



The Listening Train: A Collaborative, Connective Aesthetics Approach to Transgressive Social Learning

Dylan McGarry, Durban University of Technology

Abstract

This paper explores a personal iterative retrospective of a series of expansive social-learning processes that were collaboratively developed through practice-based enquiry across 17 South African towns/contexts. This reflexive narrative explores the development of a 'Climate Train', a mobile social-learning platform, that was conceived and created through a collaborative social movement of 'cultural practitioners' ranging from visual artists, poets, film-makers, theatre-makers, guerrilla-gardeners, musicians, facilitators, to educational researchers, among others, who created new 'connective aesthetic' social spaces for dialogue and exchange. Drawing from a variety of artistic genres, including but not limited to theatre and social sculpture (an expanded concept of public/participatory art), I reflect on the formative, foundational qualities of these approaches and share insights into social-learning praxis that emerged on the tracks. Of primary focus is the use of aesthetic praxis as a means that transforms how we engage with our inner capacities as well as how we develop our relational sensibilities. Key findings include the vital role of connective aesthetics in establishing imaginal thinking, moral intuition, empathy, participative parity, and emergence, and how these are important for transformation and establishing new capacities for ecological/global citizenship and collaborative intelligence.

Keywords: Connective aesthetics, transgressive learning, transformation, social learning, transdisciplinary praxis, practice-based research, commons, ecological citizenship.

Introduction

In 2011, I spent 44 days aboard a train that traversed South Africa. As part of a large team, we learnt of the realities of climate change, environmental degradation, and other injustices through open discussions and exchanges with citizens in 17 different towns. Known as 'The Climate Train', this project was a collaborative, social-mobilisation initiative that aimed to create an alternative to the traditional 'conference' space. This was a conference that travelled – and offered South Africans a variety of processes and initiatives that encouraged emergent conversations, exploring everything from droughts, destructive mining, and drug abuse, to innovations in energy, agriculture and activism (as well as many other issues in between). The train was conceived in the build-up to the 17th United Nations Conference of the Parties, or COP17 (a global climate change conference, that meets annually and aims to

create a comprehensive agreement among all nations to reduce carbon emissions and respond collectively to climate change).

The impetus behind the Climate Train 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. The organisers of COP17 seemed primarily or almost exclusively interested in including governments and some civil-society partners, and we believed this to be a massive oversight. The primary focus of the train was to create an experiential, grounded form of environmental education that did not arrive with any particular agenda, but rather created social-learning opportunities in each context which were accessible and relevant to the people living in each town. Put simply, we wanted to create social spaces in which it would be possible to meaningfully listen to citizens. It was an exercise in establishing spaces in which to empathetically witness the lives, ideas and questions of citizens in each town, whilst being culturally neutral and accessible.

In hindsight, I appreciate our naivety, as we aimed to achieve a kind of emergent, 'experiential' or 'grounded' form of dialogue and learning through an experimental-learning approach that was experiential and expansive, although I did not understand it as such at the time. This paper explores some of the relevant experiences I had on the train, and how the train helped me (and my fellow collaborators) to understand the role of aesthetics and active absence in creating social-learning methodologies (concepts I define in the following section). While this is not a research paper, it is a personal, reflexive examination through an iterative narrative of the phenomenon that was the Climate Train and of key concepts I learnt over those 44 days that shaped my understanding of social and expansive learning.

Aesthetic Experiential Learning

Experiential-learning processes encourage discoveries and experimenting with knowledge first-hand, instead of hearing or reading about others' experiences (Kolb, 1984). While we wanted to encourage experiential learning on the train, we also wanted the learning to be expansive and inclusive. Expansive learning in this context was inspired by the work of Engeström (2001) and is reminiscent of Mukute's (2010) work, where active open discussion and reflection are encouraged through a series of communicative and social-learning processes. We also drew from Wals, Van der Hoeven and Blanken's (2009) idea of establishing a relational agency by enabling a learning society that can engage with developing a more sustainable world. In this context, social learning is seen as 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' (Wals *et al.*, 2009:11). Our understanding of this was fairly rudimentary and intuitive at the time.

In shaping the 'expansive-learning processes' for the train, we believed that an aesthetic approach would 'open up' spaces for dialogue and exchange, as well as create the common social space in which people could gather and explore questions and ideas. We therefore enlisted a multiple-genre team of aesthetic practitioners from the visual arts, dance, music, theatre, film, poetry and participatory art.

The train was essentially a collaborative social-learning experiment that introduced ‘connective aesthetics’ as a methodological innovation. ‘Connective aesthetics’ was initially conceived by Gablik (1992) and has been loosely defined by different practitioners since then. In our context, ‘connective aesthetics’ offers a tangible connecting force that sparks imagination and intuition, and creates new opportunities for dialogue, exchange and also personal reflection. The role of Gablik’s (1992) connective aesthetics and Sacks’s (1998) particular expansion of aesthetics – which she describes as the process of ‘enlivening’ through aesthetic, being the opposite of ‘anaesthetic’ – played a considerable role in how we were able to lift out these capacities for imagination and intuition of participating citizens and make the invisible aspects of social exchange visible. Sacks’s (1998) redefinition of aesthetics, and its direct relationship with ethics and agency, was possibly one of the most influential contributions to how we approached our pedagogic questions, and how we thought about new ways of approaching social learning as an artistic act that focused on agency (both personal and relational).

A Permanent Conference

The train did not emerge in isolation, but was in itself a product of a long, expansive social-learning project. Over a two-year period, I participated as a coordinator of an open group of scientists, activists, artists, and other citizens who formed a series of emergent, ‘self-staged’ active and reflective processes in the build-up to COP 17. The group aimed to imagine new ways of subverting the static habitual realities of the current COP process, but also imagine new ways of approaching climate change challenges in South Africa.

The aim was to create a ‘permanent conference’ as inspired by the work of Beuys (2004) entitled ‘Honey Pump in the Work Place’, which took place over 100 days in 1977. As a growing collective, we named this permanent conference COPART, which was both an acronym for ‘Connecting Our Planet And Reimagining Together’, and a play on the COP17 event, where we hoped that people would ‘COPART’ rather than ‘cop out’. In order to increase the support for, funding of, and interest in this project, we held public meetings, seminars, and planning sessions over a period of almost two years in which various interested partners were involved. We created the COPART blog,¹ an online platform for holding the conference together, as well as a fundraising tool. We managed to arrange two big ‘build-up’ events: the first (which coincided with COP16 in Mexico) was the ‘Climate Fluency Exchange’, which occurred over ten days in Cape Town; the second was the Re-Imagining Festival at the National Arts Festival in Grahamstown, which also took place over 10 days, but six months later.

Constructing New Spaces for Learning

In Orr’s (2004) explorations into the ‘myths of education’, he suggests that the process of learning is more important than the course itself. Orr (2004:13) saw our current approach to learning and education as only crystallising ‘pedagogy that reinforces passivity, monologue, domination and artificiality’. Responding to this static and stagnant crystallisation, we believed that a connective aesthetic approach to social learning would help to steer one away

from the product-driven approach to learning and focus on the process, in particular the phenomenological experience of learning. We also found that a connective aesthetic approach to capacity and agency development allowed for new empathic social climates to emerge, and thus greater parity. A connective aesthetic methodology allowed us to construct new social spaces for transforming our understanding of learning processes and social-learning methodology, as they engaged human imagination, intuition and empathy in the learning action (McGarry, 2013; 2014). Agency development (both personal and relational) seems to rely heavily on the social space and structures provided for learning – as can be seen in Archer's work (2000; 2007). What transpired for us as the COPART team was that we asked ourselves: How can connective aesthetics help us construct new spaces for social learning?

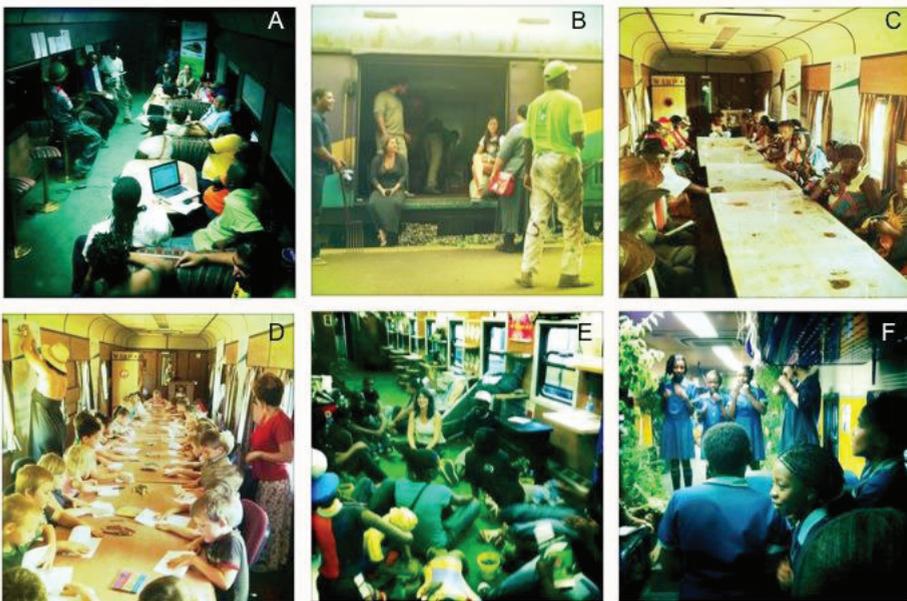
The Train

The Train 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 various regions of the country. Apart from coordinating this group, I was responsible for a social-sculpture project entitled 'Earth Forum'. The train itself consisted of ten carriages (see Figures 1 and 2). 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 housed the cinema and second classroom, the eighth housed the exhibition room, and the final two carriages were used for storage and workshop space, as well as for our mobile nursery of indigenous trees, shrubs, succulents, edible plants and seeds. We spent approximately two days in each town, but only a single day in some of the towns. The Climate Train travelled at night, but remained in the town stations during the day, with activities usually happening on the station platforms or near the station.

Active Absence

One of my primary duties in the COPART network was to develop a transdisciplinary, expansive-learning programme on the train that drew from a variety of different artistic genres and disciplines, with visual artists, poets, 'guerrilla-gardeners'/permaculture educators, writers, film-makers, educators, and other practitioners running their own programmes (see Figure 3). What shaped the central ethos of all these projects was the creation of a space of 'active absence', as inspired by the work of Kaplan (2002), who, through his development work with diverse people, saw 'active absence' as a way of actively creating a space for emergence. He uses the metaphor of an opening protea (an indigenous South African flowering fynbos plant). The flower's petals appear to create an enclosed bowl-shape, but there seems to be nothing inside – the bowl is empty. However, these petals have carefully created a safe, sheltered space, away from the wind and the 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.

Figure 1. Interior of the Climate Train. A) A daily evening meeting in the living room/office space for Climate Train practitioners. 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 on the Draft African Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth presented by elders from the Dzomo la Mupo in Louis Trichardt, Limpopo. D) The boardroom carriage during a workshop with schoolchildren in Limpopo. E) A permaculture design process in the exhibition-room carriage, showing a variety of green technologies and other educational material. F) Children in Pretoria (Gauteng province) participating in a drama workshop led by Kyla Davis, who headed up the theatre troupe in the cinema/classroom carriage. (Images are my own)



Examples of These Active Absent Spaces

The guerrilla-gardeners on the train created gardens, together with local citizens, mostly children, in unexpected places in the towns we visited. The spaces they sought out for gardens were empty, sometimes abandoned, spaces that had been overlooked or were seen to have no purpose, such as traffic circles or verges. Through the process of collaboratively designing the garden and developing a common picture of what should be grown there, and what the garden was for, they created several opportunities for participants to work with new incarnations of their thoughts, ideas and stories.

The visual artists and poets would work in chalk on pavements and platforms, or use massive shared canvases that would roll out and cover ten metres of the station platform. Using these 'actively absent' canvases, they encouraged and guided local citizens to dream together how they would like to see their town in the next ten years. Participants found themselves sharing

Figure 2. Images of the Climate Train. A) The lounge/meeting-room carriage during a daily meeting. B) Self-appointed guerrilla-gardener ‘Wayward Sun’ in the open studio carriage, which, while travelling, housed plants we collected in each town, to plant in the following towns. C) Visual artist Mathias Chirombo and writer co-manager 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 as we were about to leave Soweto. E and F) The dining carriage in use. (Images are my own)



a common canvas and navigating one another’s dreams and images, offering new forms of emergent democratic dialogue through the shared parity of the canvas.

The ‘Earth Junkies’ Team worked primarily with small children, whom they invited to tell stories about ‘Mother Earth’. They first created a ‘portrait’ of Mother Earth, and then told one another stories of how she came to have a ‘fever’, and what might be done to calm her fever. This process was filmed and documented in the form of a short documentary titled: ‘The Children’s Charter for the Rights of Nature’. The process revealed evocative new ways of embodying abstract concepts such as climate change, and created new forms of exchange and lines of questioning, as the children were able to reflect on issues such as pollution, deforestation, resource depletion and apathy through the embodiment of these concepts in their imaginings and how it related to Mother Earth as a persona.

The ‘Well Worn’ Theatre Company used similar processes of embodiment, music and dance to explore emergent issues within each town, allowing for participants to tangibly work with questions and challenges in an openly collaborative and reflexive way. ‘Applied’ and ‘forum’-style theatre created the opportunity for participants to constantly feed back new perspectives with great rigor.

Figure 3. 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 agroforestry researcher working with children through their 'AM-BUSH' guerrilla-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 station platform in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. (Images are my own)



My personal contribution to the overall Climate Train creative education programme was a social-sculpture practice that I collaboratively developed with the artist Shelly Sacks, entitled 'Earth Forum'. This used a large, round oiled cloth as a shared meeting space that participants (seated on chairs) sat around, reflecting on issues in the town, inspired by Mukute's (2010) approach to expansive learning through what he called 'agentive talk'. Participants gathered handfuls of soil (which was usually found in a suitable, strange public space, such as a traffic circle, a busy street corner, a station platform, a foyer of a bank) and offered each of their handfuls of earth to the cloth as they shared their experiences and went through three different rounds of examining their hopes and ambitions for the town and for the greater ecological world. The cloth would then get stained by the soil and gradually embody these traces from each participant, ensuring that, in the next forum, participants could tangibly see other citizens' involvement in this open dialogue. The cloth itself became the actively absent space, and the soil the central connective aesthetic. We found that creating active absent spaces also lent itself to greater empathic listening and perceptivity on the part of participants, as well as a deeper, more engaged form of imaginal thinking.

A Listening Train

By the time that the Climate Train arrived in Durban for COP17, it contained various artefacts or what Gell (1998) called 'indices of agency', each embodying sincere exchanges between over 8 000 people across South Africa. The artefacts came in the form of stories, photographs, footage, the Earth Forum cloth with people's contributions, large ten-metre canvas paintings made by citizens in each town, GPS locations of gardens in each town, and a collection of poems created in each town. The citizens who shaped these artefacts and participated in the expansive-learning processes included 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, we had completed a total of 23 Earth Forums, had planted 19 new collaborative gardens, had developed a Children's Charter with just over 700 children, and had gathered these exchanges in a total of ten different languages, including isiZulu, isiXhosa, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, !Xam and English. We felt as though we had new families in Cape Town, Worcester, Beaufort West, De Aar, Kimberley, Klerksdorp, Krugersdorp, Soweto, Pretoria, Mookgophong, Polokwane, Louis Trichardt, Johannesburg, Standerton, Ladysmith, Pietermaritzburg, and, eventually, Durban (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Climate Train route through South Africa



While the train was primarily a ‘listening or an empathic train’ and not a ‘teaching train’, we did aim to create this project as a social-learning endeavour that worked with emergent themes and concepts, rather than didactically pushing climate or sustainable-development agendas directly. This allowed us to work with other issues such as alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, HIV/Aids, and the resettlement of farm workers and people living near mines. Here I realised that creating an ‘active absent’ space was vital for expansive and experiential social learning, as it not only reduced the didactic influence of my own (or the facilitator’s/artist’s) agenda, but also offered a more emergent, nuanced and rich picture of what the country was struggling with, and what issues influence and affect people’s capacities to act as ecological citizens. This shift away from dialogic themes, and instead working with emergent agendas and perceptions, allowed for deeper, more embodied exchanges that were actively empathic and intuitive.

Nature Rights for Africa

Incidentally, we did not choose the name, ‘Climate Train’. Ideally, we wanted to call it the ‘Listening Train’, but our funders did not approve, so we had to rename it. Even though the central ethos was to create emergent opportunities for learning and exchange, we did have one clear goal to contribute to one, predetermined tangible product by the end of the journey. This was to promote and examine the rights of nature, to add to the meaning citizens ascribed to such rights, and to help encourage the creation of an open public platform to explore the development of a Draft African People’s Charter for the Rights of Mother Earth² that contributes to the Universal Declaration of Rights for Mother Earth.

The Charter, developed by Enact International, was drafted by renowned environmental lawyer Cormac Cullinan to be offered as a document in order to start a new conversation in South Africa. Essentially, the Draft African People’s Charter and the Universal Declaration outline a global consensus on the part of thousands of citizens from different countries who have declared 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 People’s Charter was intended to be an inspirational document with a uniquely African character that can function as a common manifesto that can be used to unite and mobilise many different sectors of South African civil society (e.g. civil rights organisations, trade 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. Our approach to the Charter was to work with people’s existing agendas and concerns, and, after reflecting deeply on these collectively, examine the existing Charter and see if it spoke to their intuitive concerns or not, with the space to add to or edit the Charter as we went along. This was a deeply collaborative approach to learning that I was particularly inspired by. The approach allowed for existing dialogic agendas to be ‘sidestepped’ momentarily to create space for emergent thinking and agendas to rise to the surface. I found this to be vital in creating a common or shared dialogic ethos of the

group – a ‘relational agency’ as it were – that later helped group members approach the existing Charter with their own questions, ideas and images, and not merely haphazardly consider a document from outside their context.

Commons and Collaborative Intelligence

The role of connective aesthetics allowed for a deeply collaborative and social approach to learning. The use of aesthetics was for us a profound tool that allowed for emergence and for dialogical and experiential forms of learning to emerge. What I learnt from the Climate Train is that finding the educational home for this approach to social learning, and other socially constructed forms of embodied and collaborative learning, would undoubtedly require freely accessible common spaces in which people can learn within their existing cultural structures. Martusewicz (2009:254) refers to the concept of ‘collaborative intelligence’, which she borrows from 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 to 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 one another; and 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 as a social convention, and an autonomous ‘I’ does thus not really exist. This is interesting considering that the majority of contemporary education is assessed and monitored, even valued, by individual merit, and learning is usually primarily recognised as an individual endeavour. Martusewicz (2009) reminds us that humans map the world through discursive forms (language, text, symbols, etc.), and that we build strong epistemological patterns and practices which relate to our words, our knowledge and our culture. We pass these on, which, in turn, informs our meaning-making and our approach to education. This, over time, can blind us to the fact that we are immersed in a broader living system, causing us to confine ourselves and our learning to our own individual experiences and merits.

Considering the communal, social and interactive understanding of intelligence and mind, as outlined by Martusewicz (2009) and Bateson (1972), 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 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 contribute to the development of collaborative intelligence or the ecology of mind?

Martusewicz (2009:258) sees education within this context as enabling of systemic wisdom where learning is oriented to 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, and so on. Yet these commons spaces which offer socially constituted forms of learning are affected by Western forms of education and commodification, making it difficult now to identify them as still existing.

The commodification of education, and knowledge itself, through intellectual-property processes has made the establishment of commons ever more difficult. The development of the Climate Train as an experimental approach to social learning was inherently collaborative, practice-based, social and communal, and within the ‘commons’ community. While, in practice, it was all these things, I found challenges and obstacles omnipresent when attempting to conduct and document this process, not to mention analyse it systematically. The project was shaped by so many different people, and by a rich array of contexts and histories, and explored various themes and ideas. I felt that we were ‘listening’ to stories that travelled beyond the contextual boundaries of the towns that told them. What we heard spilled beyond issues of climate change or environmental degradation, and revealed personal and social ontologies that unearthed further questions for all of us involved. Beyond these obstacles, I found institutional paradigms that sought to commodify this research as the merits of a single individual (i.e. my PhD) – and not the social, ecological community that actually produced them – even more challenging. If we are to fully engage with expansive social learning both in theory and praxis, we will also need to rethink and reshape the institutional frameworks that govern contemporary research which encourage collaborative, multi-authored reflection and recognise collaborative intelligence. If learning is social and relational, how we assess and review it cannot be held by the perceptions of a single individual.

Final Thoughts: Lovers of Every Kind

While the Climate Train provided a dynamic exploration into practice-based collaborative experiments in expansive social learning, it was not merely a research process, but an emergent social phenomenon. The Climate Train was the embodiment of a collaborative intelligence that created a ‘mobile commons’. We aimed to achieve a kind of emergent, ‘experiential’ or ‘grounded’ form of dialogue and learning through an experimental-learning approach that was experiential and expansive, and I believe we achieved this. We did not have any particular expectations of what might emerge, but, rather, we knew we wanted to primarily ‘listen’ and create spaces for people to speak and learn freely. While sometimes clumsy, and perhaps naïve, it was clear we created a version of this initial dream. Not only did we listen, but the guerrilla-gardening, portrait storytelling, earth forums, theatre and painting allowed us to capture the stories and reflexively iterate them collaboratively. The aesthetic tools also reduced the role of facilitators, and fostered parity.

I look back on the train journey and see it as the birthplace of my understanding of the role of empathetic attentiveness, and how vital this is for social-learning processes. In reflections after the train journey, all the practitioners agreed that the train could not have come about without its focus on connective aesthetics and establishing emergence using the concept of 'active absence'. An aesthetic approach to social learning, whether in the form of poetry, guerrilla-gardening, theatre, music or storytelling was essential, as it continuously created a common ground, a relational agency, and a sense of belonging, regardless of what town we were in, or what language we were speaking.

If social learning is to expand and transgress the boundaries of existing educational dogma, I believe it would need to embrace deeply the notion of connective aesthetics and active absence, and allow for emergent dialogic spaces.

Orr (2004:11) explains in his final myth about education that we somehow believe that the purpose of education is to give students the means for upward mobility and success, 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 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... .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.

What two years of connective aesthetic collaboration, and 44 days on the Climate Train, taught me is that peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers and lovers are all across this country, and they have the moral courage to join the reimagining of their futures. I believe we as educators have the responsibility to create the empathetic spaces and imaginative structures in which they can be heard.

Endnotes

1 www.dontcopoutcopart.blogspot.com.

2 <http://therightsofnature.org/the-peoples-charter-for-africa/>

Note on the Contributor

Dylan is a Post-Doctoral fellow at the Environmental Learning Research Centre at Rhodes University, and is engaging in practice-based research into connective aesthetics, transgressive social learning and socio-ecological development in South Africa. He has a transdisciplinary PhD in Environmental Education and Art, and his academic work to date has mainly revolved around sustainable rural development and social ecological learning.

Email: armadylan@gmail.com

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