



## Ecopedagogy as/in scapes: Theorizing the issue, assemblages, and metamethodology

Phillip G. Payne

To cite this article: Phillip G. Payne (2018) Ecopedagogy as/in scapes: Theorizing the issue, assemblages, and metamethodology, *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 49:2, 177-188, DOI: [10.1080/00958964.2017.1417228](https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2017.1417228)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2017.1417228>



Published online: 06 Mar 2018.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 31



[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)

## CONCLUSION



# Ecopedagogy as/in scapes: Theorizing the issue, assemblages, and metamethodology

Phillip G. Payne

Monash University, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

## Theorizing the practices of ecopedagogy as/in scapes

The final part of this Special Issue (SI) of *The Journal of Environmental Education* presents (i) an empirically informed outline of a nascent *practice theory* of ecopedagogy as/in scapes, and (ii) a conceptual-philosophical frame for continued research, inquiry, and critique into ecopedagogy as/in scapes. In so doing, it demonstrates (iii) the methodological use of assemblage theory and (iv) the importance of metamethodology in legitimizing the tasks of environmental education research (EER), whose combination is also relevant to curriculum inquiry and policy development (Payne, 2016).

This practice theory of environmental education (EE) is one among many possible unorthodox pedagogies now available, as noted in the Introduction. However, the original contribution to the literatures of EE and EER of this SI can be found in its empirical-conceptual formulation in the ongoing efforts of seven invited researchers who broadly represent four different geo-cultural locations of knowledge production (Canaparo, 2009), and whose combined 30-odd studies of ecopedagogy in seven different Scapes conducted over a number of years serve to localize and temporalize the nascent practice theory while “globalizing” its potential for various transferrabilities. Admittedly, despite the limited sampling of Scapes in a SI, its inductive and abductive development of the notion of “assemblage” from the “grounds up” is worthy of serious consideration in theorizing postcritical approaches to EE and EER. Manuel DeLanda’s (2016) exhaustive theorizing of Deleuze’s elusive notion of assemblages has already informed a “new” philosophy of society (DeLanda, 2006), and the idea of assemblages is used here to respond to the “messiness” of social science method (Law, 2004) found in EE and EER. Here, we do “like” work in theorizing ecopedagogy as/in scapes.

As we will see in the latter part of this Conclusion, the twinned task of theorizing ecopedagogy as/in scapes, and offering a frame from which that nascent theorization can be advanced conceptually and methodologically demands supplementation with a metamethodology in the social sciences (James, 2006) adequate to the empirical-conceptual task of legitimizing this SI. That is, as was exhaustively explained and referenced in the extended Introduction, the SI aims to practically reclaim EE and EER, as a “decentered radical practical-theoretical, democratic role experiment” (Connolly, 2013) whose dominant logics require a “reversal,” and, in doing so, represent a theorization of practices that, effectively, are de-anthropocentrized, partially rehumanized and socialized, and “weakly” ecocentrized’ (Payne, 2018). Table 1 crudely summarizes the assemblage of Scapes, scales, and scopes of ecopedagogy.

A cursory glance at each column in Table 1 demonstrates how the *practices* of our assemblage work. Put simply, what representationally (albeit textually/discursively) is *presenced* by the researcher/author in the scoping of a particular Scape invariably reveals what is also *absenced* (textually/discursively) in the “others.” Thus, within the limitations of the various practical studies assembled in the preceding pages and under theorization here, we, as readers and interpreters, are better able to *access* the flux of



**Table 1.** Assembling a practice theory of ecopedagogy as/in scapes.

SCAPES (sampling)	SCALE (emergent, relational)	SCOPE spatial	SCOPE temporal	SCOPE intercorporeal	ECOPEDAGOGY processes	ENCOUNTERS Examples
MOVEMENT/ motricity Cae Rodrigues (2018)	Micro-bodied	Proximities afforded geographically <i>Chora</i>	Presences afforded cyclically <i>Kairos</i>	<i>Ludics</i> of sensory dissonance, meaning, action, and interaction	Eco-somaesthetic pre-constructions of outdoor activity constructions	Cold sand Mud surfing
FOOD	Micro-bodied	Localized in Country/Land/Sea-cosmological	Ancestral-eldered intergenerational, recyclical	Sentience, finding, gathering, preparing and ingesting of (scarce) foods	Indignity by invitation in accessing and understanding localized food histories	Green prawns Edible fauna
Zane Ma Rhea (2018)	Cosmo-Gaian					
SPACE-TIME	Meso-local	Ecologies of everyday geographies, and transpositions to related contexts	Immersive repeat experiences. Embedded and memorized encounters and episodes in situ.	Movement and environmental affordances, sensuous and affected,	Lifelong encountering and citizenry monitoring	Mist and rain River memories
Ria Dunkley (2018)						
REEF/Ocean	Micro-embodied	Submerged, "facing" in proximally 'like' marine ecologies	Immersive repeat and accumulating experiences/transitions.	Sensing/feeling, floating, snorkeling, traversing	Sensorium rich, repeat witnessing encounters of ecocide of reef	Coral bleaching
Hilary Whitehouse (2018)	Planetary					Disappearing Wrasse
RIVER/Land	Meso-river	Situated/movement proximal, ecologies	Experiential, repeat episodes	River canoeing, movements	Bioegalitarian assemblages of (inter) cultural-natural history in industrialized river system	Murray Cod and river ladder Dying River Red Gums
Alistair Stewart (2018)	Macro-basin					
ANIMAL	Meso-local/urban	Entities in different physical and material spaces of animal ecologies	Culturally, materially, socially evolving flows of bodies, knowledge, power.	Embodied and affective human, animal and other living and nonliving beings, things and their agencies	De-centering in posthuman through interdisciplinary thinking and visits/encounters with other species	Caged lorikeets Farmed animals
Teresa Lloro-Bidart (2018)	Macro-interspecies					
ESCAPE	Micro-Macro-mobility	Embedded locally globally in travelling	Experiential, "smaller" and "bigger" finitudes = hyper-finitude	Mobility and its simulacra	Re-humanizing object oriented accidental engagements and encounters	Cold, murky water Emu eggs
Yoshi Nakagawa (2018)	Cosmo-hyper-macro					
ONTOLOGY~ EPISTEMOLOGY~ AXIOLOGY~ METHODOLOGY Phillip Payne	Micro-embodied Macro-global/planetary	Nomadic positionings and planetary emplacings in Nature and its biogeographical/regional scales	Slowly embedded in (re)cyclical historical natures	Ecoanarchic de-(technologicalized, textualized, digitalized). Re-(materialized, animated, wilded, memorized, storied)	Inquiry for being for nature. Inner-social-outer nature(s) reconciliations through cyclical experiential education	Drainpipe into bay Bare Gull/Bear Gully

*presence* and *absence*, and representation and nonrepresentation, in theorizing ecopedagogy as/in scapes.

To reiterate the basic sources and *counterlogic* of this nascent theorization, each of our contributing researchers/authors was expected to foreground at least three empirical studies of EE grounded in the everyday practices and associated incorporeal and immaterial conceptions and constructions of the “researched”—that is the Scape scoped across the different relational *scales* of *spatiality*, *temporality*, and *intercorporeality* for what is presented to the idea and practices of ecopedagogy. In this materialized presencing-absencing grounded in the materially real and its/their particularized symbolizations, we sought to minimize the everpresent threat of uncritically imposing theory on different, complex practices and, hence, fall into the trap of perpetuating yet more theory-practice, rhetoric-reality, philosophy-grounds gaps in EE and EER. Our broad aim is to *reclaim* EE and EER as practices of the everyday material and real, and their probable agential relations and interactions. We are far less interested in yet more “rehearsals” of theory whose relevance to practices is rarely explained. Accordingly, [Table 1](#) has been “crafted” to illustrate the “bundling” and “weaving” of presencing and absencing in different Scapes that might occur “relationally” in any ecopedagogical practical *processes*.

Here, to emphasize, a priority purpose of this SI is that the derivative and residual *environments* of *Nature* are treated as scaped “locales” of affective meaning-making and knowledge production. “Nature” also needs to be reclaimed “before” education, and reconceptualized accordingly (for example, [Debaise, 2017a](#)), if EE is to practically “live up” to its founding imperatives and expectations. To be sure, this ecopedagogical as/in scapes process and project has, lately, been revived in academic forms of intellectual exchange by the tsunami of “new” high ‘thought’ whose non/less anthropocentric intentions are now, sometimes uncritically, flooding contemporary theory in EE and ESD/EfS (for example, [Payne, 2016](#)). That belated movement of (Western) high thought is a response to the Anthropocene, in particular the material “crisis of the earth system” ([Angus, 2016](#)) and its “slow violence” now defining the local and global rises of various environmental justice movements ([Nixon, 2011](#)).

On this salutary note that problematizes the “gap” creating role of the new (theory rehearsed in isolation of ecopedagogical practices and scaped contexts), it is worth revisiting from the Introduction the ‘old’ forces driving the formalization of EE in the 1970s and, at the same time, the parallel development of ‘applied’ environmental ethics whose incorporation into EE and EER was “disappointing.” The new of then, and old of now, occurred because of the “ecological crisis,” as that global phenomena were then known. Our practice theory not only seeks to reclaim EE and EER, but minimize the potential for new gaps perpetuated by the assumption of theory “trickle down.”

This new “crisis” now “moving” thought in the Anthropocene seeks, in brief, a (re)turn to the realities of ontology and the agencies of material beings and things via a host of twists in speculative, materialist, realist, empiricist and historicist accounts of, for example, the animated vitalities of ecologies of things and objects in Nature/Culture. But, again, way back in EER, [Robottom and Hart \(1993\)](#) highlighted the need for research to address the relationships of ontology, epistemology, and methodology given the inordinate preoccupation of EE on epistemological issues only (learning and teaching about knowledge and attitudes and behaviors; values clarification; and, reflective practice). Such was the then dominance (and still persistence) of the positivist inspired and conservative education view that EE should be *about* and *in* the environment, and only then might behaviors *for* the environment be modified (and, consequently, constraints on methodology). In other words, the anthropocentrism and hubristic humanisms of instrumentally applied education trumped the limiting (sic) ontologies of environment and nature, and nature-culture. We reverse that logic in a practice theory.

The radical decentering alternative assembled and represented in [Table 1](#), above, must therefore be read historically and practically in conjunction with, first, [Figure 1](#) in the Introduction, and second, in [Figure 1](#), below.

### **The ecosomaesthetics~environmental ethics~ecopolitics of ecopedagogy as/in scapes**

[Table 1](#) and [Figure 1](#) are, obviously, reductions and approximations of the extensive scholarship undertaken in assembling this SI. Each contribution should be carefully studied by the reader to understand



Figure 1. Framing inquiry and critique in EE and EER.

the breadth and depth of its researcher’s efforts and how the respective presences and absences play off each other in informing a practice theory of ecopedagogy as/in scapes.

What then are the major features, characteristics, and qualities that, irrespective of scape, inductively and abductively inform the nascent theory of ecopedagogy? What “others,” inevitably, will need to be further scoped in different scapes and their environments/cultures that are now partially represented in the SI. Notwithstanding those others, we can confidently propose that ecopedagogy is;

- Nature is ecopedagogically at the “center” of predominantly natural natures whose affordances, qualities, and characteristics dominate in various environments and their scapes,
- Experience driven primarily through physical movement and activity, as (em)bodied and embedded in dynamic, localized everyday “outdoor” environments as versions of Nature and planet,

- Afforded sensorially and presented perceptually in the material qualities of scapes and their topological-cosmological scales, typically “Nature” or characteristically “open,” or “wild” and/or “memoried” and ‘restor(i)ed,’
- Slower, or slow, experiences and affordances via immersions, or serial episodes, be they shorter visits and/or longer events, in “engaging: the same scape, or similar environment,
- Engaging as “encounters.” Such environmentally and experientially lived experiences are affectively predisposed, emotionally charged, and temporally/spatially dynamic. Often, but not always, intercorporeal encounters are spontaneously, accidentally, liminally, or serendipitously felt as a moral, social, and “ethico-political” “real”-ization of human and other-than-human actions and interactions in the fluxes of objective nature scapes and subjective nature scapes,
- Fluxes include ‘real’ encounters of moving bodies interacting with and responding to despoiled and/or exploited environments, including commodified/objectified and instrumentalized/determined culture-nature relations,
- Environmental encounters also contain a frothy mix of body~timespace sensorium experiences that are enigmatically or ambivalently satisfying, happy, pleasurable, exciting, uplifting and disappointing, disturbing, troubling, demoralizing. A “significance” of the human experience, as active encounter with problematic natures, lies in its ‘moving’ of embodied, emotional, and cognitive dissonances that, invariably, necessitate a process of problem identification, observance/witnessing, monitoring and “resolution” in the now of the experience, but also over subsequent time and location.

In general, the above listing of relatively common qualities and characteristics of ecopedagogy as/in scapes “found” is suggestive of a range of practices of “deschooling” that “free up” the “chaos/anarchy/wildness” just summarized (e.g., Springer et al., 2016; Payne, 2017b).

Much more can be added in terms of the different *processes* found ecopedagogically by our contributing authors. However, they can “less” confidently be asserted here in a nascent theorization of what has been partially accessed, presented, and absented in reassembling the “totality” of the limited sampling. For example.

First, some contributors found that the experiential learning “outdoors” in “nature” outlined here could or should be complemented or extended in “schooling” via “academic” teaching/learning “indoors,” with its conventional classroom resources. On this crucial point about the potential linear-like continuum of “recycling” episodes of outdoor “informal/experiential” and indoor “formal/cognitive” EE, there is an extensive literature from the “outside” of EE, but on the “inside” of educational philosophy and practices. This outsider/insider is called “experiential education” (e.g., Warren et al., 2008). Its Deweyan inspired “pragmatics” of “organism-environment” relations as “growth,” this “transactional” field of formalized experiential education (including “field,” “service,” and “applied” learning aligned with practical knowledge/doing) embraces the often informal “experiential learning,” but does not leave it “out there” in the field, segmented and unattended. The differences, and overlaps, of both, and their respective values, and efficacies, as an “alternative” hybrid of schooled and deschooled pedagogies are currently underresearched and under-theorized in a range of educational subdisciplines (or interdisciplinary studies in Education) such as health, outdoor, physical, and citizenship curriculum, as well as in, for example, NGO environmental programs and public social-ecological “resistance” movements.

Second, although “nature” is allegedly dead, or at an “end” (in many privileged western/northern academic circles), the scoping of scapes pursued here, ecopedagogically, remains alert to Nature, as materially, performatively, and symbolically real, even as memory and remembrance of earlier time-space practices.

Scaped and scoped natures provide a real and material alternative to those culturally constructed versions of “place” pedagogies proposed as culturally constructed substitutes, or surrogates, but are rarely debated in terms of the assumptions and interests underlying that worthy interest. Empirical insight and grounding is often missing, instead deferring to the authority of theory. We are also sensitive to those postcolonial alternatives, including “land” pedagogies, and tensions across a range of pedagogical alternatives, but remain skeptical about their lingering anthropocentrism and colonialisms,

as was also indicated in the Introduction. To be sure, Zane Ma Rhea's (2018) account of a *deimperialized* ecopedagogy of food Scapes proceeds only from an *invited* form of Indigenous *presencing* of what otherwise, even counterwise, remains absent.

Ma Rhea (2018) exposes where contradictions, at least, are likely to pervade any comforting stasis in EE practices and theories, even in the emergent theorization assembled here. Nevertheless, among the alternatives now available to EE such as the critical, anarchic, land, place, wild, and postcritical reversal/counterlogical of ecopedagogies as/in scapes, their convergences and divergences demand earnest consideration in "turning" ontologically (and epistemologically) to a modest ecocentrism as theorized practically in these pages. A different "form" of ecopedagogical "assemblage" is anticipated in outlining yet another productive experiential, deschooling, alternative conceptual-empirical space for reconstructing practices in EE and EER that advance the aspiration to materially and experientially reclaim the field/ground.

To further destabilize and highlight one orthodoxy dominating the abstracted academic textualism of the field/ground practices, perhaps incoherence, central to reclaiming EE and EER, for many of those authors and the human subjects they studied, nature is still alive, vibrant, and animated, but probably not so well in the new Anthropocene/DromosphereScape. Our scapes and scoping are, therefore, inductively suggestive of a pluralist version of first/original "Nature" (Debaise, 2017a) whose formulation as an "event" might abductively be useful in speculating experientially and existentially about the empirically based practice theory of ecopedagogy as/in scapes. Debaise's (2017a, b) view of Nature as event, like other *postlinguistic* versions of speculative *immaterialism* (Harman, 2016) and *new* "new" materialists such as Elizabeth Grosz's (2017).

*Incorporeal* are critical of how certain concepts referring to complex realities suffer from strategic reductionism that give rise, and life, to the rise of overexaggerated dualisms and associated hierarchical thinking, on one hand, and simplified, bland monisms, on the other. Debaise's critique of epistemology views the differences of nature and culture as a consequence of the processes of the *bifurcation* and reification of each, culminating in more nuanced reconceptualization of nature as pluralist and an event. Harman's immaterialisms is a critique of the respective "undermining" (downward reduction) and "overmining" (nonallowance of the excess of things or surplus in reality), whose combining as "duonming" in much discourse vastly oversimplifies the realities of nature and social realities of culture. Grosz's genealogy of ontoethics (and associated politics and normative aesthetics), aim to *de/reconstruct* the academic orthodoxy of the persistently excessive deconstructing of various dualisms (nature-culture, and human-environment, and mind-body). Her *new*, "new materialisms" locates the ideal in the material and material in the ideal, pointing again to the need for far more nuance in the way key ideas and ethics of nature and culture are practiced, and deployed minitheory.

Hence, on the basis of the SI, we are, modestly, "less" confident at this stage about how the scoping of scapes might proceed. Certainly, the Different scapes sampled as practices do give credibility to reworking the concept of pluriNature as an emergence of ecopedagogy and materialist/idealist form of ecobecoming via experiential education. And, if so—following Whitehead's process philosophy, Debaise (2017b) avoids the already overly simplistic binaric collapsing/mashings of culture and nature, with the partial reclaiming of the latter from its "disappearing" or invisibility in EE discourse.

Third, time and the experience of time, have pretty well escaped attention in EE theory and practice. Times/temporal "natures" "presence" in EER is often implied, or serves only as a footnote. Time(s), however, figures prominently in this SI where the temporal "nature" of the spatialized ecopedagogies characterized in Table 1 provide partial evidence about the centrality of body~timespace immersions and experiential encounters. What is not immediately apparent in our assemblage, however, is the "political" nature of time in, increasingly, the "fast" of fading Nature (Virilio, 2010). Elsewhere, to partially recover this absence, I have presenced three of my own evidenced based insights into "slow" ecopedagogies in a few different scapes in the otherwise rapidly accelerating Dromosphere/Anthropocene (Payne, 2014, 2015, 2017b).

Fourth, the almost inaccessible temporalization-spatialization of affectation and geographies of feelings of humans and other-than-humans is, increasingly, being theorized (Schatzki, 2010, Thrift, 2008). However, there continues to be a lack of empirical insight, translation to, or interpretation in,

pedagogical and methodological experimentation or/and relevant deliberation in EE and EER practices. However, the mutually constitutive ontological and epistemological natures of (em)bodied timespace encounters in different scapes are partially disclosed in the bundling of this assemblage and, shortly below, in the incorporation of metamethodological sensitization for legitimizing purposes. Nevertheless, for example, the affectivities and spatialities/geographies of walking/movement methodologies, sensuous ethnographies and ecophenomenological storytelling are gaining post-Ingold (2011) traction and provide a promising alternative as a “movement” oriented ecopedagogy, or form of ecometric studies, as anticipated in Cae Rodrigues’ (2018) contribution to the SI. Likewise, Hilary Whitehouse’s (2018) and Al Stewart’s (2018) respective emphasis on snorkeling and canoeing mobilities as practical/experiential/embodied “method” in reef and riverScape ecopedagogy.

Fifth, the enigmatic dissonances encountered environmentally (and socially) by the researched/participants (and our researchers/contributors) returns us, again, to the already existing extensive literature in EE and EER about the founding principles of the field, research into significant life experiences, memory-work, action competence, agency, and participatory action research. Their conceptual-empirical “memorization” is partially on display, or demonstrated in this nascent theorization. For example, the above listing of the characteristics and qualities of ecopedagogy and/in scapes “mirrors” key aspects of the Tbilisi Report (1978). This report recommended EE be interdisciplinary in nature and application; encourage participation in the learning experience through practical activities and “first-hand” experience; emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, and the development of values sensitive to the environment, and serve as a promoter of active responsibility in action. All are concerned with building an environmental ethic (Palmer, 1998, pp. 10–11).

### The environmental design of experiential education in environmental education

Where, then, does the above nascent practice theory of ecopedagogy as/in scapes (re)position the now de-centered human “teacher” when the scapes and scopes of the environments of nature are practiced less anthropocentrically in, for example the material consequences of the realities of the Anthropocene/Dromosphere?

As a “designer” of the environmental experiences of participant “doing” and intense encounters in Nature! This designer, effectively, is asked to envisage and anticipate the conditions in which “learners” interactions include active and, potentially, important or significant “encounters” in, by, with, and for Nature through a recyclical array and ecopedagogical reassemblage of various “othered” and “thingly” body~time~space experiences, relations, and their dissonances. Didier Debaise (2017a) would see this design purpose for guides/teachers/researchers as grounded in the need for “the intensification of experience” where pluri Nature (or, here, differentially scaled scapes), as an ecopedagogically sequential “event,” are deemed worthy of “importance” and value. Yet again, well before the curriculum theorist Dwayne Huebner’s (1967/1987) prescient prognosis of an environmental design for education indicative of the “temporality of man” (sic), the above listing of the practical features of ecopedagogy and material/symbolic characteristics of scapes begin the hard “field” work of fleshing out John Dewey’s (1938/1988) call for “...framing and adopting an intelligent theory or, if you please, philosophy of experience” in his *Experience and Education* now partially informed in this SI in reclaiming, reframing, and redesigning EE and EER.

But, this designing of practices is highly suggestive of a related need to do so without the overt “intervention” and instruction of the teacher, educator, researcher, instructor. They might act only as “guides” to assist participants’ explorations, imaginations, discoveries, encounters, and scopings of the scape in question, as indicated in Table 1.<sup>1</sup>

The less-centered role of the designer of slower experiences, repeat encounters, and intensified activities/affectivities of pluri Nature scapes, therefore, shifts the locus and focus of EE practices to the very different question of how the teacher anticipates and creates the temporally and spatially particularized “environmental design” of “education.” But, against the importance of this intensified environmental design of ecopedagogical encounters in scapes, we must remain eternally vigilant about how orthodox views of curriculum design, theory, and (implemented or enacted) practices have fallen hostage to the



neo-liberal economy of accelerated and instrumentalized educational discourses (Payne, 2006, Hursh et al., 2016). Design, a rarely considered attribute of any ecoEducation beyond “sustainable” architectures of facilities like an ecoschool/forest “without walls,” is a constant elsewhere in various practices of sustainability. For example, designing new tactics for living in the early architectures of eco-philosophy of Henryk Skolimowski (1981); and, most recently in the notion of ontological design as an ecological practice in Abby Mellick Lopes’ (2017) critical theorization of the materialist move to sustainable cultures and economies.

By extension, the ontologically oriented and aware “design” of ecopedagogy within its “framing” scape, and associated scoping and/or research, is one practical means through which the role of the teacher, guide, leader, facilitator of significant encounters can be envisaged before, during, and after “experiences” and “accidents,” as conceptualized here by Yoshi Nakagawa, in relation to how the above listing of characteristics, can be enacted with those that such designing purports to serve.

In summary, based confidently, and less confidently, on the scholarly activity undertaken in assembling a practice theory of ecopedagogy as/in scapes, we can “imagine” and anticipate in its environmental design a radical experiential, affective, and critical encounter/praxis of an *ecosomaesthetics~environmental ethics~ecopolitics of education*.

### ***The metamethodological ontology~axiology~epistemology (and methodology) of theoretical inquiry and the practices of ecopedagogy as/in scapes***

This “sourcing” and reassembling of a nascent practice theory of the ecosomaesthetics~environmental ethics~ecopolitics of ecopedagogy as/in scapes leads inexorably to the question of “what next?” for further research, inquiry, and critique.

In very general terms, Figure 1 is an attempt to capture some of the major dimensions and tensions underpinning and informing (i) the ongoing need to develop practices of ecopedagogies that are alert to a wide range of matters and issues (ii) how research, inquiry, and critique might proceed within and across the environmental and social “design” of their respective conceptualizations, contextualizations, and reassembled representations and legitimations.

The task of linking nascent practical theorizing and framings of inquiry to further that theorization is not simple or easy. The preceding “work” of this SI must, therefore, be “read into” this all too brief outline of how “metamethodology” (in research activity, in reflective/reflexive practices, in framing SIs, in writing a grant, in reviewing and critiquing the literature, and so on) underpins the different ways in which an assemblage also works in “advancing” practices, research, and scholarship.

In this instance, the social theory of “constitutive abstraction” (Sharp, 1985) and its metamethodological development (James, 2006) is a preferred *position* I take editorially in assembling a nascent theory of ecopedagogy as/in scapes. Its historical, materialist/realist emphasis is also a) deeply attentive to the ontological turn in the tsunami effect of contemporary theory b) sufficiently flexible to incorporate the use of different theorists and methodologists in each of the four “layers” of its metamethodological approach to inquiry, social explanation, and in this instance, ecologized social explanation, and c) has a significant 50-year-long “rack record” of legitimizing a variety of conceptual-empirical insights into the tensions of ontology-abstraction, or ontological “realism” and epistemological/constructivist “realisms” (see Figure 1 in Introduction, and later).

Geoff Sharp’s original formulation of constitutive abstraction thesis (Sharp, 1985), and Paul James (2006) metamethodological development, is a worthy candidate to consider in resensitizing EE and EER because they have been extensively applied to, for example, how intellectuals work (i.e., us), be it in the rise of the entrepreneurial neoliberal university or critiques of poststructuralism, postmodernism, and posthuman, and their construction of new subjectivities; the role of the humanities; globalization and new world orders; changing forms of economy and class; issues concerning ecological, indigenous, and gender/feminist politics; technological mediations and determinisms; and, the persistent challenges to social movements (Hinkson, et al., 2016).

Reclaiming the practices of EE (pedagogy, curriculum, policy, research) and their theorization is, therefore, an ideal “application” from which the interdisciplinary explanatory project of constitutive

abstraction and its “extension” of ecological-social relations, and nature-culture insights, can confidently proceed in legitimizing an assemblage such as that offered here.

James’s (2006) metamethodological interpretation of the constitutive abstraction thesis systematically brings theory back in and reorients the more general but still festering concerns about how intellectual work is conducted and represented by intellectuals themselves, who are increasingly “extended” or “stretched” in the various postmodern forms and modes of intellectual exchange now engaged within the changing socio-ecological relations we “work” within and, globally across, in performatively driven institutions (and their audit/entrepreneurial arrangements and accountabilities). On this cautionary note, repeatedly, Paul Hart (2013), encourages us all in EER to see ourselves within our own terrain. This SI adds weight to that call.

With apologies to the depth and breadth of James’s metamethodology, now made explicit as underpinning and informing our reassembling method in this conclusion, four interrelated levels of analytical abstraction are used to theorize ecopedagogy as/in scapes—empirical analysis, conjunctural analysis, integrational analysis, and categorical analysis. To put the first three in sequential context for the purposes here, we jump temporarily to James’s most abstracted fourth level categorical analysis. Why? It focusses “categorically” on the relations of ecology and ontology as they have been (re)constituted temporally, spatially, corporeally, and epistemologically through the changing formations and transitions of tribalism to traditionalism to modernism to postmodernism.

Again, a cursory glance at [Table 1](#), above, and [Figure 1](#) in the Introduction to the SI, demonstrates how the modes of temporality, spatiality, corporeality, and epistemology have been incorporated by each of our contributing authors into their scoping of a preferred scape that, consequentially, is reassembled as a practical theorization of ecopedagogy as/in scapes. Put differently, the “prerequisite” work undertaken by our contributors to the SI is heuristic to accessing the abstracted categories of nature and culture, and their less anthropocentric and decentered, but practical ecological/environmental aesthetics-ethics-politics outlined in [Table 1](#).

James’s first level of “empirical analysis” is well demonstrated in this SI via each contributor’s drawing upon, at least, three conceptual empirical studies. Incorporated into the seven scapes scoped, the separate but integrated second level of conjunctural analysis targets various primary modes of production, exchange, communication, and organization. For example, Ria Dunkley’s studies of children’s summer club in a National Park, and elderly river monitors in London. Also incorporated into the theorizing of ecopedagogy as/in scapes are the primary modes of integration and their analysis. These include, for example, the spatially-temporally “proximal” presencing of “face-to-face” relations (for example, Ma Rhea (2018) with indigenous elders and pedagogically traditional food ecologies, including the sustainable hunting of animals; Whitehouse’s (2018) repeat encounters in a reef ecocide pedagogy; Teresa Lloro-Bidart (2018) on animals in zoos and feral pedagogies in urban “scales,” noting a conceptual-practical contradiction with Ma Rhea’s (2018) Indigenous position).

Following James, that mode of “face-to-face” integration now “extends” socially into “object-extended” integrations via Stewart’s (2018) “low tech” canoeing pedagogy and encounter with the agro-industrial management of a river. Similarly, Whitehouse’s (2018) snorkeling method partially “masks” the saltiness of the face-to-face and protectively “suits” the skin of its watery coldness (but heating!), wetness and viscosity of the ocean. And, the continued abstractions of experience in James’s “disembodied integration” is addressed in, for example, Yoshi Nakagawa’s (2018) encountering of the simulacra of eco/nature tourism.

Following James, we are now well and truly in the epochal formation of postmodern globalism (i.e., the Anthropocene/Dromosphere for the purposes of reclaiming EE and EER), particularly in the affluent north-west. Across the postmodern ontologies of time, space, bodies, and their epistemologies (and methodologies, and practices) identified by James’ and re-interpreted in all of the Figures and Table representing the SI, there is compelling evidence in all contributions here, and elsewhere (Payne, 2003/2006) about the emerging “dominance” of “technics of experience” in the now categorical everyday of the digital/virtual/cyborg that serves over and against that of modernity’s categorical, metaphorical, mechanistic, and scientific “way of life” that, in turn, was over and against the premodern category of the analogical, genealogical, mythical, and cosmological in “being.” Put simply, tensions,

contradictions, and, possibly, incoherences might occur in assembling a theory of ecopedagogy as/in scapes, and elsewhere, that the incorporation of a metamethodology might be alert to and identify, and partially “smooth out” while acknowledging such a problem or limitation.

Yet, as James cautions in his metamethodology, these “earlier” categories of culture and nature live on, partially, practically, and symbolically, often as traces and memories. Again, each researcher finds, or traces/experiences “memories” of the previous levels of ecology-ontology-cultural relations, be it simply moving in nature as captured in Rodrigues’ (2018) account of ecomotricity, or as “retraditionalized” primitive-like “canoe” travelling on an irrigationally industrialized and despoiled riverscape, or snorkeling an ecocidal bleached reef, as they are presented in theorizing ecopedagogy as/in scapes

Figure 1 aims, therefore, to “capture” and “list” or “frame” some of the major practical-empirical problems and conceptual-philosophical issues conducive to advancing a reassembled theorization of ecopedagogy as/in scapes *and* metamethodologically inspired or driven research into the theorizing of environmental education and its practical pedagogies, curriculum theories, policy-making processes, and research/scholarly development.

Some additional comments are needed to illustrate how the metamethodological issues implied in Figure 1 emerge from, and reflect on, the assemblage of theorizing summarized in Table 1 above, and Figure 1 in the Introduction to the initial framing of the SI.

My brief comments focus primarily on the inherently *political* nature of any and all intellectual and practical efforts, and hence the normative reflexivity that is unavoidable in any effort to be “educational.” Put differently, neutrality cannot exist. There are still those in EE and EER who still profess to be value free, even in teaching children “neutrally” or via plain qualitative and/or quantitative descriptions and treatments of people, environments, situations, animals, events, cultures, histories and so on in research. Put differently, again, claiming neutrality is inherently a political act that may, or may not, be ethical, or ambiguously somewhere in-between.

Thus, in Figure 1, in each of the “internal” dimensions of ecopedagogy as/in scapes and, more generally, EE and EER, any researcher, theorist, policymaker, or practitioner is asked to make “politically” clear the underlying assumptions or presuppositions they make about their a) embedded position and situatedness in, for example from Figure 1, worldview, framing, contextualization, and representation and b) how that “subjective” positioning then positions the “objective” of the practicing, the theorizing, the policymaking, the researching, and so on. And, then, how the politics of that “internal” representation are “saturated” or inscribed materially and/or discursively by the “external” of, in this particular instance, the Anthropocene/Dromosphere and its/their material/real “consequences” for the “internal.” Yet again, the fluxes, tensions and, even, contradictions of presencing-absencing, feeling-knowing, nonrepresentation-representation, nature-culture, and ontology-epistemology, and so on come to the fore. They are thrust “politically” and normatively upon our needed clarifications of position and positioning. They warrant ongoing vigilance, deliberation, clarification, and expression.

To the best of our individual and collective abilities, expertise, and experience, each phase of the framing and development of the SI has encouraged such a reflexivity. Over the seven months of assembling and then “writing” the SI, there was—the sharing of proposals/abstracts, monthly newsletters, typically three drafts from each author and associated “immediate” reviews, including the Introduction, the potential to read final drafts and cross-reference other contributors where continuities and contradictions, convergences and divergences, and presences and absences, might be addressed in the practical theorization of ecopedagogy as/in scapes. So, temporally, across our spatialized geo-cultural diversity, we constantly revisited the initial framing of the SI (Figure 1 in the Introduction), elaborated (where appropriate/relevant) on the outlining, historicizing, and illustrating of each of the key concepts of ecopedagogy, scapes, and the underlying logics of EE and EER, as these were reflexively informed by the evolving metamethodological framework (Figure 1, above), while all the time declaring limits and limitations. We arrived at a nascent but reasonably “solid” empirically driven theorization of, potentially, a practically radical/critical version of ecopedagogy as/in scapes (Table 1, above).

Of course, further development is needed of what might tentatively be “named” in EE and EER, following this SI, as a case study in the ecologies of speculative empiricism, materialism, and realism as they run through a practice theory of ecopedagogy as/in scapes.

## The “special” nature of ecopedagogy as/in scapes

Notwithstanding the primary purpose of reclaiming EE, the processes of theorizing ecopedagogy as/in scapes described in the Introduction and Conclusion seeks to postcritically and practically “advance” the aspirations and expectations of EE and EER. This advance of discourse is problematic in an increasingly chaotic, hostile, consumption driven, posttruth “climate change” economy of various abstractionisms played out “politically” and, often, unethically from the various “positions” in the practices of EE enabled in our “positionings” in the academic “grounds” of the postmodern university and, indeed, forums and mediums of intellectual exchange, such as this journal.

Special Issues of *JEE* are, however, one means to seriously address serious issues challenging, if not confronting, the critical progress and ecologically sustainable prospects of EE and EER. There are many pressing issues readers of this Journal are invited to tackle and have been identified, again from the grounds up of pedagogical, curriculum, program, policy, research, methodological, and philosophical practices (Payne, et al., 2017a).

This SI started with an account of Leopold’s “wolfpedagogy as/in mountainscapes.” It, and his development of a fabled land ethic, served as an allegory for what was to follow. Now, in conclusion, it is timely to “re”turn to that scaped and scoped ecopedagogy. This time, however, given the assemblage and metamethodological treatment “specially” developed and represented here, we might presence what is partially absented in Leopold’s “otherwise” prescient contributions to an ecosomaesthetics~environmental ethics~ecopolitics of EE, reiterating his potent critiques of the then contemporary practices of outdoor/environmental recreations and formal education (in North America, at least).

We might see anew, and better be able to respond to some, perhaps not all, questions that, surely, Leopold would ecopedagogically ask in his trigger-happy encounter with the old wolf.

What did the wolf know? Did the depleted pack raise its six pups? What did the mountain know? And do? What did its trees, caves, and streams know? What don’t, or can’t, we know? Indeed, for Leopold (1966, p. 137), most likely, “...there lies a deeper meaning, known only to the mountain itself” and “the howl of the wolf.” But, 70-odd years later, we ecopedagogues as/in scapes can (re)turn literally or allegorically to the mountainscape and experience its presences and absences in ways that are historically, materially, symbolically, and critically real in the new “face-to-face” encounters of an ecosomaesthetically reopening of ethical and political insight and action. What has happened to the mountain “nature” and its ecologies of things?

## Note

- 1 Our contributors agree upon a less centered role of the “teacher,” although it must be noted that Zane Ma Rhea’s de-imperializing ecopedagogy of foodscapes could only be ethically accessed and inter-culturally scoped *Indigenously* after being invited by an Elder to that Country. Those elders remained a vital “resource.”

## References

- Angus, I. (2016). *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil capitalism and the crisis of the earth system*. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.
- Canaparo, C. (2009). *Geo-epistemology: Latin America and the location of knowledge*. Oxford, England: Peter Lang.
- Connolly, W. (2013). *The fragility of things: Self-organizing processes, neoliberal fantasies, and democratic activism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Debaise, D. (2017a). *Nature as event: The lure of the possible*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Debaise, D. (2017b). *Speculative empiricism: Revisiting Whitehead*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.
- DeLanda, M. (2016). *Assemblage theory*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.
- DeLanda, M. (2006). *A new philosophy of society: Assemblage theory and social complexity*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Dewey, J. (1938/1988). *Experience and education*. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *John Dewey, the later works, 1925-1953* (pp. 1–62). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Dunkley, R. A. (2018). Space-timeScapes as ecopedagogy. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 49(2), 117–129.
- Grosz, E. (2017). *The incorporeal: Ontology, ethics, and the limits of materialism*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Harman, G. (2016). *Immaterialism: Objects and social theory*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.

- Hart, P. (2013). Preconceptions and positionings: Can we see ourselves within our own terrain? In R. Stevenson, M. Brody, J. Dillon, & A. E. J. Wals (Eds.), *International handbook of research on environmental education* (pp. 507–510). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hinkson, J., Cooper, S., & Caddick, A. (Eds.) (2016). Special issue: Cold war to hot planet: Fifty years of *Arena Journal*, 45/36, 1–343.
- Huebner, D. (1967/1987). Curriculum as concern for man's temporality. *Theory into Practice*, 26, 324–331.
- Hursh, D., Henderson, J., & Greenwood, D. (Eds.) (2016). Special issue: Environmental education in a neoliberal climate. *Environmental Education Research*, 21(3), 299–505.
- Ingold, T. (2011). *Being alive: Essays on movement, knowledge and description*. London, England: Routledge.
- James, P. (2006). *Globalism, nationalism, tribalism: Bringing theory back in*. London, England: Sage.
- Law, J. (2004). *After method: Mess in social science research*. London, England: Routledge.
- Leopold, A. (1949/1953/1966). *A sand county almanac: With essays on conservation from Round river*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Lloro-Bidart, T. (2018). A feminist posthumanist ecopedagogy in/for/with animalScapes. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 49(2), 152–163.
- Ma Rhea, Z. (2018). Towards an Indigenist, Gaian pedagogy of food: Deimperializing foodScapes in the classroom. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 49, 103–116.
- Mellick Lopes, A. (2017). Ontological design as an ecological practice. *Arena Journal*, 47/48, 171–192.
- Nakagawa, Y. (2018). EscapeScape: Simulating ecopedagogy for the tourist. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 49(2), 164–176.
- Nixon, R. (2011). *Slow violence and the environmentalism of the poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Palmer, J. (1998). *Environmental education in the 21st century: Theory, practice, progress and promise*. London, England: Routledge.
- Payne, P. (2003/2006). The technics of environmental education. *Environmental Education Research*, 12(3-4), 487–502.
- Payne, P. (2006). Environmental education and curriculum theory. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 37(2), 25–35. doi:10.3200/JOEE.37.2.25-35.
- Payne, P. (2014). Vagabonding slowly: Ecopedagogy, metaphors, figurations, and nomadic ethics. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 19, 47–69.
- Payne, P. (2015). Slow ecopedagogy and critical curriculum action. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 31(2), 1–29. doi:10.1017/ae.2015.32.
- Payne, P. (Ed.) (2016). Special issue: The politics of policy in education for sustainable development. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 47(2), 69–178. doi:10.1080/00958964.2015.1127200.
- Payne, P. (2017a). Ecopedagogy and radical pedagogy: Post-critical transgressions in environmental and geography education. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 48(2), 130–138. doi:10.1080/00958964.2016.1237462.
- Payne, P. (2017b). Early years education in the Anthropocene: An ecophenomenology of children's experience. In M. Fler, & B. van Oers (Eds.), *International handbook of early childhood education* (pp. 117–160). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
- Payne, P. (2018). Introduction: The framing of ecopedagogy as/in scapes: Methodology of the issue. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 49(2), 71–87.
- Robottom, I., & Hart, P. (1993). *Research in environmental education: Engaging the debate*. Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Rodrigues, C. (2018). MovementScapes as ecomotricity in ecopedagogy. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 49(2), 88–102.
- Schatzki, T. (2010). *The timespace of human activity: On performance, society, and history as indeterminate teleological events*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Sharp, G. (1985). Constitutive abstraction and social practice. *Arena*, 70, 48–82.
- Skolimowski, H. (1981). *Eco-philosophy: Designing new tactics for living*. New York, NY: Marion Boyers.
- Springer, S., Lopes de Souza, M., & White, R. (Eds.) (2016). *The radicalization of pedagogy: Anarchism, geography, and the spirit of revolt*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Stewart, A. (2018). A Murray Cod assemblage: Re/considering riverScape pedagogy. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 49(2), 130–141.
- Thrift, N. (2008). *Non-representational theory: Space, politics, affect*. London, England: Routledge.
- Virilio, P. (2007/2010). *The university of disaster*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Warren, K., Mitten, D., & Loeffler, T. (2008). (Eds.) *Theory & practice of experiential education*. Boulder, CO, USA: Association for Experiential Education.
- Whitehouse, H. (2018). Questions of ecopedagogy in tropical oceanScapes in the age of coral ecocide: An autoethnographic description. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 49(2), 142–151.