At the time I thought that this might be an alternative way to get people to act on global and local environmental problems. I was actually thinking about this just the other day - so it has stayed with me since the Earth Forum.

An authority in social learning had come to sudden inspired insight in this social sculpture. This insight stayed with her and deepened her own personal understanding of agency and reflexive justice. I considered this a small triumph. Something seemed to click, and perhaps I had come to a workable methodology that could be a valuable social learning instrument, one that encouraged a form of social learning that expanded a person's capacities. Time would tell, but somehow I felt more prepared than I had ever been since starting on this clumsy alchemical journey, judging from people's positive reflections on my practice and my ability to guide the processes, and my ability to 'see' into the learning. I began to feel a lot less clumsy.

After applying the newly adapted methodology in Grahamstown I was invited to the GIPCA HOT WATER colloquium at the University of Cape Town. The colloquium was a space for practitioners in the arts to reflect on their responses to climate change and environmental degradation. It was a fantastic opportunity to apply the new Earth Forum methods in a situation that would include many artists. I was nervous for this event as Shelley told me in Oxford that Beuys once mentioned that artists would be the last to accept and understand Social Sculpture (personal communication, July 2011). The Earth Forum (EF 11) was large, and mostly consisted of strangers. Liz was a participant and it was great to see her again; it had been a few months since we had sat in an Earth Forum together. She noted how far I had come when she watched me guide the social sculpture. She also realised just how much she missed this social practice, the ability-to-act in this way, and express herself with others in a

deeply imaginative, sincere and empathetic way.

At GIPCA HOT WATER I was asked to speak about my work and to offer Earth Forum as one 'intervention' at the event. I spent a great deal of time trying to think how I would express what I was learning through applying Social Sculpture methods in my work, and preparing for this event was an unexpected opportunity to reflect on what I had learned and gained over the past two years. I had come a long way, and when I looked back on my research journey I was amazed by just how many different people were involved in this collaborative journey. It was truly astounding; I closed my eyes and could see hundreds of faces. I thought about the group of informal waste collectors that Mary-Ann and I worked with in Colesburg, how we turned waste into puppets and sculptures that embodied long forgotten !Xam stories and mythology, and evoked ways of knowing that seemed to be leaking out of their grasp. I thought of the group of inspired young people from Grahamstown who gave so much of themselves to the process of deepening their abilities to act and respond in a complex world. I thought of the incredible contributions of Mbaza, Jamie and Injairu who helped co-construct a space where all of us could bring forth new insights and emergent concepts, and act on them. I thought of the 150 different citizens from across Africa at TippingPoint who came together and tried to uncover a means to respond to climate change as artists and creative practitioners. My mind drifted across to the many people from various different walks of life who dedicated their time and their expertise to participate in COPART, a loosely governed social space in order to attempt to continue the work we had achieved at TippingPoint. It was the many faces I could see who were involved in the ten-day Climate Fluency Exchange, who were willing to participate in our collaborative journey, even though none knew entirely where it would lead us. I thought about Shelley and Lara, my friends Elizabeth and Maria who came with me on the early developments of Earth Forum, and the 50 or so people who participated in the early rough attempts at Earth Forum. I thought of all the people at the Environmental Learning Research Centre, particularly my supervisor Heila and other fellow researchers there. I thought of my ex-partner who had left this world so violently and so abruptly and in so doing changed the course of my life. I thought of my beloved family, my dear friends and wonderful fiancé, their patience, their support, their empathy for what I was trying to achieve. I

was overwhelmed by how over those two very long years, hundreds of people were involved and contributed to the insights that I carried at that moment. It was indeed a collaboration, and as much as I was attempting to develop a pedagogy that encouraged ecological citizenship, it was through the gracious and warm support provided by these fellow citizens, that my own agency as an empathetic citizen of the Earth had been distilled.

So what had I learned? Liz, reminded me that in the dictionary the word 'climate' is not just about weather; it has two interpretations, either: 'the weather conditions prevailing in an area' or 'the prevailing set of attitudes in society'. It is the latter that I realised I was working with. I had come to discern that in many instances 'sustainable development' would focus on the symptoms of climate change and environmental decline, or perhaps the structural or technical elements of our system, aiming to try 'fix' the problems, as if they only have a single component 'broken'. Yet when I thought of the social and natural world, its complexity and organic nature, I could see that treating it like a broken toaster wouldn't achieve anything meaningful. The phenomenology of ecological citizenship was my concern. I had come to understand just what it meant to develop an approach to learning that enabled people's ability to act, their agency. It was not merely a process of 'raising awareness' but instead working with people's already existing abilities and capabilities that would contribute to their own ability to act. Heila had reminded me that educational methodologies that draw from cultural-historical approaches to learning, that are social, creative and imaginative were what was needed (Lotz-Sisitka, 2009). It is processes such as these that have proved most useful as these enable reflexive engagement with contradictions and tensions that have the potential to enhance capabilities and social change processes (O'Donoghue, 2007). Yet if the learning needed was social, cultural and historical it should emerge from and work with people's values.

It was Nussbaum and Sen's (1993) Capabilities Approach⁸⁶ that helped illuminate the reality that personal values fundamentally influenced people's agency. Their approach to human

⁸⁶ See Chapter One: Sen has helped to make the capabilities approach predominant as a paradigm for policy debate in human development where it inspired the creation of the UN's Human Development Index (HDI: a popular measure capturing the freedom and multidimensionality aspects of human development including health and education).

well-being and social justice focused on an ethical recognition of an individual's entitlement to their ability to freely live out their valued 'beings' and 'doings'. It spurred me in the direction I took in aiming to encourage both personal agency as well as relational agency.

To explore one's own personal values, to uncover their hidden or displaced perceptions and prevailing attitudes, seemed to be vital. By doing so it seemed possible to apply these exposed values to personal ideas of progress, through the active employment of one's imagination. While developing one's imaginative capacity, and the process of uncovering one's own values are in themselves a great expression of personal agency, this was not the entire picture. It was through a collaborative exchange, through negotiated means, that the real learning would transpire. The relationships and the capacities needed in listening seemed to be a major contribution to agency, specifically what I have been referring to as *relational agency*, the ability to act in relation to each other, to act as a group of equal citizens. I realised that in both circumstances, active use of one's imaginative and listening abilities were used in both forms of agency (i.e. personal and relational). To listen and imagine through one's own personal values (a personal agency) and to listen using one's imagination to understand and see the valued 'beings and doings' of others (a relational agency). I also had learned that this was difficult to achieve through traditional approaches to facilitation. A more democratic, creative, self-facilitated approach was required, which social sculpture phenomenology and methodology seemed to offer.

Significant also was a sense of collective physical embodiment that could encourage a sincere shared common ground, the *connective aesthetic*. While structured, it required simultaneous flexibility to accommodate emergence. It focused on the reality of our circumstances, which were not elevated, ideal or abstract, but an integrated part of everyday consciousness, and located within our own cultural histories while at the same time embodied in a simple object. I realised that the connective aesthetic and the associated practice did not necessarily point participants toward a particular desired future state. Instead it enriched the present, and called each individual engaged in the collaborative exchange to a vivid attentiveness, and devotion to the tasks at hand. It was Irwin's (2010) reflections on Heidegger that had focused my attention to a process of awakening rather than becoming:

awakening to already existing capacities and forms of agency, and building on these, not necessarily becoming something else through the acquisition of new capacities. In other words I realised that the ecological citizen's capacities were innate, intuitive and, while expanded through this process, were not necessarily acquired through the process of methodical apprenticeship and practice. It was building on what already existed, using latent imaginative and listening capacities to uncover and bring forward what already prevailed. So the agency therefore was to reveal what was hidden or inaccessible to the participant beforehand.

I certainly had a much better grasp of what I was focusing on, and realised that I was not approaching this in the way I had previously thought was needed. I had also come close to collaboratively developing the methods that could indeed accommodate such learning. Developing a learning system that was social, enrolled our personal valued beings and doings, while simultaneously creating space and means in which these could be exchanged socially, and negotiated empathetically, seemed like a tall order; and perhaps it was. Yet I found myself reflecting back over the past two years and realised, thanks to the incredible collaborators and volunteers along the way, that we had indeed created a methodology that could offer such a learning system.

Empathy seemed to be at the heart of all of this, and when I thought 'capacity development', the primary capacities that came to mind were *imagination* and *listening*, both of which fostered empathetic agency. It also became increasingly clear to me that what was being achieved here as far as learning was concerned, could not have occurred without clear devotion to the task at hand. It was a loyalty or a fondness to this process of enriching our existing capacities, and in assisting others in the group to do the same; it was a 'kind' altruistic agential force. It was indeed the recognition that *love* had a great deal to do with it.

Arthur Zajonc (2006) wrote in the *Journal of Cognitive Affective Learning* that there is a profound connection between cognition and affection, particularly in what he calls *contemplative enquiry*. After apologising for the breach of etiquette for relating love and knowledge with each other (particularly as a professor of physics), he made a brave case that knowing itself remains partial and deformed if we do not develop and practice and epistemology of love, instead of an epistemology of separation. Yet it is through

acknowledging our inherent separation, and our expansion into the process of individuation (that which makes us unique and different) is where we are able to utilise and learn from each other. According to Zajonc (2006: 2):

While much has been gained through this process of individuation, achievements which we should not lose, if left to go on indefinitely, we logically end up with a society of selfish monads. I am convinced that the countervailing force to such fragmentation is not mutual self-interest or rational economic action that maximizes utility (as economists would have it); rather I believe that genuine empathetic relationships can be and are established between and among us.

Here it was, I was feeling embodied, my aim was to work as fully embodied human being, and to create a useful means to developing personal and relational agency that enabled and expanded the capacities of real ecological citizens. I could not feel more embodied when I felt confident that love was at the heart of this methodology. Zajonc (2006) was calling for our attention to turn from isolation to empathetic connection. For Zajonc (2006) and indeed for me real learning, be it social or personal, requires a form of devotion or affection to that which you are connecting to and developing meaning from, that is to say in order to learn from it we need to learn to *love* it. It was at this moment that I felt as if I was understanding what I was achieving through enlivening our imagination and awakening our empathetic capacities through methodologies that stem from an *expanded concept of art* and from *connective aesthetics*. It was enabling each person to find their personal and peculiar ability-to-act as an ecological citizen, not in the distant future, but today.

So what did I know? I knew what I was doing was different; it was a response in which I was far beyond traditional technological fixes (Rittel and Webber, 1973). It was certainly moving beyond awareness raising and mere behavioural change process, and instead utilised cultural-historical and reflexive processes that Heila suggested (Lotz-Sisitka, 2009). It moved beyond our current perceptions of progress and future desired states (Irwin, 2010); and acknowledged that our mastery or power over nature is a fallacy. It was a methodical process that demanded that each participant was embodied in the precarious delicacy of the present. It also saw learning as the expansion of personal capabilities (Kronlid, 2009), which are according to Nussbaum and Sen (1993), inextricably linked to our valued beings and doings. I also knew that I could recognise what social learning and communal action draws mainly from our differences and peculiar individuality (Wals et al., 2009), while at the same time this

communal action accommodated different ways of knowing (Ellingson, 2009). More importantly, to really learn and act meaningfully as interconnected citizens, this process aimed at expanding our empathic capabilities so that we go beyond our capacities to logically separate, but rather carefully and gently contemplate how they connect, and all the while intuitively employ love in our meaning-making (Zajonc, 2006).

This is where I had arrived – after almost two years of clumsily and naively seeking out an arts-based approach to environmental learning, particularly for environmental justice and ecological citizenship, I had come to a point where the basic methodology had been constructed. It had been shaped through a widely collaborative and creative process, which in itself was a rough social sculpture or social learning project. Unaware of exactly what would emerge when I started, I now stood in Cape Town, in November 2011, equipped with a phenomenology, a methodology and sense that I was finally working as a fully embodied human being, especially since I could practise this methodology through guidance of my intuition, the active use of empathy, and the constant recognition of the value of keeping love present and active in all that I did. Despite the clumsy collaborative alchemy I employed, I felt equipped.

CHAPTER 4

EARTHLINGS ON A TRAIN: THE APPLICATION OF EARTH FORUM IN TWELVE DIFFERENT SOUTH AFRICAN TOWNS AND CITIES

“How can the leaves on the tree say ‘we do not care for the roots’? How can they claim to be evergreen? ... For me the future generation doesn’t only mean human beings, it is the future of all earth communities, future of everything...”

Mpatheleni Makaulule (EF 33)

4.1. REFLEXIVE JUSTICE IN THE FORM OF AN OILED ROUND CLOTH

Between October and December 2011 I worked with Earth Forum in twelve different towns across South Africa, on a mobile social mobilisation, education and justice platform in the form of a modified train, which travelled for 44 days from town to town. I did this alone, with some help of Elizabeth Fletcher, and later reflexive conversations with Sacks during visits to the UK⁸⁷. In the process a single cloth picked up the traces of earth that embodied over 300 different people’s personal pictures of progress, their inner thoughts, ideas as well as their collective socially constructed learning. In this chapter I explore both my own reflections, as well as the participants’ reflections on the efficacy of Earth Forum. I see efficacy in this context as focusing particularly on learning that constructively influences and expands individuals’ capacities for democratic action and citizenship, with particular reference to contributions to *reflexive justice*, and *participative parity*. Reflexive justice refers to Nancy Fraser’s (2008) indication of justice that responds to the lack of effective justice mechanisms that can properly account for globalism’s non-accountability to global issues such as climate change. Participative parity, Fraser (2003) explained is the ability to create social arrangements that allow all members of society the ability to interact and communicate as peers, and on an equal footing (I investigate reflexive justice and participative parity in more detail later in this chapter). Heila Lotz-Sisitka (2009: 84) argued that reflexive justice is vital for environmental education in Southern Africa, and that it requires paying attention to social learning processes that build local capacity for adaptation while also building capacity for social critique and advocacy that does not leave local adaptation practices naïve or

⁸⁷ Captured in my case record data.

conservative. This understanding is at the heart of the Earth Forum methodology, particularly building on existing local and personal capacities that encourage the development of personal and relational agency, which has been discussed in Chapter One. Fraser's (2008) theoretical conception of reflexive justice described citizens as constantly involved in social justice practice in an equal participatory manner, which enables citizens to reflect on both the urgent claims of those that are suffering injustice or perhaps those speaking on behalf of those that are disadvantaged, while also being able to accommodate the meta-disagreements interwoven with these claims. Fraser (2008: 73) described these two components of reflexive justice as "inextricably entangled in abnormal times" and claimed that we should see reflexive justice as the means by which groups work at the intersection between these two components, thereby theoretically mobilising the corrective capacities needed to mitigate the effects of each other. In this way Fraser saw it scrambling the distinction between normal and abnormal discourse. Lotz-Sisitka (2009: 84) insisted that in societies such as South Africa, where inequalities remain deeply seated, reflexive justice is vitally necessary, and the implications for educational research are that it requires exploring the ethical deliberations in the education process, as well as within reflexive social justice practice. In this chapter I explore the potential application of what I see as a reflexive social justice practice, that seeks to offer an educational process that is ethical, equal, and accessible to anyone, and indeed attempts to untangle urgent personal claims from wider meta-disagreements.

Lotz-Sisitka (2009: 85) stated that it is crucial not to confuse people's historical educational contexts with people's power and inherent capabilities for learning, resilience, adaptation and change. She used this fantastic example:

In response to continued patronage in development and educational theories and practices amongst development and education intervention organisations, a leader of a shack dwellers association in Cape Town famously wrote a letter to a left-leaning NGO titled 'We Are Poor, Not Stupid' (cited in Pithouse, 2009:169). In citing this, Pithouse argues that there is a need for a single axiom 'everybody counts, everybody thinks' (ibid.). This recognises that everyone has recourse to the reflexive resources to develop individual and collective capability, even if their social and education systems and cultures have not previously needed to, or wanted to develop or enhance such reflexive capability. Citing Rancière (2007:51–52), Pithouse (2009:169) argues that 'starting out from the point of view of quality, asserting equality as a given, working out from equality, trying to see how productive it can be and thus maximising all possible liberty and equality' is an important strategy to avoid reproducing inequalities and various hierarchies.

With sensitive understanding of these realities, in this chapter I explore how I used the form of a round oiled cloth to create new, equally-accessible arenas for learning socially, that absented traditional democratic social arrangements, and instead created a listening and learning platform for citizens regardless of their age, gender, education or background. An arena in which, as I will demonstrate, participants felt valued, and were affirmed as equal peers in a democratic exploration into their values and pictures of progress. The *connective aesthetic*⁸⁸ of the round oiled cloth provided the receptive space needed to host this learning arena, that was suitably strange to encourage participants to use their imaginations to listen, and to expand their existing empathetic capacities needed for progressive citizen based action. My experience of reflexivity was that of a balance between inner and outer dialogue (which is corroborated in different ways by Sacks, 2007b and Archer, 2007), and the cloth itself provided the neutral and common constant porthole to travel between inner and outer realities as a group.

4.2. BACKGROUND TO THE CLIMATE TRAIN AND THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER FOR AFRICA

The Climate Train was a collaborative social mobilisation project that aimed to create a mobile conference that travelled across South Africa offering a variety of processes and initiatives in the build up to the 17th United Nations Conference of the Parties or COP17, a global climate change conference. The impetus behind this project was to ensure that citizens across South Africa would not be excluded from this huge event that was taking place in December 2011, in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Through a series of meetings and workshops a group of different volunteers from COPART⁸⁹ came together to create an artistic and novel approach to environmental education and justice that would travel on the train from town to town, and offer citizens in each town to participate in this mobile exchange⁹⁰. The team included three visual artists, a film maker working with children, two photographers, three writers, a theatre troupe consisting of three practitioners, a poet, and a rotating group of different environmental educators from different regions of the country, and myself and the

⁸⁸I speak about Suzi Gablik's (1992) concept of connective aesthetics and Shelley Sacks' use of this term in her social sculpture work in Chapter Three.

⁸⁹See Chapter Two for more details on COPART, www.dontcopoutcopart.blogspot.com

⁹⁰Also see Appendix D on the attached CD for the Climate Express weekly newsletter edited by Sonia Koopman, the resident journalist on the Climate Train. There are three editions.

Earth Forum cloth. The train itself consisted of a total of 10 carriages (see Figures 18 and 19). The first three housed the team, the fourth was the central meeting room, lounge and writing room, the fifth was the dining carriage, the sixth housed the boardroom and open space classroom, the seventh carriage housed the cinema and second classroom, the eighth carriage housed the exhibition room, and the final two carriages were used for storage and workshop space, as well as our mobile nursery of indigenous trees, shrubs and succulents. We spent approximately two days in each town, but only a single day in some towns. The Climate Train travelled at night, and rested in the town station during the day, with activities usually happening on the station platforms or nearby the station⁹¹.



Figure 19: Interior of the Climate Train. A) The living room/office space for climate train practitioners, during a daily evening meeting. B) Some of the Climate Train Team after a long day near the end of the trip in KwaZulu-Natal. The carriage shown here is the storage carriage where we stored chairs, tables, plants, tools, banners, posters, giant puppets and other miscellaneous items. C) The versatile boardroom carriage, during an intensive post-Earth Forum discussion regarding the Draft African Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth from elders from the Dzomo la Mupo in Louis Trichardt, Limpopo. D) The board room carriage during a workshop with school children in Limpopo. E) A permaculture design process in the exhibition room carriage, which showed a variety of green technologies and other educational material. F) Children in Pretoria (Gauteng province) participating in a drama workshop led by Kyla Davis in the cinema/classroom carriage. Images are my own.

⁹¹You can see the entire Climate Train itinerary in Table 4; also visit <http://www.climatetrain.org.za/>



Figure 20: Images of the Climate Train. A) The lounge/meeting room carriage during a daily meeting. B) Self appointed guerilla gardener 'Wayward Sun' in the open studio carriage, which while travelling housed plants we collected in each town, to plant in each town. C) Visual artist Mathias Chirombo and Elizabeth Fletcher sitting in the studio carriage reflecting on a long hot day in Kimberley (Northern Cape). D) Resident Climate Train journalist Sonia Koopman helping pack trees away before we were about to leave Soweto. E and F) The dining carriage in action. Images are my own.

Along with the rest of the COPART team, I developed a multiple genre and trans-disciplinary educational programme on the train that drew from a variety of different artistic genres and disciplines, with visual artists, poets, 'guerilla gardeners'/permaculture educators, writers, film-makers, educators, and other practitioners running their own programmes (see Figure 20). Earth Forum was my contribution to the overall Climate Train creative education programme. I used the instruments and practices of Earth Forum to create a new way of exploring values and understandings of those citizens we met along the way.



Figure 21: Some Climate Train practitioners in Action: A) Theatre practitioner Kyla Davis working with giant puppets in KwaZulu-Natal; B) Linzi aka 'Liliana-Transplanter' permaculture educator and tropical agro-forestry researcher working with children through their 'AM-BUSH' guerilla gardening project in Klerksdorp. C) A town meeting on the Draft African Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth coordinated by Christelle Terreblanche in Worcester. D) Mbali Vilikazi: poet and social development practitioner creating public poetry speaking spaces in Klerksdorp. E) Artist and educator from the Mpetetsane Modise in Louis Trichardt working with children. F) Visual environmental Artist Simon (MAX) Bannister creating public interactive work on a train station platform in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. Images are my own.

The Earth Forum cloth I made and used for the Climate Train now contains traces of sincere exchanges between over three hundred people across South Africa, including municipal councillors, teachers, learners, young activists, farmers, mayors, landless peoples, scientists, artists, train staff, children, educators, film makers, photographers, journalists, entrepreneurs, traditional leaders, traditional healers, cultural practitioners and a poet. By the end of the trip I had completed a total of 23 Earth Forums in 12 different towns, and covered seven different South African provinces. The Earth Forum was also conducted in a total of ten different languages including isiZulu, isiXhosa, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, !Xam and English. The traces in the cloth come from earth gathered in Cape Town, Worcester, Beaufort West, De Aar, Kimberley, Klerksdorp, Soweto, Pretoria, Polokwane, Louis Trichardt, Pietermaritzburg and Durban (see Figure 21) with a total of 359 personal contributions embodied in the single cloth. I conducted these Earth Forums on my

own, and used them as an opportunity to reflect and expand the process itself, as well as develop my understanding of Sacks' Responsible Participant concept through direct experience.

While the Earth Forums stood alone as a practice and learning experience for citizens, it also additionally contributed to the central framework that we as cultural practitioners on the Climate Train shared: the aim to promote and explore what it would mean to citizens to embrace the rights of nature, and to help encourage an open public platform to explore the development of a draft *African People's Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth*⁹² (see Appendix C) that contributes to the *Universal Declaration of Rights for Mother Earth* (see Appendix B). The charter was developed by Enact International⁹³ and drafted by renowned environmental lawyer Cormac Cullinan to be offered as a document to start a new conversation in South Africa. Essentially the Draft African Charter and Declaration outline a global consensus of thousands of citizens from different countries that declare that we should recognise the rights of nature in all our decisions and activities. The declaration was adopted in April 2010 by the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, in Bolivia. The Bolivian government has since submitted it to the United Nations for consideration. The Draft African Charter is intended to be an inspirational document with a uniquely African character that can function as a common manifesto which can be used to unite and mobilise many different sectors of South African civil society (e.g. civil rights organisations, trades unions, rural people's organisations, traditional leaders, etc.) around a common agenda. At its conception the document was seen to be the first step in establishing an extensive discussion and not as an end point in itself. As Cormac Cullinan explained (taken from the supporting document of the draft charter, see Appendix C): "The final version of the Charter will only have legitimacy as a political document if it is the product of a fully participatory process that is acceptable to the constituencies that we wish to champion it. The

⁹² You can see the Draft African People's Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth at <http://www.naturerightsafrica.org/>

⁹³ EnAct International is an environmental law and policy consultancy that specialises in developing and strengthening governance systems that promote ecologically sustainable societies. They offer strategic advice and guidance on how to respond to the major environmental issues of today (such as climate change), develop policy, design and draft laws, advice on institutional architecture and reform, train and build capacity. EnAct was founded in London in 1994 and is now based in Cape Town, South Africa with offices in both Cape Town and Durban. www.enact-international.com

process that is used to develop the Charter will determine its legitimacy and effectiveness.”

Considering this I realised that Earth Forum could offer a valuable instrument and practice that creates the space for people to uncover and explore their own values before looking at the Draft African Charter and would thus have the opportunity to compare their personal values with those of the charter, enriching subsequent exchange and conversation. Working closely with the *Draft African Peoples Charter* provided an opportunity to work with a wide variety of people, with support and backing from the funders of the Climate Train. I was, however, still free to conduct Earth Forums in my own way, with no interference from the funders, project managers, nor the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature team. The train offered an invaluable platform to trial the Earth Forum with a wide variety of people, in a wide range of different languages, cultural-historical contexts and in a wide variety of settings. The following narrative explores this epic train journey and the reflections of those who took part in the Earth Forum Social Sculpture. It explores various aspects of the implementation of Earth Forum and looks at the potential contribution this work can have on reflexive justice, participative parity and learning for ecological citizenship.

4.3. EARTH FORUM ON THE TRAIN

4.3.1. TOWNS AND CITIES VISITED

The towns were pre-selected by PRASA (Peoples Rail Association of South Africa)⁹⁴ and the Climate Train steering committee, as there are limited rail networks in South Africa, and so the train had to travel along a specific route. The committee decided to select a variety of different towns, from big cities such as Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Polokwane and Kimberley to small isolated towns such as De Aar, Worcester, Beaufort West, Louis Trichardt and Standerton. Table 4 shows the list of towns and provinces visited. The train visited a total of 17 towns. I was only able to conduct Earth Forums in 12 towns, which provided enough variety for the trialling process I was interested in (Phase B).

⁹⁴ www.prasa.com

Table 4: List of towns/cities visited by the Climate Train, indicating in which towns Earth Forums were conducted

	Town/City	Province	Earth Forum conducted
1	A) Cape Town	Western Cape	YES
2	B) Worcester	Western Cape	YES
3	C) Beaufort West	Western Cape	YES
4	D) De Aar	Northern Cape	YES
5	E) Kimberley	Northern Cape	YES
6	F) Klerksdorp	North West	YES
7	G) Krugersdorp	Gauteng	NO
8	H) Soweto (Nasrec)	Gauteng	YES
9	I) Pretoria	Gauteng	YES
10	J) Mookgophong (Naboomspruit)	Limpopo	YES
11	K) Polokwane	Limpopo	YES
12	L) Louis Trichardt	Limpopo	YES
13	M) Johannesburg	Gauteng	NO
14	N) Standerton	Mpumulanga	NO
15	O) Ladysmith	KwaZulu-Natal	NO
16	P) Pietermaritzburg	Kwa-Zulu-Natal	NO
17	Q) Durban	KwaZulu-Natal	YES

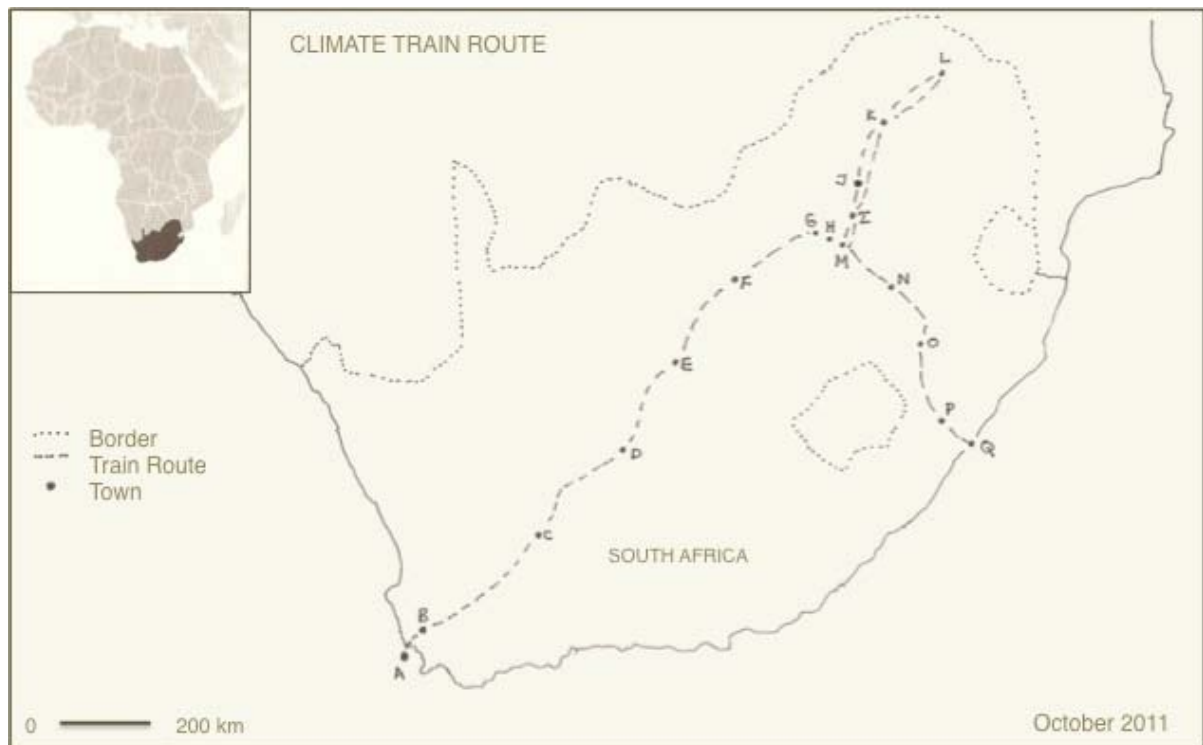


Figure 22: Climate Train Route through South Africa in this order - A: CapeTown; B: Worcester; C: Beaufort West; D: De Aar; E: Kimberley; F: Klerksdorp; G: Krugersdorp ; H: Soweto (Nasrec); I: Pretoria; J: Mookgophong (Naboomspruit); K: Polokwane; L: Louis Trichardt; M: Johannesburg; N: Standerton; O: Ladysmith; P: Pietermaritzburg; Q: Durban.

Table 5: A brief summary of Earth Forums in each town, specific details are further elaborated on in the following text, in a multiple-genre narrative on the train journey

EF No.	PLACE, DATE & DATA RECORD	NO. OF PEOPLE	GROUP & BRIEF SUMMARY
EF 12	Cape Town 28 October 2011 Data: Personal Reflection. No recording.	9	Train Practitioners and other citizens: SET UP: This Earth Forum was conducted in the Cape Town Train Station forecourt in the afternoon during Friday rush hour. Nine participants took part; three were from the Climate Train team, while the rest were citizens in Cape Town who had come to see the train off, and say goodbye to friends and family who were leaving on the train. It was a small group, so the process was quicker, and I did not have access to chairs and so people had to stand which definitely inhibited the process, making it feel rushed. PROCESS & DIALOGUES: As a group we explored questions of healing, health, active stillness and contemplated our preparations for the journey. NATURE RELATION: Each person had a unique expression of how they saw the soil/earth they had gathered, and there was a strong connection to the Earth in relation to healing and healthy living. PICTURE OF PROGRESS: Diverse images, relating mainly to personal action, with some speaking of need for improved communication and forms of exchange and collaboration. Common picture of need to reconnect with natural world. DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 13	Worcester 29 October 2011 Data: Personal Reflection, Recording approved by participants. Later interview with Alicia Mtonjeni	12	Zwelathemba Youth Forum: SET UP: Twelve young participants from the local informal settlement in this farming community, contributions in isiXhosa, English and Afrikaans. Set up in a traffic island outside the train station. It was a long three hour practice with the participants really rigorously working with their questions. PROCESS & DIALOGUES: The main concerns that were explored were around alcoholism in the community from the legacy of wine farming in their communities, and the increase of violence and crime. The group also explored specific questions around development, and what would constitute progress for them in Worcester. NATURE RELATION: Instead of collecting soil the group mainly collected broken glass and alcohol bottles which were strewn around the station. It was indicative of the problem with alcoholism in the town, of which most of the participants discussed. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: A common strong theme where they felt that they could make a substantial difference by fighting for improved land rights and through wider access to education. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 14	Worcester 29 October 2011 Data: Personal Reflection. No recording.	9	Eden Primary school: SET UP: A group of five male and four female learners, on the Worcester train platform, outdoors. PROCESS & DIALOGUES: The girls were very shy to speak, and it took a while for the children to find their voices and feel comfortable to explore their own pictures of progress. The exchange mostly spoke of their love for natural spaces and animals, their concern for new buildings entering into their landscape. It was interesting to observe how the active listening process enabled the girls especially to feel more confident to speak. As we progressed beyond the first stage the boys stopped giggling and really seemed to listen to the girls, making the space feel safer and more egalitarian. NATURE RELATION: They mostly collected soil and grass tufts from the station platform. Two children seemed to connect with the plants growing on the platform, empathetically wondering how difficult it must be to grow there; the other children connected the handful of soil/earth with the connection food and places to play. Five out of the nine children were concerned about the future of the earth, and were worried that natural places would not last. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: Similar themed images, that spoke movingly about their responsibility, and specific tangible actions they would like to take or already take at school and at home, mostly regarding specific 'doings' like not wasting water, and throwing away litter. One boy spoke of the importance of listening, and being truthful with people as a sign of progress. DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 15	Worcester 30 October 2011 Data: Personal Reflection. No Recording. Interview with Sonia Koopman regarding this EF.	25	Breede River Valley Landless Women Farmers: SET UP: It was a large group that spoke predominantly in Afrikaans. Indoors, on the train, within the boardroom carriage. PROCESS & DIALOGUES: In The women often felt it necessary to stand up while speaking, which seemed to have an effect on the atmosphere of the Earth Forum, turning it more into a community meeting. I tried my best to make the women aware of the active listening process, and to try not to respond with agreeing or disagreeing to the content spoken, but it seemed they could not refrain from clapping or shouting 'Amen!' when they liked something someone had said. However near the end the group seemed to fall more into an active listening space. After the Earth Forum we explored the Draft African Charter, and the women later attended a community meeting in the town hall, attended by the Mayor and other municipal councillors, where they shared their collective pictures of progress that emerged from the Earth Forum. NATURE RELATION: The weather made it difficult to collect their own soil/earth handfuls, and so I provided them with a mound of earth on the cloth, and asked them to close their eyes and notice where their thoughts take them in their imaginal space. Almost all the women spoke nostalgically about their childhoods; the soil seemed to immediately take them to specific memories of being close to nature, being involved in growing their own food, or swimming in clean rivers. Each juxtaposed these memories with experiences today, with pesticides and reduced land access. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: As in EF 13 improved land access and getting youth closer to the earth through subsistence farming was a common desired action. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 16	Worcester 29 October 2011	30	Worcester Open Air Museum: SET UP: This was not a traditional Earth Forum as I was given less time, and had the opportunity to work with a very large group. At the time I didn't have the cloth and only had five minutes to prepare so I rearranged a seminar room at the

	Data: Personal Reflection. Recording approved by participants. Reflection with Sonia Koopman, Christelle Terreblanche.		<p>museum into a seated circle and switched off the lights as a common connective aesthetic. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: I went through the second stage of the Earth Forum in the dark; the absence of light gave common connective sense and seemed to heighten people's imaginal listening. The process was interesting, but I did notice that the time allocated for the Earth Forum and the cloth are significant to the process, as the concentration seemed shallow, and we could not explore the questions in as much depth. What was also interesting in this Earth Forum was that the participants consisted of the previous participants from the Youth Forum, as well as local municipal members including the Mayor. The opportunity for him to share his own inner questions with young people in the town, seemed to be a really important happening, as afterwards the Mayor came to me to show his gratitude for the process, as he never gets to shed his Mayor title and speak from the heart in that way, and to know he is really being heard. He also remarked that politicians are not good at listening, and he was delighted that the rest of the municipal team had a chance to practice their listening! NATURE RELATIONS: Despite the lack of soil each participant spoke of a time when they felt very close to nature, from swimming in rivers to playing in the mud. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: A common vision of living well in relation to others and nature through various forms of listening and sharing. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER</p>
EF 17	<p>Beaufort West 31 October 2011</p> <p>Data: Personal Reflection, Recording approved by participants. Reflection with Elizabeth Fletcher and Jayson Naidu.</p>	26	<p>Entire Climate Train team: SET UP: In Beaufort West we were unable to work with the community that was planned to visit the train. So insisted I invited everyone from the Climate Train from the kitchen staff to the main project manager. We conducted the Earth Forum on the train platform in the afternoon. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: The different insights and explorations were profoundly personal and I received positive feedback from many of the participants that referred to how the process unified the entire Climate Train personnel. It was very moving experience, as it opened up dialogue between specific members in the group who had experienced tensions prior to boarding the train in the build-up to the project. This Earth Forum was spoken in English, Afrikaans, isiZulu and isiXhosa. NATURE RELATIONS: The diversity of experiences was significant, especially from what participants experienced gathering and holding their soil/earth. Some people spoke nostalgically of a time in the past, in which they wanted to reclaim, others spoke of disconnection to the earth and natural forces as a deep form of crisis that was in some forms existential. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: What emerged was strong sense of cohesiveness as a team, and people reflected on being able to 'see' the human beings on the train, and not just their roles. DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DRAFT CHARTER</p>
EF 18	<p>De Aar 1 November 2011</p> <p>Data: Personal Reflection. No recording.</p>	8	<p>School group (eight learners and two teachers): SET UP: This Earth Forum was conducted in English and Afrikaans. It was a group of grade 6 learners, and their teachers. It was set up on an overgrown and dusty train platform. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: The exchange seemed forced and a little overshadowed by the teacher's governance over the children. The sense of freedom and personal encounter seemed to be less as it came across as a classroom task. I struggled to know for sure that all the children were comfortable and happy to contribute as the teachers kept butting in and encouraging the children to speak using their authority. In hindsight I felt it would have been best to be more firm with the teachers and keep them back from speaking to the children directly. Despite this the process still worked, with each person exploring their own inner questions. It was also really interesting to see the children's reactions to the teachers' inner questions, with the group's listening improving as we went further, I could tell from the body language and the focus of the learners how engaged they were. NATURE RELATIONS: The soil was dry and hot, and most of the participants collected the powdery red dust, with some children gathering dry leaves and plant matter. The participants spoke of a desperate need to reconnect with the earth, some children spoke of play, and the value of wide open spaces to play in. The teachers were concerned mostly for the children's futures. I struggled with this Earth Forum as my notes mainly speak of the dynamic of the teachers with the children and less on the content. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: My notes are insufficient with documenting this aspect of the project. DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DRAFT CHARTER</p>
EF 19	<p>Kimberley 2 November 2011</p> <p>Data: Personal Reflection. No recording.</p>	20	<p>!Xunhwenesa Combined School: SET UP: The Earth Forum was spoken in English, Afrikaans and !Xam with Grade 8 and 9 male learners on a busy hot platform in Kimberley train station. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: It started off with some difficulty with the teenage participants showing signs of disinterest. As we explored further they each shared something of their experience which was really surprising, as their imaginal explorations were very vivid and sincere. Judging from their body language I interpreted a level of disinterest, mixed with curiosity and a willingness to participate. As the process progressed we discovered that not all the learners could speak English and Afrikaans that well and so I encouraged the group to speak in their home language which is <i>!Qong !Qwe</i>. Describing the form of listening which focuses not just on content but on the feeling or impulse of what is spoken, seemed to really bring the group together with each participant leaning in and showing sincere signs of focus and concentration. NATURE RELATIONS: One young man explained that when he held the earth in his hands he felt closer to his family who had passed away, and were now part of the earth. One said that when collecting the handful of earth he struggled to hold it as the sun had made the dark dry gravel so hot. He went on to explain that the longer he gave himself to hold the earth the cooler the earth became and they were eventually the same temperature. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: There was a clear thread emerging from this group, they all speak of the space and time needed for that feeling, connection and love for earth to emerge. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER</p>

EF 20	Klerksdorp 4 November 2011 Data: Personal Reflection. No Recording.	6	Klerksdorp Dance group: SET UP: This Earth Forum was conducted with a small group of local performance artists and dancers from Klerksdorp. The exchange was spoken in both English and Afrikaans, and was competing with the noisy passing of a coal train. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: I was concerned the noise of the passing train would disrupt the group, but instead I noticed it seemed to focus their concentration and add to their listening. I was surprised also by how simple the instructions were and how easy they were to translate and make comprehensible in Afrikaans as my Afrikaans is broken at best, yet the same level of depth and rigour was emerging from the exchange. NATURE RELATIONS: The soil/earth contributions were mostly small weeds and soil gathered on the somewhat neglected train platform. The tenacity of these plants and of nature was mentioned by most of the participants, and seemed to be a recurrent theme in their expressions. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: The value of embodiment and the strength of character that can emerge from becoming completely "in oneself, and following one's own movement and freedom" were highlighted as a very significant action, and picture of progress. DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 21	Klerksdorp 5 November 2011 Data: Personal Reflection, No Recording.	10	Klerksdorp visiting children: SET UP: Ranging from 9 to 15 yrs old, this exchange was really interesting as the children had come to visit the train on their own, without a school bringing them. They were not wearing uniforms and had been playing on the train all morning, participating in all the different activities on offer. I later found out that they were younger siblings and friends of the Dance group and that's how they got to the train. Set up on the noisy train platform as in EF 20. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: This Earth Forum really revealed the potential of this process in accommodating children, and I could see how this work was universally applicable across ages. It was conducted in English but some children responded in Sotho, and Afrikaans. Their engagement was dedicated and extremely focused with the children really concentrating on each task with obvious devotion to the task at hand. The insights too were also surprisingly unique and individual, whereas before I worked with younger children I would notice some repetition in the children's responses, all these children had a unique perspective and experience, yet shared similar hopes for their pictures of progress. NATURE RELATIONS: The soil/earth itself was mainly collected from the overgrown train platform, with some children noticing the difficulty to survive in concrete, and the difficulty to live in spaces without plants and water. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: My notes are insufficient with documenting this aspect of the project. DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 22	Soweto 9 November 2011 Data: Personal Reflection, Recording approved by participants. Reflection with Mpetesane Modise.	7	Transition-Towns and Peoples Life Environment Agency: SET UP: This Earth Forum consisted of four people from Eco-towns in Ladybrand and three people from Peoples Life Environment Agency in Soweto. It was spoken in English, isiXhosa and Setswana. Conducted in open storage car on the Climate Train. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: This exchange was one of the most inspiring for me. As the participants were all people who were familiar with facilitative social/collaborative process and the need for seeking common visions and goals with community groups. At one point it felt like support group for development practitioners, as the concerns and pictures of progress that emerged were that of improving our abilities to communicate and empathise with each other. They had all witnessed or experienced great conflict in their work, and reflected afterwards how valuable it was to speak in a receptive and empathetic space. Mpetesane Modise from the Peoples Life Environment Agency, chose to come with us on the train for the rest of the journey and was fascinated by the Earth Forum practice and subsequently participated in several other Earth Forums and participated in one of my earlier explorations into Earth Forum Responsible Participant apprenticeship. NATURE RELATIONS: The soil/earth contributions were those gathered from the surrounding train platform. It was interesting to see how the participants who were from far away and those that were local, related to the soil/earth. The local participants connected directly with their community, and sense of responsibility and limitations they felt. Those from far away viewed their situation more broadly observing the wider struggle of finding balance between people and nature. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: One common picture of progress was the need to enable communication, exchange and real listening between people. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 23	Soweto 9 November 2011 Data: Personal Reflection, recording approved by participants (asked to withhold their identities). Interview with a participant who chose to remain anonymous.	25	Landless Peoples Movement: SET UP: A group of women and men, who have been struggling with landlessness in various forms in Gauteng. It was set up in the storage car as in EF 22. NATURE RELATIONS: The soil/earth contributions amplified the group's loss of land and identity. Almost each person reflected on their handful of soil/earth as an image of loss and lack. A young woman spoke of how the Earth gathered in her hands was the closest she will get to her mother, who had passed away several years ago. She saw her mother in the soil, and holding it close to her bosom she licked the soil, her tongue powdered by the fine ochre dust. After a long pause she said, "this earth is her and me". PROCESS & DIALOGUE: An elderly man confessed his frustration that those with swimming pools have the opportunity to learn to swim, while those most vulnerable to flooding in informal settlements, will only get to swim when flooding waters take their homes. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: Their longing for their own land was explored in depth, as well as clear pictures of progress towards obtaining healthy land to live on. I spoke with the coordinator of the group after the Earth Forum and he saw the process as helpful for their cause, as they often get caught up in shouting matches that explore only the bad, but this process enabled them to begin looking forward together. He found the active listening practice extremely useful and said that he was going to use it in their meetings in the future. The Earth Forum was conducted in English and Sesotho. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER

EF 24	<p>Soweto 10 November 2011</p> <p>Data: Personal Reflection, recording approved by participants. Reflection with Sonia Koopman.</p>	30	<p>Woman in Environment (Mine affected Communities from Vosloorus)SET UP: 20 woman and 5 men from Vosloorus, in the East Rand and some from Soweto, speaking in Sesotho, English and Afrikaans. Inside the Boardroom carriage on the train. I was unable to let the group go out and collect their own soil/earth substance, due to weather and lack of time, and so worked with a mound of soil on the cloth. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: What this seemed to do is unify the content, most of which reflected on happy memories of the past, which seemed to bring the group closer to each other. I was very moved by this exchange which echoed the exchange in the previous Earth Forum. NATURE RELATIONS: While I conducting this Earth Forum I was completely unaware that the very earth we were holding was likely to be radioactive. After the Earth Forum we all participated in a workshop with Marriette Liefferink on the effects of mining on the poor and vulnerable, and discussed what it is like to live near mine dumps in Gauteng. Holding a giant chunk of rock consisting of heavy meals taken from water pipe in the East Rand, she carefully told the shocking story of mine pollution in South Africa, from heavy metal poisoning our drinking water, corroding our soils, killing wetlands and slowly but surely snuffing out life far beyond the limits of the mines. The story got worse, when she revealed the many areas around Johannesburg, specifically the West Rand, which have now become radioactive, from uranium mining. The radioactivity is transported far and wide as dust in the wind, it also seeps into underground lakes, and radiates out into the innocent lives of those living nearby. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: The importance of exchange and communication emerged from this process, and that communal education and constant conversation was lifted out as an important response. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER</p>
EF 25	<p>Pretoria 11 November 2011</p> <p>Data: Personal Reflection, Recording approved. Reflection with Mpetestsane Modise, and Dulcie</p>	12	<p>Woman in Environment Pretoria: SET UP: I set up the space in an alcove in the Pretoria train station, with the busy Pretoria city train commuters walking past throughout. This group of women were all much older than me, and I was somewhat intimidated. It seemed as if they were just humouring me and they showed great patience and were open to the process. I had to adjust the process somewhat as some of the woman had disabilities and thus were unable to walk out and find soil for themselves. Instead I had collected soil earlier and placed it in the middle of the cloth on the table. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: This group of women shared moving stories from their childhoods and almost each and every woman spoke from a place of their past, and of a nostalgic connection with the soil. NATURE RELATIONS: One elderly woman shared a memory of her childhood in Lesotho, the smell of the earth took her to a day when she was no older than six years old, playing with her sister in the soil. She could hear her mother's voice calling her Sesotho name, her mother died when she was nine, and she imagined her mother now part of the soil she held. She said that it was not a nostalgia she felt but a peace and resolution between the balance between her mother and the earth. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: While they spoke of their own childhoods, the women's pictures of progress were unanimously connected with concern for their grandchildren. All the women were grandmothers, and all were worried about their grandchildren's futures. Much of the progress pictures revolved around reconnecting their children and grandchildren to nature through agriculture and growing food. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER</p>
EF 26	<p>Pretoria 12 November 2011</p> <p>Data: Personal Reflection. No recording.</p>	14	<p>Pretoria School group and one teacher: SET UP: The set up was the same as EF 25. This experience with a school group was completely different to the schools I had worked with in Worcester and De Aar. The teacher completely stepped back and allowed me to guide the group completely. She participated as much as the learners. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: I noticed fascination from the learners when their teacher shared her imaginings and insights, as if they had never had a conversation on equal footing before. I could however been reading too far into their fascination. Due to time this group worked with the same set up as in EF 25 with soil on the table, which was not ideal and seemed to reduce the forms of relativity to natural phenomena. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: The pictures of progress were surprisingly technical and science driven. I later learned this was a science class, and so was obviously foregrounded as the agenda in the learners' minds. This being said two learners spoke about the importance of equality, sharing and listening to each other with open hearts as their picture of progress. The teacher was the only participant to look at the soil nostalgically, from a time in her past. While the children spoke of systematic symptoms of environmental degradation and climate change. The picture of progress was a communal effort to connect and respect natural ecosystems, and to connect and respect other people. DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DRAFT CHARTER</p>
EF 27	<p>Naboomspruit 14 November 2011</p> <p>Data: Personal Reflection, Recording Approved, Reflection with Sonia Koopman and Elizabeth Fletcher.</p>	23	<p>The Jubilee Mokopane Landless Peoples Movement, mine affected communities: SET UP: The shape and form of this Earth Forum was established under the shade of several large trees in the grounds of the Naboomspruit train station. It was an extremely hot day (35°C). PROCESS & DIALOGUE: This was possibly one the hardest Earth Forums I had guided, as the group arrived with expectations to speak with government officials and were somewhat disappointed by my process. There were also challenges with language and translation (mostly spoken in Xitsonga), which made the process clumsy and forced at the beginning, but seemed to be cohesive and unifying towards the last stage of the process. They did seem to transform from attitudes and concern that focused on their vulnerability and their experiences of being victimised by the mining companies and government, into a sense of purpose and possibility, that nothing was set in stone and that they could transform the status quo if they worked openly and clearly with the specific people involved. NATURE RELATIONS: The soil/gathered elicited stories of disconnection, dislocation and dispossession, all of which could be located to soil and land. The connections, all fundamental, circulated around the loss of</p>

			land and identity they had experienced. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: There was a common thread of thinking around engaging the government and the mining companies in a different way and perhaps finding ways of speaking to people involved as individuals. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 28	Polokwane 16 November 2011 Data: Personal Reflection, No recording.	12	Polokwane Woman In Environment: SET UP: I set up this Earth Forum under a willow tree planted in a large traffic island at the station. The women in this group were involved in the emerging informal and formal green economy, women in agriculture, conservation, environmental education and/or environmental justice. I had worked already with two other Women in Environment groups up to this point. The majority of these women were small enterprise owners mainly involved in small agriculture ventures. NATURE RELATIONS: The handful of soil/earth gathered was mostly talked about literally, where the women spoke of the shared value of the soil in their lives, with one woman referring to the soil as the main provider for her children, it fed them, healed them when they were sick and educated them, as her entire livelihood emerged from what she sold from her farming. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: My notes mainly speak about unavoidable personal content that emerged from this Earth Forum regarding my Godmother's cancer, and a wider sickness of the earth as mother. I could not help feeling after a tender embrace from each woman, who had arrived as strangers to each other and to me, that when I left this town, I gained 15 new mothers, within the process. It was in this Earth Forum that I realised the strength of this process in bringing diverse people together in warmth. It was certainly a result of the sincere empathetic atmosphere, and the active listening that encourage such a strong bond and trust for each other. PICTURE OF PROGRESS: A common picture of progress that emerged was improving reciprocal networks between them, and within their communities. Some women also spoke of improving their children's relationship and interaction with the earth through farming and growing food. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 29	Polokwane 16 November 2011 Data: Personal Reflection, Recording approved by participants.	11	Capricorn District Municipal Councillors: SET UP: Same set up as in EF 28. The group spoke mainly in English, with one participant speaking in Xitsonga. Since working with the Mayor in Worcester, I had been very interested in working with other people working for local municipalities in the towns. My ideal was to have a variety of citizens from each town sitting in the same arena and working as a collective equal group. These of course were difficult to arrange. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: In Polokwane I worked with eleven municipal councillors on their own which was really interesting. At first they seemed to be a bit disappointed that they were not sitting in the air conditioned train but under a tree, each holding a handful of soil they had collected. Yet I think my judgments were too harsh, as the deep explorations of each participant were surprising, as were their pictures of progress which collectively pieced together the argument that if they work to ensure that nature lives well, they are by default ensuring people live well. I asked after the Earth Forum if this connection was absent prior to the Earth Forum, two councillors said that it had been and they often struggled with the dilemma of having to protect them each separately as if they were in competition, and of course people were their priority. NATURE RELATIONS: The handfuls of soil inspired very diverse reflections, with one man speaking about watching used oil pour into the soil at an automotive garage and how it looked like coagulated blood, and he wondered how sick the soil might become. Another spoke of the smell of the soil, and how it made her feel good, and reminded her so much of her childhood, and she remembered how she was almost in constant conversation with nature as a child. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: They agreed that making decisions for healthy water, soil, etc. was making good decisions for people too. A framework to make decisions for both is what they discussed after the Earth Forum. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 30	Polokwane 16 November 2011 Data: Personal Reflection, No recording.	7	School group: SET UP: Same set up as EF 29. After the fantastic previous two Earth Forums in Polokwane I was very excited for the next group which consisted of seven learners from two different local high schools. Something did not work with this group, and I think it was my role as Responsible Participant. I realised that doing more than two Earth Forums in one day is excessive, and sadly this group did not have the best experience. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: The process felt laboured and slow, with the learners all struggling to share their perspectives. Only one participant was able to share their perspective fully, while the rest almost skipped the stages by saying: "I couldn't think of anything". I was surprised. I realised too that I was being lazy as instead of sharing original new thoughts, and working as hard as the other participants, I was sharing old insights I had discovered in previous Earth Forums. I wondered if this would affect the group, if I was somehow letting off subtle signs that I was tired and drained, and unable to participate properly, if this would affect their ability to participate. NATURE RELATIONS/PICTURES OF PROGRESS: I have insufficient data from this Earth Forum to gauge nature relations and pictures of progress, or primary impulses of participants.
EF 31	Louis Trichardt 18 November 2011 Data: Personal Reflection, Recording approved, Reflection with	11	Vatsonga Cultural Village: SET UP: It was an extremely hot day, and so I set up the Earth Forum in the shade of beautiful Victorian eves of the Train Station. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: Ten people from the cultural village in Elim reflected on the convergence of western, Venda and Shangan cultures, with particular concern on how capitalistic western influences were slowly eroding the close relationship people had with the natural world. NATURE RELATIONS: Hlekani (Grace) Maluleke, the chair of the Vatsonga group, placed her handful of earth on the cloth and said: "We are stuck between the western world and the world we know and love. Our people are forgetting to replace the trees we cut down. I remember my childhood when there was a balance, but now we have to work hard to bring that balance back". Musundwa Malaka

	Christelle Terreblanche.		stressed the importance of each person's responsibility to actively participate in ecological citizenship; with a quiet smile she shared her poignant contribution "Each person should plant their own tree in their garden. If I did not have a tree in my garden that means I am stealing the oxygen made from my neighbour's tree, I have the responsibility to plant my own, and farm my own air". Another person holding the soil said: "The soil usually holds me, but now I am holding it". This exchange was really coherent and rigorous. With each participant really exploring the questions behind their questions. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: The pictures of progress were mainly around maintaining traditional knowledge forms and finding new ways of sharing these, which they do in the cultural village. Grace also participated in translation from Xitsonga and Tshivenda into English, which seemed to deepen her listening. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 32	Louis Trichardt 18 November 2011 Data: Personal Reflection, Recording approved, Reflection with Elizabeth Fletcher.	7	Arts group from Louis Trichardt -SET UP: In the shade of an old abandoned steam train at the station, with local artists where the process was conducted in English and Xitsonga. This small group of artists had very specific ideas around ways in which nature had been exploited in their communities, and the fears of potential coal mining seemed to create the context of each person's experience. By chance I had set up this Earth Forum next to an old abandoned steam train, which still had coal in the engine, as well as pile of coal next to it. RELATIONS: Holding in his hand a lump of coal, one of the participants reflected on how there were no plants growing the coal which had obviously been sitting there for very long time. He described just how strange it was to him to dig something up with so much effort, waste and loss when the coal obviously prefers to stay deep underground, far out of reach. PROCESS & DIALOGUE/NATURE: This group was very slow and meticulous with their contributions and seemed to really lavish the imaginative space in which we all gathered our thoughts, ideas, questions and insights, and described them in much detail. One participant described his experience with careful attention to scale: holding just a single grain of sand in his hand he considered how this grain was once a part of a mountain. He imagined society as being made from individual beings who, like grains of sand, could come together to make a mountain. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: Some of the progress pictures were really inspiring, as they described the value of working with people's imaginations and encouraging people to dream and share their dreams, rather than holding them inside. DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 33	Louis Trichardt 19 November 2011 Data: Personal Reflection, Recording approved by participants. Reflection with Elizabeth Fletcher and Christelle Terreblanche.	35	Dzomo La Mupo - SET UP: Conducted inside of the boardroom on the train, as many were elderly and they requested to sit inside where there was shade due to the severe heat. I unfortunately could not have them collect their own soil, and so shared soil on the cloth as I had done in Pretoria. This group consisted of 35 different traditional vaVenda elders who had been fighting the proposed coal mining in their area for some time (they spoke in English and Tshivenda, with Mpatheleni translating mostly). PROCESS & DIALOGUE: They had also been working tirelessly to combat the government's recent development of a tourism centre and lodge near a sacred site in the mountain where the rain is made and where their ancestors live. The site is so sacred that only elder Makadzi women are allowed to visit these places and are not allowed to disturb anything there, not even drink the water. Despite this, the government had built a huge lodge where now tourists ramble through the forests desecrating the site. The elders felt the lack of rains and the climate change was a result of this disturbance and the distribution of western influence on their complex ecological calendar which they described in detail. NATURE RELATIONS: The elders shared their love for the soil, with many referring to the soil as a vessel that contained the spirit and the physical life body. A clear coherent image of all life emerging and returning to the soil was expressed. Also the elders spoke of hopes that people would listen to what they had to say and consider their understanding of balance and living well with the natural forces. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: They carefully shared their pictures of progress which included no mining in their communities, and instead their people remaining custodians of these last remaining indigenous forests and indigenous people. After the Earth Forum a rich and detailed discussion regarding the Draft Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth was explored, and later amendments and additions to the charter were contributed. CONTRIBUTED TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
EF 34	Pietermaritzburg 26 November 2011 Personal Reflection. Recording not approved.	10	Sobantu High School and Gobindlovu High School – SET UP: The final Earth Forum on the train was with a mix of two different high school groups from the Pietermaritzburg area in KwaZulu-Natal, conducted on a noisy train platform. PROCESS & DIALOGUE: The school group was without teachers, and it was interesting as half the group were not acquainted with the other half. In this situation a reversal of inhibitions occurred to what I had experienced in Worcester with the female learners having much more confidence in speaking and considering the tasks. The group was slightly older (Grade 9 and 10) and two of the participants had rich and deeply thought out contributions, unfortunately without a recording I was unable to remember them clearly. NATURE RELATIONS: One note from my journal reflection reads: "she considered her soil/earth as an extension of herself, and an extension of her family, it made her feel close to her family and to love". The exchange occurred in English and isiZulu, and although I learned isiZulu at school, I relied mainly on listening to the feeling of what was being said, as I had done with the school group in Kimberley, which again had a noticeable effect on the learners' concentration and dedication to active listening. PICTURES OF PROGRESS: Unfortunately my notes are insufficient. DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DRAFT CHARTER
	TOTAL	359	

4.3.2. FINDING PARTICIPANTS

In each town I would have to adapt my approach to accommodate the needs of the citizens we met. In some towns there had been a great deal of preparation made by either the town, or the Climate Train activators (people who would travel ahead of the train activating citizens in each town to join the train on its arrival). Other towns were less prepared for our arrival and we would have to improvise and work with the general public. Both situations had their own pros and cons. In those towns that were prepared I was able to work with a wider variety of people, who had signed up for the entire day to participate in train activities and would therefore be more open to participate. I also managed to work with members of council and local government in some of these towns, youth groups, local NGOs, local forums and other communities groups, school children, teachers and principals. These Earth Forums were easy to set up, and took relatively little time and effort to arrange. Essentially in each town there were visitors to the train who were expecting to spend their time to participate in workshops and so many were committed to participate. With potential Earth Forum participants I explained in detail what the process was about, and how it was connected to my research, and how the ethical aspect of the research worked. I explained how long it would take and what would be required of them, as well as what the research would be used for. I would also share in what ways it might be useful for them, but made it clear that perhaps they might not find it useful; it depended on each individual's personal experience. If they were willing to participate I also asked for permission to record the process, or document in a form that they were comfortable. Depending on their response and the comfort of the individuals, and depending on what form of consent I was provided, I would invite them for a specific time and place nearby to join the Earth Forum. In each town I would wake up fairly early and survey the station and surrounding grounds to locate a suitable space to conduct the Earth Forum. Once I had selected the site I would transport chairs and the Earth Forum table to the site and arrange the site in advance, so that when it came close to the time to start all I would need to do was lead the group to the site.

In other towns where people were not expecting to spend two to three hours in a process such as the Earth Forum, my approach was slightly different. I would set up the Earth Forum

and then once set up, would meet people visiting the train. Through conversations I would invite people to an Earth Forum. Once I had accumulated a minimum of eight people or maximum of 30 I would gather the group, negotiate research ethics with them and conduct the process if they were agreeable. These groups usually consisted of people who knew each other, school groups, teachers, train station staff or families.

4.3.3. SELECTING A SITE

When selecting a site for an Earth Forum I would search for a space with shade (it was the peak of summer and very hot) that was easily accessible and not too far from the train itself. Many Earth Forums were conducted on the actual train platforms, or in the gardens or car parks nearby. The sites selected were usually industrial, with loud noises and strong smells coming from the other trains moving along the tracks. With several other Climate Train activities occurring along the platform I always tried to select a site that would be least affected by interruptions from other groups. There were two situations where I was unable to conduct the Earth Forums outside and had to set up inside the Boardroom carriage. I found the long slender shape of the train severely disrupted the round harmony that was usually created in the outdoor Earth Forums; these Earth Forums had an uncomfortable and formal atmosphere as if they were meetings or traditional workshops.

'Making strange' can be seen as a vital component of social sculpture methodology as was described to me by Shelley in a personal interview (S. Sacks, personal communication, February 21, 2011). Choosing to gather the participants in an unusual setting, on a train platform, in a garden, on a side walk or on a busy traffic island, aided the process in a vital way. Earth Forum practice involves engaging and encouraging participants to use their imaginations and if you transform the nature of the environment they are in, and offer a space that is unique and seems solely created for this particular (and peculiar) purpose, this seems to lift participants out of traditional habits. Noel Gough (2009: 74) described 'defamiliarisation'⁹⁵ as 'making the familiar strange, and the strange familiar' in his rhizomatic

⁹⁵ According to Gough (2009:81) 'Defamiliarization' has been attributed to the German poet Novalis (1772-1801, aka Friedrich von Hardenberg). Gough (2009) also cited Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky (1917-1965) who introduced the concept of *ostraneniye* (literally "making strange") to literary theory.

curriculum inquiry. Gough (2009: 75) described the tactic of surprise as useful in diminishing distortions and helping us recognise our own preconceptions, a '*learning-as-forgetting*' that enables the potential for new intellectual breakthrough.

I noticed that when we conducted Earth Forums in the boardroom on the train, or inside buildings in traditional rooms, participants would not pick up the practice as intuitively as when they were in a strange outdoor space, and so needed more guidance from me (the Responsible Participant). In those cases where I knew who my participants would be in advance (EF 12, 15, 17, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31 and 33), I tried to use the 'making strange' method carefully. If I was going to work with a particularly corporate group or with government officials (EF 22 and EF 29) I would choose a space that was surrounded by trees, that required a walk through a garden, or crossing a bridge to get to the site. If I knew that the group attended was very environmentally conscious, and was already very connected to nature, I would choose a site that was more industrial like a construction site, or an island in a traffic circle (as in EF 13, 17 and 25). These environments were stranger to the groups, and although aware of my assumptions of the group, I was attempting to find a space that would be as strange as possible for the participants, hoping that this might unlock and/or open up their imaginations. I also found that noise played an interesting role in the concentration of the group. Due to the reality of having to conduct these processes in noisy train stations or near busy roads, I discovered an unexpected benefit of noise. I often noticed that when a noisy train would pass, or when a group of noisy people would walk near, the group would adjust their entire postures to attempt to listen to the person speaking with greater attention (as in EF 12, 19 and 20). As we were sitting in a circle, when a loud noise would disrupt us, I would see the whole circle change shape and contract, like an iris in an eye (particularly in EF 19). It would adjust its shape for focus. Considering also the main objective of the Earth Forum is to develop citizen's capacities to listen and practice empathy, I now feel that strange noisy environments are usually 'assistants' in encouraging these outcomes.

4.3.4. PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

The participants ranged greatly in demographics and contexts as can be seen in Section 4.3, Table 5. Participants ranged from young school children to elderly established government officials. In some cases the participants had not met any of the other participants in the Earth Forum (as in EF 12, 16, 22 and 28) and in other cases the participants all knew each other and worked or lived together, and in those circumstances I was the only person unfamiliar with the group (as in EF 13, 14, 15, 19, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31 and 33). I was unable to get every participants' age and contact numbers, but in Table 5 a brief summary of each Earth Forum and some details of the group demographics, context and origin is provided. I did not exclude any person from the Earth Forum and so all participants ranged greatly in age, gender, ethnicity, and language. According to Wals, et al. (2009) in social learning practice, diversity plays a noticeable role in deepening the type of learning that can occur; however the learning will take longer than within a homogenous group. I noticed that in the Earth Forum, when I worked with only school children, or only people from the same club or organisation, there was a great deal of repetition occurring in content from each participant (as in EF 14, 18 and 30). I expected this repetition perhaps with children, but was surprised to see it with adults. I noticed this to be the case in two Earth Forums (EF 15 and EF 23) in particular. In diverse groups, especially those where the participants had not met each other before, there was a much wider range of emergent content (as in EF 12, 22, 28 and 30). If the main outcomes or objectives of Earth Forum are to encourage the development of the listening, imaginative and ultimately the empathetic capacities of the participants, then a diverse group would possibly encourage the use of these capacities in a different perhaps more refined/delicate/intricate way. Listening in an Earth Earth Forum is more than listening in the traditional sense; it involves listening to the content, the feeling of what a person is saying and the impulse from where they are coming. Listening in an Earth Forum also requires the participant to listen and empty their mind, to picture what the other person is seeing, experiencing and feeling. Participants must engage their imaginations and try to picture the whole experience of the person speaking. In a homogenous group, if there is repetition, practising and using these capacities might become tedious. In a heterogenous group, with a wider range of content, and perhaps a wider range of emotion, there seems to be a richer landscape of experiences

to draw from, engaging the rest of the participants' listening and imaginative capacities, as observed in EF 12, 22, 28 and 30.

I did notice, however, that in homogenous groups, the participants left feeling more as if they had come to a consensus or paved a way forward than a heterogeneous group, as was the case in EF 13, 15, 23, 24, 27, 29, 31 and 33. The goal of the Earth Forum is not necessarily for the participants to reach a consensus (this can of course be a useful unintended outcome), but rather to develop their capacities that enrich their ability to practice empathy and contribute meaningfully to equally participating as mindful and empathetic citizens. While another goal is to rethink or imagine new, meaningful and suitable forms of progress that emerge from this empathetic exchange, this is different to reaching consensus or complete agreement. So reaching consensus might have seemed to be a primary outcome to the participants in earlier Earth Forums (EF 13, 15 and 23); it was not the priority of the social sculpture, and in later applications of Earth Forum practice (from EF 17 onwards). I was clear in defining the goals of capacity development and empathetically imagining a new form of progress. For example in Worcester, the Breede River Valley landless women (EF 15) had all experienced similar struggles and were sharing very similar experiences. They had been moved or displaced by wine farming and had had to adapt from livelihoods that were mainly subsistence, with some piecemeal work on farms, to livelihoods that were entirely reliant on farm labour. Through sharing their similar plights (of being moved off their land and being forcefully resettled in dense townships; to struggling with the effect of pesticides and other toxins in their environments), the women seemed to echo each other's sentiments and this affected the group's ability to listen without judgement (to listen without agreement or disagreement) and instead create a space of affirmation of each other's opinions, which excluded the outside socio-political forces that affected them directly. Participants in this Earth Forum became increasingly unable to refrain from responding, or agreeing out loud. They found it difficult not to react, and in some cases stood up and clapped when another made a pertinent point. While this behaviour would have been perfectly suitable for an ordinary meeting, and valuable for the morale of the group, it disrupted and affected the impact of the social sculpture's methods to engage and enrich certain capacities. These

women were victims of a large corporate takeover of their land, the Earth Forum was offering them a space in which to reflect deeply as a group and listen and imagine what suitable progress may look like. Yet because the group was so similar, perhaps also because they felt so vulnerable and helpless, and there were no conflicting views, or even slightly different experiences emerging out of the exchange, the group became more united and alienated other possible circumstances or citizens who were responsible for the situation. In hindsight, having some farm owners or managers in this Earth Forum, might have made the impact of the Earth Forum methods more useful. My diary entry after this particular Earth Forum expresses this concern:

30 October 2011, Breede River Landless Women: Difficult EF, possibly the worst one yet! The women were all older than me, struggling with such difficult circumstances, and were all in the complete same frame of mind, constantly repeating each other. Of course this collective ethos is very good for their advocacy and their activism, but played havoc with how I was able to guide this space. I think very little learning happened, while they all used their imaginations carefully to construct their stories and experiences, they hardly used them to listen to each other without judgement, or to contemplate meaningful progress. They constantly agreed with each other, and in some cases shouted out loud 'Amen!' as if they were each giving sermons. What happened? Were they all too similar? I wonder what this EF would have been like if I had a few farm owners or managers in on it. Surely it would have been more empathetic, and less sympathetic ... I really need to think this one through.

I learned some valuable lessons when it came to how to arrange a group. In De Aar I invited a school group to participate (EF 18); the group consisted of eight learners, two teachers and me. The learners (boys and girls) were between 12 and 13 years old and from a local school in De Aar. The teachers, two older men, I estimated to be in their mid-40s. While the children seemed to enjoy the early parts of the Earth Forum, (gathering the earth and exploring their own inner thoughts and imagination), when it came to share and speak the learners found it difficult. The teachers encouraged them as if it was a compulsory task, which transformed the group from an open, equal, democratic space, into a space of obligation and pressure; I was very concerned with the ethical ramifications of informed consent, as I was unable to be sure if the learners were still comfortable with participation. I constantly reiterated that the participants could answer in ways that felt comfortable, and were not obliged to speak or participate. What emerged in the group was repetitive content that was short and sparse.



Figure 23: Earth Forum in De Aar (EF 18), with school learners alongside their teachers (teachers not seen in this image). The bottom right image shows the participants soil contributions after exploring round one of the process. Images are my own.

Reflecting back on this Earth Forum, and comparing it to a similar school group I worked with in Worcester (where the learners were around the same age and also a mixture of girls and boys, EF 14). The only difference was there were no teachers; the atmosphere was very different, and the content while sometimes repetitive, on the whole was personal, thought out and emergent. Also I was more confident and convinced that the learners really were happy to participate and were not obliged to, maintaining an ethical continuity. There was also a stronger cohesion between the Worcester learners than between the De Aar learners, as I suspect the Worcester learners felt more free and valued as individuals, and could sense the great care and attention that had been placed in making the space feel equal, inclusive and free. An Earth Forum occupies a unique and different space from that of a classroom setting, which I only came to notice when the school teachers in De Aar completely transformed the space, with the power they had as teachers and disciplinarians. Their contribution changed the Earth Forum from an open democratic space into one which was autocratic and imperious. This refined my understanding of how democratic or alternative the Earth Forum

pedagogy was. I realise that in De Aar situation (in EF 18) I should have acted with more authority as the Responsible Participant, but I felt intimidated by the teacher's age and authority with the learners, and I did not take control of the situation as I ought to have. This incident shed light on how easily the Earth Forum could be transformed into a conventional teaching space that can inhibit personal freedom. This finding was valuable in designing the handbook and the approach to Responsible Participant induction (explored in Chapter Five).

In subsequent Earth Forums with learners (EF 19, 21, 30 and 34) I tried to exclude teachers from the group, and instead worked with learners and teachers separately. In Pretoria a teacher participated with her class in EF 26, but she did not show the same authoritarian attitude with the learners, and instead allowed the learners to participate freely in ways that they felt comfortable. I realised that the De Aar Earth Forum (EF 18) might have been an isolated incident. From this experience, however, I became more sensitive and attentive to any potential power play issues in groups. As a precaution prior to an Earth Forum I would try to identify the existing relationships among the participants, so that I was able to pre-empt any obvious power play or relational expectations influencing the democratic shape and form of the social sculpture.



Figure 24: Earth Forums in Worcester: Top left and bottom right is the Zwelithemba Youth Forum (EF13), and top right and bottom left is Eden Primary School (EF14). Images courtesy of Rafique Mayet.

4.3.5. ACCOMMODATING DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

Travelling through seven different provinces and twelve different towns, meant involving participants speaking ten different languages. This was possibly one of the most challenging aspects of applying a newly developed pedagogical practice within such a wide range of contexts, with such a wide variety of participants from different cultural-historical backgrounds. In the majority of Earth Forums I was able to conduct the entire process in English; however in some specific places I needed to accommodate other languages, otherwise significant participants would have been excluded. Afrikaans and isiXhosa was easier to incorporate as I have a basic capacity in these languages and was able to correct nuances in translations where needed. I did not have the resources to hire a translator. I was also concerned with how a translator would affect the participative parity, and the shape and form of the Earth Forum. A translator would inherently be participating in a very different way to the rest of the group. Consequently I did not have a dedicated translator for any of the

Earth Forums I conducted in other languages. In some cases two or three different languages were used in a single Earth Forum, and this of course posed several challenges to the participants and to the Responsible Participant. In these situations I asked the group if anyone would be willing to translate. In Louis Trichardt (EF 31) I asked the group to translate and one woman was eager to assist (Hlekani aka Grace). I noticed that throughout the process she was deeply engaged in listening, practising active listening with such dedication. Her translation was carefully descriptive and it seemed to capture so much. After the Earth Forum was over she was very curious about the methodology; she wanted to know more and found the entire process very liberating. In her words “It was so peaceful, I found myself seeing and listening to things in a way I have never done before ... I must know more”⁹⁶. In other situations where I was the only person who did not speak the language as in Kimberley with a group of !Xam speaking boys and young men from !Xunkhwesa Combined School (EF 19, 20 participants), the entire group wanted to assist in translation, and seemed to intuitively



Figure 25: The !Xam group from !Xunkhwesa Combined School Grade 8 and 9, attentive after listening not only to the content, but also the feeling of what was being said (EF 19, with 20 participants). Image courtesy of Elizabeth Fletcher.

negotiate and share this responsibility. I also told the group that I was not listening only to the content of what was being said, but also to the feeling, and although I could not understand !Xam, I could understand the feeling and impulse of what they were saying; so I was indeed listening to the person who spoke

and not merely those who were translating. I was amazed to see how this transformed the shape

and form of the Earth Forum: the atmosphere changed completely. Before we began the group was very fidgety, nonchalant, and had that 'this-is-stupid' kind of look that teenagers

⁹⁶ I expand on this story of Grace (Hlekani) in Chapter Five.

seem to be able to perfect through subtle body language. However, once I had mentioned this idea of listening to the feeling and impulse of what they were saying, they all seemed to move in closer. From lounging on the chairs at the beginning, they adjusted their positions. They began sitting upright; they placed their feet flat on the floor; almost all of them rested their elbows on their knees, with their hands cupped in front of them, holding their handfuls of earth. The group simultaneously leaned in to listen to each person. It was as if the entire group changed and drew in closer, focusing on each other with a noticeably more attentive manner. In my Journal written on the train, I reflected:

Today, under the eaves of the beautifully preserved Victorian station at Kimberley I worked with 25 young men and boys in an Earth Forum Social Sculpture amidst the chaos surrounding the train. The chaos of today was somewhat expected. We had the Premier of the Northern Cape and the Minister of Environment at the train, for a huge welcome and speeches which took up most of our schedule and so left us a brief hour and a half to work with the 600 youth who came to the train. We could not work with all of them of course and between the COPART team and Indalo Yethu's volunteer environmental educators from Kuruman, we managed to work with about 100.

I worked with 25 of that group and I was so moved by their contributions in the Earth Forum. As we are travelling from town to town, we are traversing different cultures and languages, and so I feel it is important that participants feel free enough to speak in their mother tongue. When I suggested this to the group in the Earth Forum, they said "Maar Meneer, jy sal nie verstaan wat ons se, ons praat Boesman Taal by die huis, !Qong !Qwe" ("But Sir, you will not understand what we say, at home we speak the Bushman (!Xam) language, !Qong !Qwe"). I took some time to think about this and assured them that I might not be able to understand the words, but I could listen to the feeling of what they were saying, and what is important is that the rest of the group will understand and also listen to the feeling of what we all have to share. The group seemed fascinated by the prospect of someone listening to the feeling of what we are saying, and once we agreed on this plan, it amazed me how the circle of seated young men softened, became warm and receptive.

At the end of the forum some of the participants were kind enough to translate the substance that emerged. One young man explained that when he held the earth in his hands he felt closer to his family who had passed away, and where now part of the earth. One said that when collecting their handful of earth they struggled to hold it as the sun had made the dark dry gravel so hot. He went on to explain that the longer he gave himself to hold the earth the cooler the earth became and they were eventually sharing the same temperature. His hope for the earth was that if we are going to help the earth we need to take the time for ourselves to cool to match the warmth of the earth. There was a clear thread emerging from this group, they all speak of the space and time needed for that feeling, connection and love for earth to emerge. After this session I contemplated how little time we make for ourselves for this vital contemplation, there is of course an urgency to respond to climate change, yet the speeding up of our lives, and our busy schedules that have contributed to the disconnections that we now face. I have heard it emerge before in other Earth Forums, that as things become more urgent, the more time we need to take to be mindful.

Listening to the feeling seemed to work particularly well in almost all situations with different

languages except for a group in Naboomspruit (EF 27 with 23 participants) with the Jubilee Mokopane Landless Peoples Movement, who were a group of people who had either been displaced or moved because of mining, or were living with mining very close to their homes. I was unaware of the brief they were given by the activation team on the train, and what they were expecting from the process, but they found the Earth Forum and lack of available translators very frustrating. Only near the end of the Earth Forum did they confess that they were expecting to speak to journalists, they wanted their plight publicised and assumed the train would offer them this. They also expected government officials and perhaps mining executives to be present. So when I suggested that we were to listen to the feeling of what was being said, they felt that what was important was spreading the message of their plight, not focusing on listening to each other, as they were well aware of each other's situations. Luckily there were journalists aboard the train, and we were heading to meet the Premier for Limpopo in the next town so we were able to meet their expectations. They felt comforted by this and then were happy to explore the methodology and attempt the group translation and listen to more than just the content. I spoke to participants afterwards and they reflected back on the process affirming the methodology, and in hindsight could see the value of practising active listening and listening beyond what was translated. It seemed to me that in the end the issue was not that they were uncomfortable with the volunteer-group translation approach, but were rather disappointed with the Earth Forum as a whole compared to what they expected to accomplish by visiting the train.

In hindsight I feel that leaving the group to translate for each other is a fair and useful way of approaching the challenge of conducting Earth Forums in different languages. While of course a translator could be useful in the group, I would think that they would need to participate in the processes of the Earth Forum as much as the other participants, in order to ensure their presence is not disruptive or voyeuristic, and the equitable and inclusive shape and form of the social sculpture remains intact.



Figure 26: Naboomspruit Jubilee group (EF 27), where listening to the feeling was not as successful as it had been in previous Earth Forums. Images courtesy of Rafique Mayet.

4.4. INTIMACY BETWEEN STRANGERS

Considering the theoretical conception of reflexive justice and participative parity, both of which call for equal participation of citizens as peers (Fraser, 2008), I would imagine that a methodological necessity would be to ensure a sense of trust, openness and equality. I was certainly aiming for these attributes, but what I did not expect was the level of intimacy and tenderness that emerged in Earth Forum. It is difficult to develop a level of intimacy and warmth in a short two to three hour process with strangers. Yet through my own experience, and the reflections of other participants from the Earth Forum process I have been deeply inspired by just how easily this methodology encourages noticeable openness, honesty and intimacy, even between a diverse set of strangers.

Either directly after an Earth Forum or later through other correspondence (either in person, via email, telephone or Skype), I was able to get feedback from participants on what they felt about the Earth Forum process, from the methodology to the approach taken by myself the Responsible Participant. While I share these reflections in this section, I am aware that some participants might have felt uncomfortable mentioning any faults in the process to me directly. Some did feel comfortable to criticising aspects of the work regardless of my presence in the interview.

On the train Elizabeth Fletcher published the following on the COPART blog of her experiences in an Earth Forum with the entire team on the train (EF 17); it explores the value of Earth Forum in creating new arenas in which to accommodate difficult or even existential challenges with climate change and environmental degradation. Elizabeth's reflection reveals also how Earth Forum offers a space in which participants are able to speak with intimacy and what she described as "profound care":

The last pastel colours are washing over Beaufort West. It's chilly in the shade.

I've just come inside from an Earth Forum with the whole train team. I'm talking upper management, artists, kitchen staff, security, film crew, journalists, and the works. While it's impossible to describe an Earth Forum until you've participated in one, I'd like to offer a few thoughts that I had about the exchange.

When the 26 or so participants, sitting holding their hands cupped and full of earth, were asked to reflect on it, most of them spoke of their families or the major arcs of their personal lives. One person shared a mother's warning not to carelessly destroy their vegetable garden at home because she would be buried in the ground one day and these plants would grow above her. Another person spoke of three recent deaths in the family, all within three weeks. The earth was a reminder of our creation and our inevitable destruction. It struck me that when we are given the space and time to speak about the earth, the world we live in, we speak with such intimacy and such profound care.

I once remarked to Dylan that the Earth Forum is one of the closest things I've come to spirituality. I'm not sure if I still agree with myself because I think spirituality requires an outside and mystical presence. But I think what I was feeling when I said that was the powerfully therapeutic nature of the Earth Forum. We face up to the Earth we inhabit, we listen to other people facing up to it and we share how we feel about it.

It made me think about how we are dealing with climate change and why it's so difficult to get our lazy selves to consume fewer resources and to look after what we have. Part of it, I'm sure, is our selfish nature. But I think it's more than that. I think we are terrified. Climate change points directly to the prospect of our world becoming steadily less hospitable to our species. To talk about climate change is to talk about an existential crisis.

But we all know we're going to die eventually. It's part of being human. The death of a grandparent or the discovery of a dead animal in the garden jolts this idea into fact within us from a very early age. So why does the idea that the planet cannot no longer sustain us affect us so much more deeply? I think it's because we're better people than I initially thought. We love this planet and all its richness more than we realise and the thought of not being able to give it to our children and their children is heartbreaking and devastating.



Figure 27: Earth Forum with the Climate Train Staff at Beaufort West (EF17). Images my own, and courtesy of Rafique Mayet.

Christelle Terreblanche, a journalist on the Climate Train, and active coordinator of the African People's Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth, participated in three Earth Forums (EF 6, 31 and 33) and had a similar reflections regarding the Earth Forum arena as one that promoted intimacy and spiritual connection, but which also offered an expansion of her thinking and imagining capacities:

I think from the Earth Forums I gained a way of thinking about my own spiritual awareness, and letting it grow, allowing these thoughts a space to take seed and grow, and knowing that it's okay to freely explore these ideas or impulses, we don't have space really to consider these aspects of our work and lives ... it therefore influences things that I am doing, for instance probably the passion with which I am pursuing the charter process (African People's Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth) has been deeply influenced by the Earth Forum experiences ... even though it is going to be such a long road, I have learned through the Earth Forums that there is traction, and there is this whole receptive space in people that I may not have noticed before. I have worked in my own capacity for many years with mining communities,

but looking at it through this perspective as well while on the train, in the Earth Forums, and with one-on-one experiences with people, it brought a dimension that I hadn't previously factored in. It was hard enough to bring their plight as a journalist to the paper, it was always a fight, with conflicts with businesses ... but having this space as a citizen to explore these questions with others, and to come to understand others differently, with more freedom is amazing. Also exploring this through a different way, with art is amazing, which dovetails with my own lifelong interests and passions ...

... It was amazing because, we did this charter, and at some point with this train being such a logistical nightmare, and having to be involved in that unexpectedly, I didn't have much hope for the charter, but the Earth Forums kept it alive, and made it alive.

I was amazed to hear Christelle's thoughts; as someone who had experienced more than one Earth Forum, she was affirming my own reflections. I too felt a huge shift in my own awareness. This is an excerpt from an article I published on the COPART website during the journey:

Along the way I have had the privilege to work with many South African children, women and men. I have particularly enjoyed working with woman from the organisation entitled "Woman in Environment" (WiE). These are either woman involved in the emerging informal or formal green economy, woman in agriculture, conservation, environmental education and/or environmental justice. As a young man, often times younger than the WiE participants, I feel somewhat out of place, helping to guide and shape such a gathering. In each circumstance I am careful to mention that I am well aware of my age and gender, and humbly ask (with the greatest respect) for the group's understanding and trust in my role as Responsible Participant. I am clear to mention I am neither a facilitator nor mediator, but merely a human being who sincerely would like to participate in a mindful exchange and capacity development process, with my own capacity being developed as well. Usually with gentle warm smiles the group humours me, and allows me the space and time. Something remarkable happens each time I am surrounded by a group of strong African woman, who carry much of the weight of caring for their children and the earth herself. These fora consist of a particular substance, a warm fortitude that holds each of us, in the emergent excavation of values.

Recently in Pretoria, I sat in a circle of woman who shared the deeply intimate reflections of the place on the earth, and their hopes for the earth cradled in their cupped hands. One elderly woman shared a memory of her childhood in Lesotho, the smell of the earth took her to a day when she was no older than six years old, playing with her sister in the soil. She could hear her mother's voice calling her Sotho name, her mother died when she was nine, and she imagined her mother now part of the soil she held. She said that it was not a nostalgia she felt but a peace and resolution between the balance between her mother and the earth. In a gathering of WiE in Polokwane, I felt safe enough to share my personal struggle with my Godmother healing and the healing of Mother Earth. A few weeks before boarding the train I discovered my Godmother was diagnosed with Acute Myelogenous Leukaemia, holding my handful of earth I could not separate the healing I desperately sought after for these two important symbolic mothers in my life. The woman in the group paused the Earth Forum to pray out loud (in their respective languages) for my mother, the vibrations of their voices ululated in a harmonious chanting. Afterwards, a woman broke the silence by saying "we have prayed for the healing of your Mother, and our Mother Earth". I could not help feeling after a tender embrace from each woman, who had arrived as strangers to each other and to me, that when I left this town, I gained

15 new mothers, within the process and also practically in their caring for me, and in their promise to call my mother to share their love and prayers.

It seems that when we hold the earth in our hands and in our imaginations, and when we offer sincerely empathetic ears to the values and hopes of strangers, we immediately turn from disconnected outsiders into intimately connected ecological citizens who resemble a family, with our home being the earth beneath our feet.



Figure 28: Earth Forum at Louis Trichardt (EF 31) with the Vatsonga Cultural Group. The top image is myself on the left, with Hlekani (Grace) Malukeke on the right. The bottom left image is Christelle Terreblanche sharing her questions and insights in the space. Images courtesy of Rafique Mayet.

Finally, a reflection from Dulcie Hlatswayo, I found particularly inspiring, as she participated in only one Earth Forum (EF 28), with a group she already knew very well; another woman named Mpetsetsana from the Peoples Life Environment Agency in Soweto and me where the only ‘outsiders’:

I was also touched and moved by the Earth Forum as I connected with my inner soul,

and how we shared these similar experiences so openly and honestly. ... Since participating in Earth Forum I have noticed my consciousness is shifting and expanding. I certainly feel changed. I see differently. It is as if my eyes are no longer just my eyes but have become windows to unknown worlds where mysteries are revealed and beauty is beheld in ways I could never have imagined before, I suppose I could say that I am seeing with my imagination, not just my eyes and thoughts. Ordinary events have become extraordinary. ... It is as if a veil had lifted and I am now privy to something private. ... All events, no matter how mundane they seem, can be joyously alive and filled with vitality and in tune with deep hidden rhythms. I have been so inspired by this work I am now busy writing my biography entitled 'Heritage and Success'.



Figure 29: Earth Forum with the Pretoria Woman in Environment group (EF 25). The soil was placed in the centre of the table as an alternative to exploring the space as some of the woman could not physically walk un-aided; the adjustment lead to personal explorations from their past, rather than the immediate earth, land and soil in the space we were working in. The bottom left image shows Dulcie Hlatswayo on the far right. Images courtesy of Rafique Mayet.

I find these reflections useful as they do not only affirm the considerably deep and personal effect the Earth Forum offers participants, but also the 'warmth' it creates in how citizens are able to engage with each other. I did not receive any comments that would point to the contrary (i.e. a sense of disconnection or separateness in the process). Surely, for equality and parity to be possible in participation, one would need participants to feel safe enough to share their thoughts and ideas. From my experience Earth Forums offer more than just the

basic sense of openness and trust, but encourage a sincere warmth and attentive care for each other, that I have not experienced in any other social space, other than within my own family, or among my close friends. At its very basic level one would hope for a non-judgemental space within which people could offer their opinions and an audience that would be receptive to listening to these. The Earth Forum methodology, seemed to not only offer this non-judgemental space, but one in which people felt a warmth and intimacy, that was completely unexpected among strangers. I was also surprised by the recurrence of this phenomenon, and just how easy it was to replicate.

4.5. EARTH FORUM AND ECOLOGICAL CITIZENSHIP

4.5.1. HOW CAN THE LEAVES FORGET THE ROOTS: THE DZOMO LA MUPO EARTH FORUM

From my experience Earth Forum is a practice that is inherently shaped by an ethical need to bridge the normative and conceptual divisions between environmental and social justice concerns. I understand ecological justice as a move away from anthropocentric views of nature to one underpinned by a recognition of an equal relationship between humans and their environment (the Earth), where the long-term interests of both ecosystems and society converge. As Irwin (2010) put it so gracefully, if climate change teaches us anything, it is that man's perceived control or power over nature is a fallacy; climate change makes us tremendously aware of this. Considering our profound lack of control, the most suitable response would be to focus on what we do have control over, our own inner thoughts, imaginations, and subsequent actions. This understanding highlights the need for equity and equal application of justice at all levels, with particular emphasis on the way in which decisions affecting the present and future of both ecosystems and society are made. This primarily finds expression in citizen participation at local levels, where they are directly connected to and dependent on natural communities and ecosystems, and where individuals can personally experience themselves, each other and place themselves into the wider ecology as a whole. It is the warm connective practice that encourages participative parity and the capacity development of citizens who have both an ecological and empathetic literacy, that I feel is Earth Forum's greatest contribution to contemporary environmental movements, and to the dawn of an authentic ecological citizen movement.

Possibly one of the most vivid examples of Earth Forum contributing to and enriching an ecological citizen movement was working with 35 different individuals from the Mapungubwe

region in Limpopo, in mid November 2011 (EF 33).



Figure 30: Dzomo La Mupo Badge on traditional dress. Bottom right image – Mpatheleni celebrating with the other makadzhis after a long day at the Climate Train. Images are my own

How can the leaves on the tree say 'we do not care for the roots'? How can they claim to be evergreen? Our elders are our roots, and we are the leaves. This is what we are seeing, the seeds are dying - why? Because we do not care for the roots. The younger generations they are the seeds, they have lost their connection to the elders, saying 'we can live our own life'. I learned this from my father, he was an elder.

These are the words of Makaulule Mpatheleni the spokesperson for

Dzomo La Mupo (Mup Foundation: www.mupofoundation.org) who

participated in an Earth Forum in

Louis Trichardt, Limpopo, alongside Moses Mudau, and 33 other elders and *makadzhis*⁹⁷ from their community. The day before they had handed over a letter to the Deputy Minister of Water Affairs, Rejoice Mabudafhasi, on behalf of a coalition of nine NGOs to call for a ban on the water licence application by Coal of Africa, an Australian mining company. The company had been prospecting to mine for coal at the Vele mining site at the edge of the Mapungubwe world heritage site, which is where this community has lived for centuries. This would necessitate the extraction of underground water from an area in Venda to feed the new Medupi power station in the area. The coal also happens to be below sites deemed sacred for the *baVenda*. A day after publication of the official appeal, Moses received word that the mining company would take legal action against Dzomo La Mupo over the appeal to government. Christelle and I published a version of this story in the *Natal Witness* newspaper. In our research before publication, the company dismissed these claims as “spurious”, and claimed it would revert to legal avenues if attempts to bring the company into disrepute did

⁹⁷ The *makadzhis* are women who have undergone menopause and who become guardians of sacred natural spaces; they are very respected elders in the community.

not stop.

This Earth Forum consisted mostly of women of Dzomo La Mupo, who guard the ancient water springs, including their elders and spokespersons of communities from far-flung areas such as Tshidzivhe, Vhutanda and Thsivhale; as well as some of the Climate Train staff. This Earth Forum created an arena that seemed familiar to this group, as if this was how usually they worked⁹⁸. Each person required little guidance as each sincerely shared their concerns and pains regarding several burning challenges – ranging from the proposed mining in the area to the growing disconnection occurring between generations in their communities – and shared their requests with the decision makers at COP17.



Figure 31: Dzomo la Mupo in Louis Trichardt: Left top and bottom images – discussing the Draft African Charter after the Earth Forum process. Right image is the Mupo group walking on the train platform between sessions. Images on the left are my own, on the right are courtesy of Rafique Mayet.

⁹⁸ I later discovered that the Mupo Foundation had been working with one of my contemporaries at the Environmental Learning Research Centre, where they were engaged in various participatory learning process to affirm and engage issues of biocultural diversity (Belay, 2012). I am unable therefore to know if this work was successful through the Earth Forum, or through prior work with Belay, but what is interesting for the Earth Forum process is the potential complementarity of different forms of environmental education practice.

This community faces diminishing water supplies at a time when the coal mines are expected to use vast quantities of water amidst fears that the extraction process could also contaminate ground water. What emerged in the Earth Forum as we listened to the women of Dzomo La Mupo (vhaVenda for 'Voice of Nature or Universe') were their aims to revive the indigenous values of Mother Earth and to protect their sacred sites, traditions and way of life from extractive and unsustainable industrial development. A primary focus for the Mupo foundation is to heal the ailing trans-generational knowledge pathways in their community, which are rapidly being eroded from the effects of globalisation and urbanisation. Mphatheleni said:

At Mupo Foundation we are working with elders, for us the elders are fountains of knowledge, without elders, we cannot say we will have a future ... for us, as we say we learned from the elders, sacred sites is not just a forest or a cave, as the elders say, sacred sites starts very deep under the ground, beyond where we can reach to up, up to where we can't reach above the stars ...

She stressed that sacred sites:

... connect us on earth, and the ancestors in the ground and the one we don't know, meaning the creator ... If you disturb the sacred sites, you interfere with the connection of spirituality, of where we are and where our water comes from. We have disturbed this cycle of seasons that is why we have climate change. We go to sacred sites to pray for the health of whole communities. This is not a story, it is a reality. We want to raise this in a loud voice at COP17. Look at the disturbed indigenous forests, sacred sites and ecosystems. This is what causes climate change. Our children today are growing knowing another way of life. The children, they know that the food comes from the packets and from the shops, there is no relation to the soil. ... How can our children believe in the knowledge coming from the elders and from nature?

The elders' greatest concerns were regarding how even government do not respect their sacred sites. The sites are regarded as the dwellings of protective water spirits and early warning systems to droughts:

Today the department of tourism have turned our sacred sites into an entertainment place. You will now find condoms scattered at our sacred site. You go inside our sacred site you find a concrete house with people sleeping there. There are modern burials there, with tombstones, plastic flowers and empty bags of cement.

The sensitivity of the indigenous vhaVenda insights of the delicate balance between culture, spirituality, livelihoods and nature also emerged in the Earth Forum. During the exchange the elders passionately explained that when individuals or industries disturb sacred sites, they not only interfere and jeopardise Venda spirituality, but also jeopardise the natural ecological patterns that sustain all earth communities. An elderly woman from Dzomo La Mupo proclaimed:

The rivers are empty, they should not be empty during this time, we have a month which is a restricted-sacred month, where we should not do anything during this month, we are not allowed marriage, or any other ceremony in that month ... it is taboo ... during this time you stay at home like the Israelites ... during this month people are mining minerals from the earth and burning the forest, now we are seeing that these months have shifted, that's why there is climate change. How can there be balance, how can we be stable?

A female elder from the group, affectionately called Makadzi, opened up a large, round two-metre diameter paper, with carefully detailed sketches and illustrations on it. She carefully deciphered this large round document which looked like a map, but in fact was an indigenous ecological calendar that the elders had previously created with younger members of the community supported by Belay (2012) and the African Biodiversity Network. She highlighted the paramount importance of protecting traditional cultural cycles, based on understanding the interconnectivity and balance found in nature, and between people, in order to solve the complex problems of climate change:

If you look at this calendar, this is the cycle, the movement of the ecosystem which is found in the sacred site, in the indigenous forest. We are saying as Dzomo La Mupo, there is no miracle to solve climate change if we do not go back to the roots, and find ourselves interwoven in the ecology. Our elders, the ecosystem, this is our solution to bring order to this disordered world.

This Earth Forum seemed different from the others I had experienced; it was almost as if the cloth replaced a campfire, and provided similar warmth one gets when seated around a campfire. Mpatheleni reflected later and said: "Our discussions were fruitful, because you all were able to listen like a vhaVenda!"

A male elder insisted that usually they see that these consultations benefitted individuals at the expense of the community, while Earth Forum seemed to value the input of the individuals and the whole:

... you find now that the community is in darkness, they don't even know what is happening, very few people will benefit. What we are saying as Dzomo La Mupo, the whole environment does not belong to an individual, even if I am a king I cannot make a decision without proper consultation, proper consultation should be done properly, with everyone, as we are speaking here, in this space. We are not against the mine per se, we know that our people lack jobs, the issue is the repercussions of the mine (and that) they may bring disaster to human life. We are saying as Dzomo La Mupo, please do not damage our ecosystem, as no one can restore the ecosystem which is damaged ... we can find another way together in spaces like this one.

Mpatheleni and other members of Dzomo La Mupo have struggled to participate in the 'stakeholder' sessions, and they are constantly sidelined. This was in stark difference to equity and openness that they reflected on in the Earth Forum. Reflecting on the initial public consultation process hosted by Coal of Africa, Mpatheleni learned from their engineers that if the mining is to go ahead it is estimated that by 2015 they would have used all the underground water reserves in the area. Mpatheleni recalled this initial meeting where they were completely ignored, despite the fact that this was intended to be a public forum:

We stood up and said what about the ecosystem, you are not caring for the ecosystem, you are not caring for the ecosystem that is the basin for the whole life. Then the director or the manager went out of the room, then we said to those who would allow us that 'you cannot apply this water licence, and minister should not give you this water licence, because once you are taking water you bring desert here. We are still against mining here because it will destroy trees, it will destroy our soil, it will pollute our air, it will poison everything. They just ignored us, is this democracy?

This Earth Forum was also significantly productive in the development of the Draft African People's Charter for the rights of Mother Earth, as the Dzomo La Mupo group asked to add two core principles to the draft charter: that all indigenous forests be protected as a priority to bolster ecosystems; and on a cultural level, that the ancient wisdom of the elders be respected and harnessed in the bid to meet climate change before it is lost forever. They insisted we should:

... live to leave a space for future generations to continue ... where we are trying to fulfil the present life ... everything we must do, it (must be) for the future generation. And for me the future generation doesn't only mean human beings, it is the future of all earth communities, future of everything, future of the trees as when we were today planting trees with the school children, the children are future, but the great grandchild of those children will see that big tree. We have to do everything thinking about the future generations of all earth communities.

At the close of the Earth Forum Mphatheleni, on behalf of the Dzomo La Mupo group, made the following plea:

We are humbly requesting ... can we save the last remaining indigenous forests rather than continuing to destroy them. Can this be a call very loud to every community? Every indigenous tree, every indigenous forest that we see, can we use all our power and all the means to save it, instead of destroying it, or interfering it. We hope that through this way we can really deal with the climate change ... another request, can we use the knowledgeable elders before they die, because to us Dzomo la Mupo, elders are our library, a living library, which if an elder dies it's like going to Oxford and burning the library ... can COP17 and all the institutions regard the elders as a knowledge library that we have to save before it goes to decay. I don't see in a hundred years to come we will be having knowledgeable elders with this knowledge ... there is a huge gap between the young and the elders, that's why we said the food in the packet, there is no knowledge there, no elder who is going to transfer the

knowledge there, there is no connection, no connection to everything.



Figure 32: Mpatheleni speaking at the People's space at COP17 in Durban. Image my own.

Mpatheleni managed to take this message to COP17 herself, as she joined us on the train and we ended up at COP17, working closely together at various different discussions, talks and think-tanks. Mpatheleni and I worked further using some of the Earth Forum methods, particularly active listening, and imaginal thinking, to reflect on this particular Earth Forum and overall questions of ecological citizenship, particularly in spaces like COP17 where

Mpatheleni was often the only indigenous person speaking or working in these forums. Mpatheleni referred to the recognition of the rights of Mother Earth and our imaginative/empathetic practice as the beginnings of the first real and practical form of healing between indigenous and non-indigenous people. She explained that the equal recognition, the careful-attentive listening, and the inclusion of the physical earth in the forum itself were profound contributions towards making cross-cultural social arenas that could accommodate indigenous and non-indigenous thinking, without diminishing either group, in many ways dissolving the line between the two, as we recognised our common place as part of nature. She felt, as was affirmed by some elders, that the Earth Forum reflected similar methods and practices in their traditional storytelling, community forum and other social dialogue practices; what made it particularly useful was that it was also accessible to non-Tshivenda people, allowing for rich exchange between people in ways of expression that came naturally.

Through this reflection of the process from Mpatheleni, and the warm and positive response from the elders, I felt that the Earth Forum had in many ways been blessed and affirmed. It certainly had stood potentially one of the toughest tests. The history of communication between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples has not been very warm, constructive,

sincere or peaceful, and to have the Earth Forum seen as not only an arena that supports participative parity between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, but goes even further in creating spaces for healing between these groups, felt like a significant achievement for reflective justice. Healing, at its core, implies significant learning and transformation potential, which was noticeable and appreciated by Mpatheleni and the elders.

4.5.2. DRAFTING A CHARTER

As has been detailed in the application of Earth Forum across South Africa in this chapter, one could describe Earth Forum (in the context I applied it in South Africa) as a holistic agency development initiative, which focuses on capacities that encourage empathic literacy, specifically imagination and active listening. It also encourages participants to hone their perceptiveness and focus on internal connections/disconnections, which we have come to understand through testimonials from Earth Forum participants (more participant testimonials and reflections are further examined in this section). Earth Forum intentionally makes visible, the invisible relationships in society, and makes visible the relationships existent in nature, this is something Sacks had mentioned might happen, as that is one of the aims inherent of social sculpture. Through the Earth Forum processes we (the participants and myself) were able to distil a form of empathetic and ecological literacy. As we have seen with the Mupo Foundation (EF 33), the women in Polokwane (EF 28) and the landless women in Worcester (EF 15), Earth Forum encourages the integration of local indigenous knowledge and alternative forms of knowing to be not only welcomed into the learning process, but to contribute significantly to the learning experienced by all the participants. Considering this capacity development potential of Earth Forum, I would like to explore in more detail how these contribute meaningfully to ecological justice through enriching the personal and relational agency of citizens who contributed to the development of the Draft African People's Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth, as well as the first Global Children's Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth, via the Earth Forum social sculpture. Participants involved in certain Earth Forums (see Table 5 for details of which Earth Forum groups participated in this process), after sharing their pictures of progress, would take a 15 to 20 minute break and then reconvene for a different 30-minute to an hour session of exchange, exploring their

pictures of progress and personal reflections, as well as that which they heard from others in the group relating it to the text of the Draft Charter. We would read out different aspects of the charter and people would comment on them accordingly. With their permission and consent we would then adjust and add to the Draft Charter text in each circumstance. This was significant as the participants were not merely just agreeing or disagreeing with the text of the document, but engaging with it using the insights they had gained from their own personal experience, as well as that which they had witnessed relationally through the Earth Forum exchange. A personal and relational foundation was enabled as a framework to approach the Draft Charter text and reflect on it as a group.

Development is a complex social phenomenon, with various shapes and forms that are, for the most part, contested (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Sen, 1983; Sen, 1990; Camillus, 2008; Curran, 2009). Questions of what constitutes development have given rise to the realm of 'sustainable development' which I explored extensively in my MSc research (McGarry, 2008; McGarry & Shackleton, 2009a, 2009b). I have always struggled with the concept of sustainability, but in my scientific background I found it difficult to reflect on and transform my approach to it. I found myself asking the question: 'sustaining what exactly?' Are we sustaining economies, or political power, do we sustain cultures or nature? The relationships between these, and the dichotomies experienced between these forms of sustainability seem to further confuse sustainable development, and the use of the concept. Michael Bonnett (2009:178) explored the use of the word and concept of sustainability and the high degree of ambiguity in how it is used or interpreted. The ambiguity emerges from the confusion regarding whether a group or organisation is sustaining the conditions necessary for the survival of an animal or plant population or if instead they are sustaining conditions for their own economic growth (Bonnett, 2009: 178). While Bonnett (ibid.) saw the notion of sustainability itself having great merit, of leading a life that is truly sustaining of oneself, ones community and nature, he felt that the overall use of the concept of sustainability as a policy, rather than a frame of mind, has been its greatest downfall.

To avoid confusion, and to remove this work from such conflation, I do not refer to this work

as sustainability education, or as a contribution to sustainable development. I feel that associated technocratic responses to sustainable development are not helpful in the context of enabling the personal agency of the ecological citizen, as they separate social and natural relationships and simplify these worlds into pieces and parts, that are systemised, articulated and often mediated through technology (as discussed in Chapter One). I felt and still feel, particularly in environmental sciences (my background before this research), that most sustainable development practices that I have encountered are treated as if the human-nature interaction were systematic machines, with little warmth, empathy and imagination. While of course there are creative, thoughtful sustainable development projects being implemented across the world (Hawken, 2007), I struggle with the idea that we attempt to technocratically 'fix' the problems we make in the outside world, with little integration of the individual human being's imagination and inner intentions into our transforming practices. This is not to say that this research aims to dismiss or push aside technological and scientific responses to the ecological crisis, but rather that it aims to provide an empathetic and imaginative foundation for the human being that engages these problems, where an ability to respond is not governed or decided by technocratic or extreme biocentric decision making, but rather by intuitive, empathetic and imaginative responses, a response(ability). It seems that technocratic responses would benefit greatly from a more integrated approach that draws from creative ecological citizenship and emerges from intuitive imaginations and the expansion of personal and relational forms of agency.

From my experience the socially constructed space enabled by Earth Forum lends itself to a more integrated approach to sustainable development, in which decisions and pictures of progress are explored through imaginative exchange between citizens. This enables inner and collective agendas to be surfaced and explored collectively, that are founded on personal insights, inner intentions and immediate experience, this is something Sack's is constantly trying to enable in her work. Instead of exploring sustainability specifically, Earth Forum asks what I feel is a more helpful question: 'what would constitute progress?' Before attempting to answer this question though, Earth Forum creates the arena in which we can come to understand this question from not only our own personal perspective but also in relation to the

entire body-of-nature, of which we are an integral part, and which includes the other human beings with which we share it. Attempting to answer questions of progress without making the Earth (and all the relationships that make us part of earth) intentionally present is, as far as I see it, the equivalent to the case of a single organ in the body being only concerned with its own development, forgetting to include the heart, the lungs, the brain, and the digestive system, in its plans for progress. We cannot consider these questions around progress until we recognise our place in the entire ecology of life. We need to make visible the entire ecology of our own imaginations and ways of knowing and see the picture of what it means to live well, for all, not only for a small component of the whole. It seems that there are more than enough sustainable development platforms for debate, negotiation and so on, but these platforms seem somewhat useless when those participating lack the agency to really listen to each other, with open hearts, open minds, and with their imaginations.

Thus far Earth Forum as a social sculpture has revealed specific insights in socially constructed learning, not for sustainability, but for ecological citizenship that accommodates the entire embodied human being. Firstly, as revealed in the Earth Forum process, what is needed when considering any form of progress is to consider and pay attention with the whole being, and to listen with our imaginations. One needs to picture the full picture of not only the idea for progress itself, but the motivations, intentions and impulses from which they emerge in the other human being. As I have found in Earth Forum practice (specifically in EF 9, 13, 28, 19, 31 and 33), if we are able to picture what the other person is seeing, feeling, imagining, we would get really far in developing new ways to not only approach collective decision making but also discover new ways of sincerely 'being' together as communities. Discussed in more detail below, this form of 'relational agency' could potentially be valuable in increasing the resilience and adaptability of communities in unpredictable situations emergent in an era of ecological apartheid and its associated symptoms such as climate change (Belay, 2012).

Secondly it seems this approach enables citizens to get closer to real forms of progress that emerge from interconnected human exchange; and that would meet the long-term interests of

both ecosystems and society (as was seen in pictures of progress expressed in EF 13, 15, 16, 19, 22, 24, 28, 31 and 33). The progress considered by individual participants is not merely in the context of isolated individuals in society, or society isolated from wider ecological processes, but instead all inner contemplation and outer exchange is explored within an interconnected socio-ecological context. This was noticeable by the participants themselves, as reflected by my own experience and by participants such as Sonia, Dulcie, Elizabeth and Christelle. This could potentially ensure that forms of technocratic solutions that are agreed on as a collective could be considered through integration of socio-ecological realities, and with the considerations of personal and relational motivations, intentions and impulses; but this remains to be seen in the wider application and life of Earth Forum in wider contexts over longer periods of time. Experiencing this first hand through the Earth Forum process in such a wide variety of contexts, and in contrast to other facilitative approaches to decision making and considering progress (experienced in my exploratory research phase documented in Chapter Three), I understand enabling the imagination of the embodied human being in a creative exchange to be the essential first step in the learning of the ecological citizen. I consider this to be the 'foundation phase' learning required to initiate non-institutional socially constructed approaches to ecological citizen capacity development. I would also consider from these findings that this approach to learning would undoubtedly have considerable benefits to various forms of actions towards progress in the social-ecological realm, as it works with the inner transformation of each person, which lies at the heart of any form of progress.

These findings are not merely based on theoretical contemplation; as I have shown in this chapter, I have applied the Earth Forum practice within a social justice project (EF 6), that contributed to the rise of a nationwide conversation, and the development of charters and declarations, and managed to successfully accommodate and facilitate a process of exchange, discussion and democratic dialogue. In the build-up to the development of the Climate Train project, I held an Earth Forum with all the project developers and coordinators to explore the roots of our thinking, and we explored where we would like to see this project take us. Out of this process it was clear that what was needed was not merely getting people

to sign up to a particular demand, or decree, but rather what was required was an attentive listening and chronicling of citizen's pictures of progress. In doing so, the organisers asked Cormac Cullinan, author of *Wild Law* (Cullinan, 2011), and a leading international environmental lawyer, and instrumental facilitator of the development of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth the year before (Cochabamba, Bolivia in April 2010), to help draft a document that could be used as the beginning expression that citizens around the country could work on. In a conversation with Cormac two months prior to setting off on the Climate Train, he explained that from his perspective the significance of a charter does not lie in the document itself, but in the conversation it inspires in society. It is the dialogue, exchange, discussion process that is so vital in developing agency among citizens. He used the example of the South African Freedom charter and how in many ways what made it so powerful was not the document itself (it was never used as a legal document), but instead how it transformed people's thinking, as referred to in Chapter One. The Freedom Charter was the first building block needed in constructing South Africa's democracy, and was the foundation of the current constitution in South Africa (Beal, 1994).

The following are selected transcripts from a recording of Cormac Cullinan speaking about the draft charter on the Climate Train at the end of our journey at COP17. We were gathered around a table with people from the Global Alliance for the Rights of Mother Earth, and various representatives from the National Union of Metal Workers South Africa, the Democratic Left Front, the Mupo Foundation, the Latin American Observatory on Environmental Conflicts (OLCA) in Chile, the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa, African Conservation Trust and the Legal Resources Centre, among others to discuss the future of the Draft African Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth (6 December 2012, Durban Train station, emphasis mine):

It's hard for us, sitting in a democratic society to understand what it must have been like for those people [speaking of non-white South Africans during the 1950s]. Apartheid was in full swing, the state was extremely powerful, the military was completely on top; there was no immediate prospect of that changing. In other words the oppressive state was extremely strong, and yet people gathered together in small groups all around South Africa. The congress movement originated and they started this discussion, a discussion that reached into South Africa. Into little homes in rural areas, to trade unions all over. The discussion was: could we imagine a society which was post-apartheid? What would such a society look like? And so out of that was born this amazing document: the Freedom Charter, which expressed the vision and

the aspirations and the hopes of the people. The doors of learning and culture should be open, that people should have security in their homes, etc, etc. There is a certain poetic ring about the Freedom Charter when you read it. The most important thing I think was, although that document has been absolutely seminal in the struggle it was the conversation that it started. It was the idea of people daring under situations of extreme oppression to imagine another world, and to say: this is the society that we intend to build, and we will build. No matter how much oppression, no matter how long it takes. Indeed that document, because of the process, had great legitimacy and as we all know it was cited in countless meetings and struggles over decades before we got democracy...

The difficulty with drafting a climate change charter or climate change document just in that way is that climate change is not the problem really; it is the symptom of a deeper problem. So it is like a patient with a fever, the temperature goes up, and the temperature of the earth is going up. In order to cure the fever you must diagnose why has the patient got a temperature, is it because they have been injured? Is it because they have got flu? Is it because they have got a really bad disease? If you just look at the fever your conclusion is that the way of responding is maybe to take a damp cloth and dab the person on the brow. That appears to help for a while but, if it is a bad disease the person will still die, because you have not gone deeply enough, your diagnosis is too shallow. I believe that is the case here with climate change. It is a good thing to have renewable energy and green jobs, and all the rest of it is a very good thing. Yet what happens if we bring in green energy, and the demand for more energy increases faster than you can bring in green energy? You then get more and more coal. I mean the real issue underlying all of this, is that we have fallen for (when I say we I mean industrial nations that dominate the planet) have somehow convinced themselves, that we humans are separate and superior from the system. In other words the rules of nature don't apply to us. We can get past them by technology or more energy etc. What I think is particularly interesting for South Africans, is that this idea of separation is one we have experienced before. Before it the emphasis was that it was separateness between people, and we called it separateness or apartheid, as you know that's what the word means, it means separateness, apartness. Now underlying this is this deeper separation, a separation between ourselves as human beings and the rest of this amazing living community into which we have come into existence...



Figure 33: Cormac Cullinan speaking at the Draft African Charter meeting on the Climate Train, with Mpatheleni from Dzomo la Mupo on the right. Picture courtesy of Rafique Mayet

... [Speaking of the Draft African Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth] This is a process not just to be done for the sake of looking democratic, because it is the conversation itself which is more important than the document that comes out of it. If you can have such a process and it is fully democratic and it is legitimate, then it would be very interesting to see what will come out of it. I suspect what will come out of it, will be something that very strongly emphasises the rights of communities to take decisions on their own lives, and to be able to protect the places where they live. We need to reconnect and build, the antidote to the disconnection, the apartheid if I can put it that way, the separation between people and the rest of the planet, is to connect more deeply once more. This is very challenging and I don't pretend to have the answer, is it possible to start such a process, such a

conversation in this country? Should it be confined to South Africa? Because the thinking is shared by our African brothers and sisters, our neighbouring countries and beyond. Who would be the social players with sufficient credibility to take forward such a discussion? Clearly there is labour, there is indigenous people's organisations, there is civics, etc. It seems to me that if we are to have such a conversation it needs to be led by a grouping of many organisations from different sectors with credibility and it needs to be an authentic conversation in which the voice of the people shape the document, and we make a serious attempt to imagine, even though the economic and political forces driving extractive industries may be as powerful now as the apartheid state looked in the 1950s, nothing is more powerful than a people moving together with a united vision for the future...

Cormac mentions the significant role imagination played in enabling the public conversations that led to the shaping of the Freedom Charter during a time when change seemed unimaginable. This was a time when the entire political, social, economic and cultural system of South Africa was locked down in a hardened set of principles and rules. Yet despite this hardened landscape, a democratic process of imagining and re-thinking emerged, which led to the construction of an entirely new democracy, and possibly one of the most progressive constitutions in the world (Sunstein, 2001; Kende, 2003; Berger, 2003). What he does not mention is what particular form of learning might have been at play. Carl Gustav Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz (1964) in their famous work *Man and his Symbols* spoke of how static forms can become established in our ideas, when we lose the use of imagination in our meaning making. Norms become engrained and solidify the more and more we apply the logical conscious mind in our forging of concepts and negotiated realities. Yet when we explore the realm of our imaginations, our subconscious mind, we begin to 'warm up' and 'loosen' the static state of certain ideas, concepts or norms. Joseph Beuys called this 'warmth work' (Sacks, 2011c: 86).

His [Beuys] idea of warmth work was not referring to emotion, or with the territory of the heart. It was instead referring to 'connective forms of thought' needed to overcome cold forms of rationalist thinking, that seek unity in multiplicity by abstracting what is common from the parts. For both Goethe and Beuys, it is essential to understand the multiplicity in the unity. This active entry into the dynamic being of things is part of the warmth character of thought.

I like to think of it as a ball of wax in one's hand. When it is kept in my hand, my warmth loosens it; the wax becomes pliable and plastic, and can change. When it is left to cool it solidifies, and its ability to transform becomes increasingly difficult. The imagination can be seen as the warmth that makes the wax elastic and supple. Using re-imagining and imaginal practice in this way offers a form of learning that is inherently transformative, as citizens

shape their meaning from existing experiences and cognitive process, which are altered inevitably from the norms. One can see varying degrees of transformation occurring for the individual involved in imaginal work. For example, the experiences testified by Elizabeth Fletcher in opening up her experience of social exchange and listening. Similarly that shared by Dulcie Hlatwayo in expanding her ability to reflect on her life and begin working on the story of her life. Or Georgina Cundill's account of experiencing an epiphany regarding the fragility of the human being's existence, and the need to protect the human being from extinction, is significant considering she is an active and deeply critical thinker when it comes to social learning and natural resource management. Her shift of context, and emphasis on the human being is another example of transformation through connective imaginal work. Imaginal work also showed signs of transformation in social engagement, such as that which was experienced with the !Xam group of young men (EF 19), whose entire approach and contribution to the exchange changed when they could imagine another form of listening, i.e. that of listening not only to the content of what has been said, but also listening to the feeling or intention of the person speaking.

While the transformation does not have to be as profound and significant as Mezirow (1995) or Elias (1997) spoke of, that of a deep transformation of one's identity and place in the world, there is undoubtedly an inherent transformation occurring in developing an imaginative approach to meaning-making. The process of coming to understand something forges a new perspective, which in itself is a transformational phenomenon. Goethe described this process as developing 'new organs of perception' (Sacks, 2011c: 37) where the process of coming to perceive and know something, in developing insight, in itself expands and develops the capacities or perceptive 'organs' of the person who is practising imaginal thinking. Zajonc (2003) and Sacks (2007) both highlighted Goethe's methodological thinking as not necessarily referring to object consciousness but rather focusing more subtly on the relationships and movement between, where one is learning to cognitively live in relationships. Zajonc (2008) saw this as a crossing point between the phenomenal and conceptual domain, where one witnesses this threshold through a sudden insight, or what Goethe called *aperçu*. It is through this 'aperçu' that apperception (to make sense of an idea)

occurs, and Goethe saw this as a kind of seeing in itself; it is where knowledge is formed (Zajonc, 2008). It is not just naively or passively seeing, but instead a process of moving oneself inwardly to the point where one can stand before the perceived and see it not merely as a thing, but also as the co-presence of the inter-relational factors it consists of (Sacks, 2007b). It is as Sacks (2007b) puts it existing in “a liminal space, between perception and theory, but 'theory' in its original sense of meaning to behold ...”

For citizens to collectively and constructively imagine beyond the hardened forms of reality, especially those as solid and unchangeable as the South African apartheid regime of the 1950s, is not only a revolutionary display of social justice in itself, but also significant feat in imaginative capacity development. The transformation of South African society over the following five decades was certainly made possible by the brave and revolutionary agency of citizens across the country, all of which no doubt were enabled (directly or indirectly) to employ imagination in their meaning making through the Freedom Charter project, and other connective aesthetic means, such as the development of the South African flag, the concept of a 'rainbow nation' and the development of the national anthem, all connective aesthetic projects that kept our imaginations active and kept the social realm warm and pliable.

In my application of Earth Forum on the ground with citizens, I noticed the vivid influence employing imaginal practice into the learning arena played, in enabling participants to begin 'warming up' solidified concepts and ideas and finding their own perspectives within the normative shapes and forms that constructed their lives. The Breede Valley Landless woman farmers in Worcester (EF 15), for example, moved away from conversations of helplessness regarding the oppression of vineyard farming on their traditional livelihoods, to conversations regarding the value and importance of these livelihoods in their lives and ways in which these could be maintained. The subsequent town forum that the woman participated in after the Earth Forum, revealed their expanded ideas of speaking with farmers rather than tolerating the farming activities that affected them, which seemed to reveal their perceptions on farming as the status quo seemed less solidified and had the potential to transform. I was also very aware and conscious of encouraging the development of 'new organs of perception' and

establishing the practice in such a way that we were exploring the relationships between each other, the natural world, and within ourselves. The young participant in Kimberley (EF 19), who encountered the relationship between himself and the soil through the transfer of heat between soil and human being, can be seen as an example of a new form of perception enabled through imaginal experience of relationships.

Resident Climate Train journalist Sonia Koopmans participated in several Earth Forums (EF 15, 17, 22, 24, 27, 33) along the train journey with me. In a reflective interview four months after the train she shared her experiences in detail. With regards to 'warming up' static forms she found the sculpting process evident in how it enabled people's ability to shift or transform how they communicated:

In the beginning I never really understood what we were talking about with this Social Sculpture word. When I experienced it, you see how the sculpting process takes place and how people communicate. I mean you are coming in there, and you don't know anybody and you walk away you feel like you are connected and you have known them, and shared this huge thing. You don't walk away feeling about this person, or running off to say this and that. I think it's that empathy that develops for the next person. You feel like 'wow, we are so lucky'. I felt so much more appreciative of the human race and of human beings in general. Does that make sense? ... It really is not that long, but what transpires in that short amount of time and space, you walk away and you feel and you might not have spoken to that person for the full two hours, perhaps only 40 minutes, but you walk away feeling like you have given so much, and walk away with so much that you have been given. You feel empowered, it is just there is so much.

Sonia's reflections from her varied Earth Forum experiences showed just how she experienced a new form of listening, and a new approach for personal insights to emerge:

In an Earth Forum your guards just drop. It happens automatically. You don't come in and say now, this is how I am going to be, but in Earth Forum you can't prepare ... you just drop your guard, you connect, you let go, you listen, you take in ... not because they are telling you this hugely interesting story but because it is connecting to you through your heart and not your mind specifically. You know what I mean? When you are in a traditional conversation, you are concentrating on the details, listening to what happened ... you are trying to work it out in your mind, calculate it, but Earth Forum you become so calm and opening yourself to feeling and listening in a different way, and you don't try to figure out why, or who, or what, you just sit back and listen, and let things happen in their own way. It gives so much room for people to find their own ideas and their own questions.

This was important for not only enriching the participants' experience and learning, but also for establishing a new way of approaching ideas of progress and contributing to the charter. I did not want to see people merely looking at what seemed to be a static, completed

document when encountering the draft charter, but instead something that was open to change and evolution. It was important therefore not to have any of the citizens see or begin to work with the draft charter until they had come to find their own pictures of progress, their own set of values and principles and explored their own 'organs of perception' through the Earth Forum practice before participating in a draft charter dialogue. This approach was successful, as the following narrative explains.

The warming of static forms can be seen in the example of the Jubilee Landless People's Movement in Naboomspruit (EF 27) who participated in an Earth Forum. The members of this group were affected deeply by the existing decisions made by the government and extractive industry on how and where they should live according to set ideas of development. Only once we began exploring their ideas of progress through the active application of using our imaginative capacities, did we begin to see an opening up, and a shifting of the entire attitude of helplessness of the group. The hardened, static realities of the governmental decisions and actions were not entirely set in stone. The atmosphere was frustrated and tense, there seemed to be an angry helplessness in the tone and content of what was being explored, even before we started the Earth Forum. However as each participant was offered this new social arena, instruments and practices to explore their imaginings in unearthing their pictures of progress, there were noticeable changes in the atmosphere and mood of the group. Reflections of this change were supported by the group after the Earth Forum. We were faced with specific tensions in this Earth Forum as the group had arrived with the expressed expectation that they would be speaking to the government directly and instead were faced with a group of artists on a train. This, of course, was a great disappointment, particularly since they had experienced so much suffering and were angry and frustrated. Speaking about their problems with others with no specific planned outcome other than developing their imaginative, and communication capacities seemed a waste of time at first, yet they still decided to participate. There were of course several other outcomes that emerged from this Earth Forum, such as passing a clearer resolution regarding their plans as a group, as well as feeling more able to communicate their struggle and offer clearer pictures of progress, to name a few. What was significant was the transformation of their plight from frustrated and

angry, to a more receptive and attentive group, capable of replicating these processes in their future activities. The participants also reflected that the process had been fully inclusive: they were surprised to see typically quiet individuals participate and express themselves so much.



Figure 34: More images from the Earth Forum with the Vatsonga Cultural Group (EF 31). Pictures courtesy of Rafique Mayet.

What I learned from the Earth Forums on the train, particularly from the Jubilee group (EF 27), as well as other landless groups (EF 15, 23, and 30), or groups with wide diversity (EF 12, 16, 17 and 22) was the value of ‘letting go’ of desired outcomes, and instead focusing on learning from each other through a process of empathy and listening. It seemed to be that it was the *participation* in participatory democracy which could potentially have been of the greatest value in enabling personal and relational agency. Shirley Letwin (1989: 223) explained that instead of striving for “indisputable knowledge of what ought to be done”, there are alternative failsafe conditions that guarantee social cohesion and learning: “policies which would guarantee greater citizenly awareness of the views of others”. Letwin asked the

question: “Would we want democracy if we had access to indisputable knowledge of what ought to be done? The answer is, of course, no.”

Gideon Calder (2011), quotes Letwin (1989: 223), who argued that the value of democracy is not solely teleological, and the *telos* of democracy is not simply the acquisition of better knowledge. Calder went on to say: “It is because democracy can tenably have no single *telos* that its value, inevitably, lies in part in the democratic process itself”. I would argue the same could be said of the Earth Forum social sculpture. Having the opportunity to participate in an Earth Forum, does not only provide a legitimate experience of democracy, and the value of the democratic process itself, but it also offers the experience to learn from one another on an equal footing, while at the same time accommodating and ‘living, experiencing and seeing’ the contradictions and relationships within our inner thoughts and within outer-world processes. Brenda Martin described certain insights on this in an interview after her Earth Forum experience (EF 35, see Chapter Five, Table 6 for more details):

For me the greatest value was the opportunity to enter a quiet moment of reflection which allowed for wholly unexpected connections to emerge. It was also hugely comforting to share these insights in a safe space.

In Polokwane, an Earth Forum with eleven Capricorn District Municipal Councillors (EF 29) also offered something unexpected. Three different councillors described their responsibilities in ensuring human well-being, and what a daily pressure this is for them. Considering the earth in their explorations, each explored what at first seemed like contradictions between environmental well-being and human well-being. Gradually as each person went deeper into their experience, insights and questions, they spoke about the relationship and interconnectedness of human well-being with natural well-being, with one councillor explaining it like this:

For me it seems that if we make decisions to protect the environment, we are by default making decisions to protect people too. We don't need to separate them in decision making as they are one and the same.

Also in Polokwane an Earth Forum (EF 25) with twelve women from the national South African organisation, Woman in Environment, explored the contradictions between a mother's concern for her children and her concern for the natural world. There are however sometimes

situations when these two concerns are in conflict, such as when the women are worried about thick forests sheltering thieves and rapists or when a river is so strong and their children play nearby. Despite this, what seemed to emerge from these conversations was a sense of balance and respect, allowing contradictions and tensions to prevail. What seemed enticing to participants was to not avoid or set aside these contradictions but to really explore them in detail together. Farming landless woman from the Breede Valley in Worcester (EF 15: quotes translated from Afrikaans) worked through the contradictions of being farmers with no land, as one elderly woman put it: “We are the landless people, but we are the ones putting food on the tables.” Another elderly woman described it like this:

The animals, specifically pigs live better than how we live, because pigs have a place to sleep, they get fed every day, they have water to drink. We have lost our jobs, we don't have food, we don't have access to clean water, so I am saying even the pigs are living better than what we live.

This detailed and embodied exploration of contradiction was explored with great care by the majority of the participants, with many describing the strange dichotomy between feeding people in cities, while they have so little food themselves. Within these contradictions emerged specific questions, which are described in social sculpture as useful forces around which a citizen is able to develop agency. The questions revolved around asking why they had no land, and why it was difficult to grow food on the current land because it was toxified from pesticides used in the vineyards. Using these questions the woman could expand their questions into specific questions regarding progress, both personal and collective, which they later shared at a public meeting in the town hall. Much of their picture of progress was towards obtaining arable land, but underlying these pictures of progress was a more detailed picture they established in their Earth Forum, which articulated why the land was so significant, why it was so valued by the woman, as another middle aged woman described:

The fields are so dry and empty now. I remember that people treated the ground as it was sacred, like being at the church. When I was growing up, my parents (farmers) loved and respected the soil, the earth. Now this love and respect has been lost through the generations, and it has made me very sad. I wish that people today could have the same respect and love that her parents had for the land. If we got the land back that is how we should treat it, and that is how we should show our children how to work with it.

Reflecting on this particular Earth Forum (EF 15), Sonia Koopman remembered how moving it was to listen and participate in these exchanges, and consider these contradictions with

open hearts:

It is always emotional I would say, and not intentionally so, you don't go into the Earth Forum and say, okay now I am getting in touch with my emotions, and get it all out. It just has this way of allowing you to speak in and think in a different way, and face difficult questions or conflicting ideas. It's not even speaking with words, sometimes people don't even have to say or talk, but Earth Forums are so much deeper than just communicating, it allows you to communicate on a much deeper level. Now even thinking about it I get goosebumps. You go with and stay with people as they explore their most inner fears, and challenges ... they don't have to say things ... sometimes you can just feel it.

As mentioned earlier Christelle Terreblanche was an active journalist on the Climate Train who was in the past a key participant journalist in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission established in 1995. An active journalist in South Africa for over 20 years, Christelle was thus a witness to severely violent disparity during the apartheid regime. On the Climate Train, Christelle's role was the primary coordinator and documenter for the People's Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth, and she participated in three Earth Forums (EF 6, 31 and 33). In her reflections on the Earth Forum's value, she explained:

For me it was the fact that communities participated, you very often go to these places and the people are fractured, they come with demands, and all kinds of expectations ... and I think the value was Earth Forum was really strong at drawing them together at the same level. People were able to think longer term questions while also holding and sharing their own immediate issues, and over and above that the participants could reflect on all of this together without feeling trapped by specific forms of actions, for me that was the real value of the work...

I found Christelle's testimonial to the value of Earth Forum's capacity for enabling parity, immensely constructive considering her experience and memories of incidences of severe disparity in South Africa.

As briefly mentioned earlier in this chapter, Nancy Fraser (2003) explored the struggles with inclusion and participation in social justice through her conception of 'participatory parity, which is the struggle to identify "social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers" (Fraser, 2003: 36). Parity in this context refers to "the condition of being a peer, of being on a par with others, of standing on an equal footing" (Fraser, 2003: 101). Making this a reality in most democratic social arrangements is difficult due to a number of tensions. Kevin Olson (2008: 261) revealed one such challenge: in ensuring this parity we presuppose equal agency at the same time that we are seeking to promote it. Olson (2008: 260-261) further explored this predicament, which he called the

'paradox of enablement':

The people who most need to make claims about injustice, those who are politically disadvantaged in a given society, are the ones whose participatory parity is most at risk. They are most in need of parity-promoting policies. By definition, though, people who cannot participate as peers are precisely the ones least capable of making such claims. The problem, in short, is that deliberation presupposes participatory parity at the same time that deliberation is supposed to set the standards for participatory parity.

While in no way was Earth Forum restructuring the social arrangements of local democratic action, it did indeed offer new, neutral social arenas in which participatory parity was possible, if only for short periods of time; it also absented the existing democratic arenas, and their associated norms, which participants were used to. As mentioned earlier by Olson (2008), regarding *the struggle with presupposing participants equal agency, while also aiming to promote it*, the Earth Forum responded by focusing and lifting out forms of agency that are indeed available to everyone and *can be presupposed* as each person has access to the ability to listen and pay attention by actively employing imagination, and in so doing promoting and enriching our capacity for empathy, and therefore the imaginative and empathetic agency of all the participants.

I can presuppose these capacities, as every human being dreams, and has the capacity to make pictures and scenes in their minds, from a six-year old child, to a grown adult, this is something Sacks refers to often when introducing imaginal capacity to people. In the same way, within an Earth Forum, each and every participant has the capacity to actively listen to each other, and imagine each person's picture of progress without having to get to a final end point of specific action. Brenda Martins, the director of the Project 90 by 2030 non-profit organisation, participated in an Earth Forum (EF 35) and reflected the following:

I think it is particularly useful for surfacing empathy within groups, helping people who work with a shared purpose, particularly those who are 'stuck' to see opportunities for movement ... For me the greatest value was the opportunity to enter a quiet moment of reflection, alongside others, which allowed for wholly unexpected connections to emerge. It was a balance between personal and outer reflection. It was also hugely comforting to share these insights in a safe space, with others and to discover how easily I could work with others in this way.

Enabling and expanding these inherent capacities is also a prerequisite of democracy according to Calder (2011: 185) who said that "the outputs of democracy should include not just decisions, but also individual development".

Earth Forum offers the discourse of reflexive justice, particularly as set out by Nancy Fraser (2008) in her book *Scales of justice: reimagining political space in a globalising world*, a distinctive pedagogical and methodological framework. One could see Earth Forum and social sculpture practice as a practical example of how one can perhaps approach the 'paradox of enablement' by absenting old democratic social arrangements, through aesthetically developing new social arenas that employ and encourage the use of existing, inherent capacities, that in themselves are able to work with and experience contradictions and relationships in a constructive way. This is done specifically by employing these commonly accessible capacities and by creating a connective aesthetic space linked to the universally accessible qualities of the earth and the soil. This 'social sculpture' enables participants to work in an equal way, where parity is not only ensured, but explored reflexively by the group itself, through the experience. As Calder (2011: 193) put it: "a virtue of democracy, however, is that it enhances the scope for reflexivity about what itself counts as a good result."

This is not to say, that the Earth Forum's only value was to offer a true experience of democracy and/or participatory parity; it can and indeed did contribute constructively and practically to existing challenges and projects. One could see the transformations and affirmations experienced by Dzomo La Mupo (EF 33) and the Jubilee Landless People's Movements (EF 27) to be 'a good result'. I saw Earth Forum's greatest practical contribution as that of enabling the democratic process of the Draft Charter. It offered each citizen an opportunity to define what Mother Earth means to them, on a personal level, using their own words and motivations to describe it. It helped shape values, ideas and concepts before even looking at the existing charter that needed reviews and contributions (note only 13 Earth Forums groups were able to participate in the Draft Charter exchange: EF 13, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31 and 33). On another level, instead of offering a document that people could read, agree or disagree with, ending with signing a pledge, the Earth Forum offered a sincere and real experience for each citizen; it investigated their value of nature, and it explored concepts like 'living well as opposed to living rich', 'for every taking there is a

giving', 'all shall replace exploitation with healing', 'communities may decide for themselves' and several other statements that aim to reclaim the relationships between people and nature, and dissolve the boundaries between human-kind and the natural world (see Appendix C for the Draft Charter statements). For example Alicia Mtonjeni (EF 13) described her take on 'communities deciding for themselves' in the Draft Charter discussion after the Earth Forum (quote taken from a recording of the discussions):

We are rich with knowledge, we are rich with our hopes we are wealthy in these ways, which goes beyond the materials ... it also goes back for communities deciding for themselves, we cannot let other people come to Worcester and tell us what is good for us, we know what is needed to make our place sustainable and progressive, we do value what we have and we have a clear vision of where we are going and what we have ... We need to treat alcoholism and we can do this by first protecting our farms, it is where most people benefit something from, it is where production happens, we get to experience how to plant, how to value life and living, we can treat depression by working with the land ... I would protect them from people coming from outside to build a housing development, and building factories, that would just make things worse.

The Draft Charter did not consist of statements that people read and agreed and disagreed with, but instead explored after encountering their own and other's personal description of similar concepts, with the possibility for these to be edited. This also allowed people to refine and contribute to the re-wording and articulation of the charter, in ways that were informed by lived personal experience, as can be seen by the adjustments to the charter made by the Dzomo la Mupo group (EF 33). In Worcester the Earth Forum (EF 13) with the Zwelathemba Youth Forum articulated these values in relation to their lives in an informal settlement, located in a district where there was a strong legacy of wine farming. They described stories of their grandfathers and fathers often being paid in barrels of wine, and the legacy left behind of alcoholism and drug abuse. The participants in this Earth Forum carefully explored their concerns, which were embodied on the cloth with many broken beer and wine bottles they had collected in their encounter with the Earth in the first phase of the process. In our discussions after the Earth Forum, exploring their inputs and considerations for the Draft Charter, the concepts of living well, and replacing exploitation with healing, were informed by their personal motivations to transform the conditions that contribute to alcoholism and violence in their communities. This revealed that the Earth Forum process was not limited to connecting people to the conventional understandings of ecology, but also enables connective practice and exchange that addresses all forms of relationships that occur within

the human ecology.

The challenge in this Earth Forum (EF 13) was great as it revealed my own inner bias towards conversations around people's connection to nature, the concept of wilderness and living interconnected to healthy happy ecosystems. What emerged in this Earth Forum for me was that of a deepened concept of ecology, and a deepened understanding of ecological apartheid, a separating of relationships. The conversations we had together around the cloth were deeply informative, and in an interview with Alicia Mtonjeni from the Zwelathemba group almost six months later, I found that these insights were still being applied in the youth forum's work together, as Alicia explained:

The only way we can grow and empower each other is through giving each other information, interacting and facing these issues. We realised that we can't just believe these are issues that will affect us forever. We can change them, we are finding ways in which we can heal these problems, mostly through keeping the conversations going we had with you [in the Earth Forum].

While this may be indicative of the power of the Earth Forum process, one cannot rule out the incredible capacities of human beings to find hope in the doldrums of despondency. It is also possible that these insights would have emerged on their own, without the Earth Forum, perhaps in another form. Yet I still maintain that these conversations would not have employed imagination, developing new forms of attentiveness and receptivity in the group, as it seems that imagination is so often excluded from our social interactions, particularly in our capacity to listen.

Earth Forum seemed useful also in offering a new kind of reflexive public arena, that encouraged different forms of exchange, that went beyond argument, debate, and dishing out blame. Instead it offered a cooperative re-imagining, exploring alternative forms of progress (EF 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 29, 31 and 33), unearthing difficult questions both practical (EF 13, 15, and 28) existential (EF 17 and 31) accommodating contradictions and relationships (observed in all Earth Forums), as well as offering a space of sincere, attentive listening. All of this was embodied in a single cloth that was shared by each participant along the journey. Citizens commented on the value this cloth played in their experience, as it lifted their imaginations, it made visible invisible ideas and ways of knowing, and it provided a

physical new social arena. As Christelle explained in her interview after the Climate Train:

... I really feel the cloth was significant as it is a way of gluing things together, it is interesting to me, and beautiful to me, and bringing the earth into these conversations is very important, I think it creates a tangible, and tactile-ness, and scratches the imagination ... What I find particularly interesting is how this work will take us deeper into coming to understand and respond to questions of development, and territories, and eco-boundaries, and that would be tricky, and even messy sometimes, but I think the Earth Forum shape and it's kind of supportive creative practice would be able to hold and be able to deal with that messy-ness.

Similarly Jason Naidoo who participated in the Earth Forum (EF 17) in Beaufort West had this to say about the cloth:

The cloth seemed useful in allowing something physical to focus the mental and imaginative experience – focus is perhaps the wrong word here – but something in that vein. The cloth seemed to also emphasise our listening, enable equality and create a sense of universal-respect. I feel this is something completely under-emphasised in society currently. So I truly enjoyed the forum as an exercise that repeats and strengthens those ideas.

Georgina Cundill who participated in one of the earlier Earth Forums in Grahamstown (EF 10) saw the cloth as something that: “enabled everyone to feel that they had contributed something to the discussion. It also 'forced', in a non-coercive way, everyone to contribute.” Also Stephen Davis who participated in several Earth Forums (EF 8, 34 and 35) and later became a Responsible Participant (which is explored further in Chapter Five), considered the physical presence of the cloth as important, although it might have the potential to alienate some people:

The cloth makes it seem a little ritualistic, and some people would be very comfortable with this and others think perhaps it's a bit weird. I don't think that matters because ritual is an important part of what we should be doing more of. I think if you didn't have the cloth, you could use something else, but I think the need to physical embodiment, or symbolism of what you working with on an imaginative level is still very important and one still needs this. It is a metaphor, and having an actual physical object facilitates the metaphor and symbolism more easily.

While the goal of the Earth Forum was to expand the capacities of the group, as well as enrich how participants applied their imaginations and encouraged new forms of active listening, there were clear overall threads and consensus that emerged from the 22 sessions that I conducted in 12 towns, with over 350 people, that helped adjust and enrich the growing Draft African Charter. It is possible to see this capacity development as successes in ecological justice as they enriched capacities that directly enable democratic dialogue and exchange. One can also see the artefact of the Draft African Charter itself as a tangible

outcome of Earth Forum's contribution to the normative and conceptual divisions between environmental and social justice concerns. Across almost all of the Earth Forums participating in the Draft Charter discussions (EF 13, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31 and 33) citizens came to agree that that earth was sacred; that we needed to not only seek out equality for all people (reducing the gap between rich and poor), but also an equality for all earth communities; that all life must have the right to exist; rivers and wild places must have the right to exist; and that we must replace exploitation with healing. It was also definitively expressed in all the Earth Forums involved in the Draft Charter (EF 13, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31 and 33) that communities should have the right to decide for themselves and should have the right to protect themselves. This was so surprising for me, as I was expecting there to be disagreement with certain aspects of the charter, but it seemed that when people first explored their values and deep inner thoughts about their relationship with the earth, the charter often mirrored their own values.

Those people who seemed to need and want to use the Earth Forum practice and the Draft African Charter the most, were people who were affected by landlessness, and also those affected by mining and extractive industries, essentially those experiencing any form of environmental or social injustice. In Worcester, for example, the Breede River Valley Landless Woman Group (EF 15), who are women who were pushed off farms, and are now living as farm labourers. They once had access to land and knew how to live well and in balance with nature, but now were suffering from pesticide and fertiliser poisoning in the water and in the soil, and do not have access to land. They felt they could use the charter to demand the rights they once had and that nature once had. In Soweto, two different landless communities affected by mining were not only suffering from toxic rivers, from acid mine drainage, from high heavy metal pollution, but also radioactivity (EF 24). There is a dam just outside Johannesburg that is radioactive from uranium mining, and according to Mariette Liefrink who spoke in the discussion after the Earth Forum, the radioactivity is dangerously high. She also went on to say:

We have sadly sacrificed water for gold. A magnitude of 360 thousand litres of acid mine waste, containing toxic and radioactive waste run through our rivers and streams every day, wiping out all fish, frogs and living species along the way and causing irreversible damage ... The problem with radioactive water and soil is that it

looks clean and fresh until lime is added to it. That is why it's so hazardous. This water is filled with heavy metals such as uranium, which can cause chronic kidney disease and cancer. There are serious health consequences associated with acid mine drainage, still you find children play in this water and animals drinking from it. This toxic orange coloured water is unfit for consumption and the dangers of the polluted water are unknown to the public. It seeps into the soil, affecting the crops and animals that eat off the ground ... and this is so tragic because, next to the richest of mines, live the poorest of people.

During these processes while holding the earth in our hands we questioned whether it was safe to hold, because it was potentially radioactive⁹⁹.

In Naboomspruit, the Jubilee Mokopane Landless Peoples Movement (EF 27) was also struggling with mining and extractive industries, particularly how government and business makes decisions and consults them on what they plan to do with the earth. They explained when government and mining companies had planned community engagement through public talks and discussions, it seemed as if the outcomes were pre-constructed before they even arrive. They described how they could see how they could use the charter to protect themselves from this. In Polokwane and along the journey I was privileged to work with women from the organisation Woman in Environment (EF 15, 24, 25 and 28). I found working with groups of 12 to 20 women were particularly powerful. The women would take a look at the charter and say “we know all of this is truth ... it speaks to what we know”. They felt that if other people could recognise this, especially those in cities, there might be a future for their children. There was a strong consensus that the title of Mother Earth, was particularly significant: “... we need to respect our mother, if we cannot respect our own mothers, how will we respect Mother Earth?” said an elderly woman from Polokwane. In Limpopo I was also grateful to have the opportunity to work with 10 district councillors from the Capricorn District Municipality (EF 29); they felt the charter was immensely useful as it allowed them to support decisions to protect the rights of nature, they shared that as service providers they felt if they protected the rights of nature, they were by default protecting the rights of people, which was their ultimate mandate. The Vatsonga Cultural Village in Elim, Limpopo (EF 31), felt very strongly that the charter inherently protected cultural heritage; they spoke of how heritage and culture could never be divorced from nature: “culture can only emerge from mother earth and

⁹⁹ This is corroborated by Bega (2011) and Els (2011).

culture cannot exist without nature". In Limpopo we also had additions to the charter from Dzomo La Mupo (the Mupo Foundation, EF 33), who added three things: 1) they felt that when we speak of future generations it is not just the human generations but the generations of all earth communities; 2) they felt the charter should recognise and explicitly mention that the knowledge of the elders from indigenous communities should be protected and be practised in the implementation of the charter; and finally 3) that the very last remaining indigenous wild places, forests, rivers, lakes, coasts, etc, should be protected from any further destructive and extractive development.

When I compared the Universal Declaration of Rights for Mother Earth and the People's Charter for Africa, to the content that emerged from the Earth Forum I saw corresponding values, in all of the Earth Forums involved with the Draft Charter process. This was reflected too by how participants engaged and reflected on these documents after the Earth Forum which was common with all the Earth Forums involved with the Draft Charter. Since conducting the string of Earth Forums across the country, several larger bodies in South Africa have adopted the People's Charter for Africa into their processes including the National Union of Metal Workers South Africa, the Democratic Left Front, Mupo Foundation, the Latin American Observatory on Environmental Conflicts (OLCA) in Chile, the Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa, African Conservation Trust, the Legal Resources Centre, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Indalo Yethu, the South African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (SAFCEI) and the Institute for Democracy South Africa (IDASA). The Earth Forum did indeed offer participants the space and methods to deeply consider their own place in the overall phenomenon of the injustice they were experiencing. While I cannot provide substantial evidence for the validity and impact the Earth Forum had on each community's action towards justice, I can be sure that the process supplied a space in which each participant was able to reflect and interrogate their own values and explore their particular circumstances through an active application of their imaginations and through an egalitarian process of actively listening to each other. The substance gathered in the Earth Forum itself would have been useful to each person in a unique way; it was however a combination of what they took away from the process and the

freedom of participating in such a process that in my opinion would have had the greatest impact on encouraging new forms of imaginative literacy, which lead to developing new approaches to democratic dialogue and ecological justice.

4.6. SINCE THE TRAIN

Stepping off the train, I had sense that I would have a long future with Earth Forum. In my view, it had been so successful on several different levels. It had created meaningful learning arenas with citizens from a wide variety of backgrounds, ethnicities, languages and educational levels. It had offered democratic spaces in which people could explore the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth and the Draft African Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth, which in itself has grown in strength since the train. It had also proved to be useful in expanding citizens' empathetic capacities, through exercising imagination and attentive listening in open forum discussions. I had also come to understand its value in providing intimate, thoughtful, imaginative and caring spaces in which citizens could witness the contradictions, relationships and movements, within themselves, between each other and in the outside world, while maintaining a holistic, interconnected perspective. I had noticed that what we had accomplished was far beyond what I had expected. After the hype of the UN COP17 conference died down, I had time to reflect and consider what was next for this project. I realised that the methodology worked, and required some refinement, but essentially was ready to be shared with others. I began working on establishing a pedagogical process for Earth Forum, within which I could share the methods and potentially support other citizens who felt they would like to use the instruments and practices in their own regions. I had up to that point established considerably good working relationships with individuals from Project 90 by 2030 based in Cape Town, and so offered an Earth Forum practice for their entire staff. In the process of setting up this arena, I found three citizens who were eager to participate in an Earth Forum apprenticeship, and become fully competent Responsible Participants. I explore this entire process in the next chapter, which reports on the expansion phase (phase C) of the research process.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE APPRENTICESHIP

“... a man must seek out helpers with whose aid he can carry out the task. ... It is not their fame nor their great names but their genuine achievements that are important. Through such modesty the right man is found, and the exceptional task is carried out in spite of all difficulties.”

From the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes* (Richard Wilhelm translation: 243)

5.1. INTRODUCTIONS ARE IN ORDER

During the many Earth Forums I conducted as reported on in the previous chapter, I met several people who showed interest in using the Earth Forum methods themselves. I wanted to work with so many people but felt that neither I nor the methodology was ready to be taught. While of course I had, by now, an idea of how to do this apprenticeship, I felt that I needed to complete the Climate Train journey before I began working out the various components of what a pedagogical approach to Earth Forum apprenticeship may look like. This chapter explores the methodological development of an apprenticeship practice that could be conducted not only by myself, but others who have learned the aspects of being a Responsible Participant along the way. Part of this process was to also develop a handbook, which summarised the practice in the simplest form (see Appendix A). Four different versions of this handbook have been developed, and for the final version I worked alongside people I had worked with through an apprenticeship in how to use Earth Forum. The process of developing this handbook was a collaborative one, in which Shelley Sacks played a vital role. She initiated this collaboration, and felt it would be tremendously valuable for her and I to work closely and to reflect on our progress together. I systematically reviewed our work through member checking which came in the form of emails, physical editing each other's contributions, developing websites together for Earth Forum and her project University of the Trees. This collaboration was also facilitated through an ongoing dialogue between her and I, as well as others, the majority of which were recorded covering 29 hours of conversation (captured in the thesis case record).

As mentioned in previous chapters, Earth Forum is not guided by a traditional facilitator, or mediator, but by a Responsible Participant. It may seem mere semantics, but calling the 'facilitator' a Responsible Participant establishes a new kind of participant/facilitator relationship, which is more equitable or egalitarian. This is not to say that all facilitators practise with hierarchical overtones; the Responsible Participant concept merely creates the potential for a new neutral relationship between the person guiding the Earth Forum and the participants, a relationship that can be defined by the group itself, and is itself 'suitably strange' (a concept mentioned in Chapter Two as useful for opening up the imaginal capacities of participants). The Responsible Participant, as the name implies, is also a participant, and actively engages, and participates in the Earth Forum as much as the other participants. Responsible Participants are, as also already mentioned, responsible for establishing the shape and form of the Earth Forum and for introducing the Earth Forum practices as the process develops. The Responsible Participant does not need any specific skill set other than the willingness to listen, concentrate, follow their intuition, use their imagination and constantly aims to refine his/her sensitivities to the various processes and realities that emerge in such a space. While I have not tested this yet, I feel that children would also make remarkable Responsible Participants, as they have active imaginations, can devote themselves to a task, have a deep sensitivity to their own intuition, and to actively listening to others.

After stepping off the Climate Train, I began further work on the handbook (see Appendix A). I had collaboratively developed a rough version for the train journey. It was important to create a simple enough text that could be easily translatable, but also pick up on the nuances and sensitivities of this work. Some of this handbook was based on Sack's earlier work in *Exchange Values*, in which she drafted a handbook and suggested I use it as a reference and guide to develop the Earth Forum handbook. Yet the more I worked on it, I realised that while the handbook would be useful as a guide for Responsible Participants in their daily work in guiding Earth Forums, the handbook itself could not cover everything, and certainly could not reflect the valuable 'experiential learning' that occurs when working with others to develop such learning arenas. As described in Chapter Two (Section 2.4.2), experiential learning does

not occur through reading material, but through direct experience and reflection (Kolb, 1984; Rodrigues, 2004). It was certain that those who wanted to become Responsible Participants would need to participate in an apprenticeship process and explore by themselves the various aspects of what it means to be response(able) in this space. This would not just require their analytical reflection of their experiences as suggested by Kolb (1984) and Rodrigues (2004), but also their imaginal contemplation and development of intuitive capacities such as moral imagination.

It is important here to introduce those who helped me develop the apprenticeship, who acted as advisers, reflected on the process, or offered to participate openly in my early trials in setting up a Responsible Participant apprenticeship. Through my work in COPART and the Climate Fluency Exchange, I forged relationships with specific individuals working in similar fields. It made sense to me that for my first attempt at setting up a Responsible Participant apprenticeship, it would be useful to work with people I trusted, who could offer honest and constructive feedback and who would potentially apply what they learned in their own work. Stephen Davis, an environmental scientist who worked for Project 90 by 2030, had done a great deal of organisational and personal development work, particularly with youth. I had also worked with Stephen during the Re-Imagining festival at the Grahamstown Festival, July 2011. With others from COPART, he organised to work with 20 young people who had shown exceptional environmental leadership skills in their communities around South Africa.

Also working at Project 90 by 2030, was Daniel Robinson, and his wife Andrea Van Maygaarden, both of whom I had met in the COPART network. Daniel and Andrea are both trained performing artists, but also worked very closely in environmental education, and use creative practice in ecological learning. I felt it would be helpful to work with a group rather than with individuals, as we could create mini-Earth Forums together and explore different aspects of the practice. Also there was already a strong bond between them, and a great deal of trust. I also felt that after the apprenticeship they could form a supportive community of practice that could set up and facilitate Earth Forums in different contexts, and work together in coping with the various different challenges they met in doing this.

Before working with Andrea, Daniel and Stephen, I had been working closely with Maria Honig and Elizabeth Fletcher on exploring the different aspects of what is needed from a Responsible Participant, as explained in Chapter Three (Section 3.5.). The first Earth Forum journey on a train through South Africa with Shelley Sacks, I conducted alongside Maria Honig and Elizabeth Fletcher. Maria has worked for the South African Marine section of the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) for some time, mostly developing educational programmes for sustainable fisheries. Maria helped me set up my first solo Earth Forum in Johannesburg (EF 6) with the different stakeholders for the Climate Fluency exchange, and was extremely helpful in reflecting afterwards on what had worked and what hadn't. Elizabeth too, had worked very closely with me in establishing the Climate Fluency Exchange, and expanding and developing the work of COPART. Their contributions throughout this journey have been incredibly important. Elizabeth had reflected closely, on the Climate Train, on the approaches that work best for the Responsible Participant in different contexts and different circumstances as described in Section 4.4. Elizabeth also experimented with being a Responsible Participant herself on the Climate Train. Her most valuable role however, was sitting in on most of the practices, and reflecting after these events with me, providing a great deal of feedback that helped me refine the Responsible Participant methodology, and what would be important for the pedagogy of Earth Forum apprenticeship. These reflections were mostly recorded, and then sections transcribed and later edited into text for the Responsible Participant handbook.

Finally, also while on the Climate Train, I met Mpetestsane Modise, who worked at the Peoples Life Environment Agency in Soweto. She is an artist, a teacher and development practitioner, and she reported that she had found the Earth Forum useful along the journey. Elizabeth and I spent a great deal of time with Mpetestsane exploring the draft handbook for Earth Forum. With Mpetestane's help, we were able to explore what she felt was easy to grasp, and what perhaps was more difficult, which was invaluable in refining the handbook. Also along the Journey I met Hlekani (Grace) Maluleke from the Vatsonga Cultural Village, in Elim, Limpopo (EF 31). She participated in an Earth Forum, but also ended up helping with

translation. We spent the rest of the day with her and the other participants from Vatsonga at the cultural village, which was not a typical cultural village, in the sense of it being a big tourist facility, but rather a social learning centre, a 'barefoot college' of sorts, where community members could come and learn and share their own knowledge and practices, from how to build a traditional hut, to how to grow an orchard. Hlekani explained that through translating she got a sense of what was required of a Responsible Participant, and what she felt was valuable. I regret not being able to spend more time with her; we only had the one day as the train was leaving the next day, yet in that day we came to understand a great deal of what was needed, and Hlekani not only understood the concept of a Responsible Participant easily, she also grasped intuitively the value of social sculpture, which she felt in many ways affirmed what they were exploring and developing at Vatsonga. Before I left at the end of the day, Hlekani and I had already developed a practice with an instrument called 'Being Water'.



Figure 35: Hlekani (Grace) and me at the Vatsonga Cultural Village in Limpopo, where she offered me this Tshitemba gourd to use in a new social sculpture small act we devised together entitled "Being Water". Picture Courtesy of Elizabeth Fletcher.

The final introductions needed are for the group of new Responsible Participants I worked with in Oxford: Sarah Thorne, Melanie Lauwaert, Matt Matre and Seth Jordan. Sarah, originally from Germany, was studying in Oxford; Melanie originally from Belgium, was living

in Sweden; Seth originally from the West Coast of the USA; and Matt who was up originally from the East Coast of the USA, all found themselves in an Earth Forum in Oxford that was hosted by Shelley and myself. After the Earth Forum they claimed they had found it useful, and wanted to work with it more, seizing the opportunity to further develop the apprenticeship process. It came in the form of an intensive one-day apprenticeship with Sarah, Melanie, Matt and Seth. Since then I have sent Earth Forum cloths and handbooks to their respective countries (Sarah remains in Oxford, Seth and Matt in the USA and Melanie is in Belgium). Each has plans to continue conducting Earth Forums as Responsible Participants.

Finally I must also note that while I was developing the apprenticeship process in South Africa, Shelley was conducting Earth Forums in Germany based on the work we did in South Africa. In addition to this she was independently developing an apprenticeship process for Earth Forum Responsible Participants in Germany, which was very different to my apprenticeship process, and since then Shelley and I have managed to reflect on the similarities and differences in our pedagogical processes.

The social practice research that I conducted in the earlier stages of this study, documented in Chapter Three, later became a participatory research process through the development and implementation of Earth Forum as reported in Chapter Four. Developing and expanding the pedagogical approach to Earth Forum, in a form of an apprenticeship process, was something that inherently required active participation with others exploring the new developments of Earth Forum practice alongside me. Through the concept of apprenticeship or induction I was able to reflect with others on their experiences. This proved useful in further developing the pedagogy. I kept track of this research amidst the action and engagement, through recordings of our conversations, journal entries and subsequent interviews with these participants. In addition to this careful reflection with participants was conducted, as well as long reflective sessions with Shelley Sacks, which were recorded. During the entire process I followed the same ethical framework established for the Earth Forum, as reported in Chapter Four. In which I only proceeded with the study and apprenticeship process with participant consent. I described the aims and an overview of the study, before we discussed if they were

comfortable to participate as participant apprentices. I constantly checked if participants were comfortable to continue with the processes, throughout each sitting. During the Earth Forums, as well as during the interviews and reflections, I ask for permission to document the processes in a form they felt comfortable with. In almost all the circumstances the participants were comfortable with audio recordings, which was really helpful for transcribing their reflections directly.

5.2. ACTIVE APPRENTICESHIP

Participating in Earth Forum in itself is the first stage of the apprenticeship. Only through this experience did I find it possible to begin working with an individual with the potential of becoming a Responsible Participant, as they then had direct experiential understanding of what the process entailed. In many cases, reflecting with participants afterwards, they found that it was difficult to explain Earth Forum to others, and felt it would be simpler to ask people to experience it for themselves, arguing that words cannot completely capture what emerges in this unique arena. This being said, the handbook does attempt to place the entire experience, stage by stage, moment by moment, into words that can help guide and direct the Responsible Participant. It was clear from the start that an apprenticeship/action-based learning process would be the best way to approach an Earth Forum apprenticeship.

Experiential learning (as described in Chapter two, Section 2.4.2) has several merits in this context, as most of the capacities that need to be developed to conduct an Earth Forum, are those that are developed through interactions with others, and through exploring the facets of one's imagination, the active process of listening, or empathetically paying attention without judgement. It is through direct experience and analytical (Kolb, 1984; Rodrigues, 2004) and intuitive reflection that this learning can occur. These capacities can be discussed and made visible through text, or basic conversation, but the actual expansion of these capacities requires practice and real-time human to human exchange, and deeper intuitive/imaginal reflection. In my own apprenticeship process which was also the development of the Earth Forum itself, as reported in Chapter Three; I found it valuable to try out an aspect of the Responsible Participant process, and then reflect on it afterwards with Shelley, Maria or Liz.

Having participant researchers in the process with me, observing my actions and overall approach, was invaluable in adjusting, refining and ultimately perfecting the craft of guiding such a process, therefore improving my capacity to learn experientially. So too in the apprenticeship process I found it beneficial to adopt this reflexive approach, which relies on paired or group as well as personal reflection as part of the practice of refining the craft of becoming response(able). From my direct experience I noticed that sometimes I would intuitively respond to a situation almost instinctively rather than by rationally making a decision. An example is how to deal with people passing by disrupting the process through asking questions from the outside. As I understood the principles and impulses that created the foundations of the process, I could intuitively act in a situation to ensure I kept those principles intact. In one situation, for example, I responded almost instantly by saying:

We are all good at speaking, but we are not all good at listening, so we are carefully listening to each other in this space, you are welcome to listen and get a feel for what we are doing by listening with us from behind, but please try not to distract us, as we are all working really hard.

It was instances like this, that I understood that it was not merely my rational analytical capacities that enabled my response(ability) but also my intuition, or what Steiner (1995) called the 'moral imagination'.

When I imagined Earth Forum in its entirety I saw the sculptural aspects of the work. It had a very specific shape and form, and how the instruments of Earth Forum were used was very specific; it was indeed a social sculpture. Even as far as the questions posed to the group are standardised and established, but are not set in stone, as what is more important is the principle that underlies them, and its flexibility for specific context. It is the principle or impulse that is set in stone, not the questions, rules or actions. In this way Earth Forum has an existing structure that I see as a sculpted instrument that is used by individuals within a collective. Keeping the structure of Earth Forum constant allows for it to be used by anyone, and also simplifies the pedagogical project, as the Responsible Participants are not required to set up or establish their own practices, but rather develop their own intuitive capacities to enrich the implementation of existing ones. For example, as can be seen in the handbook (Appendix A) and as I have described in Chapter Two, the process is broken down into steps,

which are guided by questions or activities, all of which are described using a specific principle or impulse.

The shape and form of Earth Forum has however become more standardised (i.e. the round arrangement of chairs, the selection of a suitably strange setting and the use of a standardised instrument in the form of the round oiled cloth). As I imagined further into Earth Forum as an instrument, in the same way as an instrument is fully constructed like a violin or a piano, what is required is the learning needed to operate and play it in the most appropriate way and in the appropriate context. If I looked at the apprenticeship in this way, I could only take on the apprenticeship process once I was fully satisfied with the final shape and form of Earth Forum, and secondly I would need to make sure that the apprenticeship focused on every tiny aspect of how Earth Forum operated, just as one explains all the features of a piano in an instruction manual. Yet from my own experience working with instruction manuals, they only take you so far; the best way to learn how to use piano, is to use it, experiment with it, or to be taught by another who has mastered the art of using it. Indeed what was needed was experiential learning. Here I faced an ethical question: Earth Forum is not simply a piano or a violin; it is a social learning practice, created and influenced by other human beings. I could not condone Responsible Participants experimenting with it in the same way one would with a musical instrument, as human beings were involved in every aspect of the work.

My concerns were addressed partly with the standardised sculptural structure of the Earth Forum itself; it was difficult to make a mistake in implementing the process as the 'facilitative force' was not reliant solely on the person guiding Earth Forum, it was helped by the established shape and form as well as the standard questions and actions. This meant that a Responsible Participant would only need to introduce these aspects of Earth Forum, reducing any pressure on a single individual but rather making it a process that is engaged by everyone in the forum, including the Responsible Participant. The Earth Forum practice is designed to encourage a warm, intimate, safe space that inspires meaningful and rich input from the participants themselves. Participants find themselves actively attentive to the others in the group, while managing their own judgements. This means that the group predominately

'self-facilitates'; the warm ethos of listening and focusing on each person's input, reduces the Responsible Participant's need to 'facilitate' but rather intuitively keep the elements and principles of the Earth Forum together (these elements are outlined in detail in Chapter Two Section 2.5. and in the Handbook in Appendix A). The primary focus of the apprenticeship was therefore to enable a new Responsible Participant's intuitive approach to guiding an Earth Forum. The apprenticeship therefore seeks to support the Responsible Participant in their familiarity with the principles that govern the shape and form of the process, not in an exact technical way, but in an intuitive manner. The aim is to make each Responsible Participant familiar with all the principles and the elements of the shape and form of the Earth Forum, and why they have been created in that way. For example, understanding that using chairs of the same height merely enables participants to feel a subtle sense of equality as they are all sitting together at the same eye-level in a circle; the principle underlying this is to maintain an equitable experience for each individual, and so the Responsible Participant would intuitively seek a form of seating that was more equitable if they could not find identical chairs or if the space was not conducive to making a circle. The Responsible Participant might decide to merely mention the principle itself if they cannot shape the seating in the desired form. She could say that usually she would prefer everyone sitting on identical chairs in a circle as it encourages a sense of equity. This means the Responsible Participants have their own freedom in shaping and guiding the Earth Forum, as they rely not on a technical manual to shape and guide the process but rather rely on a personal fluency of the principles that underpin each element of the process. Having more than one apprentice Responsible Participants at a time who could observe Earth Forums conducted by an experienced Responsible Participant enabled more experiential learning opportunities to occur. With more people reflecting on each Earth Forum, there was a wider range of opportunities in which participant observation, reflection and refining one's sensitivities to the craft could be achieved. Once the apprentices felt more confident with the application of the suggested process they could more confidently guide their own Earth Forums without the support from an experienced Responsible Participant.

Despite the established structure of the Earth Forums, the simplicity of its form and

applicability in various contexts, it still required from each Responsible Participant apprentice an active process of developing their own sensitivities and drawing from their personal experiential learning. A mere acting out the steps and actions in a mechanical way, that is void of thoughtful reflection, intuition and vigilance to one's own responsibilities, sensitivities and 'being' in the process, would lead to an experience that would be inherently opposite to the goals of the Earth Forum project. The apprenticeship was an encouraging capacity development process in itself, and aimed to enable a Responsible Participant not simply to use some methods from yet another social learning 'tool-box' that people read and apply like a recipe. The apprenticeship could instead be equated to an artisanal practice that one acquires through not only using the instruments of the craft, but also by expanding one's own sensitivities, intuitive skill and personal capacities in perfecting or honing one's craft.

In this chapter I outline explorations into various forms of the Earth Forum apprenticeship. I reflexively examine the greater pedagogical questions this research into apprenticeship raised. With the help of reflections of participant researchers who were also taking part in the apprenticeship, as well as my own auto-ethnographic material, I report on the delicate act of designing an apprenticeship process that seems closely related to learning an artisanal practice, yet remains accessible and convenient to implement over a few days of practice in different settings, or even over an intensive one-day process.

Table 6: *Earth Forums during the apprenticeship development in South Africa and the UK*

EF No:	PLACE & DATE	NO. OF PEOPLE	GROUP & BRIEF SUMMARY
EF 35	Cape Town 5 April 2012 Data: Reflection (Journal & audio recording)	9	Project 90 by 2030 staff: This Earth Forum was conducted in Cape Town in a park, with the staff of Project 90 by 2030 as well as Andrea, Stephen and Daniel, as their first Earth Forum since beginning the training. All three had participated in previous Earth Forum processes at GIPCA HOTWATER (EF 11) and at the National Arts Festival Re-imagining fest (EF 8), and had some experience in the theory as they had participated in a reflective process (R1) using the Earth Forum Handbook prior to this Earth Forum. They also participated in a reflection after this Earth Forum (R2).
EF 36	Cape Town 21 April 2012 Data: Reflection (Journal & audio)	8	Project 90 by 2030 youth group: This was the second Earth Forum as part of the training. It involved Daniel, Andrea and Stephen organising the process themselves. They had gathered together the participants, and selected a site for the Earth Forum. I still acted as Responsible Participant for this process, the apprentice Responsible Participants worked carefully to reflect on their experiences from this process (R3).

	recording)		
EF 37	Oxford UK 11 May 2012 Data: Reflection (Journal & audio recording)	8	Matt, Sarah, Seth and Melanie: This Earth Forum took place shortly after I arrived back in Oxford. This was my third visit to the UK during the course of this study, and the goal was to come and interview Shelley Sacks, and share with her the developments I had made in Earth Forum on the ground. As part of the process I also took part in an Earth Forum with Matt, Sarah, Seth and Melanie as they were interested in the Earth Forum process. Included in this Earth Forum were Shelley as well as Wolfgang Zumdick, and two other people from the SSRU. Two days after this Earth Forum we conducted another mini Earth Forum with only the apprentice Responsible Participants, and explored their reflections of this process (R4).
	TOTAL	25	

Table 7: Interviews and reflective processes in South Africa and the UK

No:	PLACE& DATE	REFLECTION	BRIEF SUMMARY
		TYPE	
R1	Cape Town 2 April 2012 Data: Reflection (Journal & audio recording)	Group Reflection (3 people)	This was a group reflection using the Earth Forum handbook in Cape Town with Andrea, Stephen and Daniel. All three had participated in at least one Earth Forum (Stephen had participated in two already). This reflection mainly explored their initial experiences from the Earth Forums they had participated in.
R2	Cape Town 15 April 2012 Data: Reflection (Journal & audio recording)	Group Reflection (3 People)	This reflection with Andrea, Daniel and Stephen was aimed at gathering the experiences of the apprentice Responsible Participants of the process of guiding of Earth Forum, considering both their theoretical exploration of the process in R1 and now their personal experience of Earth Forum (EF 37), understanding the theory behind it .
R3	Cape Town 23 April 2012 Data: Reflection (Journal & audio recording)	Group Reflection (3 people)	This reflection was the final reflection in the first exploration into the apprenticeship process. The Responsible Participants shared their overall experiences and articulated how they felt about continuing in the process.
R4	Oxford 13 May 2012 Data: Reflection (Journal & audio recording)	Group Reflection (4 people)	This reflection took place before another mini-Earth Forum which was a part of my exploration into a rapid induction practice, in which I aimed to see how I could reduce the amount of time needed for an Apprenticeship. This reflection started at 09h00 and finished at 18h30.
R5	South Africa/ UK July-October 2012 Data: Reflection (Journal & audio recording)	Individual interviews email/ Skype/ telephone	The iteration of this work also included individual interviews via email, telephone and Skype with the following people separately: Dulcie, Elizabeth, Maria, Andrea, Stephen, Daniel (South Africa), Seth (USA), Sarah (UK), Matt (UK), Melanie (Belgium), Shelley (UK), Christelle, Sonia, Kyla, Wolfgang, Brenda as well as Tomas Remiarz (Germany) and Peter Hozák (Germany).

3.3. REFLECTION ON THE APPRENTICESHIP

Based largely on my earlier experience with developing the Earth Forum (see Chapter Three) I reasoned that a potentially effective approach to developing the capacities of an individual to become a Responsible Participant was through in-depth personal interaction between myself and other apprentices. It would need to involve a reflexive process that went through the setting up of and participating in at least three or four Earth Forums together to get a sense of

what was needed from the Responsible Participant. Through my experimentation in South Africa and the UK, it seems this original impulse was indeed the most appropriate. Technically however, there are two possible forms that this apprenticeship could take. In the next paragraphs I will explore my own experiments with developing an apprenticeship process (see Table 6 for details of apprenticeship processes).

My first apprenticeship experiment was to work with three potential Responsible Participants, who already had a strong relationship with the Earth Forum. We were familiar enough and trusted each other to ensure that our reflections could comment on all kinds of issues, and we were all comfortable to receive occasional critical feedback on specifics. Working with Andrea, Daniel and Stephen, we decided to set up at least two Earth Forums, and all participate in them together. The idea would be to reflect before and after each Earth Forum, allowing us to enter into the various questions that emerged, to explore these questions both with our imagination, through discussion and also through lived experience. It was also important for the participants to get a sense of all the various aspects of Earth Forum, including setting up the process, from communicating with potential participants to committing three hours of their day to work in this space, finding a suitable venue for the event, and all the minor details that require careful thought and planning. I found asking the Responsible Participants in apprenticeship, to take responsibility for this part of the Earth Forum process was a valuable learning opportunity; it also raised useful questions regarding the section in the handbook focusing on 'setting up' an Earth Forum event. It was these practice-based learning opportunities and subsequent reflections that Andrea, Daniel and Stephen all noted as the most useful parts of the apprenticeship. The entire process took about three weeks. The first week consisted of specific reflections on the Earth Forum process using the handbook and reflecting on their personal experiences of the Earth Forum. The second and third week consisted of participating in Earth Forums they had set up, but which I had guided as Responsible Participant and we reflected together after each. A final 'de-brief' session, allowed us to explore some of the key questions and learning opportunities that emerged from the process and was an opportunity to give the Earth Forum cloths to each of the new Responsible Participants. I also maintained close connection with each of them, through

Skype and email, allowing for further reflecting on Earth Forums that they have arranged themselves, seeing what they struggled with and what they found really useful. This data was captured by audio recordings and notes I had taken after each session, as well as in the emails sent to me by the apprentice Responsible Participants.

Since working with this group, I travelled to the United Kingdom, to interview Shelley Sacks, and share my research with her. It had been 18 months since we had last seen each other, and in that time I had worked on my own to further develop what had been questions and dynamic methods that Shelley had developed over her career. Now we were both working with the Earth Forum that emerged from our initial collaboration, yet we had drawn from our own impulses, freedoms and responsibly in establishing the Earth Forum as a specific form. Therefore although the strategies were similar, our implementation was somewhat different. Also we had developed our own approach to Earth Forum pedagogy, with my process resembling something of an apprenticeship, while her process was more of a rapid induction. While we had maintained email contact, we had approached the process somewhat differently.

Interviewing Shelley in September 2012 in Oxford, I discovered her approach in Germany¹⁰⁰ was influenced by the total number of people who were interested in becoming Responsible Participants, which was very large. As opposed to my group of three, which involved an intimate apprenticeship process, her first event was with 40 people who had all attended one of three Earth Forums within Berlin. This required a somewhat different approach, and Shelley and her collaborator Hildegard Kurt, found that they needed to devise an intensive two-day induction process. Shelley and Hildegard worked as a team, and used the space for each person involved in the induction to reflect on their experience of their first Earth Forum. This allowed for specific questions to emerge that could be worked with and 'entered into' and further explored throughout the induction. The second step was to carefully go through the

¹⁰⁰I must make it clear that Shelley had been co-evolving her own approach to Earth Forum in the UK and Germany, while I was developing my own application of the basic shape and form we had collaboratively developed in our trial run of the process in South Africa, May 2011. My process had therefore up to that point been developed almost exclusively through my own intuitive development as a Responsible Participant, and working with the initial concepts that we had explored in South Africa many months before.

handbook, and some of the basic things which needed consideration. This can be seen as the 'theoretical learning' for the Earth Forum Responsible Participant induction process. This included everything, from how to set it up to the fundamental capacities a Responsible Participant should be drawing from in the actual process of guiding the exchange (see Appendix A for these responsibilities). After this, on the second day, the 40 participants had a chance to work in smaller groups, where they guided their own 'stop-start' Earth Forums and experienced being Responsible Participants, with Shelley and Hildegard moving in and out of each, participating, and constructively interrupting when they saw specific areas which were valuable learning opportunities. They reported that doing it this way, more people could have helped with going from group to group, and having more cloths and smaller groups would have been quicker. After this, the Responsible Participants formed groups of five, and each accepted a single cloth to share in their community and work with. In this way they created smaller working groups which could support each other in their development as active Responsible Participants in society.

In this interview and reflection (Table 7: R5), Shelley and I spent our time carefully reflecting on our two approaches to Earth Forum pedagogy: my slow three-week apprenticeship practice and her rapid three-day induction process. We explored some of the key learning opportunities that emerged, and tried to see what benefits and challenges were associated with each of our approaches. In Berlin a useful question seemed to have been: "How do I prepare myself as a Responsible Participant?" and this included questions around how one invites people and who gets invited.

Shelley considered it ideal if people could initially participate in more than one Earth Forum and then participate in something like my slow apprenticeship process. Yet most people don't have the time and so those involved in the rapid induction were realising that they needed to do three, four or five Earth Forums after the induction amongst themselves, as they did not yet feel confident. The struggle is that they are all still learning and there is not a seasoned Responsible Participant around to guide them.

Shelley realised the need for a much better handbook. She explained that there may be a need to include a rationale explaining why the Earth Forum is being developed and practised in a particular way so that people could refer back to this. At this point Shelley had not yet seen the handbook I had developed, and so this was something we discussed further once she had seen the handbook. We both felt that an ongoing reflection on being a Responsible Participant would be interesting with Shelley suggesting “a conference of Responsible Participants, annually where people could come together and reflect on their process ... we can have one in Germany and in South Africa”.

This helped me to reflect on the process I had followed, and I could see the value of reflecting afterwards with Liz and Maria, and the value of having access to Shelley to reflect on the process we were establishing through collaborative grounded inquiry. We discussed how something of a marriage between the slow apprenticeship process and her rapid induction might offer a more suitable and applicable pedagogical approach to enabling Responsible Participants. After this discussion I began devising a possible middle ground approach which I experimented with Sarah, Seth, Melanie and Matt in Oxford. Here we followed a more rapid approach of induction, that was followed by a form of ‘online’ apprenticeship through Skype and emails, in which they could further reflect on questions with others in the group as well as with me. The smaller groups also seemed to be a significant contribution to the process, as Shelley had found that her rapidly inducted Responsible Participants in Berlin were naturally working together in groups and conducting Earth Forums together.

During this interview with Shelley she further reflected:

I realised Earth Forum has a real secret in it, and the secret is that you go in first. Into what looks like a huddle, or into yourselves, or into something intimate and personal. From the outside it might look like we are going away from the world, it looks like we are turning our backs to the world, focusing inward, inside, in the group, in, in, in. Yet the reality is that one goes in, in order to go out. So I started to draw these movements, you go into the circle. You also go into the circle to go out to collect the soil and so you go out in order to come back in better. So there are these two beautiful movements. Then I realised that is exactly the same movement that happens in the lemniscate, which is central to anthroposophy, it is there as a central form, as it has both inside and outside, the inside becomes the outside, and neither can exist without each other.

She went on to say:

That is when I thought: that is what Earth Forum is about, Earth Forum is: instead of drawing Rudolf Steiner's lemniscates, and telling the theory, and even just walking it, the Earth Forum embodies completely the connection between inner and outer work. The Earth Forum depends on both processes of inner and outer, and you are doing the 'going out to go in', and 'going in to go out' all the time, and that is what we need to carry into our lives. I thought this was a treasure, and so what I started in the induction in Kassel, I started walking the lemniscate, and sharing how this was a fundamental aspect of Earth Forum.

She continued:

We know how to dance together, we know how to cook together, we know how to play together, but what we really struggle with is how to think together. Earth Forum offers us tangible simple ways in which we can experience and learn to think together.

From this I was able to grasp that central to the Earth Forum pedagogy is that it is not about learning rules, but rather understanding the principles that enable the Responsible Participant to be more flexible as each circumstance and each group is different. It is about coming to know the basic principles and understandings, much of which is developed through experience and through actively being a Responsible Participant, and therefore cannot be something that is taught or trained in a conventional sense. Rather it is inherently an experiential learning process that resembles something of a basic induction, and then a prolonged apprenticeship, where one's own moral intuition is the fundamental mentor and guide in enabling the implementation of the Earth Forum principles. This challenged some of my earlier more technicist approaches to considering social learning pedagogy and indeed my earlier assumptions of approaching Earth Forum pedagogy.

5.4. BEING A RESPONSIBLE PARTICIPANT

There were many dynamics involved in being a Responsible Participant that we grew to understand through participating in the Earth Forum process, but also through ongoing reflexive engagement with the practice and through the apprenticeship process we were engaged in. One of the most noted by the apprentice Responsible Participants was active listening. At the very beginning when we were first shaping the Earth Forum methods, we (Elizabeth, Maria and I) all noticed how strongly the process of active listening, a method that Shelley had introduced, had affected us. Elizabeth reflected:

I have come to learn that at the end of the day everyone just wants to be heard, for me this was an important insight into being a Responsible Participant ... I think that

first experience of that level of active listening stayed with me very strongly. To actively listen is a hard thing you have to concentrate to get back there ... That initial exposure made a big impact by opening up a skill that I didn't understand the value of it until experiencing it ... When we went on the train trip when the four of us were together, we almost automatically fell into active listening ... I felt that I had achieved the deepest state of calm. I will never forget this experience, and how I used my imagination in listening, my whole understanding of the role of my imagination had transformed.

Another was a process of 'tapping into' inner wisdom, or what Archer (2007) would refer to as reflexive deliberations. Stephen Davis found the experience of Earth Forum and being a Responsible Participant as one in which he was able to tap into his own inner wisdom and knowledge:

I found one of the most amazing things through this process is that you take a diverse group of people, and create a space and means that allows them to connect to each other's humanity, I think that is very powerful ... for me personally and I am sure for others, it opens up spaces for empathy, and I don't know of anything else that I have worked with that can do that in such a short amount of time. Also this idea that one can suddenly, almost in an instant be able to use one's imagination, even if you think it's not there, or you feel you still need to create this capacity, for me when I have been a participant, I was so amazed by my imagination, and that there was so much there.

Daniel described it as a widening of his listening capacity:

Reflecting on it now, the whole listening experience was the most significant for me, it felt that it gave you and the group of people an opportunity to speak but more importantly to carefully listen. This created a safe space; I felt that when people spoke they could be open and honest. From a listener's point of view, my eyes became 'wider'. I think it's about listening to what others feel, it not just listen to also listen to what other people are saying ... I felt when people spoke they could be open and honest ... You don't normally get to listen to how one feels.

Andrea considered this attention to listening to be useful for creating a set of principles the group could not only work by but even live by. She noted the Responsible Participant needs to develop a sensitivity on how to guide these principles:

In the Earth Forums and the apprenticeship ... the listening was so unique. Inside the Earth Forum, there are basic principles you give people at the beginning as a Responsible Participant. We don't usually have those principles in our daily lives, but I remember thinking that these principles make it easier to facilitate, and move it away from traditional facilitation. While the listening principles were useful there also needs to be a kind of balance that the Responsible Participant is aware of. There is the danger of a participant only sharing a sentence which is not as difficult than when someone does not stop talking. I remember one participant at UCT (University of Cape Town), he didn't stop speaking ... he just got hold of this great freedom and didn't stop ... it was difficult to listen to him comfortably after a while. I realised then that the Responsible Participant needs to understand how and when to intervene when a participant doesn't understand these principles.

While the apprentice Responsible Participants are still relatively new and had limited experience in conducting their own Earth Forums at the time of writing this, they all seemed to notice the value of listening in this work. Elizabeth, however had the widest experience as a Responsible Participant, and thus had a robust insight into 'being' a Responsible Participant herself and observing my action as Responsible Participant. In our reflections, especially reflecting on those Earth Forums she had attended with me as Responsible Participant, she noticed specific details of the experience of being response(able) in this process. Every Earth Forum was different, and every gathering of citizens required a somewhat different level of agency or response(ability). She mentioned the state of calm that is needed, of being present and patient. It is difficult to guide or shape this process if you are not staying with the person and listening attentively to each participant as they speak. I personally noticed that if I was tired and did not participate authentically in each step of the process (such as gathering my own experiences in the first stage, and instead repeated my experiences from the day before) I would somehow 'lose' the group, as happened in Polokwane (EF 30). I am not entirely sure what was at play in this situation, but I would seemingly lose their attention and their enthusiasm for the process. What was interesting is the participants were not aware that I was merely repeating my experience from the Earth Forum the day before, yet somehow they could pick up on my diminished presence in the space. I realised that it was crucial for the Responsible Participant to participate authentically in each Earth Forum. I realised it would be wise to avoid guiding more than two Earth Forums in a day, as I had sometimes done on the train (EF 28, 29 and 30), as this left me exhausted and made it difficult to be present and actively listen. I have provided some evidence for the value of listening in 'being' a Responsible Participant, but there were other less obvious details I noticed that were an important part of 'being' response(able): the need to ensure that people are comfortable, and to keep a keen sense on their comfort during the process, as the process is deeply affected by even the slightest change in one individual's attention. I also noticed that one should not force or overly emphasise the actions in the process as 'rules' or obligatory actions, but rather as principles and suggestions. This involved inviting rather than coercing participants into the process. Feedback from Kyla Davis, in an early Earth Forum in Johannesburg (EF 6), helped me reflect on this further:

I remember feeling that the spot we picked was a little forced and that I wanted to be inside where it was warmer and more comfortable. I did not want to be sitting in the middle of the city, being stared at by passersby, just for the sake of it. Otherwise, I thought it was a beautiful process. It was a very human experience ... I do think however it is powerful beyond measure. Simple, gentle, meaningful and a safe space for people to reflect in whatever way they feel comfortable. I think it could afford to be treated a little more irreverently, be lighter of touch. I think that way people might open up to themselves and others even more.

I really considered this advice carefully, and subsequently tried to maintain a 'lighter touch' in my response(ability). I realised that the core principles that I was developing were merely suggestions that help the Responsible Participant to find the most suitable action needed at the time, with adjustments for that particular group and that particular context. What was more important was the development of the Responsible Participant's intuitive response(ability). Understanding the impulse that gave rise to the principle was important in enabling the Responsible Participant's intuitive capacities and their personal agency in guiding the Earth Forum. Understanding the impulse and origin for the principle can be outlined in the handbook (Appendix A), but is only intuitively developed through experience. This is something I came to understand through my own intuitive development as a Responsible Participant.

In my early development as a Responsible Participant I encountered a situation that relied on my intuitive response(ability). It was during an Earth Forum in Grahamstown at the Re-imagining festival (EF 8). The participant group consisted of youth from the Project 90 by 2030 organisation. Stephen Davis and Kyla Davis attended this Earth Forum. There was also a film crew from 50/50¹⁰¹ that wanted to film the process, which I agreed to only after I had obtained consent from the participants. From the start I intuitively knew that the cameras would affect the process, and so limited their filming to only cover the first stage of the process, that of gathering the soil and a few individuals speaking. During the first part of Earth Forum the camera-man tried to come inside the seated circle of participants to film from the view of the inside space where the cloth lay, and I had to quickly pause the process and ask him to leave.

¹⁰¹ A local environmental TV show. See Appendix F for the 50/50 films.

There was another situation where a woman in another Earth Forum (EF 7) could only participate for an hour, and not for the full two and half hours. I had to think on my feet, as having someone leave half way through the process would certainly affect the shape and form of the Earth Forum, and the sense of attentiveness and community. My intuitive response was to explain to her the principle of donating one's time for the full process. I explained how valuable it is to have everyone switch off their phones and give their time and full attention to the other human beings in the group. Her leaving would disrupt this. I offered her two options, the first was to reschedule and join another Earth Forum in the future, the other was to experience only the listening aspect of the process, and be a witness throughout, until such time as she had to leave. She was comfortable with this and so was the group. Incidentally she was so inspired by this experience she ended up registering for a PhD in social sculpture the following year.

These intuitive actions of my response(ability) emerged effortlessly I feel, because I understood the principles and the impulse or reasoning behind these principles, and what role they played in shaping the Earth Forum. I understood that without these principles at play, the facilitative force offered by the whole social sculpture process would be jeopardised, and then more facilitative responsibility would be placed on my shoulders, turning me more into a conventional facilitator rather than a Responsible Participant. Therefore I have come to realise that there are certainly moments in the process where the Responsible Participant will need to act intuitively beyond the guidance of the handbook, as the handbook can only anticipate a certain range of possible scenarios. Expanding on the handbook through an experiential apprenticeship was an important process that enabled me, and hopefully enabled the apprentice Responsible Participants to expand their intuitive capacities and response(ability) in any possible context. Enabling this intuitive capacity development was something that influenced the range of pedagogical questions I explored.

5.5. PEDAGOGICAL QUESTIONS

One of the major pedagogical questions that has emerged in the apprenticeship of a Responsible Participant, is how one develops the sensitivities and intuitive capacities needed

for active empathetic and generative listening. In order to explore this question, it is important that I describe the specific aspects of listening that emerged as being crucial to the Earth Forum process, and which are thus invaluable for the Responsible Participant herself, especially in starting out with shaping and guiding Earth Forum.

5.5.1. WE DON'T JUST LISTEN WITH OUR EARS

At the core of the apprenticeship is creating opportunities to develop the Responsible Participants' listening capacities. Alongside this, or perhaps what emerges out of developing one's listening capacities, is expanding one's empathetic literacy, and one's own intuitive capacities when considering what the group needs, and how to respond to difficult questions, and unexpected circumstances that arise from the participants' contributions. Listening however is at the heart of it. I thought at first that the human being listens with her ears, but really she listens by extending what she hears with her imagination, this is something profound that I was introduced to by Sacks. Although she explained this to me early on in our enagement, it was only through experience that I came to realise that listening is not merely a process of taking in sound and perceiving a collection of words. It is an exchange of imagery, thoughts, ideas and other substances. The imaginal faculty is vital in listening, as we all use our imaginations to picture and sense what another person is sharing. We take it in and picture it. As Seth Jordan described in his reflection of listening with his imagination after the Earth Forum apprenticeship:

I really feel that I have noticed the quality or ability of my imagination more since the Earth Forum, like when you do exercise and then you have a muscle that is stiff afterwards and you didn't even know you had that muscle, I just need to work this muscle more, like how a sculptor develops the muscles to sculpt, I am developing mine to listen more carefully.

Through the process of developing Earth Forum with Shelley and others, and through my own experiences as Responsible Participant, I have come to understand listening as having many facets. Even within each Earth Forum itself, participants experience various layers of listening, with each round and each new set of questions; participants explore their listening capacities in a deeper and more attentive form.

Scharmer (2007), in his book on U theory, introduces the idea of 'presencing', which he

describes as a combination of 'sensing' and 'being present', in which being actively attentive, empathetic and being 'completely present' in your listening is crucial. He categorises listening into four forms. The first he describes as 'downloading', which he sees as a form of listening we use to confirm or affirm our knowing. Scharmer (2009) explains that this form of listening is a reconfirming of habitual judgements. He goes on to explain that in downloading, one is just confirming what you think you already know. In addition to this, I have discovered in Earth Forum practice that in this form of listening, one might focus on a particular aspect of what the other has said, and then run off in one's own imagination. Hearing this small part allows a thought to trigger a whole cascade of images, ideas, questions, etc. and so instead of listening further to the whole picture that the other person is trying to share, you run on in your own imagination, almost waiting for others to finish so you can share your own ideas.

Scharmer's (2009) second form of listening he calls 'factual' listening which he says can be seen as an opposite form of listening to downloading. Instead of affirming what you already knew, factual listening is a process of disconfirming what you thought you knew. You either capture new information or seek out new information to formulate new knowing. Scharmer sees this form of listening as object-focused. The listening is attentive to information that is new and asks the listener to set aside their judgments to listen to the other person, and to focus on what differs from their existing ideas or assumptions. He links this kind of listening to scientific enquiry. It's also a process of asking careful questions, in order to get responses that help to understand what new facts are emerging. What is different in the Earth Forum is that there is a layer of listening that asks the listener to set aside judgements, to try to not agree or disagree, but to see the whole picture. It recognises that the Responsible Participant, and indeed the other participants, has the capacity to hold various forms of knowing in their imaginations at the same time. It is possible to hold two opposing ideas and look at them equally without judgement but explore their facets with what Shelley calls 'generous eyes'. So while this new information may 'change your mind' it is also possible to listen without judgement to new information to truly get a clear picture of what is being heard, which I see as an important aspect of empathetic listening. Melanie Lauwaert during her reflection of Earth Forum (EF 35) processes in her apprenticeship had this to say about

listening without judgement:

... what has always been the most difficult was to leave judgement aside in my listening, and so that is something I am always grateful for when I can practice it, in the Earth Forum it somehow is made easy because we begin with sharing something we all can connect with, the earth itself. I see this is so important strengthening our empathetic abilities, and for seeing what the Earth wants and also who we are. It seems to break down our sense of entitlement and separateness.

Another participant in an Earth Forum GIPCA HOT WATER event (EF 11) had this to say:

I felt a lot of empathy for people's views and particular ways in which they talked and what they said about things and the subject they were talking about. For me it was a great way to silence the inner critic and try and really hear what the other is trying to convey, instead of what my own psychological unconscious projections make of it, and at the same time recognising these projections to make them conscious.

Understanding the value of active listening Sarah Thorne during the same apprenticeship reflection (EF 35) had this to say about the role of the Responsible Participant in ensuring this occurs:

I also feel that the role of the Responsible Participant to constantly remind the group of the elements of Active Listening was really important, especially because we can easily forget to actively listen and let our own thoughts run on.

Matt Matre saw the listening as an active facilitative force that encouraged people to speak and share in a way that they would perhaps not normally do:

I also noticed that when we listen, we invite the other to speak in a more open way; there is a certain kind of life force, a certain kind of fertility, a birthing that happens at the meeting point of our active attention and the physical earth. So I think things are able to come to life in a particular and unique way when we invite it through our attentive listening.

Scharmer (2009) separates empathetic listening as a third category of listening in which, he explains, the listener is redirecting their experience to seeing information through the mind's eye of another. It is a process of exploring another person's knowing. Scharmer explains this as being when the listener becomes aware of a profound shift in the place from which their listening originates. Scharmer (2009: 2) distinguishes empathetic listening from factual listening as we move away from listening to the objective world of things, what he calls the 'it-world' and move to listening to the story of a living and evolving self, which he calls the 'you-world'. It is coming to feel what another feels, to picture their story judgement, or what Scharmer (2009: 9) refers to as an 'open heart'. In suggesting this, he proposes that we connect with the other person directly using inner capacities. Scharmer does not however

mention the capacities necessary for this kind of listening. In being a Responsible Participant, and with Earth Forum participants, the primary capacity for this kind of listening that is mobilised is the imagination. I disagree with Scharmer's (2009: 2) explanation of empathetic listening as being a process of feeling what another feels, as in my experience this research shows that it is actually impossible to feel exactly what another feels. One can only picture and try to perceive another person's experience; it is a process of understanding. Feeling what the other feels is perhaps a description of sympathetic listening. I do not have sufficient data from people's reflections of their experiences (either participants or Responsible Participants) to make this claim. I can only describe my own experience of empathetic listening, which was not a process of feeling another person's feeling, but rather a picturing and imagining the person's narrative in its entirety, without becoming lost or following on with my own emotional reactions.

Scharmer implies an endpoint, as if the goal of empathetic listening is to feel the feelings of another, which as I have stated I would define as sympathetic listening, and in my experience, this is profoundly different. Instead, in empathetic listening, the Responsible Participant and the participants she guides are always attempting to *understand* what the other feels. In this way, one's empathetic listening capacities are used constantly in trying to perceive and intuitively imagine where the speaker is taking one, what they are feeling, and how this influences the shape and form of the image, experience or idea they are trying to share. I see empathetic listening as a form of research, a constant intrigue without judgement, exploring what we are hearing from the other carefully and attentively. In this way I was able to choose that the form of empathetic listening that is needed for a Responsible Participant is one that draws from aspects of what Scharmer describes as factual and empathetic listening, but does not draw from sympathetic actions or require the listening to use this new information as something that is limited to opposing their existing knowing. It is, however, likely that the listener will be affected by what they hear and imagine, and empathetically explore, but this does not necessarily need to be the end result as defined in Scharmer's (2009) factual listening. Elizabeth Fletcher in a deep reflection of the Earth Forum process in an interview in July 2012 saw this form of listening as shaping new relationships; it was not merely a

question of sympathy or empathy in listening, but more of a question of vulnerability, which was not necessarily about feeling or emotional listening:

You make new connections with the people who have experienced Earth Forum with you, and through this you create new relationships, but it starts with allowing yourself to be vulnerable. In those circumstances when participants do not allow themselves to become vulnerable it seems that the practice or learning is not as deep or as valuable ... An ideal example was noticing a child and someone from the city council who were participating in the same Earth Forum and how they developed a new kind of understanding and a new relationship. But even not such an exaggerated difference, even I noticed a child and their own parent, developing a new relationship because they have experienced this form of empathetic listening in an Earth Forum, one that was truly trying to perceive without a right or wrong frame. They expressed their own ideas; they were able to present themselves in a new way, without trying to feel whether it was right or wrong. This cannot happen without making oneself vulnerable, everyone in an Earth Forum makes themselves vulnerable by listening and sharing, and this seems to recreate their relationships, as they move away from emotional binary decisions. I feel that Earth Forum enables one to know how to actively listen, how to communicate empathetically rather than sympathetically. The participant is able to share their own very deep thoughts and ideas, and because it is in a context that is unusual and strange, these are ideas that have probably never been raised before even within families, and so I feel it potentially re-creates or re-develops even old relationships, because of the autonomy you are given to share these thoughts without emotional judgements. Because you have shared this experience; this unique thing, you become vulnerable together.

Scharmer (2009) does speak of the empathetic listener feeling a profound switch from traditional forms of listening, and a sense of entering into a new territory in the relationship with the other person that is listening, where the listener forgets their own agenda and begins to see how the world appears in someone else's eyes. This adequately describes the experience of not only the Responsible Participant, but also the participants within the Earth Forum as well, as shown by the data presented earlier from reflection from Melanie (EF 37) and two anonymous participants of Earth Forums (EF 35 and EF 36). It is this sensitivity to the facets of listening that the Responsible Participant needs to explore in their apprenticeship and how one teaches this is a valuable pedagogic question, is something Sarah Thorne raised in her earlier reflection.

Before I address this question further, it is also interesting to note the fourth form of Sharmer's (2009) taxonomy of listening, which he describes as generative listening. This form of listening refers to the sense that is not easy to express in words. Scharmer (2009) describes the listener as feeling their being slowing down. He explains that one feels more quiet and present, and more one's 'real' or authentic self. He says that it is a sense of feeling connected

to something larger than oneself. This is an experience of listening also found in Earth Forum as reflected in this extract from Matt Matre:

I felt also when each of us introduced to each other what we had brought into the Earth Forum space, it wasn't that we were just introducing the others to this piece of the earth but I was introducing each of you to my fertile dialogue with the earth and with my inner thoughts, it was an un-earthing of thoughts, ideas and questions, which I think we would have been unable to share if we had not listened to each other so actively and invited this un-earthing process in each of us ... I had this experience of really noticing that when I was going to speak at a certain point I could actually let myself be able to channel something that was a piece of all of us, or something we all needed to hear, as opposed to me bringing in my own thing. It felt like that there was a current, and I just tuned in and allowed my own expression of that to pass through, and I think that emerged from having everyone listen in the way they did.

Seth's experience was a feeling of 'complete infinity':

I saw myself really entering the earth, not necessarily digging a hole but just dropping into it ... it felt like we had all sunk or dropped down a level, and we were being there, in this relationship to the earth. What really stuck with me, what I saw to be really essential was how it brought both worlds together, that being the business of everyday life and the complete infinity that resides in stopping or being still with each other in a social encounter, the human meeting.

Scharmer (2009: 2) described this form of listening as "moving beyond the current field and connects us to an even deeper realm of emergence". He called this form of listening 'generative' as it is listening from the emerging field of future possibility. He describes this form of listening as a process of not only listening with an open heart as one does in empathetic listening, but also listening with an open 'will' to connect to the "highest future possibility that can emerge". The difference is subtle and experiential, I would see it as listening with intuition, imagination or instinct, yet Scharmer (2009) described the difference by saying that we no longer empathise with someone in front of us, and we are no longer looking at something outside of ourselves; but rather the listener is in an altered state, and the words he used to describe the texture of this experience were 'communion' or 'grace'. I can understand this through Earth Forum experience as perhaps an effortless experience of 'being in and with', where one seems to be, in greater and lesser degrees, listening to the entire experience in an embodied way. However this is not always possible, and perhaps something only experienced by a few, as only Matt and Seth shared their experience in this way. How one can introduce this form of listening in the Earth Forum cannot merely be achieved by saying 'listen to the generative possibility'; that would be counterproductive as it would ask the listener to engage their imagination away from empathetic listening of the

other, inspiring other thoughts or impulses that might take them away from the pictures and experiences shared by the speaker. The concept could also sound abstract to a participant. What is being asked is to listen to not just the content of what the person is saying, but also to listen beyond the content, into the impulse or other substances that can be noticed, that go beyond words; it is therefore a process of opening up the listener to attempt to perceive beyond the literal aspects of what the speaker is saying. I have described how this was somewhat effective in dealing with language barriers in Chapter Four. I had noticed in the Earth Forum in Kimberley (EF 19) what offering this task could inspire in a group, in this case the participants moved in closer and seem to access a deeper form of attentiveness, which could be seen by the contrasting body language they had adopted at the beginning of the process.

The Responsible Participant also encourages others listen to what has not been said, to listen to the impulse from where the person is coming, to sense other 'invisible' components of what is being shared. This subtly would not have been known to me if it was not for the insight of Shelley Sacks, who once reminded me in my early apprenticeship to listen to the feeling and the impulse, not just the words. This more delicate, refined and embodied form of listening is difficult to describe, I have noticed in my experience that it has something to do with the group itself. It is not merely one person listening to one person speaking, but rather an entire group of people listening attentively to one person at a time. The reflections I was able to participate in with apprentice Responsible Participants, allowed for deep thought on these aspects of the process, Melanie's experience offered some support to this idea of honing or focusing the listening of the group, through the shared effect of the group itself:

The connection of going outside and collecting earth and bringing it back along with our thoughts, experiences, feelings, and images, the moment where I was able to share my part to the cloth and to the group, I felt like far more grounded, and I entered into the social relationship much better than before. For me connecting the Earth helped me feel more part of the social group, it gave me a sense of belonging... What I felt was essential was the co-creation or interaction with the Earth. I saw it as two directions, the first is bringing the earth so consciously into the centre, helped us to do certain work and that we needed to do, but also us being there with that kind of attention and working with our own natures and our own attention helped us to be more ourselves, or what we truly are. I found it for me a healing process, very much. To allow each other to be in our full potential and allowing each other to receive what we need at the time, what I received from the earth was a certain certainty and love, and what I could give with my imagination is really those pictures, they are really part of the earth, an expression of the earth

through me being part of it, I really see that as a strong interaction. It reminded us of what we are capable of, and our potential of the whole action of human beings being part of the earth... This really powerful attentiveness and focus was also significant, the fact that noises from the public and the world outside of the circle could not distract us but only focus more inward and more into the group. I have such a hard time usually of being present when there are a lot of things going on, but this time it was so special, we were all just so in it.

The focused group listening seemed to have an invisible yet profound effect on the person sharing and on the listeners' capacities. It is as if the entire Earth Forum circle becomes a single listening organ, capable of picking up these subtle and seemingly invisible forms of information. The oiled cloth forms the connective aesthetic, where the oil itself physically retains aspects of the soil and humus collected by each speaker and listener, while the cloth creates the central universal substrate that all the listener's share, along with the speaker. I would strongly argue that this simple instrument has a great deal to contribute to the form of 'generative' or what I would call active empathetic and embodied listening that emerges in Earth Forum, and is guided and shaped by the Responsible Participant.

Alan Kaplan (2002) suggests the idea of 'active absence', which he described, in his development work with diverse people, as a way of actively creating a space for emergence. He uses the metaphor of an opening *Protea* flower (indigenous South African fynbos flowering plant). The flower's petals seem to create an enclosed bowl-shape in which there seems to be nothing inside, the bowl is empty, but these petals have carefully created a safe sheltered space, free from the wind and elements, for the plant's delicate sex organs to emerge. This image was very helpful for me, and I saw active absence in many natural phenomena. For example the womb is predominately an empty space, but from it emerges something unique and miraculous. In the same way, in social processes and in the social learning environment that exists for citizens in Earth Forum, the oil and the cloth form an 'actively absent' instrument that supports the emergence of new forms of knowing as they come into being, as well as for new capacities to be reached generatively amongst the group. Sarah Thorne's experience of this was that of gathering 'real substance':

I had this amazing image from the Earth Forum that I am still trying to formulate. It has movement, starting off with a movement outward to invite the earth in through bringing something of the earth that moved us, and then shared our journey in the group, so in a way we entered into conversations, but it was more like entering into a listening exchange, and then transformed this material, the leaves, earth, soil, etc.

through that process I realised we created something really amazing, as a group, and through our movements out and in, there was a real substance that we were all able to receive, it was a gift.

Employing Scharmer's Listening 4 (generative), by the end of the conversation you feel transformed, that you are different to the person who began the conversation, as you have undergone a subtle yet profound change that somehow connected you to a deeper source of knowing, which Scharmer (2009) explains as a process that connects the listener to the knowledge of your best future possibility and self. In my experience with *Earth Forum*, Scharmer's Listening 3 (empathetic) and 4 (generative), can occur in the same moment and are not easily distinguishable. Listening with an open heart when engaged with empathetic listening is to listen generously without judgment. This listening capacity goes beyond merely setting aside judgement, but instead listening with the imagination, picturing the other person's experience, while being sensitive to what else is being shared beyond the words. One needs to do this as a devoted action, one that respects the person you are listening to, but also maintains a warmth, heart feeling towards them. It is a loving action, one that Arthur Zajonc (2006) would confirm in his practice of contemplative enquiry.

I found Scharmer's (2009) taxonomy of different forms of listening very helpful, as it made it possible to carefully distinguish what forms of listening were being employed in Earth Forum, and therefore what forms of listening the Responsible Participant would need to be aware of in their work in guiding and shaping an Earth Forum. This leads me back to asking a question on how one 'teaches' a Responsible Participant to become aware of their own intuitive and cognitive sensitivities towards this multifaceted form of active listening.

5.5.2. ADDRESSING EMPATHY IN MORE DETAIL

While researching active listening, a term I had first come across via Shelley, I began to ask myself if a better term would perhaps be 'Active Empathetic Listening' which highlights the value of empathy in active listening. Unsure if I would find any literature on this concept I was surprised to come across the work of Comer and Drolling (1999), who argue that the most effective level of listening combines empathy with the techniques of active listening. I was pleasantly surprised to find this research, but then somewhat disappointed to learn that the

impulse or purpose of Comer and Drolling's (1999) research was to improve marketing and sales management. This to me, seemed like a contradiction, and raised the problem of an ideological agenda for using empathy in your listening, i.e. to sell something, or to develop better marketing practices, would it mean that it really was empathy, was sincerity and authenticity possible with such an agenda? I put my judgment aside, and kept my active empathetic listening capacities engaged while reading. I tried to focus on listening to their work without judgement, without trying to agree or disagree, and through this I gained a deeper understanding of their work. The article provides a rigorous and thorough exploration of listening and the dimensions of empathy, and a dynamic exploration of listening theory. Empathy, of interest to this study, is given much attention in marketing and sales, yet I found it difficult to find similar rigorous work in empathy and active listening in social learning and educational research, and in environmental education research. Given that this became an important aspect of the Earth Forum practice, and through a new understanding that if social change is to emerge in response to 'ecological apartheid' I reasoned that everyone needs to improve their listening in order to respond meaningfully in society. I was able to set my prejudices or scepticism aside, and really appreciate the value of this work.

Comer and Drolling (1999) defined empathy as the ability to discern another person's thoughts and feelings with some degree of accuracy which involves listening on an intuitive as well as literal level. This definition is helpful, particularly as it goes beyond Scharmer's (2009) definition which, without mentioning feeling another person's emotions, as Scharmer does, leads empathy into the realm of sympathy. Comer and Drolling (1999), following an intensive literature review, state that all leading listening theorists agree that listening is a multi-dimensional process (e.g. Brownell, 1985; Stiel, Barker and Watson, 1983) and through empirical demonstrations they show that listening consists of three discrete dimensions (Ramsey and Sohi, 1997), which they conceive of as: sensing, processing, and responding. Comer and Drolling (1999:19) defined 'sensing' as the actual receipt of messages, 'processing' as the activities that take place in the mind of the listener, and 'responding' as acknowledging receipt of messages. These are the stages of listening. In Earth Forum the Responsible Participant does not encourage the 'response' stage but rather leaves this open,

where every person is able to explore their pictures without the other participants responding. Participants are, however, given an opportunity to respond at the end of an Earth Forum. This means that subtle forms of response that are usually employed by listeners like nodding the head, saying 'yes' or 'I hear you' disappear, and the speaker is able to explore all the dimensions of their experience they are not prompted to explore only those thoughts that seemed to be encouraged by the listening. The Responsible Participant makes it clear throughout the process, often repeating themselves, that we are all listening deeply and there is no need to respond. This puts the group at ease, and the listeners do not feel compelled to keep the speaker talking; the speaker feels comfortable and content with the fact that the listeners are listening attentively and actively. Some participants have mentioned that this was very liberating, as they knew they were being listened to, but felt a strong sense of freedom in how they were able to explore their thoughts, questions, images, agendas, feelings, and subtle other impulses. Matt Matre in particular helped me see this element of the work when he reflected on the freedom obtained from not having to respond:

There was a certain strength we all gained from working in relation to each other and exploring connections. The connection between each of us and the connection with the earth and working with all of that together, this was really powerful. I had a real sense of what the air felt like, what we were really involved in ... this attentive zone that we created was so unique and somewhere in the process it was clear to me that the attention solidified something in our connections with each other and with the earth. We all entered into a completely different social space together and that space felt so strong. I think also that we were not expected to respond left us all with a certain level of freedom to listen and be more attentive. In my memory, I can actually go back to what that space feels like ... it made me think and imagine what it would be like if people were working within this potent place, if decisions were made in a space like that, or if inspirations were followed after a process like that, this would be so effective, it would be such a powerful starting point for both individual endeavours and collaborations...

Brenda Martin from Project 90 by 2030, noticed a similar sense of freedom that enabled a deeper reflection and listening:

For me the greatest value was the opportunity to enter a quiet moment of reflection which allowed for wholly unexpected connections to emerge, as well as the freedom to just listen without having to enter into a traditional conversation. It was hugely comforting to share these insights in a safe space where I knew I would be heard, and that I was not expecting others to respond.

Another detailed example comes from Elizabeth, in a written reflection, that later became an

article on the COPART blog¹⁰² in which she explored her first experience as a Responsible Participant near Soweto on the Climate Train, and how the group was able to help someone speak, through deepening their listening capacities and removing the traditional social responses:

I was a Responsible Participant in an Earth Forum for the first time the other day with eight young school children at NASREC station, near SOWETO. It was clunky. I went off with everyone else to collect my handful of earth before laying the cloth out so we ended up trying to shimmy it into place with our elbows while holding our hands cupped, full of earth. Some kids were forthcoming with beautiful offerings like one boy who just stared at his soil and said that he loved it because it was his future. Another girl kept trying to speak but cracked every time into giggles. I could see she was really trying but was just paralysed by fear. I gave her a break from trying and explained to the group that we were there to help each other and to hear each other. I spoke about trust and respect for each other. They could only have been about eight years old but they got it.

So we tried again. We were there to listen to each other and, for this little girl with huge eyes; we would close our eyes to help her. She got as far as "This soil ... (deep breath)... This soil..." until she collapsed into giggles. This time her schoolmates didn't giggle along or shift in their seats. They sensed she was closer to speaking, that she wanted to speak and they wanted to help. For our next try, we closed our eyes for her and she whispered to us, "I love this soil because it makes fruit and vegetable trees for us to eat and we must love it... The rest of her contribution was so quiet it was mouthed with almost no sound at all. But she had shared with the group and broke into a huge grin.

Active listening in social sculpture, and in Sacks' methodological work is somewhat different to the term active listening in Comer and Drolling's (1999) work. For Comer and Drolling (1999: 16), active listening is a process in which the listener receives messages, processes them, and responds so as to encourage further communication (Alessandra, Wexler and Barrara, 1987; Brownell, 1990; Castleberry and Shepherd, 1993). Comer and Drolling (1999: 16) also clarified that active listening is not limited to aural messages, but includes receipt of non-verbal messages as well (e.g. body positioning, eye contact, facial expressions, emotion). In social sculpture practice, and particularly for Earth Forum, traditional non-aural messages (as listed by Comer and Drolling) are not as necessary in an Earth Forum exchange, as the entire shape and form of the social sculpture's connective aesthetic, and the use of the oiled cloth instrument, offer another form of reassurance or 'constant response' that support the speakers to feel confident that they are being heard. The listeners too are able to explore all various dimensions of empathy through their listening, as they are freed from having to reassure the speaker with non-aural messages. For example, speakers are

¹⁰²<http://www.dontcopoutcopart.blogspot.com/2011/11/first-time-i-was-responsible.html>

able to explore aspects of their ideas and thoughts that they would perhaps not explore if the listeners were constantly responding or indirectly directing the course of the conversation through their enthusiastic responses such as nodding, or agreeing out loud with words like 'yes' or 'exactly'. For the listener too, having the culture of the conversation clearly constructed in ways that ensure listening, means that because these social cues are not necessary, the listener can explore finer details or capacities in their listening. These capacities include listening with closed eyes, listening to the non-verbal impulse or feeling that is emerging from the person, or actively following to see the entire narrative in their mind's eye, in their imagination, without having to disrupt this imaginative listening with immediate responses.

Comer and Drolling (1999) explored carefully the role of empathy in active listening, which they call Active Empathetic Listening or AEL. They used Roger's (1959: 210) definition for empathy: "the ability to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy, and with the emotional components and meanings ... as if one were the other person, but without ever losing the 'as if' condition". What I appreciate from Comer and Drolling (1999) is that their consideration that general models of listening incorporate empathy in some form. Some theorists consider empathic capacities inherent in our listening ability, in that empathetic people tend to be good listeners (e.g. Stiel, Barker and Watson 1983; Brownell, 1985, 1990). Others have included empathy within the model itself as an independent dimension (Hunt and Cussela, 1983; Lewis and Reinsch, 1998). While Comer and Drolling concur with the latter group that empathy is an aspect of effective listening, they do not view it as a separate dimension, and through my practice as a Responsible Participant, I would tend to agree. There is a distinct role empathy plays in listening, but I would not go as far as to say that it is independent of our capacity to listen.

Comer and Drolling (1999) go on to highlight the cognitive and affective components of empathy by drawing from Duan and Hill (1996). The cognitive component can be seen as taking a perspective (sometimes referred to as 'cognitive role taking') in which empathy is an intellectual understanding of another person's situation (e.g. Barrett-Leonard, 1962; 1981;

Borke, 1971; Deutsch and Madle 1975; Kalliopuska, 1986; Katz, 1963; Kohut, 1971; Rogers, 1986; Woodall and Kogler-Hill, 1982) and so the cognitive component of empathy in this aspect of empathy theory involves understanding on an objective level. The affective component of empathy is sometimes called 'empathetic concern' and is described as an internal emotional reaction that produces an understanding of another's feelings (e.g. Allport, 1961; Langer, 1967; Mehrabian and Epstein, 1972; Stotland, 1969). Comer and Drolling (1999) described the affective component as more difficult to explicate than the cognitive component, since it involves emotional bonds between people that enable them to sense and process emotional states. I have also noticed in my listening that it is through actively trying to feel this oneself that one skirts the border of sympathy, rather than empathy, as one can get lost in one's own reaction and suite of emotions. A number of listening theorists have adopted the position that "cognitive" and 'affective' aspects are both essential and work together (e.g. Brems, 1989; Hoffman, 1977; Shantz, 1975; Strayer, 1987), while others feel that empathy can be either 'cognitive' or 'affective' depending on the situation (Gladstein, 1983).

I find this attempt in distinguishing the forms of empathy helpful, yet I sense another aspect of our empathic capacity unexplored in listening and empathy theory, that of the role of the imagination in listening and empathy development, which I consider to be a key contribution of this study. One's imaginative capacity is a place in which the rational, conscious and somewhat objective forces are at play, while at the same time subconscious, creative and non-linear impulses are intertwining with rational thoughts. While this is happening within the imagination we can see the influence of a third force: the impulse of the heart. Our emotions also contribute to the shaping and forming of ideas, questions, etc. In the Earth Forum implementation and study, as well as in the Responsible Participant pedagogy development, I have found that through actively and consciously seating empathic listening practice within the imagination, we are able to not only see or come to understand what we are hearing, but we are also able to see ourselves thinking and imagining. Sarah Thorne noticed this in her experience during the Responsible Participant apprenticeship:

It is as if I have just been able to see: being able to see some sort of ability to trust and to just be. I felt like we all have so many capacities that are just in us, and we

probably use more than we are aware of, but I got a clear sense that these seemingly invisible capacities can be further developed after experiencing Earth Forum, the fact that I could see that they were always there, and noticing myself notice them, was amazing for me, that I have access to them all the time.

Similar experiences were noted by Elizabeth Fletcher and Dulcie Hlatwayo (which have been mentioned earlier in their reflections; see Section 4.4). Andrea considered the connection to nature, and active exploration of nature as strengthening her listening and the employment of her imagination in listening:

What aided my imagination it was being in nature... the space was really important. Not only being in nature but also taking away distractions like cell phones, allows you to listen differently... since then I have noticed that I am listening with my imagination, it comes naturally.

Daniel Robinson had seen it as a receptive perceptivity:

I was amazed at where my imagination took me, and I became very aware of my thoughts, and this other 'Daniel Robinson' in my head speaking, and thinking and exploring. There was lots of stuff going on, there were all these things coming into my thoughts at a million miles an hour, and I was unable to pin them all down ... yet later when I came to listening I noticed this same space, but it being remarkably different to just open free imagining, I noticed feeling clear, open and more receptive and perceptive.

In a later interview nine months later Daniel noted that his imagination could also get in his way:

I find listening with my imagination difficult now, as I am a bit of a day dreamer, I get distracted, but I also find myself easily distracted. I do try to listen to my imagination, but it moves on to other things, I have the ability to go into too much detail in my imagination, but I wouldn't say this happened all the time.

This is an interesting point to note: to consider the difference between imaginal contemplation and attentive listening, and to consider the latter as being different from imaginal 'day dreaming' or fantasy. It seemed that in the Earth Forum space Daniel was able to experience imaginal contemplation with ease; this can be seen by him noticing the other 'Daniel Robinson' that was thinking and exploring. In contrast, nine months later outside of the Earth Forum (he incidentally has not participated in an Earth Forum since his apprenticeship), he noticed the effect of his imagination in making him a 'day dreamer' and not a listener. The day dreaming aspect of the imagination is important in the first stage of the Earth Forum, where participants are encountering their own inner thoughts and impulses, as Stephen remembered in an Earth Forum:

I was able to put aside some of my daily administrative concerns, and really let my imagination expand, as soon as I gave it freedom it just flowed ... I got my handful [of soil] from the base of a pine tree, I could see this young pine seed and its potential for life.

Beyond the apprentice's reflections, I noticed in myself, with each Earth Forum that my imagination allowed me to hold onto more than one image, idea, thought, feeling at a time. Even when my own thoughts, and the several thoughts of others that were shared in the space, were contradictory, it was clear that this was different from fantasy or letting my thoughts run on without any control. I remember listening to certain points of view in different Earth Forums that I did not necessarily agree with, but was able to still explore this view and its associated questions despite my own tastes or evaluations. Having the capacity to stay with the other person's thoughts seemed to be enabled through the use of imaginal listening, i.e. listening by picturing and sensing the other point of view, sincerely imagining what the other person is sharing without judgement or evaluation. This particular method of imaginal listening I gained through observing and listening to how Shelley conducted those early processes with others in Cape Town, Laingsburg and Johannesburg (EF 1, 2, 3 and 4), where she too saw imagination as central to this process.

Why it is central is something I came to notice in applying this work across the country in so many different contexts. I would argue that empathy development is a product of (but not limited to) imaginal listening. If this is the case, then it would reconcile both the cognitive and affective quality of empathy, as one can observe a third higher layer of contemplation, which is able to see both these aspects at the same time, from a wider more imaginative contemplative objectivity. This is vital for rethinking environmental education practice where there are often contradictions in certain environmental responses, or indeed in different individuals' or organisations' ideas of progress. Much of the environment discourse is centred around decision making, and disagreements of specific decisions (Greenwood, 2009). I have come to understand through Earth Forum implementation that these should not necessarily become points of conflict; instead these very tensions can become opportunities for learning, and can expand citizen's pictures of progress and agency if they are addressed through an imaginal listening practice that engenders empathetic contemplation that manages judgement

and impulsive response. The strategies that have emerged in this study, particularly those in Earth Forum, that enable social exchange and learning that allows for non-evaluative, contemplative and non-impulsive response through imaginal listening capacity development, are significant to enabling Environmental Education practice, and other environmental practices, as they expand the opportunities for citizens to consider each other's agendas and proposals with a greater level of sincere empathy. If the goal of environmental learning as Kronlid (2009) states, is one that expands people's ability to act, their ability to explore their capabilities, and their expression of their valued beings and doings, this can only be achieved through sincere and open-hearted exchange between all citizens, where each perspective and valued outlook is sincerely considered and imagined. Whether she is a farm worker, mayor, a landless person, a mine owner, a young child or a parent, she requires the same capacity to listen sincerely and empathetically. Kronlid (2009: 34) stated that "learning is possible and learning conditions are likely to be improved if learner's spaces of capabilities are expanded and enriched". I would argue that expanding the imaginative capacity of citizens in their listening and empathetic contemplation is vital for environmental learning, and in addressing the disconnections inherent in ecological apartheid. Particularly if the apartheid is defined to include the separation between people and each person's inner valued 'beings and doings'.

Considering then empathy development in this process, it is important to consider whether empathy is a trait or a process as described by Duan and Hill (1996). As a trait it is a disposition or an enduring quality within people (e.g. Book, 1988; Hoffman, 1984; Kerr, 1948), while as a process, empathy is seen as situation specific and occurs in a sequence of stages (Barrett-Lennard, 1962; Grenson, 1960, 1967; Rogers, 1957). These stages of empathy are mapped by Comer and Drolling (1999: 20) as follows:

1. Empathetic resonance: similar to sensing, refers to the reception of subtle messages from others;
2. Received empathy: similar to processing, refers to the perception or awareness of the message and involves intuitive understanding of it;

3. Expressed empathy: similar to responding, refers to the cues that the empathetic individual sends back, signalling that the subtle message has been received and processed.

In my view then a Responsible Participant would be aiming to actively encourage an *empathetic resonance* (1) as well as *received empathy* (2) among the participants in an Earth Forum. She would however limit the *expressed empathy* (3) in the form of a verbal response, as the practice needs to avoid opportunities to agree or disagree, and should rather encourage imaginatively listening and contemplation. The particular and somewhat peculiar (suitably strange) shape and form of the Earth Forum exchange, i.e. the circular seating, the oiled cloth on the ground, the explicit activity of active listening observed by all the participants, seems to reassure participants that everyone is listening and focusing, and the space inherently feels attentive and conducive for empathetic contemplation. As Stephen Davis explained: "It opens up spaces for empathy, and I don't know of anything else that I have worked with that can do that in such a short amount of time". Also other Responsible Participants Elizabeth Fletcher, Matt Matre, Seth Jordan, Melanie Lauwaert and Sarah Thorne reflected similar insights in earlier quotations in this chapter. Matt described it as an 'attentive zone'; Sarah described it as a 'collective group image'; while Melanie remembered that "the world outside of the circle could not distract us but only focus (our attention) more inward and more into the group". Elizabeth described it as a safe insular 'glass igloo': it "is a totally different space, and that makes working together so much easier..." She describes how the listener does not: "feel obliged to respond in a particular way ... but is able to really receive my story, it allowed him to be receptive, and take it in and only respond afterwards, and allowed me to say what I needed to say". This was not limited to the Responsible Participant's experiences; participant Kyla Davis saw her concentration grow deeper in the space: "There were lots of distractions: cars, sun in my face, wind but it became easier to concentrate as the session grew deeper". Christelle Terreblanche described it as a process of "gluing things together". Sonia Koopman saw it as an opening for people to find their own ideas and questions: "you just drop your guard, you connect, you let go, you listen, you take in ... It gives so much room for people to find their own ideas and their own questions."

I consider this to be a process of absencing traditional forms of expressed empathy, through shaping the exchange and learning arena in a way that engenders a culture of listening and contemplation without impulsive response. The other participants are comforted and reassured that everyone is listening; they do not need the usual social gestures and words to encourage further verbal reflection. This opens them up to explore their own inner imaginal substances without them being guided by outside influences and cues. It seems to encourage idiosyncratic authenticity. From these reflections I came to notice that the responsible and regular participants were able to explore deeper not only their cognitive and affective empathetic sense, but also to be witness to these aspects from a higher more contemplative imaginative space, that freed them from conventional norms of verbal feedback or responding gestures. I would argue that this encourages emergence, and the possibility of maintaining in the group an 'active absence' suggested by Kaplan (2002), free from other people's evaluations and reactions, and therefore encouraging an unfolding or emergence of unique imaginal substance from the participants.

5.5.3. ADDRESSING LISTENING PEDOGOGIES IN EARTH FORUM

A fundamental finding in this study has been the consideration of the subtle and nuanced idea that listening and empathy are both housed in the imagination, or in what we could call imaginal contemplation. This means that in a Responsible Participant apprenticeship, active listening becomes a creative or artistic method of seeing another and seeing phenomenon that shape the world. What is required in a Responsible Participant apprenticeship that develops these sensitivities is an in-depth, contemplative and reflective process that would rely on not only practical instruction, but also lived experiences in which the Responsible Participant apprentice is able to draw and act from their intuition and imagination. Therefore the apprenticeship requires the development of specific forms of agency (empathetic and intuitive agency) which are determined by the quality of their ability to listen, notice, pay attention, and consider the unseen or invisible forces, through imaginal contemplation, which are at play within a group.

Through careful contemplative inquiry both through my own phenomenological practice, as well as through open collective reflections with Shelley and other apprentice Responsible Participants, I have come to identify some of the key strategies needed to encourage the learning and agency development of Responsible Participants:

1. Reflective seminars to engage key principles:

There are key principles of the Earth Forum shape and form that are carefully explored either in reflective groups through a three-day intensive apprenticeship process, or throughout an apprenticeship (usually before and after an Earth Forum). These reflective discussions act much like a seminar or tutorial, in which prospective Responsible Participants are able to engage with the fundamental components of the Earth Forum process such as how to go about inviting participants for an event, how to select a suitably strange setting to encourage the imaginations of participants and lift them out of the traditional understandings of meetings, how to select and arrange seating, how to place the cloth, among other practical details. This section focuses mainly on practical 'sculpting' of the Earth Forum shape and form, so that it is ready for the process. These subtle details have method to their 'madness', for example ensuring everyone is seated on chairs of a same height, plays a significant subconscious role in encouraging the participants to trust each other, and to feel a sense of community. These reflective seminars aim to reveal to the prospective Responsible Participants, the reasons behind some of the very clear suggestions when it comes to sculpting the shape and form of any particular Earth Forum.

2. Actual practice and experience of Earth Forums:

Once the apprentice Responsible Participants have explored the theoretical details of establishing an Earth Forum, they explore the finer details of the actual practice. They explore the stages of the Earth Forum, and the specific questions offered in the process. They explore theoretical aspects of 1) active listening, 2) presencing, and 3) the role of the intuitive imagination. All the while through this process, questions become the main directing force of the process, with apprentices having the freedom to question and challenge the reason or impetus behind particular actions, forms or practices. This was a very useful process as it

helped me shape and re-edit the Earth Forum handbook that the apprentices use throughout these reflective seminars, and will carry with them after their apprenticeship and into their lives and subsequent work as a Responsible Participant. In particular the theory behind active listening and imaginal perception and contemplation are explored (extract from the handbook, page 6):

... Listening is not a passive process. When I listen to you it creates thoughts and images, one could say, movements, in me. But these movements usually have to do with my response to what you think and see. I agree with some things that you say and disagree with others. Some of what I hear relates perhaps to my own ideas and thoughts. So whilst listening to you I already go off into my own world. Perhaps I do not even hear properly what you say, because I am so involved with liking and disliking or adding my own points of view. Often I can hardly wait for you to finish so I can put forward my point of view. And if we then start discussing what you have said we can quickly get into a to and fro of arguing, trying to persuade, debating the pros and cons of what we each are saying. This kind of listening has – one could say – mainly to do with antipathy and sympathy. But to really hear what another has to say we have to remove the agreement and disagreement. We have to try and stay with the person, with their pictures, with their thoughts, and see what they see and feel, without agreeing and disagreeing and letting our own thoughts run on internally. A good way to do this and focus more sharply on what someone is saying – to become a more active listener – is to consider what is being said in three ways. We can listen for the content of what is being said, we can listen to the feeling with which it is being said, and we can try and listen to what is not being said, to get a sense of the impulse or motivation in what is being said.

Regarding imagination, page 9 of the handbook states:

... Every human being has the capacity to imagine: The next step is to introduce the imaginative capacities we all have and to explore carefully how these can be used. You can say it like this: "Every human being has this amazing ability to make pictures in their mind, to imagine the past, present and even look into the future. We each have access to this space in our minds, a dome within which we can all make pictures and creatively explore the world. This imaginative capacity allows us to experience each other worlds and to appreciate the differences."

These of course are added to through the apprenticeship, in which these ideas are explored in depth through conversation, questioning and contemplation.

3.Supported Practice:

After the theoretical reflective seminars or contemplative exchange between Responsible Participant and apprentices, there are two options that follow which are determined by the size of the group. I discovered in my earlier work with apprenticeship in South Africa, a small group of two or three was easier to work with using an 'apprentice' model. As mentioned earlier, this involved setting up a number of Earth Forums with other citizens, in which I (the

teaching Responsible Participant) guided the forums. The apprentices then carefully observe the Responsible Participant's actions in guiding the process, and question and reflect on her approach after each Earth Forum. After two or three Earth Forums, when an apprentice is feeling confident to host an Earth Forum, they conduct the process supervised by the Responsible Participant, who will only interfere when necessary and if it would be an opportunity for learning. The other option with larger groups is for two or three Responsible Participants to set up 'apprenticeship days', where apprentices form small groups of three or four, and conduct among themselves a mini-Earth Forum, going through all the stages and considering all the aspects. The Responsible Participant trainers then move from group to group, observing the processes, and interrupting only when necessary. After three or four rounds, when each apprentice has had the opportunity to explore being a Responsible Participant in these mini forums, the group reconvenes and reflects further. Judging from the questions that emerge, and how the rest of the apprentice group responds to them, one can gauge if they are ready to lead the processes themselves.

4. Supported networks/ communities of Earth Forum practice:

We (collective reflections of Shelley and myself) have found that in Germany and South Africa, grouping the new responsible participants into groups of three or four in their own towns offers the opportunity for them to support each other in their early development as Earth Forum Responsible Participants. If they are working in groups, it is better that they share a cloth and handbook between the group. In other circumstances, if new Responsible Participants are on their own, they would work with their own cloths. The handbook then plays a crucial role from this point onwards. It carefully outlines the stages, and the particular aspects of the process, for the new Responsible Participant to refer back to if they are feeling stuck, or unsure. I have learned after interviewing Responsible Participants after their apprenticeship, that they are constantly learning and developing their capacities as they do more Earth Forums, and there is a need to find one's own 'style' in implementing the craft. I found this in my own work as a Responsible Participant too. Stephen Davis in an email after his first solo Earth Forum (see Figure 35) as Responsible Participant said:

Just wanted to let you guys know that I "responsibly" participated in my first solo Earth Forum on Tuesday. We had a very diverse group in the WESSA (Wildlife and

Environmental Society of South Africa) programme, which made it awesome. It's been raining truckloads here so we had to do it inside. I had to refer to the book quite a bit, and found that I had to find my own style as in my mind I kept noticing how I compared what I was saying and how I was being to how you do and be, Dyl. As I've only been in Earth Fora with you as Responsible Participant, and you set the bar high, this was difficult to avoid. At the same time I also allowed my own style to come through. The sharing in the first few stages was very authentic, and the listening was also great. I realised that the authenticity of the sharing and the depth of listening are positively related. The later stages I struggled to some degree, but overall think it went very well.



Figure 36: The WESSA Earth Forum, conducted by Stephen Davis after his apprenticeship. Stephen (top left image) is seated on left with the red scarf. The top left image shows the beginning of the process, with the blank oiled cloth. The top right image shows the soil and humus contributions from the WESSA participants. The bottom left images shows an 'unscripted' process after the Earth Forum, where Stephen followed the suggestions of one of the participants to lie down and place their heads on the cloth next to their physical contributions. The bottom right image shows the typical final act in an Earth Forum, where participants gather together their contributions. Image courtesy of Stephen Davis.

At the heart of this study, and of learning to be a Responsible Participant is intuitively working as a fully embodied human being and fellow earthling. The experience of an earthling embodiment was reflected eloquently by Melanie:

... being there with that kind of attention and working with our own natures and our own attention helped us to be more ourselves, or what we truly are. I found it for me a healing process, very much. To allow each other to be in our full potential and allowing each other to receive what we need at the time, what I received from the

earth was a certain certainty and love, and what I could give with my imagination is really those pictures, they are really part of the earth, an expression of the earth through me being part of it, I really see that as a strong interaction. It reminded us of what we are capable of, and our potential of the whole action of human beings being part of the earth... This really powerful attentiveness and focus was also significant.

I have come to realise that to encourage and develop this embodiment, the capacities required are accessible within every person, as they involve the imagination, the ability to listen carefully and to develop one's empathetic abilities. These were capacities Shelley saw in me from the start, and by seeking them out, experiencing them and coming to understand them in an embodied sense I could see how every person had access to them. This research has shown that it is through the active listening process, that the imagination and empathy can be expanded. This has been corroborated by the testimonies of apprentice Responsible Participants who have in this chapter shared how attentive listening played a vital role in developing an empathetic space and capacities that encourage empathy. For example, Sarah mentioned these latent capacities being developed:

I felt like we all have so many capacities that are just in us, and we probably use more than we are aware of, but I got a clear sense that these seemingly invisible capacities can be further developed after experiencing Earth Forum.

Matt saw it as an un-earthing process:

... it wasn't that we were just introducing the others to this piece of the earth but I was introducing each of you to my fertile dialogue with the earth and with my inner thoughts, it was an un-earthing of thoughts, ideas and questions, which I think we would have been unable to share if we had not listened to each other so actively and invited this un-earthing process in each of us...

Melanie said: "I see this is so important strengthening our empathetic abilities, and for seeing what the Earth wants and also who we are". Elizabeth noticed the same: "you both know how to actively listen, you communicate differently, and you have the ability to". This was not limited to the apprenticeship; it was achievable for any Earth Forum participant, such as Dulcie Hlatwayo from the Pretoria Earth Forum (EF 25) who seemed particularly moved by the transformative effect of active listening and imaginal perception (full quote in previous Section 4.4):

I am changed. I see differently. It is as if my eyes are no longer just my eyes but have become windows to unknown worlds where mysteries are revealed and beauty is beheld in ways I could never have imagined before.

5.5.4. FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE PEDAGOGY FOR AN ECOLOGICAL CITIZEN

To teach or introduce someone to listen actively and engage imaginal perceptivity, I have found, you have to begin by learning how to listen yourself, and then make opportunities available for others to explore their own listening abilities. This is what Shelley had done for me when we began our collaboration, she let me discover my own listening and empathetic capacities myself. This is something that forms the foundation of this study, and I would argue is in the bedrock of developing this apprenticeship process. It is important to also call it an 'apprenticeship' and not 'training', as training can be perceived as something that seems militant, working from instruction into conformity (Popkewitz, 2001). From my experience with Earth Forum learning, it engages the embodied human being, and their intuitive capacities, through enabling personal freedom. It is not a learning to conform, but rather a learning to personally flourish while simultaneously improving one's intuitive relational agency. Through a social exchange and learning reciprocation, it becomes a process of induction into artisanal embodied knowledge and skill. While the term 'apprentice' has its own historical context, and seems like a dusty old concept, I argue that there is indeed a need for interpersonal exchange of skill and knowing, through a collaborative inquiry that emerges through an apprentice-mentor relationship. I have shown that this process is an active experiential process that cannot exist only in abstract theory, but needs to be developed through grounded reflexive practice. I have shown that this requires time and a commitment to collaboration. I, in reflecting on discussions with Shelley Sacks in relation to the different forms of pedagogy we developed, have also argued that rapid inductions can work for the busy 21st century world, but they need to be founded in an ongoing social practice of reflexive exchange and learning.

I have carefully explored the vital role of active listening, and the role that imaginal perception and contemplation have in developing empathy. Empathy is not merely a passive inherent capacity, but is also something that can be developed and expanded through learning and personal and relational agency development. I have also shown in this work that, central to this pedagogy, is creating a new social arena that can limit impulsive response, while maintaining an atmosphere of trust and reassuring participants that they are being heard,

despite the absence of conventional verbal and non-verbal gestures that show one is listening. The oiled cloth, the seated circle, and the practice of active listening, replaces our traditions of listening and evaluating at the same time, with listening through empathetic picturing that attempts to control judgement and response, thus opening the space for emergence and free imaginal thinking. I infer at the end of this chapter that this study's greatest contribution to environmental education pedagogy is:

1. The contribution and value of active empathetic listening as a vital strategy for socially constituted learning.
2. That this form of listening can only be achieved and learning through enabling the development of imaginal perception and contemplation.
3. Vital in delivering this learning to citizens and potential Responsible Participants, is the practice of apprenticeship and induction.
4. The final lesson from this collaborative inquiry into pedagogy development for the ecological citizen is considering the value of embodiment: the recognition of sentience of people and place, and the need to solidify the relationships and interconnectedness we share. As Stephen Davis reflected on his first experience with Earth Forum in Grahamstown: "... it fostered and enhanced people's ability to connect and love each other. To be unified in their purpose. The Earth Forum was a key ingredient in solidifying the bond between people and the earth ..."

Without trying to overgeneralise I would say that if we are to respond to ecological apartheid by developing the capacities of ecological citizens, it will certainly need to be through a social process, which includes and makes visible the Earth, and which enables and makes space for (and respectfully recognises) the intuitive human being's imagination and their ability to listen, perceive, contemplate and empathise. I therefore contend that intuitive empathetic imaginal listening is vitally important for Environmental Education and environmental practice in general. I have shown that it shows promise in encouraging socially reflexive contemplation, and empathetic perception of people's inner questions and thinking. This would be useful in all forms of decision making and negotiation between citizens, as it has been shown to foster sincere exchange between human beings that is not impulsive but

contemplative. How this is incorporated into wider pedagogy needs to be critically and deeply considered on all levels of environmental and ecological action. I discuss this further in Chapters Six and Seven.

CHAPTER SIX

OVERALL LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS

"[The problem is] that of recovering the continuity of aesthetic experience with normal processes of living."

John Dewey (1934)

6.1 COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH AND REFLEXIVITY

As I described in Chapters Two and Three, methodological development in this research drew from a collaborative practice-led approach to methodological design and development, which in some ways can be seen as an alchemical process, particularly because of the subsequent reflexivity I applied to what I learned in practice. The 'prima-materia' or base materials that exist in a chaotic form can be seen in my early work in the Arkwork Collective (Chapter Three) and in the exploratory phase, I spent time carefully (in collaboration) separating out vital components of this work, rigorously examining where the opportunities for learning were, and in what ways these influenced agency development. These initial explorations into agency development in this study led me to distinguish between a need for *personal* and *relational agency* that could be encouraged and enabled through expanding specific intuitive and creative capacities, capacities that were at the time, still out of my reach or conception. My description of 'personal agency' during this period of study referred to a person's ability to act or respond to a particular challenge, specifically relating to the capacity one has to visualise a problem, consider ways of responding to that problem, and then act constructively in dealing with that problem. Agency is however deeply dependent on structures and at the time I was indeed aware of the interplay between agency and structure (Sen, 1993; Lister, 2004; Gell, 1998; Archer, 2007). During this stage of the research I found it necessary to look at agency in three forms, relating to a single human being, and their context within a community. Yet in my collaborations with people in this work I noticed that there seemed to be a loss of the 'personal' or the 'intimate' in how we interact with each other, and how we learn. I drew from Suzi Gablik's (1992: 4) consideration of a growing movement towards a personal and related experience of the world, rather than a solely individual experience; in her words: "... an

emerging of self that is no longer isolated and self-contained in practice, but relational and interdependent". The word 'individual' denoted for me 'single' or 'separate', a separation of the self from those around one, an island, yet in my observations I noticed that we live surrounded by people with whom we are intimately connected, and rely on for support, decision making, and countless other forms of guidance and care. This separation seemed to fuel my experience of ecological apartheid, and the belief that our actions are indeed a product of our personal and relational abilities. Yet in the professional world we are often encouraged to act and practice as individuals; one is typically expected to work as an individual during a doctoral study. In this research study I wanted to work in an ecological way that was relational, collaborative and interconnected, yet also maintain my own personal reflexivity and rigour and track my own experience of personal agency, alongside my growing understanding of agency itself. I came to realise that while each of us is unique and retains a peculiar and ultimately personal way of learning and knowing in the world (Ellingson, 2009), it does not mean that our idiosyncratic ways of making meaning should lead to isolated individuals learning and doing. Therefore an ability to act or respond at a personal level as an individual human being still relies on our response in relation to those around us: it was ecological, and therefore this study reflected this in its collaborative practice-based nature. I therefore came to describe agency as consisting of a personal agency that is deeply intertwined with what I called 'relational agency'. This was a fundamental insight toward agency which contributed to the approach of the research question (that of developing the agency of the ecological citizen during a time of separateness or ecological apartheid). Another aspect to 'personal agency' which I only discovered later on in the research was the disconnections experienced within an individual, which I further explore in this chapter. Mukute (2010) revealed in his work, using both agentic talk and reflective talk in a series of expansive learning processes, that it is possible to identify and distinguish between individual, collective and relational forms of agency, showing that there is more to agency than merely considering the single individual.

These early iterative stages allowed me to begin with small practices, small actions, from which I could reflexively adjust and transform the collaborative learning and practice research

and develop an intuitive sensitivity to this work. It drew from my own inner reflections as well as collaborative exchange with others involved in the work in order to develop such sensitivities. It began with developing my own imaginal, attentive and empathetic capacities. It was during these initial stages, particularly working with waste collected from the dumps as the primary connective aesthetic (see Section 1.6), that I was able to see the transformative possibilities in matter, that were equally possible in transformative learning and agency development in our exchanges as human beings. Beginning with small actions, and a deep reflexive or contemplative practice that occurred in parallel to this process, enabled me to observe and work with possibilities that at first were invisible in my early observations. As I progressed in this practice I was faced with two very crucial tipping points (Chapter 3, Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2) which changed how I conducted research collaboratively, and allowed me to rethink and re-imagine new forms in which learning could be achieved in a social practice. I did not lose sight, however, of maintaining a connective aesthetic practice that was linked to an inner and outer, personal and public reflexive research process, which I only came to articulate through an iterative deliberation on my practice and methods within the context of the field of social sculpture and through the generous support of, and collaboration with Shelley Sacks and others. It was in the self-devised apprenticeship with the field of social sculpture and the pioneering work of Shelley Sacks that I further explored collaborative inquiry and practice-led research which she encouraged. This was made possible through periodic visits at the Social Sculpture Research Unit, long recorded discussions, and incorporating Earth Forum into her work the University of the Trees by her invitation. I was able to obtain tangible and experiential understandings of social sculpture strategies and pedagogies that enable and encourage robust forms of social learning that respond to a wide variety of challenges, although Shelley does not refer to this as social learning, but rather transformation. Through my own experience, and reflexive practice I came to see how social sculpture is a widely applicable and accessible research practice and theoretical field. What was significant in my observations was that the social sculptor does not focus on the problems alone, but because she includes the fully embodied human being she is able to expand the potential for social transformation and learning. The social sculptor has various forms of knowing latent within her that are accommodated and enriched in the research

process, which is a shifting and evolving action.

The social sculpture apprenticeship and Earth Forum collaboration offered me a reflexive vantage point and opportunity from which I could review my previous work in Arkwork, COPART and the Climate Fluency Exchange and reflect on it with rigorous scrutiny, as it offered opportunities for continued collaborative practice-based inquiry. Central to this observation was the importance of imaginal contemplation and intuition as capacities that enable personal agency, as well as assist in listening and communication to encourage relational agency by developing empathetic capacities. Valuable to both personal and relational agency was the contribution these collective capacities had on developing moral intuition or what Steiner (1995) refers to as moral imagination.

Through the iteration of social sculpture discourse, in practice and theory during my apprenticeship, ongoing discussions and collaboration with Sacks, I came to piece together how Sacks had uniquely assimilated the work of Goethe, Steiner, Schiller, Jung, amongst many other contemporaries such as Zajonc, Scharmer and Hillman, to develop an idea that began with Beuys in the social sculpture field of research and action. She shared these insights openly and freely during long discussions and reflections, and she invited me to sit in on lectures with her postgraduate classes, and to join in discussions with other research fellows and guests she invited to join her and I in exploring some of these questions, ideas and phenomena. It was clear from the beginning that to truly work with and critically investigate social sculpture and its potential to social learning, and in particular its potential value in the education of the ecological citizen, I would need to do this through personal experience of the strategies (i.e. through an apprenticeship), and not merely through reading about the work in an instructional way. Shelley had added to this social sculpture discourse not merely through traditional forms of action research, but rather through a continual 'connective aesthetic' practice-led approach, where as an artist, she constantly sought out the 'most appropriate form' in which to respond to particular hardened, static or chaotic social, economic, environmental, political reality (Sacks, 2011d: 84). In her over 30 years of research in this way, with many social sculpture projects which have been active for decades, and with

the development of an entire research unit in an academic institution, Sacks has expanded the possibilities for practice-based research in a unique and accessible way, so that they are useful for (but not limited to) researchers in social learning and environmental education. My apprenticeship to Sacks in the field of social sculpture, her wider research community, and gaining an understanding of her methods was crucial in the development of my application and adjustment of these methods on the ground, and in my articulation of these methods and theories in the context of developing a pedagogy for ecological citizenship. The collaborative nature of this research understandably makes the boundaries between my research and that of Shelley's, and indeed the other participant researchers in this project difficult to define. Shelley encouraged social engagement and reflexivity around these questions, constantly creating spaces for new places and opportunities for people to participate in collaborative inquiry, as she said in a discussion with Lara Kruger and myself: *"... then if you could think of any people who could help be involved or brought to the table around those questions..."*

Despite the collaborative nature of this work, for clarity it is important to note that my own research contribution is unique in that it is the first of its kind to rigorously examine the methods and theories of social sculpture; as a pedagogical process and practice which is formally located in the field of art but has applicability in the field of social learning and education in general. A systematic inquiry of social sculpture through robust implementation on the ground, across of a wide demographic in the context of environmental education, and in particular in the development of a pedagogy for ecological citizenship, is also a unique contribution of this study. In addition to this, the earlier aspects of creative social learning research, prior to my apprenticeship in social sculpture and collaboration with Shelley Sacks, (covered in Chapter Three) were used to correlate and add experiential context in which I could compare the unique contribution social sculpture has in articulating a methodological approach to learning and agency development (both personal and relational) that was collaboratively developed and articulated through practice-led inquiry.

During the collaborative experiences with Sacks and others developing Earth Forum, I began to see the merits of social sculpture and collaborative-practice based research in developing

methodologies and pedagogies for socially enabled forms of learning, mostly as social sculpture theory incorporates that which you observe or intend to try understand, as an active participant in the research itself. I found that the development of an intuitive, contemplative and reflexive research process (as described in Chapter Two and reported in Chapters Three to Five) lends itself to creating social learning arenas that are robust, accessible and enabling, and that allow for embodied, intuitive and creative exchange as opposed to linear rational knowledge transfer, a point which I reflect on further in Chapter Seven.

Finally, while I indeed gained a great deal of insight into social sculpture through this apprenticeship, I have shown in Chapters Three, Four and Five how the implementation of this work was my own project, and indeed my personal reflexive iteration was a rigorous process that was led by my own initiative and agency. The social premise of this research however, cannot avoid the relational realities of social interaction, and due to the focus of this study in developing pedagogies that examine in detail methodological developments and contributions to socially constituted forms of learning, a collaborative and participatory research practice was crucial for the instigation of this study. I have therefore, throughout the study communicated these relationships carefully and rigorously.

6.2 SCULPTING SOCIAL PRACTICE

As articulated in Chapters One and Two, Joseph Beuys' theory of sculpture was integral in providing the theoretical foundation for the contemporary field of social sculpture, and subsequent practice-led social sculpture research. Beuys' sculpture theory saw an expansion of the concept of sculpture to move beyond the realm of traditional art, and into the social, ecological, economic and political sphere. This theory is concerned with the potential capacity each human being has to transform the conditions that shape their lives (Beuys, 1974), which is useful in further articulating and developing the features that constitute personal and relational agency, particularly as social sculpture theory and practice is primarily interested in agency, and the human being's potential for transforming static states. Considering Beuys' alchemical influences (introduced to me by Sacks), the potential to move between unlimited possibility (chaos/sulphur) and solidified or static states (form/salt) is achieved through

warmth work (Sacks, 2007b). As Sacks has further developed social sculpture practice and an articulation of what this 'warmth work'¹⁰³ consists of methodologically and theoretically, one is able to be the mercurial force, or the movement force between these states of being. In this way warmth work in social sculpture practice is fundamentally concerned with both personal and relational agency, as it attempts to create alchemical movement and enable human capacities for transformation that are both internally reflective (personal), as well as concerned with the relationships and nature of outer realities both physical and social (relational). The most appropriate form that is used to achieve this is developed through collaborative-practice based research that is accessible to the human being in a particular context. I have shown through an initial exploration into my own intuitive naive and somewhat clumsy practice-led research, as well as the examination and implementation of social sculpture methods on the ground, how one can conduct collaborative-practice based research that utilises creative connective practice in agency development. I have collaboratively (across disciplines) developed a new approach with regard to learning socially, and capacity development for ecological citizenship, that focuses its attention on ecological apartheid and separateness. Employing connective practice that considers aesthetic form and shape in expanding capacities of human beings has been the primary contribution of this study, particularly in developing pedagogies that encourage personal and relational agency in the context of ecological apartheid. None of which would have been possible without the generous participation of the wider community I worked with and collaborative invitation from Sacks and the SSRU. The 'invisible materials'¹⁸⁵ or substances that exist between people in their relationships, although invisible to the eye, or to our more obvious senses, does not mean that these substances do not exist, and cannot be worked with as an artist would work with clay or wax.

I have detailed how social sculpture offers pedagogies and practices that expand our senses, through developing 'new organs of perception'¹⁰⁴, or what Goethe called 'delicate empiricism' and contributes to an intuitive approach to research that accommodates various forms of

¹⁰³ A term first used by Joseph Beuys (1977); see Chapters One and Two.

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter Two, a term developed by Goethe and used by Sacks in social sculpture theory, as well as by Zajonc in contemplative enquiry and in Scharmer's U-theory.

knowing (Sacks, 2011e). These are vital for social practice, as they offer not only the possibilities for transformation through an unfolding (Kaplan, 2002; 2005) or emergent approach to research, but 'warm up' or create space for heart-thinking (Hillman, 1998), the warmth character of thought (Beuys, 1977), or contemplative inquiry (Zajonc, 2003, 2006), in which love and knowledge are not separated. The warming up of contemplative inquiry or 'heart-thinking' that social sculpture offers, and that which has been shown to be accessible in Earth Forum (see testimonials from Chapters Four and Five corroborate this), has been another contribution to my understanding of the features of personal agency development. It also enables an expansion of capacities that encourage inner reflexivity, or what Archer (2007) called the 'internal conversation' which she argued is vital for agency development for making our way in the world. Having methods such as those experienced in the first few stages of the Earth Forum specifically (see pages 9-10 of Appendix A) create opportunities and an ability to address the disconnect or ecological apartheid that exists within our own beings, and encourages the formulation of an individual's ability to imagine their own 'valued beings and doings' as described by Sen (1993).

This is not to say that the learning socially in social sculpture practice intends to be an emotional, romantic or sentimental process, but one that intuitively feels and empathetically senses the phenomena in a social situation, or in other circumstances, enabling the full embodied potential of the socially and ecologically learning human being. This approach lends itself to ecological citizenship as it creates a sincere and respectful space in which new ideas or proposals for development can be explored not simply through rational thought, but through creative, intuitive and imaginal practice. In this way citizens can work with challenges with regard to contested ideas for progress in an egalitarian and open way. This was experienced in the contribution of the Climate Train Earth Forums in the development of the Draft African Charter, and with pictures of progress that were shared in Namboomspruit (EF 27), Polokwane (EF 29), and in Soweto (EF 23). In addition, this contribution of Earth Forum was corroborated by the experience of apprentice Responsible Participant's reflections. See for example, Matt's comment:

... it made me think imagine what it would be like if people were working within this potent place, if decisions were made in a space like that, or if inspirations were followed after a process like that, this would be so effective, it would be such a powerful starting point for both individual endeavours and collaborations.

Similarly Elizabeth Fletcher shared: "it is totally different space, and that makes working together so much easier".

The learning can be equitable and not a process of 'knowledge transfer' but rather a delicate, intimate and respectful exchange of knowledge that accommodates the human beings' various ways of knowing (Sacks, 2007b; 2011d; Ellingson, 2009) and respects and includes the social and ecological phenomena that surround the learning human being.

This innate human potential to work with these social substances exists, as it occurred to me intuitively in my early explorations in Arkwork, TippingPoint and COPART. Without understanding social sculpture theory entirely, I created spaces in which I could work more intuitively, and accommodate my own personal variations in knowing and researching the world. However these early attempts were rough and clumsy, and did not go into the depth of connective socially constructed learning that can be achieved in social sculpture, particularly in enabling the imaginal and listening capacities that encourage personal and relational agency. Once I came to realise the sculpting possibilities of invisible materials of conversation, thought, imagination and intuition as first laid out by Joseph Beuys and subsequently expanded by Shelley Sacks, I was able to engage with this in an even deeper and more accessible way. This did not only allow for my own understanding of my place in the world to flourish, but also for many other citizens who came in contact with the work, as the reflections of participants of the Earth Forum and the Climate Fluency Exchange show (Chapters Three, Four and Five).

The alternative to facilitator, moderator, mediator, or teacher in the form of a Responsible Participant that is offered by Shelley Sacks, and which we further developed in our collaboration in Earth Forum, has many useful applications for how we approach facilitation in social learning. The egalitarian possibilities for learning are increased when people have the

opportunity to learn in a space where there is not a single individual labelled as teacher, facilitator, mediator or moderator; instead there is a sense that each person has the capacity to shape the nature of social exchange, and has the room in which to experiment with such agency, and draw from their own motivations and inner impulses. The Responsible Participant concept, is also a perfect example of Sack's contribution to 'moral intuition',¹⁰⁵ or reflexive action, as it offers tangible ways in which a citizen can begin to explore and develop the capacities needed to live in a democratic and humane society, that of active listening, empathy, care at a distance and understanding of the value of aesthetic or enlivening static forms in order to make room for personal and public transformation.

A unique contribution of this study was to examine the concept of the Responsible Participant in dynamic situations, with a wide demographic range of people and relate it to the conventional forms of facilitation seen in social learning practice, as I had examined in earlier research through Arkwork and COPART, which I reported in Chapter Three. Neither an investigation into the efficacy and implementation of the Responsible Participant, such as that which has been undertaken in this research project, nor their similarities or differences to conventional facilitation or moderation has been undertaken before. Finally this study contributes to the field of social sculpture and simultaneously to education and associated discourses in social learning through the use of this collaborative practice-based research, in which I (in conversation with Sacks and others) developed pedagogy for a Responsible Participant, and examined how this can contribute to the education of the ecological citizen.

Social sculpture practice offers significant contributions to the possibilities for expanding social learning practice as it highlights the need for developing a practice that is sensitive to the relationship between inner and outer phenomena in a person's relationship to a society, ecosystem, economic system, or any other outside reality, as all these realities are internalised and affected by inner motivations or impulses that we bring into the world in the form of actions. Earth Forum as a practice makes this experience blatantly visible and experientiable, as participants explore deeper and deeper their own place in the world, and

¹⁰⁵A term used by Steiner (1894) and Schiller (1965) and later by Shelley Sacks, explored more in depth later in the next section (6.4).

their own potential agency through going out contemplatively and imaginatively into their physical surrounds, in order to go deeper into their own questions, agendas, thoughts and ideals. This has been explored in reflections of participants and Responsible Participants in the previous chapters (Four and Five specifically). It is through recognising the imagination, and other senses or organs of perception like empathy and the 'I' sense that participants are able to explore how their inner natures are affected by and affect the outer nature, and that all agency is rooted in how we shift and work with this relationship between inner and outer forms: personal and relational.

6.3 MORAL INTUITION

Citizenship, particularly articulated in this thesis as ecological citizenship and that which is encouraged and enabled through Earth Forum, is a concept in which the individual human being is able to act and respond to situations of ecological disconnection through an intuitive freedom, that emerges from their own imagination and their own free will and not from a set of rules or ethical guidelines established by an outside foreign body. In a presentation for a UNESCO Summit on Culture and Development, Sacks (2011d: 82) highlighted the significance of the role of imagination in our work toward an ecologically sustainable future, particularly through her notions on agency, where ecological responsibility does not emerge from established social moral imperatives but rather manifests in our 'ability to respond'. This response is closely linked to the aesthetic, if one returns to an understanding of aesthetic as 'enlivened being', in contrast to the anaesthetic, or numbness (Sacks, 1998) which Sacks developed from Schiller's (1965) theories on play, from the aesthetic education of man. Social sculpture practice, and Earth Forum, have been deeply influenced by the work of Rudolf Steiner (1894), particularly his work on the philosophy of freedom, and his conception of 'moral intuition' which remains significant in the 21st century where the links between individual learning and agency in response to social and ecological crises rely heavily on people's personal intuitive and creative moral responses.

Steiner's (1894) articulation of agency towards freedom is explored through examining the middle ground between two states: first our natural being, our instincts, feelings, and thoughts

insofar as these are determined by our character; and second, what emerges from the commands of conscience or abstract ethical or moral principles. Steiner (1894: chapter 9) described a third aspect as the space between these two elements, in which we can orchestrate a meeting place of objective and subjective elements of experience, and in so doing find the freedom to choose how to think and act. Steiner referred to this capacity as 'moral imagination', which is an inner action that results in personal freedom. This theory of 'moral imagination' was in part a response to Schiller's¹⁰⁶ work *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* as well as the works of Goethe, where Steiner considered both philosophers had neglected the role of cognition in developing inner freedom (Prokofieff, 2009: 206).

Steiner (1894: chapter 8) implied that we only achieve free agency when we find a moral imagination, which is an ethically propelled but particular response to the immediacy of a given situation, which Steiner stressed would always be individual, and cannot be predicted or prescribed. The human experiences the outer and inner world in very different ways: while our sensory perceptions inform us about the outer appearance of the world, our thought penetrates into its inner nature and so Steiner (1894, chapter 9) suggests we can overcome this dualistic experience through reuniting perception and cognition in the imagination.

Steiner (1894) goes on to point out that our feelings, are given to us as naively as outer perceptions, and these two experiences give us insight into both the object or phenomenon we are interested in but also about ourselves. This was something he developed via Goethe's work on 'delicate empiricism'. Steiner saw this to be the true of our will, whereby our feelings offer us an awareness of how the world affects us and our will reveals how we might affect the world. Therefore true objectivity is impossible as both our feelings and will mix the world's existence and our inner life in an unclear way. Steiner argues that we experience our feelings and will (and our inner perceptions of these) as being more essentially part of us than our thinking; that our will and feelings are basic, more natural. He celebrates this gift of natural, direct experience, but points out that this experience is still dualistic in the sense that it only

¹⁰⁶ *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (*Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*) is a treatise by the German author Friedrich Schiller in the form of a collection of letters. It deals with Immanuel Kant's transcendental aesthetics and the events of the French Revolution.

encompasses one side of the world.

In between our natural being (reflexes, drives, desires) and our social responsibility to ethical principles, one can observe a third aspect, that of one's individual insight, 'a situational ethic', or what Beuys (in Sacks, 2011d: 87) later described as the 'warmth character of thought' that arises neither from abstract principles nor from our bodily impulses, and Steiner described a deed that arises in this way as truly free; it is also both unpredictable and wholly individual.

Steiner states therefore that morality transcends both the determining factors of bodily influences and those of convention, and that morality is completely situational and individual. He sees true morality as dependent on our 'ability to respond' – as Sacks (2011b) puts it – to both our inner drives and outer pressures. Intuitive morality then can be cultivated through an individual's 'moral Imagination' which is our ability to imaginatively create ethically sound and practical responses to new situations, not to serve our egos, but to face demands and situations flexibly and when needed.

Through this theory of freedom, Steiner calls us to extend ourselves out of our traditional social-existence, absencing prejudices we receive from our family, nation, ethnic group and religion, and all that we inherit from the past that limits our creative and imaginative capacity to meet the world directly. As shown in this research, Earth Forum practice enables this in the specific connective aesthetic experience that it offers. Each participant has the opportunity to experience freedom in their own personal way within an unfolding neutral and emergent social space. This is achieved in the early stages of the practice which firstly brings forward the inherent imaginative capacities of those participating through having an awareness of this capacity, both in our ability to take images, ideas, experiences and other substances into our own cognitive reflective space, but also through our ability to feel and observe our own imaginative experience (and the capacity to hold contrasting images, ideas, concepts at the same time). This process immediately begins cultivating the space between feelings and sensory information, and enabling the space for intuitive capacity development (which links to my conceptions of personal agency development). One experiences this inner work through

that which was obtained both by outside experiences (being in the surrounds, and collecting a handful of earth) but also by inner reflection (noticing what one experiences, and following one's own internal conversation). It is however in the creation of a physical arena through a direct connective aesthetic, in this case the Earth Forum oiled cloth, and seated circle, that participants are encouraged to inhabit the social world while also maintaining a deep inner sense, through using their imaginative capacities.

These experiences are then shared in an exchange, where participants are freed from the need to respond, either in words or in body language or gestures. Instead the rest of the group has the freedom to simply listen, and experience their imagination at work in picturing the experiences of the other. Through absenting judgement via a practice of active listening, the participants also begin to experience a space in which moral intuition – or what Sen (1993) described as 'ethical individualism' – can emerge. This practice is one that takes devotion and dedication, keeping aside one's own internal dialogue; instead through direct imaginal observation (not fantastical escapism) of the other's experience, the participants come closer to the experience of uniting perception with cognition, where objective and subjective elements of experience can interact, which influences one's ability to freely think and act, therefore encouraging free agency. In focusing this attention to the direct experience of their surrounding ecosystem, specifically the relationship between the sensing/imagining human being and the soil, and with each other, a sense of individual location is achieved, while at the same time maintaining a connection to interconnections between the individual (inner) and the social and ecological world (outer). This contributes to my conception of relational agency development.

I would argue that the primary contribution of this study is this particular articulation of the features of personal and relational agency development and how they contribute to Nussbaum and Sen's (1993) capability theory. I consider the development of capacities such as moral intuition or moral imagination as fundamental in addressing Nussbaum and Sen's (1993) call for enabling capabilities for economic and social freedom that value individual 'valued beings and doings', as one cannot articulate these 'beings and doings' without an

enabled moral intuitive or imaginative capacity an individual. This could equally be true in addressing Kronlid's (2009) criteria for environmental education that enable human flourishing, or indeed responding to complex social messes that Rittel and Webber (1973) described as 'wicked', and becoming ever-malignant in our attempt to approach them with a solely technical or rational form. Indeed Lotz-Sisitka's (2009) call for climate change education that is practice-centred and adaptive would also benefit from an approach to education that aims to enable and enrich the development of moral imagination and intuition.

Earth Forum, and indeed what I have come to understand in the discourse of social sculpture, is fundamentally invested in practice-led inquiry into evolving emergent strategies and theories that enable this philosophy of freedom and moral intuition to enter into the social realm in forms of practice that are accessible and universal, which contribute to various social, economic, ecological, political and cultural crises that we face today and shall continue to face in the future. I have indeed discovered in my own experience, and through the reflections of participants and Responsible Participants that Earth Forum contributes to an expansion of methods, strategies, theories and pedagogies for social learning. It supports an approach to learning socially that enables the development of a moral intuition, imaginal contemplation and attentive listening capacities that are essential for the holistic agency development of an empathetic and free ecological citizen. This approach to learning socially through connective practice encourages capacity expansion and agency development that enables inner and outer freedoms of the human being and enriches their ability to respond to disconnections in the wider ecology to which we belong.

6.4 SOCIAL SCULPTURE CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIAL LEARNING

Cundill and Rodela (2012) in an extensive literature review of emergent social learning discourses within the natural resource management context, explored the variant ideas of what constitutes an outcome in social learning. A wide variety of assumptions and assertions about the processes and outcomes of social learning, makes the territory somewhat disorientating. Despite this, they could discern two distinctive aspects of social learning research in the literature.

The first describes learning that emerges through deliberative interactions amongst multiple stakeholders, and participants who learn to work together and build relationships that allow for collective action (Cundill and Rodela, 2012: 11). In these instances social learning is considered to occur when people engage with one another and share diverse perspectives (Selin et al., 2007; Kendrick and Manseau, 2008; Cheng and Mattor, 2010; Brummel et al., 2010). Incidentally Wals et al. (2009) found that learning is deeper (although slower) in diverse groups when compared with homogenous groups. Social learning is also seen by some as a continuous process of dialogue and deliberation of different stakeholders who explore problems and their solutions (Standa-Gunda et al., 2003; Frost et al., 2006; Maarleveld and Dabgbegnon, 1999).

Cundill and Rodela (2012:11) suggested that a suitable research response to this would be to consider deliberative democracy discourse in expanding the field of social learning. I would argue that research into social learning through deliberative democratic processes (while not only limited to this) has been extensively researched since the 1970s, beginning with Joseph Beuys theory of social sculpture, and Shelley Sacks' development of the theory, pedagogy and practice of social sculpture for over 30 years. Indeed social sculpture emerged out of the difficulties in early deliberative democratic practice or what was termed 'direct democracy' by Joseph Beuys, Heinrich Boll and others in the establishment of the German green party in the 1970s (Sacks, 2007c). The search for new forms of exchange, in which every citizen could explore the conditions that shaped their lives, and reflect on various agendas and proposals in which this change could be articulated in egalitarian and democratic terms, had been deeply influential in expanding of social sculpture practice and methodology (Sacks, 2011e).

On the other spectrum of social learning literature, the consensus was that social learning occurs through intentional experimentation and reflective practice, and that throughout these "iterative cycles of action, monitoring and reflection" participants learn how to cope with uncertainty when managing complex systems (Cundill and Rodela, 2012:12). Specifically they found social learning defined (in various forms) as an interactive process of action and reflection (Kuper et al., 2009). It is an iterative process of knowledge co-production among stakeholders (Steyaert et al., 2007) and an intentional process of collective self-reflection

(Fernandez-Gimenez et al., 2008).

Considering these two spheres of social learning definitions, my experience with social sculpture theory and the work of Shelley Sacks in developing the field of social sculpture, is that it enables learning that occurs in both deliberative interactions among various different citizens as well as that which occurs through iterative cycles of practice-led inquiry. Underlying this learning in social sculpture, however, is a connective practice in the education and capacity development of each learner in their experience of freedom as 'response(ability)' (Sacks, 2012). This is a practice in which our inner doubts, concerns and questions are not seen as debilitating forces, but as opportunities for capacity expansion, and potentially agency development. Examples of this are reflected by Sarah, Elizabeth, Matt, Stephen, Melanie and Seth. Citizen's 'response(ability)' can also be seen in people's ability to contribute to the Draft African Charter through Earth Forum practice, for example, the Zwelathemba Youth Forum in Worcester (EF 13), the Dzomo La Mupo group (EF 33), and Woman in Environmental (EF 24). Instead of feeling debilitated by the conventional approach to responsibility as an obligation, it enabled an activation and inner mobility in the face of the difficulty or challenge, as well as a connective relational ability.

While there is certainly an enlivening force experienced in the connective practice, it is difficult to observe or specifically scrutinise as it is a subtle and personal experience that is somewhat intuitive, and emergent outside of the rational frame of thought. This posed a specific challenge in reflecting on this experience with others, as our conversations were inherently rational and seemed to focus on the more obvious experiences. Despite this, some reflections do reveal a sense of becoming internally active, such as that which is described by Sarah Thorne in detail earlier, specifically:

I have just been able to notice being able to see some sort of ability to trust and to just be, I felt like we all have so many capacities that are just in us, and we probably use more than we are aware of, but I got a clear sense that these seemingly invisible capacities can be further developed after experiencing Earth Forum.

Similar reflections were offered earlier by Matt and Dulcie. If the participant is internally mobilised there is a potential opportunity for them to uncover personal abilities to respond that

enable not only an inner motivation, but also a resolve such as that which was witnessed by the group in Naboomspruit (EF 27) as well as the landless women (EF 15) in Worcester. The difference here is to do with this emphasis on freedom, and evolving a new meaning of what freedom means, that freedom is linked intimately to responsibility or response(ability). This is seen by Sacks (2012) as the freedom to be response-able, and this emphasis on freedom runs through the theory of social sculpture as can be seen by the early work of Joseph Beuys. In Earth Forum, a contemporary social sculpture, there is a thoughtful exploration into the question of inner freedom through the experience of unlimited exploration in a space employing imagination and contemplative capacities, and then later in exploring inner hopes and questions, which are shared equally in the group (see Appendix A handbook, pages 9-10). Similarly the reflections from the apprentice Responsible Participants and ordinary participants, support this sense of freedom which is described as “bringing life and creativity and vitality” (Stephen Davis); one can “express oneself in a new way” (Elizabeth Fletcher); “knowing that it’s okay to freely explore these ideas or impulses” (Christelle Terreblanche); “... my consciousness is shifting, expanding” (Dulcie Hlatwayo) and “helped us to be more ourselves” (Melanie Lauwaert).

Sacks (ibid.) makes this exploration of freedom a lived embodied inquiry, all her works are designed to develop another experiential understanding of freedom, with freedom as an ability emergent from internal mobilisation through an enlivening aesthetic. The example of Beuys’ ‘Honey Pump in the Work Place’ and the ‘Organisation of Direct Democracy’ mentioned in Chapter One both foregrounded the question: ‘what is freedom?’ and ‘what are the ways in which we can work with this freedom, and developing the structures for freedom?’ Similarly Earth Forum in exactly the same way foregrounds freedom, and so did Exchange Values, in particular with the farmers; it gave them the question: ‘if there is freedom, where is it located?’ It offers the human being the capacity to reform phenomena through an intimate and personal social experience. As Sacks (2012) explained, if we can actually experience our response(ability), we can indeed experience freedom. Therefore the ultimate learning occurs within achieving a sense of our capacity to expand; we become reflective practitioners.

This opportunity to explore inner (personal, imaginative, rational) and the outer (social, ecological, economic, cultural, physical) conditions that influence their action or ability to respond (Sacks, 2011b) is a valuable contribution to the relationship between learning and agency. This consists of intensive inner thought work, in which the activated and enlivened will of the learner and indeed the entire group engages in 'warmth work'¹⁰⁷ or the 'thought of the heart'¹⁰⁸ through a process of enlivening and engaging each person's intentions and motivations (Sacks, 2007b) both of which can occur through deliberative interaction between different stakeholders or through 'iterative cycles of action'; indeed both occur in social sculpture practice, which I argue is a coherent founded theory that contributes to social learning, or indeed offers new developments in learning socially.

In this way all social sculpture participants are uncovering their own inner intentions and motivations that are their own, and so are working from an inner necessity within the social sphere (Sacks, 2011e) and with the specific issues at hand, not merely swapping onions and discussing proposals, which is often what traditional social learning practice ends up becoming. Social sculpture's primary focus is on the learning and agency development of the learner, and not so much on specific outcomes of development or sustainability; these emerge through the inner mobilisation of the individual, and in the 'warming-up' of the socially vacillated learning arena, as well as building capacities for social exchange and learning socially such as empathy, imaginal contemplation, active listening and so on. Reed et al.'s (2010) definition of social learning is one in which social interaction is a key feature of the social learning process. They described that learning can occur through two basic types of social interaction: the first is information transmission which is simply the learning of new facts through social interaction and the second is deliberation (Newig et al., 2009) in which genuine exchange of ideas and arguments can potentially lead to a shift and transformation of ideas and perceptions through persuasion. Deliberative social interaction and thus social learning in this context is based on Habermas' (1981) conception of deliberation. The contribution of this

¹⁰⁷A term developed by Joseph Beuys (1988:159) referring to the 'warmth character of thought', which was not intended to refer to emotion, nor simply feeling and the territory of the heart, but rather a sense of the world as a living being that can change, and a mode of thinking that derives itself from a deep sense of connectedness (see more in Chapter One).

¹⁰⁸This is a term developed by James Hillman (1998), which is reminiscent of Goethe's intuitive modes of consciousness, or delicate empiricism (see Chapter Two).

study is exploring the methods needed to encourage social interaction that leads to a form of learning that does not only rely on persuasion through argument, but rather on the expression and exchange of inner questions and ideas through an empathetic imaginal form of contemplation and consideration, beyond debate and conventional discussion, or perhaps complementary to these forms of exchange.

Beuys used the phrase of working with an 'inner necessity' to describe new forms of empathetic engagement and experience that enable us to locate our personal inner motivation as well as that of the social organism (Sacks, 2011a). In this way as shown in this research, the (socially) learning group engaged in a social sculpture is attending to an issue at hand from an embodied inner reality, and can therefore face a specific complex problem through an intuitive connective practice. This engages a nuanced moral intuition, intuitive imagination and inner motivations of each other; each person in the group is considered through an empathetic imaginative lens. What I have come to notice in my own observation of this process is that the learning is deep, not because of the content, but due to the connective practice which constantly enables the empathetic, imaginative, intuitive and contemplative capacities regardless of the issue that is being discussed. In Earth Forum that which is being discussed can be an issue that is contentious or something that each person agrees on; it doesn't matter, as in each circumstance everyone involved is developing these capacities that enrich and enable them to participate in any form of social action. This contemplative, reflexive approach also seems to ensure that within each process, and within the meta-development of the group over time, the social organism becomes ever more robust in the iterative reflection of the exchange. This, however was not examined deeply enough in the reflections with groups after the process, or in my follow-up interviews which is perhaps a missed opportunity, and a potential blind spot of the study. I did however observe particularly with the Naboomspruit group (EF 27) and in Pretoria (EF 12), as well as with the apprenticeship Earth Forums in Cape Town (EF 35, EF 36) and in Oxford (EF 37), what seemed to be a deeper more reflexive atmosphere and culture in the group at the end of these sessions. My own experience of this sense of deepened reflection was noticeable in my own experience of being a Responsible Participant, and was for me an expanding of my

reflexive ability within each Earth Forum; this was certainly fortified by the attentive and communally reflexive atmosphere of the space.

From my experience in developing and applying Earth Forum, I would argue that social sculpture practice is concerned with a form of learning that is emergent and aims to expand the capacities of those that participate. Intentionally setting out to enable this in both deliberative interactions of diverse people, through iterative cycles of inner and outer action, the social sculptor constantly focuses on the personal agency of everyone involved in the social learning. It is significant also to point out that the learning is carefully enabled through this connective aesthetic practice, or through what Sacks (2007b) referred to as 'instruments of consciousness'¹⁰⁹. Within a social sculpture, the learning is not enabled through traditional facilitative means, but rather through the employment of a variety of strategies that make visible the invisible inherent inner capacities of the participants, that encourage a connective way of engaging with the social or ecological world, that is personally relevant and therefore potentially more conducive for transformation, as it accommodates various forms of knowing, and draws on an inner necessity and intuitive morality (Sacks, 2011e), essentially a true expression of freedom and therefore active ecological citizenship. If each participant is able to encounter the phenomenon through their own inner motivation, there is the possibility for a personal connection to it, and therefore less risk of potential abstraction or disagreement emerging from misunderstanding. With Earth Forums there were no incidences of disagreement arising; although many of the groups consisted of a diverse array of participants, none consisted of people in conflict or disagreement over a contested issue, except the landless peoples groups (the citizens involved in the other side of the story were not able to attend the Earth Forums). It still remains to be seen what role Earth Forum could play in avoiding abstraction or disagreement in groups struggling over a contested issue. The reflections from the participants and Responsible Participants have provided some tenuous evidence to support this observation. Jason Naidoo (EF 17) commented on the value of Earth Forum's "emphasis on listening, equality and universal-respect..." which I would argue is conducive to empathy development and avoiding abstraction. Melanie saw Earth Forum as

¹⁰⁹Hildegard Kurt (2010) cited Sacks' instruments of consciousness in *Wachsen!: Über das Geistige in der Nachhaltigkeit*, Mayer, Stuttgart.

important in “strengthening our empathetic abilities... It seems to break down our sense of entitlement and separateness”. I would argue that anything that can avoid separateness and reduce the assertion of entitlement would improve the nature of understanding that may emerge. Matt Matre highlighted the role of people’s attention that: “... solidified something in our connections”. Similarly, Brenda Martin saw Earth Forum’s primary contribution as “surfacing empathy within groups, helping people who work with a shared purpose but who are ‘stuck’ to see opportunities for movement”. This solidifying and creating of opportunities for movement, both point to a sense of progress that seemed to reveal a growing sense of understanding in Earth Forum. The only criticism that emerged that showed an issue of misunderstanding was that which emerged at the beginning of the Namboomspruit Earth Forum (EF 27), where language and translation seemed to affect the process, as well as the group’s initial expectations of what they were going to be involved in at the Climate Train. These however do not reflect on the actual Earth Forum practice itself, but on how participants are invited and how the Responsible Participant deals with translation and language.

In the context of Earth Forum, which enables social learning in a multiple stakeholder deliberative interaction, as well as an unfolding of ‘iterative cycles of action, monitoring and reflection’ (within a single forum and also in the meta-practice-led inquiry and development of Earth Forum process itself), both strands of the social learning discourse are embodied. At the same time there is an ever-present substructure of specific strategies and connective aesthetic actions for personal agency development within the wider social learning arena, which is conducive to any form of social learning.

The consensus that emerged in Cundill and Rodela’s (2012: 12) study is that processes that support social learning involve sustained interaction between stakeholders, ongoing deliberation and the sharing of knowledge in a trusting environment, and that the main goal of social learning is to improve decision making, problem solving and build positive relationships within the human/environment interactions. I would agree with this, but I would add that the processes that support socially facilitated forms of learning can be deeply enriched through a

connective aesthetic, connective practice approach which has been developed in the social sculpture discourse and through the Earth Forum practice.

While deliberative processes are conducive to social learning, Cundill and Rodela (2012) highlighted how these processes do not always lead to a shared understanding or agreement on the issue at stake and eventually to learning (Elstub, 2010). Yet is an agreement or shared understanding always necessary for learning? Surely a primary goal or outcome of social learning is to enable the capacities for empathy, that which allows one human being to try to come to understand the experiences of the other, without having to agree or disagree; one disagreement can also lead to learning. Agreement is not a precursor for collective action, transformation can occur in various forms (whether people agree or not, or have a fully shared understanding or not); what is far more important than agreement is enabling the capacities needed for empathy development. Sacks (2007b: 42) described it like this (her emphasis):

I have learned over the years what an astonishing process it is to enter a proposal imaginatively, in a participatory way, instead of arguing, analysing or trying to persuade. Not only do we get a deeper sense of the proposal, but it also helps us make choices, stops us from being caught in the yes/no binary oppositions that appear whenever there is a major decision to be made, the yes/no state is embodied in Beuys' durational sound work Ja, ja, ja, ja, ja, nee, nee, nee, nee, nee, 1969. This process of negotiation and exchange is what Beuys described as the 'permanent conference'. It is also what safeguards against top-down utopianism. Every proposal has to be lived, considered and taken on in freedom, a freedom that is utterly compromised when we confuse freedom from with freedom. This corresponds with Carl Gustav Jung's view that freedom lies in how we respond to the givens. From this perspective freedom can be understood to include responsibility, or our ability-to-respond. We are all in a field of existence that is framed by certain realities- day and night- specific relationships, the need for shelter and food, and a limit to the carbon we can pump into the atmosphere. This being so, the knowledge of our Richtkräfte (directive force), of what drives us, can help us respond creatively, that is, in freedom, to such framing realities and forces.

It was with this impulse and consideration that Earth Forum was developed as contributor to social change. It does indeed offer valuable insight into the field of social learning, and the education of the ecological citizen. The transformation underway is that which develops empathy, imagination, attentive listening and so on, and not necessarily specific technical agreements of a community. It is the learning that enables trust, imaginative consideration of different individual proposals and personal motivations in connection with an issue, challenge or question of progress, which I have shown in detail with the Earth Forum implementation,

and in its earlier development, such as the pictures of progress shared by the Breede River Valley Landless women in Worcester (EF 15) or the contributions of the indigenous Mupo foundation citizens (EF 33) with non-indigenous people on the train for the Draft African Charter. This approach to emergent outcomes as opposed to agreement on established forms is something I have come to understand that sets the field of social sculpture apart in how it approaches socially facilitated forms of learning within its pedagogies and practices. It is essentially an empathetic and imaginal agency that is the focus of this 'warm' exchange and learning process.

6.5. SENTIENT HANDFULS – RESPONSIBLE OIL AND COTTON

The handful of soil and humus that is held by the participants in the Earth Forum is perhaps considered at first as merely an imagined symbol of an inner process which relates to one's own private inner thinking, a static inanimate object; this is something I came to realise in my own experience. Yet in social sculpture, as I have explained in Beuys' alchemical theory of sculpture, this is only the beginning of a process of movement or what Sacks (2011e) described as 'enlivening' through the connective practice. This was noticable in how this process enabled each participant to move beyond mere symbolism and experience the real animate and sentient nature of the Earth itself. It is a process that transforms static thinking and conditioning that the rest of the more-than-human world is a collection of hardened formed objects. As the process progresses the handful is recognised by the participants as sentient, with its own subjective consciousness, its own 'aliveness'. As Melanie Lauwaert described in her reflection of her first experience in Earth Forum:

The Earth's hope is that it wants to be the Sun, it wants to be warm... my imagination is valid, because I am me, but I am also of the Earth and so I am also part of the Earth's imagination...

Similarly a woman in Soweto, who had experienced the impact of mining directly as she and her family had been relocated for a uranium mine, held her soil and said: "I feel this soil's pain, it should be deep beneath the ground, it is not meant to be here with us right now".

In the Earth Forum in Soweto (EF 22) a young man said:

... Holding the soil I just kept finding more and more life inside the soil, insects and seedlings, and then thought, wait a minute the soil is living, that soil's life creates animal and plant life ... I thought about many things while spending time in this place and I didn't find myself thinking about all the stresses of my life ... while holding the soil I kept thinking of natural and manmade textures as there was some plastic in the soil, and I thought about natural and un-natural-ness ... I suddenly saw how everything is part of nature and everything is busy being alive. What we do is we love to separate things into species, races and give everything separate names, and how we have turned alive things into dead things by giving them names.

This experience of holding the handful of Earth was not a form of romantic elevated symbolism, but a grounding real experience as one of Andrea's experiences revealed during an Earth Forum in Cape Town (EF 35):

... I then gathered at the base of the tree a handful of soil, and as I picked it up I just smelt poo. I think I still have poo in this handful as I can still smell it. It was quite disappointing [laughter]. I wondered: 'do these seeds just smell like poo, or has someone just had a poo behind this big tree trunk?' maybe I should put this down and get a nice handful of pristine soil, and then I reckoned there is no pristine soil in our place actually, and the poo keeps the soil alive I guess...

The aliveness of the Earth has been explored in depth by James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis (2000), and is described eloquently in *Animate Earth* by Stephan Harding (2006). Harding's work on animism or the aliveness of the earth draws from James Hillman's development of C.J. Jung's Archetypal Psychology, as Harding (2006: 21) explained when considering Hillman's work:

... animism is not a projection of human feelings onto inanimate matter; but that the things of the world project upon us their own 'ideas and demands', that indeed any phenomenon has the capacity to come alive and to deeply inform us through our interaction with it, as long as we are free from an overly objectifying attitude.

Harding (2006: 21-22) goes on to show the rich philosophical discourse that supports the animistic perspective of the earth, from historical philosophers such as Spinoza and Leibniz, and the more recent work of Alfred North Whitehead (1978) who consider matter to be intrinsically sentient, as do Jung (2001), Hillman (1992) and Harding (2006). The philosophical argument states that sentience or subjective consciousness could not emerge from a wholly insentient (objective, physical) matter, and to consider it did emerge from insentient matter discredits the very fabric of reality itself (Harding, 2006: 22). Similar support for this argument can be seen in the work of Wolfgang von Goethe (*Botanical Writings*, 1952b), Rudolf Steiner (1924) and Joseph Beuys (2004), all of whom recognise the sentient nature of the more-than-human world in their work. Harding quoted the work of Thomas Berry

(2000), which I relate to the gathering together of each person's contribution of soil and humus on the Earth Forum cloth. Berry considered the earth to be: "a communion of subjects rather than a collection of objects", which gracefully reflects the communion of soil, humus, human, oil and cloth that occurs in Earth Forum. The participants explore first their subjective interactive experiences with the Earth around them in a specific location and interacting with a specific handful of gathered earth, then later consider the hopes of the Earth itself, and bring these hopes closer to their own pictures of progress and/or their own agency and own 'being's and 'doings'. Sarah Thorne articulated this in her reflection:

I had this amazing image from the Earth Forum that I am still trying to formulate. It has movement, starting off with a movement outward to invite the earth in through bringing something of the earth that moved us, and then shared our journey in the group, so in a way we entered into conversations, but it was more like entering into a listening exchange, and then transformed this material, the leaves, earth, soil, etc. through that process I realised we created something really amazing, as a group, and through our movements out and in, there was a real substance that we were all able to receive, it was a gift.

It is in this way a communion of subjects both human and more-than-human, rather than a group of humans in communion over the symbolic meaning of insentient objects, and only technical solutions that should be undertaken. This communion was eloquently described in Matt Matre's reflection during his Responsible Participant apprenticeship in Chapter Five, Section 5.5.1, which he saw as a process of more than introducing others to the piece of earth but introducing each other into a 'fertile dialogue with the earth and my inner thoughts ... an un-earthing of thoughts, ideas and questions ...' He described how he felt like he was not just listening to his own thoughts but that of the Earth itself: "It felt like that there was a current, and I just tuned in and allowed my own expression of that to pass through..."

This sentience in my experience is carried by both the human Responsible Participant who guides the Earth Forum process, as well as by the cotton and sunflower plants, which are also carried further from group to group by the more-than-human oil (sunflower oil) substrate that clings to the fibres of the cloth (cotton cloth). In this way the cloth and the oil are equally Responsible From what I noticed of participants in the Earth Forum process; From what I noticed each maintains the growing contribution of the animate Earth itself in the growing public learning and 'permanent (confer)ence', which indeed is a 'bringing together' and gifting process as referred to in the origins of the word 'confer'. It is in this way that social sculpture

and the theory of connective 'enlivening' aesthetic, and connective practice enables a form of agency or response(ability) that is suppressed in contemporary western culture¹¹⁰, an ability to recognise the sentience of all that exists beyond the human experience. It is interesting to consider that the majority of the non-western world, particularly indigenous cultures would find the Earth Forum practice elementary, basic, and straightforward, and considering the more-than-human world as insentient objects would be absurd. This is supported by Harding (2006), Cormac Cullinan (2011) and personal communications with the Makadzhi women from Dzomo la Mupo, and the people at Vatsonga in Limpopo.

Considering this, I have throughout this study seen the oil and the cloth itself as vital participants in the Earth Forum practice. Not having the oiled cloth in the space would have meant that there would be a considerable lack of continuity between each distinct Earth Forum process, with a disconnect or vivid separation between each group experiencing the process. The sunflower oil and the cotton cloth together are recognised as sentient subjects with whom the Responsible Participant collaborates to ensure a permanent continuity between each Earth Forum. Together the 'aesthetic' enlivening force is embodied throughout the entire life of the work, and is forever growing and interconnecting with other human and more-than-human communities and phenomena. Kyla Davis described the cloth as providing "a solid, tangible connection to the Earth". Christelle Terreblanche saw the cloth as "gluing things together ..." where she felt the cloth was "very important" as it enabled: "bringing the earth into these conversations".

Here I see this study contributing to direct methodological development in co-creating a practice that does not merely illustrate but embodies through direct experience, the learning and agency development of relatedness and connection required for expanding the ability of the ecological citizen. An intuitive imaginal and empathetic perceptiveness is enabled through engaging with the oil and the cloth and their inherent 'aliveness'. Even outside of an Earth Forum, I have found the oiled cloth with its soiled traces a great contributor to effective communication when I have had the opportunity to speak about the work.

¹¹⁰This suppression in western culture is articulated in detail by Harding (2006).

6.6. INTUITIVE IMAGINATIVE LEARNING

Elizabeth Fletcher realised just how intuitive the learning in Earth Forum was when she shared this poignant and open reflection of how she had used the listening capacities she had developed through Earth Forum in one of the most difficult conversations of her life:

I used active listening with one of the most difficult conversations I have had to have when I told my father that I had a termination of a pregnancy. I had to sit down and explain active listening in my own words to get him to listen properly to what I was about to say, so I asked him if I could speak to him alone, I took him somewhere that I could speak to him in private, I told him that he should not interrupt me, or be angry with me, while I spoke, and that he should try to just stay with me and see what I was trying to convey, and afterwards he could hug me if he felt he needed to. Luckily it did go that way. If I hadn't experienced Earth Forums I would not have had the ability to manage that conversation in the way I did. I realised it has nothing to do with your level of education or intelligence... Before Earth Forum I had never been exposed to the effects of active listening, it is not a theoretical thing, you can't use it in theory you have to experience it and use it to be effective, it's an intuitive thing. It allowed my father to not feel obliged to respond in a particular way that he felt he should, or not let him run on his own ideas ... but he was able to really receive my story, it allowed him to be receptive, and take it in and only respond afterwards, and allowed me to say what I needed to say.

Elizabeth shared further in the interview that it gave her a certain strength, that she knew how to construct a space for a conversation in which she could ensure her father was really listening. She also joked that it is so much easier speaking to someone who has done an Earth Forum before as you can say: "listen to me how you listened in Earth Forum" and the other person intuitively understands, takes a moment and really listens. These reflections from Elizabeth were vital for my understanding of the intuitive nature of this form of learning.

The role of the intuition and imaginal thought is fundamental in enabling this form of agency and learning, which I consider to be foundational for the ecological citizen, and in remedying the effects of ecological apartheid. The main contribution of this study has been to actively explore methods that encourage intuitive imaginative thinking in this context and thus learning. Enabling the imagination to operate as a precise form of perception and meaning making, as well as an empathetic organ needed in social communication and learning, has been at the heart of this work. In addition to this, formulating a pedagogy that enables citizens to create similar socially constructed learning arenas in which intuitive imaginal learning can take place in response to people's personal experiences of ecological apartheid, has been a primary focus. As I have described through Goethe's 'delicate empiricism' (see Chapter Two,

Section 2.2.1), as well as Steiner's concept of 'moral imagination', using intuitive and imaginal perception one is able to understand a phenomenon not as an object outside one's own being, but as living presence within oneself (Goethe), and enabling intuitive imaginal practice to encourage an inner personal morality and agency in relation to the empathetic engagement with a particular phenomenon or being (Steiner). As Henri Bortoft (2004) explained this allows a phenomenon to bring itself into thought, and prompt itself into the thinking mind as an idea, which certainly enables better decision making and action that is considering more than the human individual's agenda. Harding (2006: 34), exploring the work of Bortoft (2004) and Goethean 'active looking', explained: "this sense of deep relatedness to the object transforms consciousness into a means for holistic perception through which we are able to apprehend the intrinsic qualities of things".

This has been achieved in this study not merely through individuals encountering nature on their own as Goethe encourages, but in a social process of intuitive imaginal exchange and empathetic perception that is undertaken in Earth Forum, which is something Beuys and Sacks encourage. I would argue that intuitive imaginal perception is fundamental in developing ecological empathy and in the education of the ecological citizen. As I have shown through my own ethnographical reflection, collaborative grounded inquiry and through the work of Goethe, Steiner, Beuys, Cobb, Hillman, Zumdick and Sacks, the imaginative faculties of the human being and their use in this context is vital in empathy development and developing personal and relational agency. Similarly the value of intuition as reported by Jung, Harding, Hillman, and earlier scholars such as Steiner and Goethe have been carefully articulated. The perceptive quality and subsequent fluency that is achieved by engaging and enabling an intuitive imaginal 'organ of perception' in participant citizens in Earth Forum has been a distinct finding in this research, as experienced in practices such as active empathetic listening and moral imagination, as an example of expanding ecological empathy and the agency of the ecological citizen.

Through my own experimenting in South Africa with Joseph Beuys' alchemical theory of social sculpture, and rigorously applying and modifying methods initiated by Shelley Sack's from her work in Exchange Values, as well as the contrasting creative social learning practice

I engaged with prior to this, and via my ongoing collaboration with Sacks on the Earth Forum practice, I have begun to formulate a clearer picture of the contribution social sculpture and its associated theoretical properties can play in establishing meaningful aesthetic social education of the ecological citizen, in responding to the crisis of ecological apartheid. Intrinsic to this response are the role of imagination, intuition, and listening and the role these faculties play in encouraging a holistic form of empathetic agency.

A learning that develops these faculties and encourages personal human agency to experience deep relatedness between other human beings (relational agency) and their relationship and inherent interconnectedness with the more-than-human world (ecological empathy), is indeed a valuable contribution to mending 'separateness' or apartheid, the apartheid we have come to experience in our relation to natural phenomenon as well as the separateness we experience in our own sensuousness and perceptiveness. This study has provided me with a new perspective in which I see our imaginations as an equally significant aspect of the ecology and the flourishing of nature, which is supported by the work of Cobb (1977) and Zumdick (2011). Similarly all our faculties and senses require active development that enables a form of agency that is interrelated, connected and inherently ecological, but not necessarily biocentric. As I have shown (and as has also been shown in the work of Sacks who was developing the practice in other sites while I worked on it in South Africa) Earth Forum may offer a consistent and comprehensive learning practice that is located in contemporary social reality. It can and has been employed in a variety of different contexts, with a rich diversity of human beings and Earth subjects, all of which are embodied in a traces held in the oiled cloth.

6.7. APPLICABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION

6.7.1. AFRICAN CHARTER FOR THE RIGHTS OF MOTHER EARTH

As detailed in Chapter Four, Earth Forum was a valuable practice in the development of the first African Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth (www.naturerightsafrica.org), which is an attempt to create a positive and constructive vision for the future and a common African language on mediating our current and future relationship with nature. Inspired by the work of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth developed in Bolivia in 2010, the

African Charter is a facilitated cross-cultural conversation that “seeks to connect African people to progressive and alternative debates elsewhere in the world, while building a movement for solidarity, cooperation and empowerment to defend themselves and their natural communities from destructive forces emerging from modern day capitalism” (from website).

The Draft Charter process recognises that the destruction of nature is reaching critical thresholds, brought about by the disconnected relationship between humans and nature, and so its purpose is also to create a framework for and ability to act decisively on the root causes of the crisis and to redefine and reconnect our place in the ecological system. As Christelle Terreblanche and Cormac Cullinan provided in their reflections (see Chapter Four), Earth Forum was a valuable contributing process in developing these conversations, that steered away from traditional discussions and symbolically signing a charter, but rather enabled individual citizens to explore their own motivations and inner intentions before looking at their hopes for the earth in the Earth Forum. This enabled each human being to encounter and work with the charter in a fully participatory form; their additions or changes to the African Charter were therefore influenced deeply by the personal capacity development and expansion of inner motivations before working with the charter process.

The idea for this charter process is to facilitate deep systemic changes through new ways of thinking about our natural communities and reconnecting people with themselves and with nature. I was invited to join the interim steering committee that was developing the secretariat to house the charter process, and offer guidance and suggestions in developing a participatory, social practice that could facilitate such dialogue and interactive process (while completing this thesis in October 2012, I still remain on this board). My experiences of Earth Forum, and its application were seen to be extremely valuable by the rest of the steering committee. Due to the fact that the Charter aims to draw from other forms of knowledge and values based on a more intimate relationship between nature and people, the social sculpture theory and practice offers a rich array of strategies and thinking in housing multiple forms of knowing, and so far I have found applications of these processes well received.

The basis for the draft charter implies a people-process which would build a movement through practical interventions and the shaping of inclusive values that unite people with their natural communities, laying the basis for more holistic and inclusive “community” and “communing”, which directly emerged from Earth Forum pedagogy and theory. This therefore aims to develop new social space in which any citizen (or group of citizens) would be able to reflect on their own values and how to embrace the intrinsic rights of Mother Earth; from the personal level to the collective and the political, evoking the strengths of a deliberative and participatory democracy.

6.7.2. PROJECT 90 BY 2030: YOUTH FORUM

While developing the early forms of Earth Forum I collaborated with the South Africa non-project organisation Project 90 by 2030, who are attempting to get South Africans from all sectors of society to contribute to preserving the environment. Their goal is to change the way people live by 90% by the year 2030. Their work involves initiating and supporting carbon footprint reduction in clubs at over 30 schools nationally. They also conduct extensive research on various forms of carbon footprint reduction particularly at homes, schools and offices. They produce educational materials of various kinds, and offer advice freely to schools, parents, and other citizens. Their greatest valuation of Earth Forum however was in their workshops, seminars and interactive projects. As mentioned earlier, while I was developing Earth Forum in South Africa, after my first engagement with Shelley Sacks, I was invited to work with Project 90 by 2030's Youth Forum Programme, where they selected 20 young South African environmental leaders to participate in a capacity development project, within which these 20 youth would work with leading South African scientists, policy makers, business people and other influential citizens in expressing their needs moving into a climate change era. In this process, I worked with the group, and their facilitators in depth in July 2011 (EF 8) (details of which can be seen in the 50/50 video snippet Appendix F and Project 90 by 2030 Youth Forum video <http://vimeo.com/31077956>). As described in Chapter Five, two of the coordinators and facilitators from Project 90 by 2030, joined me in a Responsible Participant apprenticeship, and are now actively implementing Earth Forum with various communities, youth groups, NGOs and other sectors of society. Stephen Davis recently

conducted an Earth Forum on his own with the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa in Cape Town. I also conducted during this Responsible Participant apprenticeship an Earth Forum with the staff of Project 90 by 2030, and Brenda Martin, the director, provided a detailed and positive review of her experiences in the Earth Forum and how it benefited the participants during a particularly difficult time of future funding (EF 35). I have maintained my relationship with Project 90 by 2030, and it seems that Earth Forum as a practice will become one of the main processes of engagement and social learning instruments in their work with schools and other sectors. This shows its potential to be used as a methodology in other environmental education programmes yet to be explored.

6.7.3. CHILDREN'S NATURE-DEFICIT DISORDER

Earth Forum has the potential to meaningfully respond to what is being termed 'children's nature-deficit disorder' by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Children and Nature network at the 2012 World IUCN Congress, where growing concerns were expressed for generations of children who have little to no contact with the natural world and wildlife. Leaders worldwide at the IUCN gathering adopted a resolution recognising the importance of the "Child's Right to Connect with Nature and to a Healthy Environment"¹¹¹. This resolution calls on government members and non-governmental organisations to promote and actively contribute to the international acknowledgement and codification of this right within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Cheng and Monroe, 2012). Prior to this in June 2011, the UK Coalition Government launched the Natural Environment White Paper, which makes recommendations "to strengthen the connections between people and nature". (DEFRA, 2011:44). A year later in July 2012, the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee recommended "that DEFRA set a firm target for increasing public engagement with nature, such as the percentage of children of primary school age regularly engaging in nature activities".

The RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) wildlife and environmental education

¹¹¹ You can read about the IUCN congress at http://www.iucn.org/news_homepage/?11090/Towards-a-New-Era-of-Conservation-Sustainability-and-Nature-based-Solutions, and download the declaration from https://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/jeju_declaration_15_september_final.pdf

organisation considers children's nature-deficit disorder to be one of the biggest threats to UK nature (C&NN and IUCN, 2012) with other UK studies confirming this (Balmford et al., 2002; Burdette and Whitaker, 2005; Pilgrim et al., 2008; Outdoor Foundation, 2010; Gleave, 2010; Sandercock et al., 2010). Similar evidence for the value of nature in children (and adult) health, education, physiological development and overall well-being, along with the associated problems emergent in a disconnected relationship with nature were observed in sixteen different nations globally in a study by Singer et al. (2009), and in other specific studies in the USA¹¹², Canada¹¹³, Norway¹¹⁴, Australia¹¹⁵, Finland¹¹⁶, Netherlands¹¹⁷, Switzerland¹¹⁸, Denmark¹¹⁹ and Germany¹²⁰ and articulated in a global literature survey conducted by the Children and Nature Network¹²¹ and the IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication¹²²; it is now widely accepted that today's children have less contact with nature than ever before.

According to the RSPB, the proportion of UK children playing out in natural spaces has dropped by as much as 75 percent over the last thirty to forty years (C&NN and IUCN, 2012). This is despite the proven positive effects that contact with the natural world has on children's physical and mental health, personal and social development, and even academic achievements and life chances (Turner et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2009; Muñoz, 2009; Taylor et al., 2001; Lederbogen et al., 2011). There are legitimate concerns that if the decline in connection continues, the consequences for wildlife and people could be catastrophic, as children who don't value and respect nature when they're young are less likely to see the importance of protecting the natural environment when they're older (C&NN and IUCN, 2012).

In a new national UK approach led by RSPB and the University of Essex, researchers are

¹¹² Clements, 2004; Turner et al., 2004; Pergams and Zaradic, 2008; Huh and Gordon, 2008; Schulman and Peters, 2008; Brown et al., 2009; Cordell et al., 2009; Rideout et al., 2010; Faber Taylor and Kuo, 2011

¹¹³ Tucker, 2008; Staempfli, 2009

¹¹⁴ Skár & Krogh, 2009

¹¹⁵ Karsten, 2005; Wen et al., 2009; Veitch et al., 2010

¹¹⁶ Laaksoharju and Rappe, 2010

¹¹⁷ Clements, 2004

¹¹⁸ Cleland et al., 2010

¹¹⁹ Patved-Kaznelson, 2009; Bringolf-Isler et al., 2010

¹²⁰ Muller et al., 2009; Lederbogen et al., 2011

¹²¹ www.childrenandnature.org

¹²² www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/cec/

attempting to measure the disconnect between children and nature. This has been based on the *Children's Affective Attitude to Nature Scale* developed by Cheng and Monroe (2012) which measures children's connection to nature: their empathy for creatures, responsibility for nature, enjoyment of nature experiences and sense of 'oneness' with nature. Currently and indeed in the wake of this study, there will be an ever more pressing need to have pedagogies and practices that can attend to the development of an ecological literacy, through the development of imaginal, empathetic and attentive capacities, those that encourage the creative, personal abilities of children as well as their teachers. Its value extends beyond the UK, to other societies globally that are struggling to create learning practices that encourage individual connection to nature, and promote an intuitive and creative connection between people and nature. Earth Forum and similar social sculpture projects like University of the Trees, in which Earth Forum now contributes¹²³, offer a tangible and practical process that can aid in combating children's nature-deficit disorder directly with children, but also in the apprenticeship and capacity development of educators, parents and other citizens.

6.7.4. EARTH FORUM IN AFRICA

While Earth Forum has most notably been adopted by Project 90 by 2030 in Cape Town, some other individuals have been working with it since my engagement with them during the climate train project. Mpatestane Modise is an art teacher and social development practitioner at the People's Life Environment Agency in Soweto. She was deeply inspired by the concept of a Responsible Participant, and as reported earlier, during our train trip together she sat in on several Earth Forums. We completed a rapid apprenticeship during this time, and since then she has said that she uses many of the strategies in her own work at the centre but also in other consultancy work in the township, with schools and local organisations and community groups. We are planning a more detailed Responsible Participant apprenticeship, in which she would like to further expand her work in Soweto and Johannesburg.

¹²³ While developing the handbook for Earth Forum, Shelly asked me if I would be comfortable with including the Earth Forum as one of the strategies or modules in the University of the Trees social sculpture project she had been running for several years. Considering our work together was deeply collaborative, I felt this would be an even greater opportunity to not only expand my own research and understanding but also to expand the potential for Earth Forum. Since then we have added Earth Forum into the University of the Trees project as one of the vital processes used by those participants developing a University of the Trees group in their community.

During my initial development work on the Earth Forum, I met Dianne Regisford-Gueye who was at the time working for LoveLife, an HIV/AIDS youth-focused 'prevention through education' project in South Africa (<http://www.lovelife.org.za/corporate>). This not-for-profit organisation promotes AIDS-free living among South African youth aged between 12 and 19 by employing a holistic approach to youth development. Their programmes are implemented by a national youth volunteer service corps known as groundBREAKERS in partnership with more than 200 community-based non-government organisations, 5 600 schools and 500 clinics across South Africa. These programmes reach 500 000 youth every month through direct face-to-face interaction, and are complemented by an integrated media campaign on TV, radio, print, mobile, outdoor and the web. Dianne was tremendously impressed with Earth Forum, and immediately began making plans to develop a pan-African Responsible Participant apprenticeship programme for the LoveLife groundBREAKERS in Earth Forum methodology. After exploring the work in more detail she registered for a PhD in social sculpture at Oxford Brooks University to expand this work further and to develop a cross-continental social sculpture programme for African diaspora, all emergent from a single Earth Forum in Grahamstown. Her title for her PhD proposal is "Urban African Social sculpture: migration, imagination, agency and social transformation: Towards Ecological Citizenship for sustainable development" and she proposes to use Earth Forum as her main practice-based research instrument.

Similarly the Earth Junkies (<http://www.earthjunkies.org>) project in South Africa was deeply influenced by Earth Forum. Dee Lourens, the director of this project sat in an Earth Forum in Beaufort West in South Africa (EF 17), and was a resident on the Climate Train. During the journey she felt more and more impressed by the work we were doing with Earth Forum and with the African Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth. As Earth Junkies works with children and ecological citizenship, we began to collaborate, and since then we have developed, an entire programme for Earth Junkies to work with schools, which was influenced by practices and insights from Earth Forum. Since then Earth Junkies has grown, and has planned a trip from Cape Town to the Netherlands, via the Middle East, beginning in March 2013, to implement this programme in 29 different countries, with the aim of developing children's ecological literacy through empathetic and imaginal practices emergent from Earth Forum

pedagogies. I am on the education board for this project. The Earth Junkies project is also developing the first Global Children's Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth.

6.7.5. EARTH FORUM IN EUROPE AND USA

While I was conducting Earth Forums in South Africa, Shelley was implementing them in Germany and the UK. We stayed in contact throughout this project, sharing our various findings and adjusting and assimilating these into a refined version of Earth Forum as reported earlier. We also conducted apprenticeship projects independently and subsequently merged these processes into a single process. In conducting Earth Forums at the European Permaculture Convergence (<http://www.eupc2012.de/>) in 2012 in Kassel, Germany, Shelley found Earth Forum very well received by the European Permaculture community. Tomas Remiarz¹²⁴ explained to me that "... it could be very interesting to use it in a design course for permaculture training and teaching which run almost in parallel to Earth Forum ... I can see ways in which I could use it in the courses I give, but I can also see it being an excellent thing to use for actual design projects". Similarly Hildegard Kurt¹²⁵, a cultural researcher, author and social sculpture practitioner in Wiemar, Germany, and a senior researcher in the Social Sculpture Research Unit, is using Earth Forum in her own practice. Shelley has worked with over 70 different apprentice Responsible Participants in Germany, since I trialled the process in South Africa, with many conducting Earth Forums within their own contexts, including Earth Forums at the recent Documenta, in Kassel, Germany¹²⁶.

As described in Chapter Five, while working with Shelley Sacks in Oxford in June 2012, I worked with a group of four apprentice Responsible Participants (EF 37), from Belgium (Melanie), the United States (Matt and Seth) and Oxford (Sarah), all of whom are now practising Earth Forums in their own communities.

¹²⁴Coordinator for the research network for UK permaculture www.permaculture.org.uk and a consultant teacher and course designer for the Chaordic Permaculture Institute.

¹²⁵http://www.hildegard-kurt.de/cms/front_content.php?idcat=30&lang=2

¹²⁶[http://www.kasselkultur2012.de/Kalender/Shelley-Sacks-Earth-Forum/\(actDate\)/1340812980](http://www.kasselkultur2012.de/Kalender/Shelley-Sacks-Earth-Forum/(actDate)/1340812980) and http://citizenartdays.de/workshop_shelleysacks.html

6.8. RESPONSE(ABILITY) AND AGENCY

The contribution of social sculpture theory and practice to agency development seems to focus on the aesthetic enlivening force that an expanded conception of art provides, as I have detailed throughout this study (Chapters One, Two, Four and Five). Sacks' conception of absencing the debilitating effects of obligation and responsibility in people's abilities to act, by viewing it as response(ability), within Beuys' alchemical definition of sculpture, contributes to a widening of our understanding of agency. I have found my own implementation and methodological and pedagogical development of response(ability) has provided a more detailed picture of agency that is both personal and relational. What seems to be important in this process is internal mobilisation within the context of the wider relational world, i.e. creating opportunities for participants to experience the connections between their own inner ecology and that which exists outside of themselves, with other people and natural phenomena, which directly addresses the disconnections that are implicit in ecological apartheid. This emerges in Earth Forum through an exploration of one's own personal values, that uncover one's hidden or displaced perceptions and prevailing attitudes. By doing so it seemed possible to apply these exposed values to personal ideas of progress, through the active employment of one's imagination, as has been seen in several Earth Forum examples, such as the Breede Valley Landless women (EF 15), the Mupo Foundation (EF 33), the Jubilee group in Naboomspruit (EF 27) as well as the apprentice Responsible Participant Earth Forums (EF 35, EF 36, EF 37). While developing one's imaginative capacity, and the process of uncovering one's own values is in itself a great expression of personal agency, it was not the entire picture. It was through a collaborative exchange, and empathetically negotiated means, that the real learning seemed to transpire. It was the relationships and the capacities needed in listening that were the major contribution to agency, specifically what I have been referring to as 'relational agency', the ability to act in relation to each other, to act as a group of equal citizens. I realised that in both circumstances an active use of one's imaginative and listening abilities are used in both forms of agency (i.e. personal and relational). To listen and imagine through one's own personal values, and to listen using one's imagination to understand and see the valued 'beings and doings' of others, provides methodological detail to the capabilities theory developed by Sen (1993). I have also come to

realise in this study that this was difficult to achieve through traditional approaches to facilitation, as detailed in Chapter Three. Instead it required a more democratic, creative, self-facilitated approach, that which social sculpture phenomenology and methodology offered in the form of Earth Forum. I am not saying that the Earth Forum is the ultimate solution, but merely a possible attempt at enabling a form of response(ability) that encourages both a personal and relational form of agency, emergent within the individual themselves and not through outside facilitation.

6.9. EMPATHY IN THE TIME OF ECOLOGICAL APARTHEID

In my Earth Forum exchanges with people in South Africa and the United Kingdom, the immediate and painful experience of disconnection emerged in almost every learning arena that I guided. I began this thesis with Cormac Cullinan's description of this disconnection as an 'ecological apartheid' relating this experience to the deep cultural 'separateness' that has emerged in contemporary western globalised society particularly with nature, but also a separateness with each other and with our own inner realities (see Chapters One and Three). Even those communities I engaged with in Earth Forum who were deeply connected with the complex phenomenon of nature, such as the indigenous Makhadzi woman in Venda, could see disconnection emerging in younger generations, and stressed their concern for this (Section 4.5.1). Ecology is the study of natural relationships, interactions, influences between organisms, and between organisms and their surroundings, and so an ecological apartheid is the experience of degrading or absent relationships. An ecological apartheid can indeed be felt (at different degrees) by anyone in contact with the modern globalised society, in which our daily lives are held up by invisible farmers, invisible banking systems, invisible falling forests, as Sack's (2007^a) Exchange Values social sculpture project revealed in making visible invisible lives of banana farmers with whom we share a relationship every day when eating a banana.

The intuitive response to dealing with the challenge of disconnection is enabling connection. The tangible capacities that I have found that are most needed to encourage re-connection are primarily those that enable empathy and imagination. Throughout the course of this research, I came to notice how empathy rests at the heart of reconnection, as the very quality

of empathy is an act that engenders a relationship with another. Considering social learning, a practice that aims to enable learning between citizens outside of formal instructions and curricula, empathy may well be the capacity most needed in ensuring meaningful exchange and thus encouraging learning, as I articulated rigorously in Chapter Five. Empathy is an active practice and enabling the development of such a capacity is an agential question. Empathetic agency (as I have shown) can be enabled through the employment of the imagination, as a primary sensing and contemplative organ needed to enable empathy and the 'I' sense. Considering also the value of listening actively, developing a 'listening agency' is in the same way reliant on the use of the imagination, not in fanciful escapism, but in actively picturing the experiences of another including the experience or reality of other than human beings, and natural phenomena. Listening and engaging empathy therefore is an artistic act; there needs to be a greater focus on the role of aesthetic learning in social learning and in empathy research.

The racial apartheid experienced by those who came before me, and that which I experienced as a child in South Africa was addressed powerfully by the *actions* of citizens. Citizenship is indeed an action, an action of responsibility or what Sacks (2011d) described as an 'ability to respond'. Her social sculpture approach to agency, which explores the relationship between intuitive freedom and responsibility, is enriched by the redefinition of aesthetics as an enlivening process that combats the 'anaesthetic' or opposing numbing or solidifying forces that effect our ecological disconnection. To be an ecological citizen, is to be able to intuitively and fluently engage empathy through active listening and the employment of the imagination; it is that which makes fundamental substance between us, that which connects our own inner thinking and feeling, our relationships with each other and our place in the ecological system. In this way the education of an ecological citizen is indeed a question of aesthetic education, and enlivening education that is concerned with the question of freedom. As I have shown, the learning required to develop moral intuition, ecological literacy and the capacity to employ empathy in our meaning making, is what is primarily needed by the ecological citizen/human being. We therefore cannot learn in isolation, that is to say, the human being cannot learn entirely on her own, she requires the exchange

between other human beings, 'other than human beings' and the natural phenomena that surround her in order to develop the capacities needed to enable her own flourishing and agency. I have explored the question of one way to enable and strengthen this exchange.

The title of this thesis *Empathy in the time of ecological apartheid* was originally *Empathy in the time of climate change*, yet I came to see that climate change is merely a symptom of something deeper in the human condition, it is indeed influenced by our ecological apartheid. I therefore feel that instead of only investigating our responses to climate change via seeking out solutions or technical fixes, we should be employing an aesthetic response to empathetic agency development in shaping and enabling the moral intuition of ecological citizens.

This study has been a reflexive journey into addressing the challenge of ecological apartheid through a grounded practice-based approach to developing an appropriate educational response. Ecological citizenship, although coined as a new popular concept that addresses the concerns of deep ecologists and environmentalists alike, requires a more in-depth examination into how a citizen learns to be an 'ecological citizen'? This question of how as I have described in Chapter One, was perhaps the primary and consistent formative force of this study, and that which guided my approach and reflection. Understanding that fundamental to the education of an ecological citizen was the social nature of the citizen, meant that I had to consider the learning that occurs socially, and how this influences agency, both personal and relational, as articulated in my primary research question. Indeed the independent and very distinct fields of social learning, and social sculpture offered a potential methodological and theoretical framework in which I could investigate this further. My own initial explorations into these which are articulated in chapter three, outline the seemingly clumsy nature of this research, which later I discovered to be a form of collaborative practice-based research. It was in these early explorations, particularly during the Climate Fluency Exchange, that I came to realise the value of social sculpture in offering a very unique approach to learning and agency development of the citizen. It was therefore necessary to apprentice myself with an expert in social sculpture in order to fully access this relatively unknown field, as the methods and strategies rely almost entirely on experiential learning. Having a basic understanding of these methods, strategies and theories through a

combination of my own personal experiential and conventional learning process, I was able to begin applying these methods with others (as described in Chapter Four), and subsequently develop ways in which this learning could be facilitated and expanded (Chapter Five), but not in the conventional sense. My independent contribution to the fields of both social learning and social sculpture was the application of an apprenticeship learning process in which concepts like moral imagination and response(ability) could be experienced firsthand, through my own experience and the experiences of others. In this way pedagogies could be constructed based on these experiences, and the learning opportunities housed within them.

Specifically, this study has contributed to the field of social learning, by providing nuanced and specific detail into the methods and practices that enable learning that is socially conceived. In addition to this an articulation of the value of imagination, listening and empathy in the development of moral intuition, moral imagination, imaginal contemplation, active listening, and empathetic exchange in social learning has been explored. Understanding these more personal nuanced and subtle capacities as vital for personal agency development, as well as relational agency development, I would argue is a noteworthy contribution to learning and agency discourse, particularly in articulating that which is needed to encourage Sen's (1993) capabilities theory. This study's contribution to social learning goes beyond the conventions of analytical reflection and deliberative discussion that has up to now dominated social learning discourse. Instead an empathetic exchange that considers the enlivening or aesthetic education of participants has been addressed through rigorous implementation of social sculpture methodology on the ground in South Africa and the UK to enable forms of social learning that encourage ecological citizenship specifically.

With regard to social sculpture, this study has offered a detailed exploration into the active co-development of a pedagogy for social sculpture practice that enables ecological citizenship. The little discourse that is available to social sculpture has mainly been interested in citizenship in a broader sense. In addition to this, until this study, no work has yet examined the contribution social sculpture methods and theory can play in facilitating social learning, especially learning that is embodied and aesthetic, or what its meaning is for education (see Chapter Seven). Similarly a study that comprehensively and reflexively examines social sculpture methods and theories on the ground via the kind of auto-ethnographic enquiry that I

used in this study, has not been attempted at this scale, with specific rigour into the question of learning and agency development.

It must also be noted that social learning as well as social sculpture research is impossible to conduct without working with others in a social way. The collaborative and participatory nature of this research project stands out, as every aspect of the work required socially constituted engagement that was free from traditional social institutions and organisations. Indeed this work was experimental and experiential on all fronts, and thus required a collaboratively reflexive practice throughout, which in its own way made the independent contributions of this study somewhat challenging to decipher. Despite this it still required a single reflexive researcher dedicated to the research question of developing a pedagogy for ecological citizenship within the context of ecological apartheid. My own personal reflexivity or what Archer (2007) called the 'internal conversation' has perhaps been my most valuable and precise instrument of observation, and I have differentiated this from practice-based enquiry by using the term reflexive practice-base enquiry as discussed earlier. As Goethe (1952b) claimed the human body is the most precise instrument, and every object perceived develops a new organ of perception within the person who perceives it. I indeed have developed distinct organs of perception, specifically imaginal contemplation, attentive/active listening and empathy, and heightened reflexivity in a complex social context/s

While it remains to be seen just how effective the pedagogies developed in this study truly are, as they rely on future implementations of Earth Forum by other Responsible Participants who have participated in the apprenticeship, it is clear from my own personal experience, learning and agency development that the value of social sculpture in contributing to the capacities of the ecological citizen is noteworthy. Earth Forums enabled a form of connection with nature that was unique, personally valuable and relationally understandable in all the reflections offered by participants of the many Earth Forums conducted in this study (as shown in Chapters Three, Four and Five). As I have shown through auto-ethnographic reflections, a deeper personal relational agency has expanded, due to developments in my own imaginal contemplation, active listening and capacity for empathetic exchange.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESPONDING TO THE QUESTION OF EDUCATION¹²⁷

“Schooling is only an accomplice in a large process of cultural decline. Yet, no other institution is better able to reverse that decline. The answer, then, is not to abolish or diminish formal education but rather to change it.”

David Orr (2004:18)

7.1. INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter I reflect on education itself as a way to offer some concluding direction to this study, and to propose the potential symbiotic value of relating social learning to social sculpture theory and practice and what new insights this study provides in rethinking education that enables the learning for ecological citizenship and the social learning practitioner. I do this by first exploring my own personal experiences of education, in order to create an ontological basis to which I reflexively examine my more recent experiences with social sculpture and social learning, and relate these to contemporary research that reveals a broadening of our understanding of education and learning, that is embodied, sensuous, playful, unpredictable, and deeply personal. This chapter aims to settle my reflexive explorations into a wider educational context, and to consider the wider educational implications of social sculpture, and other experimental forms of socially constituted learning that I have worked with. There is a particular focus here on new understandings that have emerged regarding the pedagogical possibilities for social learning and experiential learning, as well as an examination of potential restrictions in current educational forms that need to be addressed to avoid the inhibition of new innovation and expansion of education for the 21st century ecological citizen.

¹²⁷ In this chapter I use the notion of education broadly, to include what is often referred to as both formal (e.g. schools and universities) and non-formal learning contexts (e.g. development education contexts). In its broad sense, education is about those teaching and learning interactions that broaden our knowledge and experiences of the world.

7.2. MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF EDUCATION

My personal experience of education has been a process of navigating dualism. I went to a small co-ed public school in a farming community in my primary years, an all boys high school in the city (which had compulsory mathematics and science, and was more interested in creating analytical rugby players than thoughtful empathetic citizens) and finally my undergraduate education was one in which I had to set aside my artistic impulses and creativity to complete a BSc in zoology and environmental science as my urge to work with nature and learn from nature was so strong. The dualism I experienced in these three different institutions shared a common thread: that of having to let go of one aspect of my personality and inner reality to survive and succeed in the education system. Three incidents stand out for me.

The first occurred when my grade-four schoolteacher encouraged me to bring to school animals I was nursing with my mother. My mother and I were often given injured birds, small mammals and tortoises to nurse and try release. My teacher thought this would be a fantastic opportunity for the class to learn more about these animals and their place in the natural world, along with our own place. I remember once nursing a baby Glossy Starling (*Lamprolornis nitens*) and an injured 'Banana Bat' (*Pipistrellus nanus*) commonly found in Kwa-Zulu Natal, which roosts in the unfolded banana tree leaves during the day. I remember our teacher showing us that the wing of a bird and the wing of a bat were both modified hands. This stuck with me, and I remember never quite looking at my hands the same way, flapping them around whenever I ran down hills or jumped into the reservoir on our small holding. Yet profound learning occurred for me beyond this with my mother, learning empathetically and intuitively the needs of the small delicate animals, how to handle them, what they needed, how to tell if they were cold or hot, or even how to tell if they were about to die. This I never learned in the classroom, nor could I fully share this by just bringing the animals into the classroom, there was something else I had experienced that enabled me to understand and empathetically treat an injured or orphaned animal.

The second memory I have, is struggling in high school with choosing my subjects and feeling

deeply conflicted. I wanted to take both art and biology, but sadly these clashed on the timetable. I was so deeply upset by the fact that I could not study these both together, and thought it a form of madness at the time that I could not choose both. It felt like my future was hindered by a simple flaw in the roster. Finally, the third incident continues with this theme. I was troubled in my first undergraduate year having to make a subject decision on my major. There wasn't a half science, half arts degree that I could do. I could of course gain some credits from the humanities, but some of these would not count towards my major which had to be either a BSc or a BA. Why the dualism? Why did I have to choose to be in one corner or the other? Why could I not be both an artist and a scientist? I remember thinking to myself when finally making a choice: *"Art I have learned intuitively and I don't need to get a degree in it, but zoology seems like something I need to be taught"*. Yet I kept questioning myself, did I need to get taught, did I not know a great deal about ecology, about biology, about the relationships between animal and habitat through my rich experience that spanned almost 20 years to be equally qualified to call myself a zoologist? The more I experienced in the zoology degree, the more I realized it was merely a theoretical affirmation of my existing embodied knowledge of animals and ecosystems that I had gained from my childhood and teenage years, being immersed in taking care of animals, playing in the forests, and volunteering at animal rehabilitation centers. Little did I know at the time that all learning is both intuitive and taught, and actually is deeper and more profound when it is both shared and intuitive.

My experience of education, up to the point of beginning my postgraduate research, was that it was merely a process of enculturation that was guiding me to some specific corner of knowledge, in which I will finally be able to research, experiment and hopefully expand the field. Up to that point my learning had been a process of separating my capacities into neatly ordered subjects, that could be classified and monitored. My inner realities that did not conform to these fields were not considered important in my degree. When conducting an elective module in fresh water ecology for my Environmental Science BSc honours, we had to conduct a toxicology experiment in which we measured the mortality rate of small fresh water planktonic crustaceans. The experiment had been done each year by many students; with each experimental session 80% to 90% of the creatures would die. This seemed like such a

pointless and brutal exercise, in what way were we learning from this cruel experiment? It was intuitive that toxins will jeopardise the wellbeing of microscopic life in the water, why did we have to actually kill them over and over to understand this? I refused to take part, and was threatened by the lab technician that leaving would affect my overall mark, until another lecturer intervened and let me forfeit this lab practical and instead she took me aside, and showed me a video about Dr. Masaru Emoto's research in which he exposed negative and positive emotions to water samples and found a significant correlation to the effect emotions had on the crystalline structure of the water, negative emotions creating abstract jiggered crystals, and positive emotions creating beautiful geometric snowflake-shaped crystals. We had a long discussion and in it she said:

As scientists or researchers we can either enter the unknown like we enter a dark room. We can look around with a torch, taking in only isolated information analytically with separated senses, or we can open the curtains and look at it all at once, I feel we need to do both.

This had a massive effect on me, and how I looked at research, meaning making, learning and ultimately education. In my postgraduate work (especially when I was involved in my MSc in environmental science and sustainable rural development) I found that working with children (I was exploring the role of biodiversity - particularly the use of wild food - played in the wellbeing of rural-children's lives affected by HIV/AIDS in South Africa) enabled learning that was not what I had experienced formally. I had to use capacities I had developed in my artistic practice, my empathetic practice of nursing injured and orphan animals and my scientific training of experiment design and rational deduction to navigate this research. All of these were involved in my learning in the field, in this way I was exploring the dark room by opening the curtains and using the torch to investigate the shadows. I surprised me that it had taken me so long to feel confident to do this, as intuitively throughout my education I had the impulse to learn and investigate in this way. I was a full whole human being who was shaped by my learning, I was not just a BSc degree.

This PhD, and my own embodied experiences and findings, have led me further towards the value of collaborative enquiry, communal learning, and the inherent social process of meaning making and knowledge production. I experienced learning in this study as an

embodied and shared process of developing ideas and ways of knowing together as diverse groups, or exchanges between individuals, that is not entirely predetermined or formalised, but rather emergent and creative. Enabling such a process of intuitive, communal, emergent learning in the current education environment is perhaps one of the greatest challenges for the future of this research and its application in contemporary education. Of these the greatest challenge is to recognize, value and enable an intuitive experiential approach to learning, which is inherently difficult to assess or monitor.

7.3. INTUITIVE EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Through Steiner's theory of freedom discussed in the previous chapter, Steiner calls us to extend ourselves out of our traditional social-existence, absencing prejudices we receive from our family, nation, ethnic group, education and religion, and all that we inherit from the past that limits our creative and imaginative capacity to meet the world directly. Essentially Steiner is showing how all forms of enculturation do not serve this form of learning, and the kind of freedom needed to develop a moral imagination. Yet it is possible to create new social spaces in which such learning can occur, as of course a moral imagination cannot emerge in isolation, we require a world of beings and phenomena to experience to discover these inner realities.

In this research, the Earth Forum case study offers a way in which this learning could occur in a phenomenological, experiential, social form: via a specific *connective aesthetic* experience. Each participant has the opportunity to experience freedom in his or her own personal way within an unfolding neutral and emergent social space. This is achieved in the early stages of the practice which firstly brings forward the inherent imaginative capacities of those participating through having an awareness of this capacity, both in our ability to take images, ideas, experiences and other substances into our own cognitive reflective space, but also through our ability to feel and observe our own imaginative experience (and the capacity to hold contrasting images, ideas, concepts at the same time). This process immediately begins cultivating the space between feelings and sensory information, and enabling the space for intuitive capacity development (which links to the conceptions of personal agency

development). One experiences this inner work through that which was obtained both by outside experiences (being in the surrounds, and collecting a handful of earth) but also by inner reflection (noticing what one experiences, and following one's own internal conversation). It is however in the creation of a physical arena through a direct connective aesthetic, in this case the Earth Forum oiled cloth, and seated circle, that participants are encouraged to inhabit the social world while also maintaining a deep inner sense, through using their imaginative capacities. It offers reflexive, interconnected, personal and relational ways of making meaning that are not concerned about enculturation, but rather the shaping of the inner capacities of the individual, and the shaping of the person.

These experiences are then shared in an exchange, where participants are freed from the need to respond, either in words or in body language or gestures. Instead the rest of the group has the freedom to simply listen, and experience their imagination at work in picturing the experiences of the other. Through absenting judgment via a practice of active listening, the participants also begin to experience a space in which moral intuition – or what Sen (1993) described as 'ethical individualism' – can emerge. This practice is one that takes devotion and dedication, keeping aside one's own internal dialogue; instead through direct imaginal observation (not fantastical escapism) of the other's experience, the participants come closer to the experience of uniting perception with cognition, where objective and subjective elements of experience can interact, which influences one's ability to freely think and act, therefore encouraging free agency. In focusing this attention to the direct experience of their surrounding ecosystem, specifically the relationship between the sensing/imagining human being and the soil, and with each other, a sense of individual location is achieved, while at the same time maintaining a connection to interconnections between the individual (inner) and the social and ecological world (outer).

As a case study, Earth Forum offers a significant contribution to how we consider the education of an ecological citizen, and the reforms in education that may be needed to allow for moral imagination or an intuitive approach to personal capacity development to be achieved through a form of social learning that particularly articulates the features of personal

and relational agency. This relates more broadly to a question of how pedagogically we enable Nussbaum and Sen's (1993) capability theory to become an accessible reality to people; i.e. how can people come to express their valued beings and doings in authentic ways?

Considering the Earth Forum case, and the field of social sculpture as a whole, the development of capacities such as moral intuition or moral imagination are fundamental in addressing Nussbaum and Sen's (1993) call for enabling capabilities for economic and social freedom that value individual 'valued beings and doings', as it would seem incomplete articulate these 'beings and doings' without an enabled moral intuitive or imaginative capacity of an individual. It also offers new ways in which Archers' (2007; 2012) internal conversation can be developed, but also how this internal conversation can be shared socially, and reflexively explored in social learning processes. This could equally be true in addressing Kronlid's (2009) criteria for environmental education that enable human flourishing, or indeed responding to complex social messes that Rittel and Webber (1973) described as 'wicked', and becoming ever-malignant in our attempt to approach them with a solely technical or rational form. Indeed, as noted in the previous chapter, Lotz-Sisitka's (2009) call for climate change education that is practice-centred and adaptive would also benefit from an approach to education that aims to enable and enrich the development of moral imagination and intuition. If my own education is to be used as an example, the current educational system hardly makes this easy for learners, in fact it makes it particularly difficult to learn in this way in the formal setting, and instead this currently can only occur 'between the cracks', between subjects, in extra-mural spaces, at home, on field trips or in our day dreaming.

While the general structure of education appears to be 'inhospitable' to this kind of learning, there are some spaces where such learning can occur. Jickling (2009: 164), for example speaks of fieldtrip pedagogy and its value for this kind of learning. He considers field trip learning to be fundamentally experiential in nature, and enables a valuable way of knowing that is deeply personal and emotional in nature and *"lies at the heart of our ability to be ethical beings."* He argues that the emotional aspects of learning should not be left only to

psychologists, but should also be the focus of researchers in education, as they are fundamental to experiential learning and the ethical development of learners, and can expand our pedagogical approaches to incorporate natural phenomena, social settings and the physical world around us as ‘teachers’ themselves.

As mentioned earlier in chapter one, learning that involves the phenomenological experience of the learner provides new opportunities for inquiry that does not separate *object and subject* or *place and person*, as David Greenwood (2009: 275) (formerly Gruenewald), explains: “... place-based inquiry and direct encounters with communities lead to democratic participation and social action within the local environment”. Similarly McKenzie et al. (2009: 7) describes how culture and place are deeply intertwined and result in the potential for places and geographies as being profoundly pedagogical themselves.

Although neither McKenziie et al (2009), nor Jickling (2009) advocate for an abandonment of scientific and philosophical reasoning, they argue rather that emotional or phenomenological experience adds vital dimensions to learning. As he (Jickling, 2009:168) puts it: “*experiential understandings adds flesh and life to the bones so often polished smooth and white by analytical thought.*” Considering then the current nature of education, which asks to predict and measure the learning for assessment, the development of moral intuition is so personal, embodied and particular, predicting it or assessing it in the traditional sense will not work, and question remains: is it necessary to predict or assess? Jickling (2009) speaks with similar sentiment to Steiner and Goethe, when he stresses that learning is felt and understood in a bodily and sensuous way, which cannot be anything other than an emotional experience, and (2009:167) explains that experiential or embodied learning cannot be predicted or reduced to measurable increments, and asks the question if measuring or predicting them is necessary?

Earth Forum, and indeed what I have come to understand in the discourse of social sculpture, is fundamentally invested in practice-led inquiry into evolving emergent strategies and theories that enable this philosophy of freedom and moral intuition to enter into the social realm in forms of practice that are accessible and universal. These have potential to

contribute responsively to various social, economic, ecological, political and cultural crises that we face today and shall continue to face in the future. I have indeed discovered in my own experience, and through the reflections of participants and Responsible Participants that Earth Forum contributes to an expansion of methods, strategies, theories and pedagogies for social learning, that has implications for the greater education project related to the problem of ecological apartheid. As already stated across the thesis, social sculpture supports an approach to learning socially that enables the development of moral intuition, imaginal contemplation and attentive listening capacities that are essential for the holistic agency development of an empathetic and free ecological citizen, mainly because it fronts personal experience, attentive and empathetic sharing, and innovative and creative thinking that is phenomenological and intuitive. I have argued in this thesis, that this approach to learning socially through connective practice offers great potential for encouraging the capacity expansion and agency development that enables inner and outer freedoms of the human being and enriches their ability to respond to disconnections in the wider ecology to which we belong. If then this approach has implications for the education of citizens we need to broaden our understanding then of what contexts social learning has emerged in, and in what way social sculpture can potentially contribute to expanding social learning theory and practice to accommodate such vital, universal learning.

7.4. CONSIDERING THE PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION

In considering the particular context of social learning and the potential value of social sculpture in expanding the field, what other obstacles potentially hinder the expansion of social learning theory and practice within the greater education project? To begin with David Orr asks the question: “*What is Education for?*” and goes on to say “*Education did not serve as an adequate barrier to Barbarity*” (Orr, 2004: 7). Orr (quoting Wiesel’s (1990)) considers the reality that education concerns itself with theories, not values, abstraction rather than consciousness, neat answers instead of questions, and technical efficiency over conscience. He says (ibid, 2004: 8): “Education is no guarantee of decency, prudence, or wisdom.” One could also put it like this: “Contemporary education is no guarantee for intuitive moral wisdom”.

Orr (2004) argues that if we continue with the same form of education we have now, it will only compound our socio-economic and ecological problems, and what is needed rather is to measure education on standards of decency and human survival. Orr speaks of three specific foundational ideas that gave rise to modern education, the first is Francis Bacons' proposed union between knowledge and power; second: Galileo's separation of the intellect, where analytical thought dominates over "creativity, humor and wholeness" (Orr, 2044: 8); and finally: Descarte's separation of self and object. From this Orr (2004: 8-9) mentions six myths of education, of which are valuable to consider in how they effect the expansion of social learning:

1. **That ignorance is a solvable problem**, which he believes is not, but rather a part of the human condition, and that there will always be knowledge unknown to us. In this way social learning has no exact solution, but rather an embodied contextually relevant one.
2. **With enough knowledge and technology we can manage the earth as a whole.** So far we have enough evidence to show that that is not true, and in fact we seem to make many more wicked problems from our attempts to manage and fix.
3. **Knowledge (and human goodness) is increasing**, but actually only some knowledge is increasing while other forms of knowledge are being lost. Of particular concern is the loss of first hand, embodied knowledge, and this kind of knowledge is seen often as an oddity (Orr, 2004: 10).
4. **That we can adequately restore that which we have dismantled** (Orr, 2004:11) in the modern curriculum by fragmenting knowledge into disciplines and subdisciplines, leaving knowledge 'hermetically sealed'. As Orr describes, this results in leaving students after their education without any integrated sense of the unity of things. This, as Orr describes further, makes itself visible in the reality that economists are educated with no sense of the very basic understanding of ecology or thermodynamics.
5. **The purpose of education is to give students the means for upward mobility and success** (Orr, 2004:11), when actually this only creates people who are able to

participate in society in a limited way, and does not create people with the capacities to respond meaningfully to the ecological crisis. Orr quotes Thomas Merton (1985:11) who once identified modern education as the “mass production of people literally unfit for anything except to take part in an elaborate and completely artificial charade”....

David Orr goes on to say:

The plain fact is that the planet does not need more successful people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every kind. It needs people who live well in their places. It needs people of moral courage willing to join the fight to make the world habitable and humane and these qualities have little to do with success as our culture has defined it.

6. **The final myth is that our culture represents the pinnacle of human achievement.** Orr (2004: 12) refers to this as cultural arrogance. Rather than the pinnacle, Orr points out Ron Miller’s (1989:2) thoughts on our current culture and education system which fails to “nurture what is best or noblest in human spirit. It does not encourage gentleness, generosity, caring or compassion”.

In light of this Orr (2004: 12-13) considers how we could ‘rethink education’, he suggests six possible principles:

1. **All education is environmental education:** Students explore the reality that they are part of or apart from the natural world. For example that economists are also taught ecology.
2. **The goal of education is not mastery of subject matter but mastery of one’s person:** Rather than filling students up with facts and knowledge, education is exploring how using knowledge one can perfect their own personhood.
3. **Knowledge carries with it the responsibility to see that it is well used in the world:** If this was achieved, Orr suggests (2004: 13) tragedies such as Chernobyl, Ozone depletion and the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill would have been avoided.
4. **We cannot say that we know something until we understand the effects of this knowledge on real people and their communities:** Orr (2004: 13) offers the example that the ‘bottom line’ principle taught in business schools and economics departments does not include the value of happy and healthy communities or the

human cost of economic rationality which values economic abstractions about people, community and environment.

5. **The power of examples over words:** Orr (2004: 13-14) suggests that two most important needs in education are that firstly faculty and administrators provide role models of integrity, care and thoughtfulness and secondly institutions are capable of embodying ideals wholly and completely in all operations.

6. **The way in which learning occurs is as important as the content of the courses:** Lecturing processes tend to induce passivity according to Orr (2004: 14), and usually occurs inside which gives students the impression that learning only occurs indoors, when they are behind desks. Orr (2004:13) asks us to see the current campus architecture as only crystalizing *“pedagogy that reinforces passivity, monologue, domination and artificiality.”*

Considering Orr's (2004) six problems with education and his six principles for rethinking education, the focus of this study has offered some embodied deep exploration into each of these. Firstly the concept that all education should be environmental education reflects my exploration into the concept that learning for ecological citizenship is vital for everyone, and enabling this requires a holistic 'aesthetic education' of all citizens, to borrow from Beuys' idea that "every human being is an artist". Secondly my exploration into my own embodied process of learning as an ecological citizen using a variety of methods and modes of learning that accommodated 'multiple ways of knowing' have explored Orr's (2004) second principle that education is not a mastery over subject but rather a perfecting and refining ones own person. In this way, my research has explored the development of 'moral intuition' suggested by Rudolf Steiner, and Shelley Sacks' work and practice in developing the process and learning of *'response(ability)'* and the responsible participant, which also relates to Orr's (2004) fourth principle of responsibility and knowledge. It was made clear through my embodied practice, and shifting my ontological position through reflexive and practice-based research that it was my own transformation and capacities for attentive empathy and imagination that were vital in my ability to act as an ecological citizen, and thus thinking and exploring how we can expand this learning through new pedagogy. Embodied learning, and

exploring realities through direct imaginative and empathetic experiences were key aspects of this research. Goethean phenomenological processes such as 'delicate empiricism' were explored actively in this study, leading this work to carefully explore Orr's (2004) fifth principle of the power of example over words, and the value of entering into the 'gesture of the phenomenon'. As reported on across this thesis, this occurred through the exploration into individual creativity and self expression and listening as deeply personal experiential and embodied learning phenomena. This also links to the focus on apprenticeship and mentor based learning that I explored in this study, with Shelley and Reza providing strong mentors and role models for how I learned. They, together with the participants I worked with, expanded my own moral intuition, empathetic imagination and attentiveness.

Finally Orr's (2004) sixth principle, that the process of learning is more important than the course itself, is something I realized early on in this work. Social sculpture practice as well as social learning is vitally interested in process over product, and I have examined in detail the value of creating new social spaces and connective aesthetics that enable such learning, where capacity and agency development as well as creating new social climates are equally if not more valuable than technological or material forms of development. I have explored and reflexively demonstrated the power of social sculpture to construct new social spaces that can potentially re-shape social learning methodology to be more strongly inclusive of engaging human imagination and aesthetics into learning interactions. Agency development (both personal and relational) seems to rely heavily on the social space and structures¹²⁸ provided for learning, and expanding this it is a vital question for our education system, particularly: "How are we constructing space for social learning?". From my embodied exploration into social sculpture practice and my review of existing social learning research, it would seem that there is a rich well of experience, methods, theories and practices that have not yet been adequately explored by social learning theorists and practitioners. It could be said that, in many ways, social sculpture researchers are currently leading and innovating new possibilities for how we approach socially constituted forms of learning and agency development.

¹²⁸ As can be seen in Margret Archer's work (2000; 2007)

Page Smith (1990:7, cited in Orr, 2004) talks of the failure of education to fundamentally offer the considerate and empathetic attentiveness of the teacher or mentor, in this way, reviving the apprenticeship approach in learning and education is vital:

The vast majority of so-called research turned out in the modern university is essentially worthless. It does not result in any measurable benefit to anything or anybody. It does not push back those omnipresent 'frontiers of knowledge' so confidently evoked; it does not in the main result in greater health or happiness among the general populace or any particular segment of it. It is busywork on a vast, almost incompressible scale. It is dispiriting; it depresses the whole scholarly enterprise; and most important of all, it deprives the student of what he or she deserves – the thoughtful and considerate attention of a teacher deeply and unequivocally committed to teaching.

The current education system places many educators in a ironic quandary, for example Jickling (2009:170) shares his struggles with the reality that he can critique Cartesian reductionism in his classes but he is then required to describe and assess this learning of his students using reductionist Cartesian models. Similarly collaborative enquiry or social learning is emerging as area of enquiry in contemporary education discourse, but the very fact that it is being sectioned off as a new sub-discipline within the existing institutional structures could jeopardize the expansion of this research by hemming it into the existing structures of reductionist assessment, and the modes of individualizing knowledge which fundamentally inhibits the growth of social or collaborative forms of enquiry and learning. Jickling (2009:172) suggests that we need to shift emphasis away from evaluation and back to considering what good learning opportunities look like, where learning exists as whole activities.

7.5. BROADENING THE SOCIAL LEARNING LANDSCAPE

In reflecting further on the relationship between social learning and the kinds of social sculpture learning practices that I engaged in through this research, I draw on a recent publication by the Environmental Learning Research Centre at Rhodes University (Lotz-Sisitka, 2012) which (re)viewed literature on social learning in natural resource management, participatory human development and environmental education. This monograph affirms that certainly all learning can be seen as social, and indeed the growing field of social learning is

revealing just how significant socially constituted forms of learning are. Particular in the fields of environmental education, natural resource management, human development and education for sustainable development, social learning is gaining much attention (Wals, 2007, 2009; Cundill and Rodella, 2012; Lotz-Sisitika, 2012; Kulundu, 2012)

Yet according to Cundill and Rodella (2012), the field of social learning (emerging as an overlapping sub-field of education; development and natural resources management) does not have a coherent underlying conceptual base, but rather has several different trajectories and definitions, that are applied in a variety of different contexts and disciplines. Some researchers use social learning to describe specific forms of learning processes while others use the term as an 'umbrella concept' for a variety of different collaborative endeavours based on participatory approaches (Cundill and Rodella, 2012). Reed et al (2010) also examine the heterogeneity of the use of the term "social learning" and highlight the abundance of different frameworks used to describe and utilise social learning as a conceptual construct. With this confusion associated with the conceptual base of social learning, it is not surprising too that the methodology used to enable social learning is equally diverse, or in my experience, vague. How one actually enables 'social learning' is not readily discussed or explored in the educational literature, and there is a definite need to investigate this more than the 'what' and 'why' of social learning discourse. Lotz-Sisitka (2012) also suggests that there is a need to give more attention to the 'how' of social learning.

In a southern African context, social learning has been influenced also by the emergence of participatory development and more specifically what has been termed Participatory Rural Appraisal or PRA (Kulundu, 2012). The interest in socially constituted forms of emancipatory learning, have come from the need for equitable participatory development that is driven by those directly affected. As Kulundu (2012:39) explains, the aim has been to find social approaches that work to *"localise and humanise the developmental agenda so that it can reflect the needs of the most vulnerable members of society."* The development agenda has moved away from over-emphasising materialistic, product driven outcomes to focus more on knowledge sharing and transformation of learning itself, with a clearer focus on self-development and agency (Kulundu, 2012). Added to this the human development discourse

draws heavily on Sen's capabilities theory, which focuses on people's valued beings and doings, personal and relational agency, and moves away from developing material capital only but rather enabling and enriching a wider range of human and social capital (Kulundu, 2012). While there is clearly interest in furthering the field of social learning within the development agenda, there remains "theoretical ambiguity" according to Kulundu (2012:40) of social learning processes, which leaves the discourse open to many different interpretations and confusion, however also keeps the field open for innovation and expanding the field further beyond traditional education spaces.

With participation standing at the center of the development agenda, mainly through PRA methodology, exploring techniques to accommodate the transfer of local knowledge into development programs has been a priority for many researchers and practitioners in participatory development. With this direction in development practice, questions around social forms of learning and enabling meaningful social learning have directed new developments in social learning, yet much of this expansion draws from traditional pedagogical and methodical processes, that in which facilitators facilitate social learning through manufactured workshops. Kulundu (2012:41) problematizes the role of the facilitator figure who usually enables this learning, and she questions the potential for power dynamics that inadvertently affect the overall social learning process. Kulundu (2012) cites Chambers (2005: 114), who refers to the incidences of '*facipulation*' (facilitation + manipulation). When *facipulation* occurs it potentially hinders knowledge expansion in social learning environments as it tends toward individuation and enculturation traditions that reduce the potential for intuitive, personal and sometimes peculiar ways of knowing to expand, due to the intentional or unintentional agenda of the facilitator.

Facipulation aside, Kulundu and Chamber's concern themselves with a greater question regarding social learning in the current context of education, and the traditional pedagogical practice of enabling participatory forms of learning and knowledge transfer in development programs. There is a demand for expanding pedagogical innovation in the field of social learning, yet very little work has deeply investigated new innovations in social learning

practice. Why we should be perusing social learning has been widely examined, but how we should be enabling it requires further attention. There has also been little critique of the notion of facilitation in development oriented social learning, which the social sculpture notion of 'responsible participant' can potentially provide, as shown in this study.

Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2012:59) call for "*deep changes in understanding about the inter-relationships between people and their life support systems are required.... [that are]... deeply connected to a fundamental re-orientation of the place of humanity in nature.* Yet attempting to scale this into an international research agenda lends itself to some particular concerns. They (2012:61) warn that failure to give attention to understanding the social processes of learning and social change, can lead to 'ontological collapse' in social learning research. The notion of 'ontological collapse' is used by Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2012:61) to explain the manner in which important social processes become objectified through **reification** and **alienation** and can eventually become abstracted and distant from the immediate context of social learning processes. They draw from Sfard's (2006) definition of ontological collapse, which occurs when accounts of actions and events are been translated into statements about states and properties without a clear context and process description. Reification here refers a form of abstracting social learning into greater theoretical concepts rather than describing social learning and the particular processes needed to attain social learning in specific socio-cultural contexts. Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2012:61) suggest the need to rather refer to "social learning processes" and not 'Social Learning" (as abstracted object). This focusses attention on the methodology, processes and pedagogy of contextualized forms of learning socially. Alienation refers to the objectification as presenting a social learning phenomenon in an impersonal way, as if social learning occurred "without the participation of human beings" (Sfard, 2006:24). Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2012) suggest reflexive personal accounts of the particular actions and processes that enable socially constituted forms of learning to avoid this collapse. They (2012:62) suggest that *critical realism* and *cultural historical activity theory* have both brought reflexivity into focus in social learning research, where reflexivity is used in the form of tracking an 'internal conversation' which is central to the emergence of agency (Archer, 2007; 2012), but is also socially, historically and materially situated. Lotz-Sisitka

(2012:86) encourages understanding 'social learning processes' in this vein:

...ongoing processes of learning and change involving human actors who collectively and reflexively make their way through the world in various ways (Archer, 2007, 2012). Archer makes the important point that without reflexivity, there can be no society (2007); a process which involves "all normal people considering themselves in relation to social contexts and vice versa" (Archer, 2012: 1)

This study has been primarily concerned with **the how** of social learning, and particularly interested in developing pedagogies for specific socially constituted forms of learning. The internal conversation reflexively developed in this thesis via the auto-ethnographic rendition of exploring various forms of social learning initially, and later the in-depth exploration of social sculpture and a pedagogical accompaniment to a social sculpture practice (Earth Forum) has not only offered a way to establish and adjust ontological positions, but also methodologically explore how learning can occur, both through what individuals experience within themselves (intuition and imagination) but also how they share and learn from each other through listening and dialogue (attentiveness and empathy).

Rethinking the role of facilitator's and facilitation itself in the use of Shelley Sack's concept of "responsible participant" is an example of the 'how', and offers a alternative approach to facilitated knowledge exchange, providing a greater level of participative parity, creating new social spaces for exchange. Another example presented in this research is the social sculpture foundational use of connective aesthetics and form (i.e. the Earth Forum cloth) that enliven and encourage new personal and intuitive opportunities to emerge for empathetic exchange and attentive listening. Pedagogically too, the exploration into embodied, experiential learning and the value of mentor/apprentice relationships in enabling intuitive, embodied forms of experiential learning, have offered some insight into just how we might begin to innovate social learning practice and the pedagogy of social learning.

I would argue that social sculpture practice/processes are offering the expanding field of social learning new ways to rethink the existing paradigms of learning in participatory development and environmental education, and the principles of social sculpture praxis need to be explored further, particularly in exploring methodological developments in social learning processes. Furthermore, the specific focus of this study has provided a detailed look at the

pedagogical development (via renewing and expanding our conception of apprentice), showing this to be a potentially valuable social learning process in an of itself.

Attentive listening, intuition and imagination are all engaged and considered as primary capacities that need to be enlivened in any form of learning socially, as the combination of these capacities enable empathy as was shown in this study. Learning to further expand the potential for this form of learning in the world seems to benefit from an apprentice/mentor model in which learning is embodied and experiential. One could even explore the idea that apprenticeship to one's own inner realities, i.e. becoming apprentice to one's intuition, is a concept worth further exploration methodologically. Highlighting the reality that all learning is deeply personal and embodied, social learning whether in human development, natural resource management, environmental education or in corporate settings, all requires this basic foundational pedagogical and methodological premise, where imagination, intuition, listening and empathy are the keystone capacities that need to be encouraged and enabled.

As we continue to approach further complex social and environmental development questions we are pushed to find ways of engaging people in the process of sharing different ways of knowing as not only a form of material exchange of intellectual property, but rather encouraging of a nourishment of each person's agency. Yet enabling these new processes are currently at risk due to existing educational models as explained by Orr (2004), Jickling and others cited above. These spaces are not always conducive for meaningful social learning due to their structured and prescriptive nature, their inability to accommodate meaningful collaborative enquiry; few are naturally intuitive for all people; nor can they easily enable the kinds of spaces that allow for particular (and sometimes peculiar) ways of knowing to emerge and be shared. There is potential to expand social learning practices from bringing people into 'workshop spaces' and 'facilitating' their knowledge into existing programs, to creating new learning spaces/places that allow for intuitive and emergent forms of learning that are not prescribed, but rather creative and aesthetic (awakening), as offered by the examples provided by social sculpture practices described in this study. Such processes can potentially enhance the reflexivity of social learning in new ways, as shown in this study.

Kulundu (2012: 43) points out how participation is perceived by organizations and by their bureaucratic demands. She suggests that this hinders the potential for further learning and multiple ways of knowing to be attended to and nourished:

By structuring participation according to a set of rules, we risk eroding possibilities that might have been far better suited to the vision of development upheld by the participants. Organisations that are forced to take on these bureaucratic demands run the risk of playing to the tune of the funders and the demands of the proposal rather than supporting a work in progress that is continually responsive to the needs of those the development project is supposed to empower.

Similar constraints can be found in institutionalised education as referred to by Orr (2004) but also described via my opening stories in this chapter. This challenge rests mainly on the tradition of how we conduct development and what we consider learning to entail, and more particularly the tension between product and process which has been raised in the literature (Wals, 2009; Botes and van Rensburg, 2000; Eversole, 2003; Orr, 2004). It is the urgency and pressure of having immediate results, completed reports and established development, research, or curriculum plans, that potentially push learning into traditional education boxes which were established for the purpose of enculturation as explained by Orr (2004). As Orr (2004) so powerfully argues, the ecological crisis, together with ongoing social justice crises require a different form of education, one that is more attuned to creativity and reflexivity, and that involves expanding, relating and constituting encounters with multiple forms of knowledge and ways of knowing, that are unique, visionary, personal, imaginal and embodied.

The development agenda, although expanding the participatory nature of learning, and the potential for dynamic social learning, remains threatened by tensions emerging from rapid bureaucratic systems that want to neatly 'wrap-up' and plan development in a prescribed and rigid way, despite their need to enable 'participation' and the value placed on traditional knowledge. There is often little room for inter-subjective, reflexive, interdependent and transformative processes in these neatly planned development projects as described by Kulundu (2012) and Chambers (2005). Such circumstances threaten the future of social learning research, particularly in formal learning, development and research institutions where

the monitoring, modeling and predicting of knowledge development and learning outcomes are strictly governed (the focus being on defining and assessing the 'object' of social learning), and where the reflexive, unpredictable and creative freedom needed for social learning research is not widely provided with enough attention (the emergent, creative processes of social learning). Social learning processes need a more welcoming and expansive home, a commons.

7.6. COLLABORATIVE KNOWING AND THE COMMONS

Finding the educational home for social learning and other socially constructed forms of embodied and collaborative learning would undoubtedly require freely accessible common spaces and process in which people can learn, both within and external to or in relation to the existing educational structures (these not being fully adequate due to their often formalised structures as outlined above). Rebecca Martusewicz (2009:254) refers to the concept of 'collaborative intelligence', which she borrows from Susan Griffin (1996):

...intelligence, even knowledge, is not born of the human capacity to think or make sense of the world alone, but rather it is the result of a collaborative endeavor among humans and the more-than-human world. In this sense, as human communities are nested within a larger ecological system, we participate in and are affected by a complex exchange of information and sense-making that contributes to the well-being of that system.

Martusewicz (2009:254) relates this idea of collaborative intelligence with Bateson's (1972) notion of the 'ecology of mind' in which the 'Mind' is seen as a complex system of interactions and transformation which are created through various elements entering into relationship with each other, and that human relationships with other living systems are living, communicating and part of a generative whole, all set within a limited earthly context. The thinking self, the autonomous "I" is not seen as the definition of the 'mind' or 'intelligence' but rather a social convention, and an autonomous "I" does not really exist. This is interesting considering the majority of contemporary education is assessed and monitored, even valued by individual merit, learning is usually primarily recognized as an individual endeavor. Martusewicz (2009) reminds us that humans map the world through discursive forms (linguistic, textual, symbols, etc) and we build strong epistemological patterns and practices, that relate to our words, our knowledge and our culture. We pass these on, which in turn inform our meaning making and

our approach to education, which over time can blind us to the fact that we are immersed in a wider living system, and isolate ourselves, and our learning to our own individual experiences and merits.

Considering the communal, social and interactive understanding of intelligence and mind, outlined by Martusewicz and Bateson, the creation of intelligence and therefore learning is also inherently social and communal, and consists of an interaction between human beings and the more-than-human world. Social learning processes, therefore, exist within the commons and would seem to require a commons approach to education. Commons are spaces that are not owned, but rather belong to everyone, and do not require money or social status to access them (Martusewicz, 2009). What then is the purpose of education in the commons, and how does education and social learning contribute to the development of collaborative intelligence or the ecology of mind?

Martusewicz (2009: 258) sees education within this context as enabling systemic wisdom where learning is orientated toward understanding and acknowledging the ways in which we interact, depend on and impact a larger system of intelligence. Education within existing cultural commons can be found in food cultivation spaces, medicinal practices, the arts, decision making practices; yet these commons spaces which offer socially constituted forms of learning are so affected by western forms of education and commodification, that it is difficult now to often identify them as still existing (Bowers, 2006). The appropriation and commodification of education, and knowledge itself, through the formation of the modern institutions, and through intellectual property processes associated with these, has made the establishment of commons ever more difficult. Even in the construction of this PhD research project which was inherently collaborative, practice-based, social and communal, and which was situated within the 'commons' community, I found challenges and obstacles omnipresent when attempting to conduct and document this research. Most of these obstacles were present in institutional paradigms that sought to commodify this research as the merits of a single individual. Engaging with this complexity required ongoing and careful reflexivity throughout the research process.

7.7. A FINAL NOTE

My personal hope for the direction of social learning process into the future, is to explore new kinds of pedagogical practice such as that offered by social sculpture, that rethinks the question of reflexivity, inter-dependence, transformation, inner and outer experience, embodiment, love and empathy in developing new ways of enabling social learning, as well as researching existing socially constituted learning. This learning needs a more empathetic, collaborative home. It needs a commons, an open space or form(s) in which sharing and collaboration are the norm, and where institutions respect and nourish this collaborative form of research and learning. The desperate need to 'sell' one's intellectual property as individuals and not as groups will diminish and education will feel more common, more collaborative, more loving.

From my experience as an intuitive social learning and social sculpture apprentice (where my intuition was equally a mentor in my doctoral learning) the future of social learning and its application will require the formulation of new ways in which we can equip practitioners to create opportunities for social learning, and develop a sensibility and sensitivity to the inner realms that enable social interaction. Indeed a social learning classroom does not resemble anything we are familiar with today, it is amorphous and opportunistic, it lies both in the traditional outer realms between apprentice and mentor, but also in the inner realms of intuition, imagination and inner perceptivity. It can be transient, and mobile, as I found on the Climate Train, and it can at any time occupy the time and minds of a wide range of diverse individuals, willing to come together to learn new ways of being and becoming in and through more innovative, creative forms and practices. I have found that empathy is certainly a vital capacity for social learning, regardless of the role you are playing in the learning action (guide or participant). Yet empathy is a faceted capacity, that is fed by a perceptivity to outer phenomena and inner intuitive movements. Empathy is housed in the imagination and expanded on in this space, and empathy is primary force we use to listen and engage socially. The social learning apprentice is therefore learning to master the skill of empathy, and in turn understand the facets that feed and nurture empathic competence. They are

developing a moral imagination in themselves, and attempting to foster this same capacity in those they work with. From what I have learned from my vast array of mentors and masters to date, the future for social learning pedagogy lies in apprenticeship, and expanding the conception of apprenticeship to include equal attention to inner perceptivity as we place on outer perceptivity; and in a collective commitment to the commons, where we might learn together to become new and different human beings, new kinds of earthlings that are not victim to the ecological apartheid of the present.

On the next and final page I conclude this study with an image of the Earth Forum oiled cloth taken on the 25th of November 2012, which at the time embodies in its oiled fibres the experiences of hundreds of human beings through the soil traces, as each person found (to a greater and lesser degree) their own personal location in the wider ecology, as well as their considerations of how they each could address ecological apartheid in a personally relevant form, a form that emerged through an articulation of their own valued 'beings and doings'.



Figure 37: *The Earth Forum Cloth after the Climate Train journey. Embodied in its oiled fibres are the questions, inner imaginings and pictures of progress of 359 citizens, from 12 towns in 7 South African provinces. Then later another 33 citizens in South Africa and the United Kingdom contributed their traces during the development of the apprenticeship process. At the moment of completing this study, there were a total of four active Responsible Participants and their respective cloths in South Africa, two in the USA, three in the UK and one in Belgium. Photograph is my own.*

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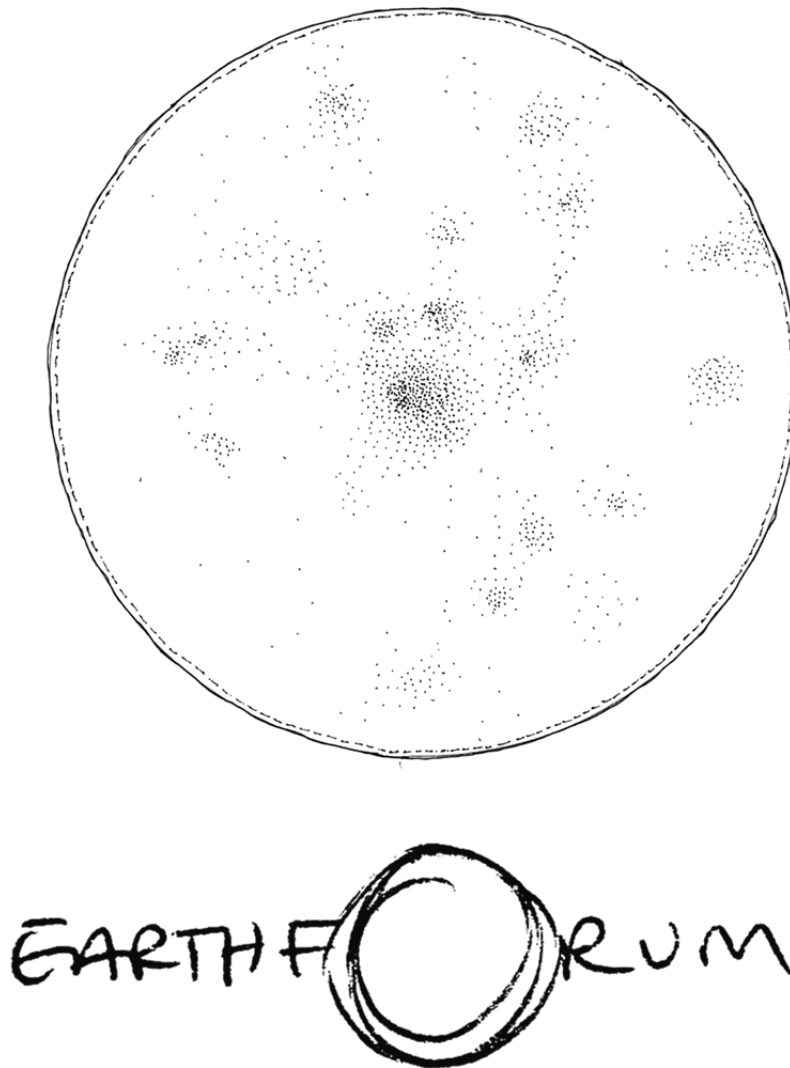
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APPENDICES

Appendix A can be found here; all other appendices are contained on CD that accompanies thesis.

APPENDIX A



A GUIDE FOR RESPONSIBLE PARTICIPANTS¹³⁰

¹³⁰ The Earth Forum logo above was developed in collaboration with Shelley Sacks, her daughter Rosa and myself. The sketch of the round cloth above is my own personal drawing, ink on paper.

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indebted to this Earth who holds us, and for whom this work is dedicated.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is for you, the new responsible participant, to conduct your own Earth Forums. If you are reading this and have not participated in an Earth Forum apprenticeship, please refrain from conducting Earth Forum until you have participated in at least five Earth Forums and worked closely with a responsible participant (See Appendix 2 for more information on the apprenticeship). Working with the instruments and materials of this Social Sculpture rely much on your own abilities, your own insights, and previous experiences. This guide offers suggestions of how best to establish your Earth Forums and remind you of any details you might have forgotten during your apprenticeship. The guide explores “how” to approach people and invite them to conduct an Earth Forum; “what” physical forms are needed to set the scene; details of various practices used and other vital information that you might need to keep Earth Forum in motion. This process is dynamic and constantly being refined by the context and needs of the participants. We value any feedback from your experiences with conducting Earth Forums. This is the first draft of this handbook and we look forward to refining it further with your insights and experiences.

There are four major sections to this guide:

INTRODUCTION: A brief background to the Earth Forum and Social Sculpture.

FEATURES TO CONSIDER: Considering the specific features of the Earth Forum process.

SETTING THE SHAPE & FORM: A detailed account of how to set up Earth Forum, from inviting participants to setting up the instruments for the process.

GUIDING AN EARTH FORUM: This is a step-by-step support on how to guide Earth Forum.

INTRODUCTION: BEING AN EARTHLING

Humans emerged on Earth, we are *earthlings*. What makes humans particularly unique, as opposed to other earthlings, is that we dream and imagine, we reshape our own lives and transform our environments. We do this together, and we achieve much when we share our ideas and knowledge. The word best used to describe this sharing is *forum*. This is when people come together to meet, to learn, and it is where ideas and views on a particular issue can be exchanged, that traditionally comes from the Latin “fores” which means to be outside. One cannot be human without the soil and the Earth, and we cannot be a forum, in the traditional sense of the word, without being outside. Yet today most forums, learning, and exchanges happen

indoors, with the Earth usually excluded from the forum. When you think about it, we really are earthlings: everything we eat, drink, breathe or own has come from the Earth and when we die, our bodies return to soil. Yet today we are all too quick to wash out the dirt, with whitening detergent, and sanitise our homes and children with a cocktail of chemicals. How did we get to this point? We somehow managed to use every little piece of the earth in our daily lives without providing ourselves with the time or space to include the Earth in our forums, and in our plans for progress.

Each of us dreams, imagines, and reshapes our lives and immediate environments every day. We do not always realise it, but we are all practising artists sculpting our worlds with as much creative freedom and artistic vigour as any artist does in our traditional understanding of art. Our capacities to imagine and to listen and learn from each other are what have enabled us to achieve so much. Perhaps forgetting to use these capacities as well as forgetting we are earthlings has led us into our current era of climate change and environmental degradation.

Earth Forum has emerged from the territory of Social Sculpture, which is a progression of art emerging from German artist Joseph Beuys' "expanded concept of art" from the 1970s. It is based on the understanding that every human being has the capacity to transform their own lives and every human being is essentially an artist. Social Sculpture works towards developing new fields of awareness, through creating practices, instruments (of various shapes and forms) that engage our imaginations and artistic capacities to help transform our consciousness through a specific social exchange, a social sculpture. Earth Forum is a social sculpture that offers new ways in which people of every age, gender or ethnicity can meaningfully develop their capacity to imagine, listen and exchange ideas about how we might live on this Earth. It is an accessible process that relies on a *Responsible Participant* who is in some ways a facilitator, a responsible person who guides the forum (but is different from a facilitator as this person participates in the process as much as the other participants). The *Responsible Participant* could be anyone wanting to use this social sculpture in their community, and following a short three-day apprenticeship, will be able to use the instruments and guide the process with ease and confidence.

The Earth Forum instruments in its basic form consists of an unbleached, natural calico cotton, oiled, circular cloth (1.5m diameter) but can be enhanced with the addition of a round wooden table, identical wooden chairs or stools, and a simple canvas tent that can allow the participants to work in any site with relative comfort and protection from the elements. The participants work with the earth (soil, rocks, plant

matter, humus) collected from the surrounding area; this earth plays a central role in creating the shape and form of an Earth Forum and is the tangible form that the participants are able to connect with (it is the primary *connective aesthetic*, which simply relates to the opposite of anaesthetic: it enlivens our imagination, allows us to perceive shapes and forms with new eyes). The individually collected earth is placed on the cloth by the participants through a specific process. The cloth is placed either on a round table or upon the floor, with the participants seated in a circle round the cloth. Within this shape and form the participants proceed with the creative exchanges offered in Earth Forum. The oiled cloth will over time collect the traces of earth from each forum and the soil marks embody each participant's listening, sharing and learning.

Earth Forum offers new practices and instruments that can be used by different people together, to meaningfully uncover their own agendas and their own ways of dealing with their particular situations. This has discernible effects on one's ability and motivation to engage with difficult and sometimes overwhelming aspects of living in a climate change era. Imagination plays a significant role in our work towards an ecologically sustainable future –specially when tackling the daunting complexity of the problem, and considering the responsibility we all feel to do something to effect a meaningful positive change. Yet we have seen that Environmental Education in the form of mere “raising awareness” does little to change actions; it requires more than this. Responsibility does not arise from moral imperatives, or merely from having a raised awareness, but is rather arises through developing an ability to respond – the ability to transform one's own life, and one's own surroundings. This can be closely linked to the aesthetic dimension of Earth Forum, and how we use our imagination, our inner artist, to see the world we have lived in, live in now and the world we would like to live in.

Earth Forum offers new ways in which people can meaningfully explore what it means to live on this planet, through a carefully forged social sculpture process. We have successfully piloted this process across South Africa and have enabled incredible connective practices between people from very different walks of life, from farmers, governmental officials, activists, scientists, entrepreneurs, teachers, artists, learners and community leaders.

FEATURES TO CONSIDER: RESPONSIBLE PARTICIPANT

When a group of people work together with the purpose of enabling *everyone* to participate, they usually work with a facilitator, moderator or guide. In the Earth

Forum process we have found it helpful to think of this person as a *responsible participant*. This is different from a facilitator – who to some extent stands outside of the process. It is also different from the role of a moderator. There is nothing to moderate in an Earth Forum. Although facilitators and moderators can be helpful, they also create a separation between the facilitator or moderator and everyone else. To be a responsible participant means to *actively participate* in all the processes oneself. Whatever everyone else around the cloth explores, the responsible participant explores too. The reason for this is to put the responsible participant on an EQUAL basis with everyone else. The responsible participant has thoughts, feelings, doubts, confusions just like everyone else. The difference between the responsible participant and everyone else is that as well as participating in the process, this person also introduces the process and makes sure that everyone knows what to do. They only intervene if no one knows how to go on, or if people have forgotten some important aspect of the work, like actively listening to each other, and are slipping into a discussion or a debate. As responsible participant your role is sometimes different from the others, it is important that you explain this idea of the ‘responsible participant’ at the beginning. You can say that most of the time you will be participating like everyone else, but if it is necessary you will step out of this role for a moment and take some responsibility for moving things on. You can also explain that in the beginning you are setting the framework for the process to begin, and that after this you will participate in the process just like everyone else.

FEATURES TO CONSIDER: ACTIVE LISTENING

Listening is not a passive process. When I listen to you it creates thoughts and images, one could say, movements, in me. But these movements usually have to do with my response to what you think and see. I agree with some things that you say and disagree with others. Some of what I hear relates perhaps to my own ideas and thoughts. So whilst listening to you I already go off into my own world. Perhaps I do not even hear properly what you say, because I am so involved with liking and disliking or adding my own points of view. Often I can hardly wait for you to finish so I can put forward my point of view. And if we then start discussing what you have said we can quickly get into a to and fro of arguing, trying to persuade, debating the pros and cons of what we each are saying. This kind of listening has – one could say – mainly to do with antipathy and sympathy. But to really hear what another has to say, we have to remove the agreement and disagreement. We have to try and stay *with* the person, with their pictures, with their thoughts, and see what *they* see and feel, without agreeing and disagreeing and letting our own thoughts run on internally. A good way to do this and focus more sharply on what someone is saying – to become

a more *active listener* – is to consider what is being said in three ways. We can listen for the content of what is being said, we can listen to the feeling with which it is being said, and we can try and get a sense of the impulse or motivation behind what is being said.

FEATURES TO CONSIDER: EVERYONE SHOULD PARTICIPATE

In an Earth Forum everyone should get a sense that *we are all participants* in our world, even if we feel invisible and helpless. So, the process should be structured so that everyone has *a chance* to participate. How do we make this possible without people feeling compelled to participate and that they are not free? Even if it is difficult for some people to speak because they are naturally shy, or not very talkative, it is important to use a process that encourages everyone to speak and to feel at ease. If we do not set up a process that invites and encourages everyone to speak, only the few who usually speak will contribute. They will fill the space whilst the others observe in silence. And those you observe in silence might also not just be quiet because they are shy. People can also be quiet because they are a bit lazy to formulate their thoughts, or because they are not really interested in sharing what they think with others. A good way to enable the participation of everyone is to emphasise at the start that every person sees something when they look at a situation. Everyone has something to contribute, even if it is their questions. It is very important to ensure that there is enough time for this process. Giving things enough time is about allowing things to unfold – giving ourselves and each other the space to go beyond what we already know, to go beyond our habitual points of view. It is also important to stress that there are no right or wrong things to say and that one does not need to share everything one thinks or feels.

SETTING THE SHAPE & FORM: INVITING PARTICIPANTS

Inviting participants to an Earth Forum requires some thoughtful consideration and one should be very specific and clear about the requirements for participation. In order for an Earth Forum to work well you should suggest the following in your invitation:

- **TIME DONATION AND COMMITMENT** – Each participant should donate at least three hours of their full attention for the process to be effective. It is recommended that the group should not exceed more the 25 people. Each participant should be well aware of their time donation and commitment to the process and cannot take phone calls, notes or film an Earth Forum. If a participant leaves before the process is complete this does not allow for an effective Earth Forum for all those involved; in this case the participant can be

requested to attend another scheduled Earth Forum to which he or she can commit for the full duration.

- **ANONYMITY** – If you are using Earth Forum with a group that in conflict or struggling over a contested issue, it is important to offer anonymity to the participants from the start. Unlike workshops and talkshops, participants need not introduce themselves during or before the process, but can do so if they want to.
- **OUTCOMES** – The outcome will be an exploration into developing new capacities that help one truly listen to someone else, as well as create an imaginative and innovative way of seeing how and others live in this world. One can assure invitees that an outcome will come from attending and participating in the process.

SETTING THE SHAPE & FORM: INSTRUMENTS

Earth Forum in its basic form consists of a white, oiled, circular cloth (1.5m diameter), but can be enhanced by the addition of a round wooden table, identical wooden chairs or stools, and a canvas tent that can allow the participants to work in any context with relative comfort and protection from the elements (details on each instrument are found below). The participants work with the earth (soil, rocks, plant matter, humus) collected from the surrounding area of an Earth Forum; this earth plays a central role in creating the shape and form of an Earth Forum and is the tangible form with which the participants are able to connect. The individually collected earth is placed on the centrally placed cloth on a round table or the floor. The participants are seated round the table and/or round patch of ground and cloth, and proceed with the creative exchange (details below), working with the physical form of earth in their hands to start with and then on the cloth for the duration. The oiled cloth will over time collect the stains from participants at every Earth Forum.

We have found that the process is more comfortable and has greater impact for the length of time dedicated if people are seated as opposed to sitting on the floor. If no chairs and stools available then sitting on the floor on a large square unbleached natural canvas (approximately 4 x 4 m) is preferable. A seating arrangement must be made for all who participate in order for them to be level and equal. It is also preferable to use seating made from wood or natural materials, but it is most essential that the seating is identical. Make an executive decision when selecting seating arrangements and try to work with what is available in the space in which you are setting an Earth Forum. Therefore the key components of seating must be selected in this order: 1. Identical seats; 2. Comfort; and 3. Naturally made.

It is recommended that participants are seated around a round wooden table that can comfortably fit the 1.5m diameter cloth. If a round table is not available, then a square table could be used, but a rectangular one is not advised. The participants must be seated in a perfect circle for comfort and ease of listening, speaking and viewing each other. Conducting an Earth Forum on the floor will work for those who are capable of sitting on the floor. However the round table Earth Forum has a recognisable shape and form, made more visible by the earth mounds on the table cloth.

SETTING THE SHAPE & FORM: SELECTING THE SPACE

The most ideal setting for an Earth Forum is outdoors. This need not necessarily be a green space like a park, garden or wild area, but can also be an urban or industrial area. Try choosing a space that is unusual and strange and not like any other setting that would normally hold meetings/workshops. This aims to steer the Earth Forum away from a regular outdoor lunch or gathering and into something curious. Earth Forums have been conducted in a number of different environments: dry river beds; road sides; city pavements; public parks; buildings entrances; amphitheatres; lecture theatres; and in more traditional seminar-room settings. The context has a major influence on an Earth Forum and helps establish the shape and form of the social sculpture. Keep in mind that this is a gathering of people thinking carefully and deeply about what it means to live on the Earth and so choosing a site that might reveal how we are connected or disconnected from the Earth is crucial to the process.

SETTING THE SHAPE & FORM: RESPECT FOR THE SPACE

Earth Forum instruments must be handled with great care and respect. We might be working with what are traditionally everyday objects like an ordinary table, cloth, tent, table and chairs; however in an Earth Forum, each of these instruments has a particular purpose and sense of being in their shape and form. It is important to ensure that participants do not use the table in a traditional sense, i.e. to hold cups, books or bags. When welcoming the participants, make them aware that the *“chairs, table and cloth are very particular instruments we will be using in this process, and please respect them for this purpose”*. Ensure that people do not sit down in the designated space until everyone is present and are ready to do so as a group. One could arrange seating away from the space, while waiting for the group to gather.

GUIDING AN EARTH FORUM: BEING THERE

The responsible participant is the facilitator who both participates and guides an

Earth Forum. In order to both participate and guide, the responsible participant must try to be as present as possible. Their role is to inspire a sense of calm composure and to use a gentle approach while also being firm in reminding participants to keep to the tasks at hand and that the time allocated is used wisely. 'Being present' refers to maintaining an awareness of both your own thoughts, feelings and impetus as well as those of the individuals in the group and how they are responding to the tasks given to them. The responsible participant needs to be empathetic to the needs of the participant and sometimes might need to adjust the process to accommodate individuals in the group.

GUIDING AN EARTH FORUM: STEP BY STEP

STAGE 1: Time requirements and housekeeping: It is important before you start the Earth Forum that all the participants are comfortable and relaxed. You can recommend that they visit the toilet, eat and drink before the process, knowing that two to three hours will lapse without any disturbance. Make it very clear that if participants are due to leave before the process is complete, they should rather participate in another Earth Forum that can be scheduled in the future, and if not, will not be able to attend at all. Earth Forum has nine stages that can be followed easily, to help guide and shape the exchange. We suggest that you follow this template as much as possible, but realise that the process can be flexible depending on the individuals in the group.

STAGE 2: Introducing the responsible participant: Start by explaining carefully and clearly who you are and how you as the responsible participant will guide the process:

"Earth Forum is led by a responsible participant, who helps shape and guide this imaginative exchange. A responsible participant is not a facilitator, negotiator, mediator, or moderator as there is nothing to negotiate, mediate or moderate in Earth Forum. The responsible participant's role is simply to participate in the exchange, but also to assist participants in developing their capacities to imagine and listen. I will therefore come in and out of the process as necessary."

Also describe how the group will stick to time limits.

STAGE 3: Every human being has the capacity to imagine: The next step is to introduce the imaginative capacities we all have and to explore carefully how these can be used.

"Every human being has an amazing ability to make pictures in their mind, to imagine the past, present and even look into the future. We each have access to this space in

our minds, a dome within which we can all make pictures and creatively explore the world. This imaginative capacity allows us to experience each other's worlds and to appreciate the differences."

STAGE 4: Collecting a handful of earth: When instructing the participants to collect their handful of earth, remind them of their amazing capacity to imagine and visualise and ask them to use this capacity during their collecting experience. They will have about five minutes to explore the surrounds and find their handful of earth. When everyone has returned to sit, ask the group to hold their earth and quietly shape their picture of their experience in their minds. Also ask the participants not to speak to each other during this process. Once all the participants have arrived back with their handful of soil, remind them about working with their imaginative space to collect their thoughts and shape their picture of their experience. This takes time, so give the group about five minutes to shape their pictures. It might feel like a long time to sit and work in silence, but it is important that each person has the time and space to shape their own pictures.

STAGE 5: Developing the capacity to actively listen: Before people begin to share their pictures, their experiences, feelings and other thoughts about collecting their handful of earth, it is important to talk about developing the capacity to actively listen.

"In this space we will work towards trying to really listen to each other and see each other's pictures. To do this will require using your own space, your imagination to picture what the other person is saying. Listen without judging, reacting or responding to what the person is saying. Try to stay with that person's picture."

STAGE 6: Sharing your picture: After some time has passed, invite someone to share their picture. Suggest to the group that responses need not come consecutively in the circle, but rather when the participant feels ready. The participants are welcome to use as much time as they need, but the responsible participant might guide them if they go off on a tangent, or ask them to wrap up if they are taking too much time. Find the right time to share your picture/experiences; as the responsible participant, you must also participate. After each person shares their picture they can place their handful of earth on the Earth Forum oil cloth.

STAGE 7: What are your hopes for the Earth?: In the next round, ask the participants "what are your hopes for the Earth?" This may seem like a simple question but is extremely difficult to answer. You can suggest that they can use their imagination,

their workspace or their “dome” to imagine the answer. Also this question does not necessarily apply to the future but can be visualised in present. If they are finding it difficult to connect with this question or visualise their pictures, then suggest another question. “What are your hopes for this place/town/city/land?” You can give the group at least five minutes to reflect on this question and then check with the group if more time is needed. Explain to the group that they should use their imaginative space to visualise what it might look, feel and sound like and to describe some of the experiences and feelings they have.

Before the participants share their pictures, remind them about active listening – to try to stay with the person, to use their workspace see the other person's picture and to not judge or respond to what they are saying. In addition, the participants should listen to not just the content of what the person is saying, but also to the feeling, and the impulse from where the person is coming.

STAGE 8: Developing the second question: A variety of questions can be developed and asked in this round, taking the group to constructive creative exchange, building on the first two rounds. Suggested questions:

“In what way do your hopes for the Earth link to anything you are doing or would like to do?”

“Considering your hopes, and the substance that has been gathered so far, what would you consider to be progress towards your hopes?”

We spend a great deal of time rushing into 'doing stuff': we are constantly thinking about what we should do, and how we should do it; but how often do we give ourselves the time to think about how our 'doings' link to what we value being. The first two stages encourage participants to experience being on/in the Earth. The Earth Forum provides the space and time for each participant to slow down and consider what they value being, and what they value about the place and world they are in: linking this to actual opportunities for action can be very productive and useful.

STAGE 9: Working with the materials: In this round, there is space to share a thought or question for the future. , The participants can draw from the great deal of material and substance that the group has produced through the process and try to clarify a clear question or aspiration for future Earth Forums. The question could also be taken and considered by each participant to apply in their daily lives. This round is available for an open exchange, but unlike most discussions, debates or

conversations, every participant has developed their capacity to imagine and listen and so the exchange is a thoughtful, sincere and empathetic experience.

ETHICS

Earth Forum is a collaborative practice with the primary goal of equitable sharing of responsibilities and shared ecological citizenship. It is important to ensure Earth Forums have built in them a standardised core set of ethics and moral practices, such as informed and collaborative consent in all activities. This means that all participants (children and their guardians, as well as adults) need to be carefully consulted and made aware of the Earth Forum non-extractive process. This means you cannot use any content emergent from the Earth Forum without the informed consent of the all participants involved in the practice. This informed consent does not necessarily need to be in written form. For the Earth Forums in Africa we have found that there is a history in South Africa and in Africa of indigenous people's signing away their land, and so in our experience we have found that people are sometimes reluctant to sign waivers or consent forms (McGarry & Shackleton, 2009a). It is therefore important to create ways of receiving consent that do not necessarily require a written signature, but can include verbal agreements as done by McGarry & Shackleton (2009b) in work with vulnerable rural children. In this case conversations discussing the aims, objectives and outcomes of how you will use the content emerging from the Earth Forum, including all perceived possible pros and cons are provided, for the participants.

As this is a deeply democratic and collaborative initiative, there will sometimes be circumstances that require a more collaborative ethical strategy. Therefore participants need to decide if and in what way they would like to participate and what happens with materials that are produced together. This form of ethics has been drawn from *Grounded Collaborative Reciprocal Empowerment* developed by Piquemal and Allen (2009). Therefore ethical engagement becomes a shared responsibility and shared authority. Earth Forum does not see the participants as vulnerable subjects as this takes away their own voices and their right to self-determination, but rather sees informed consent being developed through a process that is constantly negotiated by all those involved in the practice as it evolves. See more in Appendix 1 for documentation of Earth Forums.

APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENTING EARTH FORUMS

It is not advised to record Earth Forums as in many ways they exist in a particular time and place, and what should remain of them is left in the oiled fibres of the cloth.

However sometimes certain groups might want to have a record of the exchange, and this is fine if everyone in the group is comfortable with being recorded. A good method for documenting is to photograph the Earth Forum cloth before it is used, and then again after each Earth Forum you conduct. You can place the cloth on the group where the Earth Forum was being held and step half a metre away from the cloth and take a photograph from shoulder height. This should ensure a consistent set of images. Make sure you (as the responsible participant) take the photo each time and not anyone else. In this way you will be able to gather a series of images of the cloth holding new traces of earth after each practice, and witness its growth and aging. You can email these images to Dylan McGarry at armadylan@gmail.com to have these added to the Earth Forum website www.earthfora.org on which citizens can follow the growing traces on different cloths in different regions. If you feel you would like photographs of the entire group, make sure you have informed consent from each participant.

APPENDIX 2: THE APPRENTICESHIP

Being a responsible participant is being an empathetic and considerate participant, who through experience is able to guide an Earth Forum. If you are willing to practise Earth Forums in your community and in your life, we suggest that you participate in at least five Earth Forums, guided by a responsible participant who has taken you on as an apprentice. Once you are feeling comfortable with the practice, working with the instruments and are familiar with the particularities of being a responsible participant, you can use this handbook to help guide and remind you of the basic and finer details of this process. Once you are comfortable with the process and have completed a few Earth Forums, and have received feedback from participants about your work as a responsible participant, you could begin working with other participants and train them as apprentices through the same process. It would also be useful to run an Earth Forum periodically with other responsible participants and get feedback from each other's experience to help improve your work.

References

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