

**RISE UP!?! AN ANALYSIS OF APPRECIATIVE RESISTANCE IN
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

By

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between the concepts of education and activism. I suggest that educators can approach activism in ways that are consistent with the aims of education. In support of this suggestion, I conduct an analysis of a concept of education that includes activism (Chapter II). Building on the notion of educative activism, I explain a framework of appreciative resistance that I have developed as an approach to education that includes activism. The Concept is based on an ethics-based epistemology (Cheney & Weston, 1999) where our understanding of the world is preceded by an etiquette that demonstrates an openness to the world's possibilities (Chapter III). In the following two chapters I look at cases (or examples) that offer a chance to test possible examples of the appreciative resistance concept, and their connection to educative activism. The first case (Chapter IV) examines an activist campaign with which I was involved as a student at Lakehead University. While I am critical of the way that the campaign was approached, I analyze the activist events for elements that fit with the concept of appreciative resistance. The second case (Chapter V) explores a fictional response to a development issue on the Lakehead University campus. The story is designed to represent an activism that exemplifies the appreciative resistance concept. Analysis following this story links appreciative resistance to the broader concept of educative activism. The story is represented in a non-traditional voice that expresses my thinking about educative activism in a way that is not possible using a traditional academic tone. Chapter VI provides a summary of the main arguments presented through the thesis, and offers some guideposts for further thinking and research about educative activism and appreciative resistance.

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other voices

lay

justunderthesurface.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction and Personal Rationale

Activism is a contentious issue when paired with the idea of education. Teachers and students bring diverse values and agendas to educational experiences, and the wide range of contexts in which education can occur makes for no simple answers where this pairing is concerned. In this thesis, I explore ideas of education, environmental education, and activism, and examine the complex ways that these constructs interact within the context of education. Specifically, I develop a concept that I have named “appreciative resistance” to describe a particular kind of educative activism, one example of the integration of activism used to forward educational aims. In doing this, I create a project that is conceptual in nature, and uses cases, stories, and narratives as vehicles for analysis of a conception of education which encompasses some kinds of activism.

I wonder how activism can be educational, or included in learning in such a way as to further educational goals? Can activism be used in educational contexts without manipulating or coercing students? Where activism is used as a pedagogical tool, how can students use it in ways that demonstrate integrity and appreciation for all parties to a conflict? If we encourage students to engage in thoughtful activism, can philosophical inquiry guide this activism in more educational ways? In addition, drawing in part on a critical/post-structural theoretical orientation, I wonder what ways activism in education might be used as a tool for disruption of, and resistance against, dominant narratives that construct our “selves,” communities, schools, and environments (Barrett, 2005; McKenzie, 2004).

In speaking of appreciative resistance, I mean the ability for students to engage in efforts of resistance that are generative, and respectful towards themselves and those with whom they disagree. The idea of appreciative resistance draws on “appreciative inquiry,” an action research methodology that is based in a model of positive thought called the “appreciative paradigm” (Stavros & Torres, 2006), and on ethics literature from an emerging branch of ethical thinking called ethics-based epistemology (Cheney & Weston, 1999; Jickling, 2005a, b). These concepts are explored in greater depth in the following two chapters. Bringing these questions to a convergence, the overriding question that I want to explore in this thesis is: *Is there a place for sociocultural activism in environmental education?*

How I Arrived Here: Some Underpinnings of This Project

This section brings a personal touch to my thesis. By “placing” the origins of my ideas and analysis into context, I expect that this project can better resonate with readers’ own experiences and ideas. Further, reference to this personal history will guide me in the continuing development of this project.

I have been interested in graduate studies for some time, although the disciplines and areas of research interest have changed many times. The initial idea for a master’s thesis on environmental education and social change initiatives occurred while driving along highway 401 between Whitby and Mississauga, Ontario (across the top of the city of Toronto). I was taking up a few weeks of work between finishing coursework for my bachelor of education degree and beginning my final practicum at an outdoor education centre. While sitting in the daily traffic jam that was my early morning routine those few weeks, I looked around and noticed that, like me, everyone was sitting alone in their car.

I thought about this for a moment, and realized that this was not only a problem of environmental dimensions, but of social dimensions as well. It occurred to me that many of my fellow commuters arrived at work each morning and home at night feeling tired and grouchy from the hour(s) they spent sitting in traffic on their way to work, just as I did.

As an education student, I wondered what role an educator, *qua* educator, could play in helping to reform the environmental and social ills highlighted by a society that sits alone in traffic for hours each day. I wondered about the emissions that could be reduced if people found alternative ways of commuting, and if these people would be happier and healthier if they weren't isolated in traffic so much? In particular, I wondered about ways that I could encourage students to take action on environmental issues such as this, and how I might participate in such action with them without taking advantage of my position as an educator. While this thesis is a departure from my initial ideas on that morning drive, they were the genesis of a Master's thesis in environmental education.

In the eight months spent completing coursework for this Master's degree, I spent a good deal of time contemplating how this project might look. As my thesis concept was developing, I became involved in a student-led activist project. The campaign urged the university administration to rethink a land exchange plan that would see a parcel of riparian land annexed from the university property and leased to the adjacent golf and country club and developed as part of the golf course. The more involved I became in the activist campaign, the more I struggled with what I perceived as a lack of integrity demonstrated by the organizers in their attempt to affect change. They seemed set on

vilifying the university administration in the eyes of the students and the local community. In this process, the real issue (in my view) of long-term protection of natural space on campus seemed to become lost in a nasty fray of drum-banging protest that the university administration seemed to ignore.

Despite my dissatisfaction with this approach to activism, I still felt like the issue was important and participating in the campaign was worthwhile. In the end, the campaign was effective in thwarting the proposed landswap, at least in the short term; however, I wonder if the negative tone surrounding this activism may have soured the university administration on further talks about protection, and respect for, natural spaces on campus, or naturalization of university land. If the activist approach had been different, could we have laid a better foundation for future green space protection on campus? If the activists had positioned their efforts as an educational endeavour—central to the purpose and mission of the university—would the university administration have been more cooperative? My analysis of the landswap case forms a chapter within this thesis.

My experience with the landswap issue led me to think about activism, and where people develop ideas about activism and social advocacy. I questioned whether “good” activism could be taught in schools or other educational settings. In reading about the topic, I became interested in Norwegian philosopher Næss’s interpretation of Gandhi’s activist philosophies. In an interview on Deep Ecology and education (Næss & Jickling, 2000), while outlining how he suggests teachers might deal with contentious issues in the classroom, Næss suggests that we maintain open dialogue with those who have views that are different than our own. Further investigation into Gandhi’s ideas about action in

Næss's writing (Næss, 1958) led me to think of Gandhian and Næssian thinking as potential lenses for analysis of activist cases in education.

Since I began studying at the Faculty of Education at Lakehead in 2005, I have noticed a trend of development on campus that seems to disregard aesthetics and environmental concerns. The landswap situation is one example of this trend. Another example is the construction of a new parking lot and later a motor vehicle overpass (or, as I prefer, over/pass) on campus, which facilitates the ease of parking, as well as the movement of vehicles around the campus. While these are issues of concern to a university, should they be the only concern? What about the loss of aesthetics of our campus landscape? What about the negative impacts predicated by more drivers on campus? Certainly, these issues are of concern as well. In what way might we resist development on campus that is environmentally and aesthetically short-sighted? The second case that I will conduct is a speculative look at ways that the campus community might begin to resist the trend of campus development that has been started with this parking lot and over/pass, but both examples are chosen because they illustrate my thesis of an education that foregrounds activism.

From a critical pedagogical perspective, I understand education to be inherently political (Kincheloe, 2005); from this it follows, in my mind, that an education that is political in nature should provide guidance on political action. On the surface this is appealing; however, there is certainly a conceptual question associated with politically active education that needs to be analyzed in greater depth. If it is assumed that education is inherently political and ethical, can the concepts of action and resistance be educationally justified in ways that don't lead towards activities that are presumptuous,

coercive, or doctrinaire? I have framed my thesis as a conceptual exploration of teaching good, or justifiable, resistance within an idea of education. I will introduce appreciative resistance to the analysis and test its fit with the broader concept of education. I will then use cases to contextualize my concerns and to provide substantive content for analysis.

It is interesting, in the later stages of the production of this project, to draw a connection from my starting point (early morning commuting on highway 401) to where the process of creating a masters thesis has brought me. In some ways, I think those early morning drives that provided so much time for thinking and reflection can be viewed as the genesis of the appreciative resistance that I construct in this thesis, as well as an example of the kind of praxis that *drives* (double entendre intended!) the concept of appreciative resistance as a pedagogical strategy. The carbon/oil issues that I was (and am still) concerned about in those early stages of this project began a chain of action/reflection that led in part to a change in my lifestyle (I no longer commute an hour to work each day), as well as the development of the conceptual side of this thesis, an exploration of the educative potential of activism.

Research Questions

I come to this project with assumptions, and it is important to be clear about my starting places as I undertake this project. Sitting in my car on the 401 led me to believe that education needs to be engaged with contemporary issues that are meaningful to teachers and students, as well as the wider community. This kind of engagement in education could involve activism of some sort. Yet, my involvement with the landswap suggests that not all activism is educational, just as not all experiences are inherently educational (Dewey, 1938). Literature that I review points to the idea that teachers can

have influence on their students without being doctrinaire (Hare, 1964; Næss & Jickling, 2000). The question that is more difficult—that requires more finesse in answering is the question of how to conduct activism in educational ways. In what context, with what intensity, and with whose interests in mind should we approach activism or resistance as educational experiences? In my focusing question at the opening of this thesis, I ask *is there a place for sociocultural activism in environmental education?* As well, I wonder if *an appreciative approach to activism can support, educationally, such political resistance?* These are the questions that I will explore throughout this thesis. In order to be systematic, I will focus on the question of activism in education in Chapter II, and Chapter III will look primarily at the notion of appreciative resistance, a concept that I argue offers some potential as a means to educative activism. The cases presented in Chapters IV and V will serve as a testing ground for the analysis conducted in the earlier chapters. The forthcoming section provides a brief outline of each chapter.

The View From Here: An Outline of the Thesis

In Chapter II, I present a conceptual analysis of that considers ways that activism may be consistent with education and further its aims.¹ Central to this argument is the tension between education and indoctrination. In Chapter III, I examine the concept of appreciative resistance—an approach that I think has potential to help educators bring activism in line with education. I explore how appreciative resistance may help educators frame approaches to activism in ways consistent with education, and away from indoctrination or other misuses of authority or influence over students. Chapter IV and V are case examples that serve as testing opportunities for the concept of appreciative

¹ The notion of aims of education is difficult in and of itself, and is also addressed in chapter II.

resistance developed in Chapter III. Chapter IV outlines a campus-based activist campaign that I have been involved with during my graduate studies. The story of the Landswap Issue gives me an opportunity to point out examples of appreciative resistance and demonstrate how the concept of appreciative resistance can be grounded in an understanding of education that is inclusive of activism.

In Chapter V, I explore a new voice, and devise an invented case (Wilson, 1963) about an activist initiative that resists development for the sake of development on the Lakehead University campus. This story is personal, and provocative, but more importantly it opens an opportunity for me to engage with the idea of appreciative resistance, and make connections between the concept of appreciative resistance and educational aims that it would be harder for me to make using traditional argument or analysis. Such an approach to research is also consistent with a growing support in educational scholarship, including environmental education research, for alternative means of research representation (Cole, 2002; Giroux, 2007a; Hart, 2002; Kincheloe, 2007). The story highlights the generative or positive character of appreciative resistance, and the analysis that follows further links appreciative resistance with the educative activism that I propose in Chapter II. Chapter VI provides a summary and synthesis of the thesis, and provides some commentary on the results.

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multiple voices

live
In
these pages

different voices
tell
different tales

stories within stories
theses within theses
some dominant
others suppressed
waiting for just the right moment....

CHAPTER II

Developing Conceptual Analysis as Research in a Postmodern Context

Conceptual analysis is an appropriate choice of research method for the initial phase of my thesis. It is a useful technique for unpacking meaning in the language found in my research question. Meaning in terms like education and resistance can be explored by “looking closely at some of those ideas attached most closely to the concept of education itself” (Soltis, 1968, p. 7). Moreover, this analysis allows for the uncovering of “value commitments” (p. 15), either implicit or explicit that are attached to an understanding of each concept.

As part of my research, I contribute to the development of conceptual analysis conducted in educational research during a period influenced by a postmodern mood (Noddings, 2007). Conceptual analysis is historically grounded in the analytical tradition of philosophy, attributed to Bertrand Russell (Noddings, 2007), and taken up in the area of education by the likes of Peters (1965, 1967, 1973), Scheffler (1960), Soltis (1968), and others. Peters (1973) notes that “the cardinal philosophical sin is to fail to make important distinctions” (p. 14). While distinction is an important part of conceptual analysis, postmodern theory offers an equally important perspective on subjectivities and pluralities that may be helpful in “nudging” analytical thought toward being responsive to change, and the ability to recast itself as demanded by the changing landscape in which a concept exists (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994).

The contribution that I make through bringing a postmodern mood to conceptual analysis is an offering of some socially critical ideas to the process of analysis of concepts in the analytical tradition. This offering should not be understood as a value

judgment of one ideology against another, but rather as a suggestion that drawing on some ideas from postmodern thinking, such as its challenge of universal knowledge and singular truth, may be helpful in building a rigorous conceptual analysis that explores important questions about subjectivity and pluralism such as the nature of partial and situated knowledge (Haraway, 1991) that arises from postmodern theory.

I conduct a conceptual analysis that is grounded in the methods of the analytical tradition (c.f. Wilson, 1963) and is informed by a post-modern mood brought to bear by philosophers working in the continental tradition (Noddings, 2007). Analytical methods, as I understand them, map the meanings of, and relationships among concepts by analyzing examples that are thought to be representative of a particular concept. To balance this approach, I draw from a critical pedagogy which offers perspectives that are mindful of social justice issues in education—perspectives that are not always represented or considered central to a concept, and so may sometimes be under-considered in analytically driven conceptual analysis to date (Kincheloe, 2005). I wish to conduct a conceptual analysis that responds to critical pedagogical critiques of the analytical tradition, for example the under-consideration of effects of cultural power and domination (Kincheloe, 2007). In considering critical pedagogy in a conceptual analysis, I produce research that is mindful of hegemony and which begins to consider environmental and social justice concerns that may not have received enough attention in educational philosophy (B. Jickling, personal communication, May 2007), in particular the philosophy of environmental education (Orr, 1992). This approach continues a tradition of scholars who have brought a flavour of critical pedagogy to their work in

environmental education (Barrett, 2005; Clover, 2002; Fawcett, Bell, & Russell, 2002; Lousley, 1999; Malone, 1999; marino, 1997; McKenzie, 2004; Russell, 1997).

My Approach to Conceptual Analysis

The bulk of writing on the doing of conceptual analysis comes from the analytical tradition; however, questions arising from critical pedagogy offer a flavour of social criticism to the analysis, creating the potential for philosophy that not only theorizes about concepts, but also inspires social and ecological change. It is my hope that this kind of critically influenced conceptual analysis is taken up by educators and those who they teach, and that together they negotiate the kind of education that will enable socially just change in the world. In this way, it is my position that it is neither educators nor education alone which enables change, but rather that change is negotiated amongst all participants in the educational process.

Wilson's (1963) book *Thinking with Concepts* provides an excellent practical guidebook to methods for conceptual analysis in the analytical tradition. He asserts that users of conceptual analysis should be adept at identifying questions of concept from other types of questions (value or factual), and that they should be able to parse a "mixed question" (concept combined with value or fact) in order to avoid offering "right answers" when the meaning attached to a concept has not been solidly established.² With these skills, conceptual analysts can apply different *cases* (or examples) of a concept (model cases, contrary cases, borderline cases, invented cases) to glean meaning from the language that we use to describe concepts, and in turn to answer philosophical questions.

² While I find Wilson's ideas helpful, I also recognise that the analytical emphasis on separating fact from value, and the notion of "right answers" must be approached cautiously given the postmodern mood that I am considerate of in this thesis. Indeed, Wilson himself points out the problems that "right answers" might present.

Given that conceptual analysis has its roots in the analytical tradition of philosophy, there is little in the way of a roadmap or blueprint that describes what conceptual analysis influenced by questions of postmodern critical pedagogy might look like. This leaves me going somewhat out on my own in developing an understanding of conceptual analysis that accepts some of the challenges introduced by critical pedagogues working in the postmodern domain. As a starting place in building my analysis, I offer the work of Wilson (1963) as a foundation for doing conceptual analysis, delineating concepts in order to establish some degree of common meaning. For Wilson (1963), common meaning may be established by examining cases and examples, in search for threads that tie examples together and thus give outline to concepts. I also look to Deleuze and Guattari (1994) whose meta-philosophy brings postmodern challenges to conceptual analysis in the analytical tradition. Their questioning of the universal nature of concepts, and the *concept* of concept itself can recast analysis in a way that is different from other examples of conceptual analysis in the philosophy of education (Peters, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1973; Scheffler, 1960; Soltis, 1968).

Deleuze and Guattari (1994) assert that “every concept has an irregular contour defined by the sum of its components” (p. 15-16), and that “philosophers are always recasting, and even changing their concepts” (p. 21). In the same vein, Peters (1966) comments that “terms in a natural language develop a life of their own and send out shoots which take them far away from the central trunk of the concept...The important thing is that we should recognize the differences in the uses as well as the similarities” (p. 2). This similarity between Deleuze and Guattari (1994) and Peters (1966) shows a resonance between traditional analytical philosophers and the work of Deleuze and

Guattari (1994), which places an emphasis on this continuous change and development that I find helpful in considering postmodern concerns in conceptual analysis.

As a way of articulating the parameters within which concepts exist, Deleuze and Guattari (1994) conceptualize *the plane of immanence*. They describe the plane as “a table, plateau, or a slice” (p. 35) on which concepts rest. What most qualifies this idea as postmodern is the possibility of multiple planes of immanence on which concepts might rest in different configurations, and that the development of a plane of immanence is contextually influenced. They note that:

If it is true that the plane of immanence is always single, being itself pure variation, then it is all the more necessary to explain why there are varied and distinct planes of immanence that, depending on which infinite movements are retained and selected, succeed and contest each other in history. (p. 39)

Understanding conceptual analysis this way brings a flavour that resonates with me. I don't interpret the work of analytical philosophers in education to advocate absolute universalism, but the notion of a plurality of concepts is not foregrounded in their work. Plurality is important in the analysis that I want to conduct, as it opens space for hearing multiple voices within the stories that I will tell later in this thesis, and in the analysis of education which I am about to begin. Showcasing a multiplicity of voices, or planes on which concepts exist (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994) may help avoid the problem of “right answers” that Wilson (1963) identifies, and also speaks to the postmodern concern that conceptual analysis offers single solutions to philosophical problems without regard for contextual factors (Noddings, 2007). Where education and activism are concerned, I will

approach my analysis of these concepts from a wide viewpoint to encompass a variety of possible formulations of each concept.

Keeping in mind the notion of a conceptual analysis that is responsive to postmodern questions, in the sections that follow I will analyze the terms “education,” “environmental education,” and “activism” in an attempt to see if the concept of education, can be justifiably seen to include educational activism. In chapter III, I will use the notion of *educative activism* to develop a concept of appreciative resistance, which I will use to test cases presented in Chapters IV and V.

Coming to Terms: The Concepts of Environmental Education and Activism

In what ways can activism be educational? When might it be otherwise? Given the highly conceptual nature of these questions, it seems difficult to begin an answer without first unpacking the question and clarifying specifically what is intended by the concepts it contains (Wilson, 1963). Simply furnishing a definition of each concept is not adequate. The amorphous nature of the concepts of education and activism make it difficult (and undesirable) to pin down the idea to a single definition (Jickling, 1997; Peters, 1966; Soltis, 1968). However, it is difficult to engage in an in-depth discussion without having some clarity about key terms constituting the topic. Through conceptual analysis I will provide groundwork that I hope will elucidate the terms education, environmental education, and activism enough to invite an intersubjectivity of meaning that can then be used to investigate appreciative resistance in educational settings. To this end, I approach conceptual analysis in a way that frames ideas enough to provide a structure for discussion, and moves beyond formulaic definitions in the hope of outlining criteria that form contours of a concept (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994; Peters, 1966). I am

not attempting to frame a “right” conception of these ideas, but rather, I am constructing a working conception that reflects assumptions about, and possibilities for education, environmental education, and activism.

With the notion of working conceptions in mind, and considering my critical postmodern influences, I would also like to recognize that while I may ascribe particular criteria to a concept, that my conception is not universal, and I may centralize (foreground) that which other conceptions leave peripheral (backgrounded) (Peters, 1966; Wilson, 1963). In fact, in my thinking about education and activism, I quite explicitly draw the notion of activism towards the centre of the concept of education, although it is, I believe, generally considered peripheral. In doing this I participate in the work that Deleuze and Guattari (1994) describe as the recreating of concepts “for problems that necessarily change” (p. 28). In the section that follows I will undertake an analysis of the concepts of education, environmental education, and activism in preparation for developing a concept of appreciative resistance in Chapter III.

Education

While this thesis deals specifically with the concept of environmental education, I begin with a discussion on the more general concept of education because I believe that an understanding of environmental education is best thought of as being nested within a broader conception of education (Jickling, 1997; Jickling & Spork, 1998). As such, I will begin by examining some of the analysis that has already been undertaken by philosophers of education in the analytical tradition. My analysis of education focuses on the work of Peters (1965 1966, 1967, 1973), but also draws from Hare (1964), Wilson (1963), and Deleuze and Guattari (1994). I also provide some analysis of the criteria that

are important in thinking about education as a concept that brings with it a flavour of critical pedagogy.

Peters (1966) explored the idea of education in an effort to reveal the criteria that compose education as a concept. He concluded that three things primarily constitute the process of education: the transfer of contextually worthwhile things; some element of knowledge, understanding, or cognitive perspective that is dynamic or responsive to dialogue; and, the condition that procedures or activities that are coercive or manipulative are ruled out. These criteria describe education in conceptual terms, as opposed to activities, or pedagogies that are enactments of the concept. That is to say, for example, that a teacher's methods of teaching reading (or any other subject) in a classroom represent one means of achieving Peter's (1966) three criteria, but these might also be reached by other means, either by a teacher with a different approach, or by a learner in some context outside of schooling. This variability of approaches is significant in the discussion of educational aims.

Peters (1967) suggests that education might be understood as a family of processes that share certain criteria that people generally deem to be educational in nature. He outlines processes or sub-concepts that he sees as central to education, and those that he considers borderline. (The central processes he suggests include things like training, instruction and learning by experience, teaching and the learning of principles, the transmission of critical thought, and conversation and "the whole man"[sic]). This line of thinking is helpful, in that it outlines education as a broad expanse of experiences and accomplishments rather than as a single process.

In his contribution to the discussion of the aims of education, Peters (1966, 1973) elaborates on what he means by education as a family of processes, as opposed to activities. He points out that as a process, education does not prescribe any particular activities; although, it does eliminate activities that are considered indoctrinatory. According to Peters (1966), the concept of education does not dictate specific activities, and therefore cannot not have extrinsic outcomes at the level of *process*, even though the *activities* that constitute education may have purposes or ends that are outside the process itself. The point of this distinction is that the aims of education are intrinsic to education itself, and should not be thought of as connected to societal needs or outcomes—although extrinsic outcomes are generally concurrently achieved through the activities that are chosen as a means to education (Peters would say these activities have *purposes* that are concrete and often extrinsic, rather than *aims* that are intrinsic).

The distinction between education as a process and activities as a means of carrying out the process is important because the aims of education bear heavily on the construction of education as a concept, and how the component parts of the concept are laid out as central or peripheral. My interest in this thesis is recreating a concept of education that may allow a role for activism as a more central component. Given that activism is a goal-directed endeavour, it is challenging to integrate this under Peter's (1966, 1973) conceptions of the aims of education. This is an important challenge to work through, however, because Peters makes a strong argument for conceptualizing aims of education that separate education from indoctrination and other more subtle processes that are extrinsically directed, as they have high potential to lead students away from free thinking and questioning of ideas.

An Education—Indoctrination Tension. In my effort to recreate the concept of education in a way that draws activism from the periphery towards the conceptual centre, it is important to consider the fringes of the concept, particularly where education borders with coercive teaching such as indoctrination. It is my belief that education can include activism, but that care must be taken to ensure that educators push students to think for themselves and make independent choices about activism. In this section I explore the qualities of the borders between education and indoctrination, and in the following section I provide some commentary on ways that educators might conduct activism in educational contexts without concurrently transplanting coercive or manipulative qualities sometimes associated with activism.

In his work on the concept of education, Peters (1965, 1966, 1967, 1973) stresses the importance of “wittingness and voluntariness on the part of the learner” (1966, p. 45). This is one factor that separates education from indoctrination, as it requires some kind of consultation with the participant (or perhaps their parents) on what the process will look like. Hare (1964) also emphasizes the need to ensure that what we call education is qualitatively different from indoctrination. He notes that the key difference between education and indoctrination lies not in content, or in method, but in aim.

For example, a teacher might use non-rational methods with students who are too young to participate in rational discussion, and this would be acceptable in an educational context providing that the teacher’s aim is to produce students who will one day have the skills to engage in meaningful moral discussion of the subject(s) they are learning. This notion links nicely with Peters (1966) second criteria of education, that there be an element of knowledge that is dynamic in its response to new information through

dialogue. Moreover, Hare (1964) suggests that when a teacher is using non-rational methods of persuasion, she may simultaneously invite students to participate in moral discussion about the issue, knowing that they may not be cognitively ready for such a discussion. This invitation is of key importance in Hare's (1964) conception of the tension between education and indoctrination, as it establishes the teacher's *aim* to help students develop as free thinkers at the earliest possible time.

I am in agreement with Hare (1964), and I think that his separation of education and indoctrination at the level of aim is a useful distinction, and it dovetails with my upcoming analysis of the potential for educative activism, in particular my discussion of Næss' (Næss & Jickling, 2000) thoughts on dealing with controversial issues in the classroom. Before moving there, however, I offer a brief discussion about the tension between education and indoctrination that is created by Hare's (1964) suggestion that persuasive techniques may be appropriate educational strategies in some circumstances.

Navigating the Education—Indoctrination tension. Hare (1964) rightly points out that influence is a central effect in the teacher/student relationship, and that this feature of the relationship need not be considered indoctrinatory. Permitting that the teacher's aims are educational in nature, some persuasion may be useful and appropriate. This is supported by Peters (1966) in his discussion of the normative nature of education; what is worthwhile to teach needs to be decided by somebody or some group of people, and that ultimately this value cannot help but be transmitted along with the teaching. Teaching, however, is not strictly educational, or indoctrinatory; there is clearly a grey scale or continuum between these two poles. Where the threshold between education and

indoctrination lies, and how close to the edge a practitioner can tread and still be considered a *good* educator remains an important question.

Walsh (1993), as part of his *geometry of education*, outlines a continuum on which educational practices may float in regards to political bias. He describes one extreme as open (general shared agreement, or having a high area of common ground), and the other as loaded (specifically interest driven). The open end of the continuum is shared more-or-less by different discourses of education, while the loaded end is fragmented and contoured to the specifications of various proponents of discourse (for example, supporters of “education for sustainable development,” “education for the environment,” and other “education for” campaigns). Points on the continuum are dialectically interrelated, that is to say that educational activities are never strictly loaded or open, but rather are in dynamic interplay with multiple positions on the spectrum (Jickling, 2003). This is critical in my conceptualization of education, because it means that particular approaches to education are not fixed; there are opportunities for issues of loaded character to be examined within the more open realm of educational discourse, and for open positions to be explored in a more contested atmosphere that characterizes the loaded side of the spectrum.

Let me be clear that I am not advocating that loaded issues be dragged to the open end of the spectrum in the guise of objectivity or value neutrality; rather, I think that by examining value-laden issues from a more-or-less open position we are able to conduct analysis of the issues with individuals who hold a wide variety of viewpoints, thus broadening students’ ability to comprehend viewpoints different from their own, even if they disagree. Approaching contested issues in this way would seem to be in line with

Peter's (1966) second criteria of education, that knowledge should be dynamic. In the reverse scenario (giving "slant" to otherwise open issues), the dialectic interplay along the political/apolitical spectrum puts supposedly objective notions about education up for debate in a "mediated and negotiated third space" (Jickling, 2003, p. 24).

Given the messiness of the political/apolitical spectrum that Walsh (1993) outlines, it would seem that the lines between pedagogical integrity and more questionable educational practice, as well as the larger threshold between education and indoctrination are equally blurry. Jickling (2003, 2005c) builds on Walsh's (1993) work by suggesting guideposts for teachers who choose to engage with controversial issues in "the tough work of good education" (Jickling, 2003, p. 25). He suggests that when wading into loaded issues, educators should ensure they embrace ambiguity and build indeterminacy into their practices. This approach brings with it tentativeness about competing viewpoints or possible directions, and allows educators to highlight choices and alternatives for their students. The notion of choice is implicit in all of Jickling's (2003, 2005) guideposts, and for me choice is in turn connected to the important educational task of empowering student voices (McLaren, 1989).

Educators teaching about controversial issues empower student voices when they employ methods that allow students to engage with the issues being taught in ways that resonate with their own stories and lived experiences (Giroux, 2004; McLaren, 1989). As a facilitator, the educator helps students to identify choices and possibilities, as well as potential for action. Moreover, the educator acts as a catalyst for discussion that outlines a breadth of views and approaches to action amongst members of the learning community. Rather than championing any one perspective, the educator highlights the

diversity of opinions, and engenders in students a sense of hope, and efficacy in their ability to make a difference. According to Giroux, this approach “pluralizes politics by opening up a space for dissent, making authority accountable, and becoming an activating presence in promoting social transformation” (2004, p. 39). Considered in this way, educators draw the concept of activism to the center of education when they conduct their practices in ways that subvert the status quo by enabling students to develop a sense of political agency, without forcing that agency in any particular political direction, but perhaps pointing at some landmarks as places from which to begin an activist journey (Næss & Jickling, 2000).

Environmental education is one facet of education where pedagogy is often linked to activism. Environmental issues have become front burner political issues. In the Canadian context, in particular, environmental concerns often hit close to home. A great number of Canadian families earn their living through resource-based industries and they are often criticized by those promoting environmentalist agendas. Knowing the complexity of these issues, in the following section I extend the previous analysis that suggests activism can be educational, and need not be seen as an indoctrinatory (or otherwise coercive or leading) practice in the context of environmental education.

Environmental Education. I put forward a conceptualization of environmental education that rests within the concept of education that I have been discussing. Ideas from Peters (1966, 1967), Hare (1964), McLaren (1989), and Giroux (2004), as well as my own contribution to the conceptual analysis are as relevant in the field of environmental education as they are in the field of education in general. There is also a healthy discipline-specific discourse on the nature of environmental education that will

have a bearing on my effort to conceptualize education and environmental education in a way that positions activism as a central educational concept.

I begin by offering some characteristics that I think are central to environmental education. The upcoming bullet list comes from the reading that I have conducted through coursework as a graduate student in education, specifically environmental education, as well as research that was conducted specifically for this thesis. It is also influenced by my practice as an outdoor educator. What is included here are ideas and concepts that resonate for me as an environmental education researcher and practitioner, and that also sync with the broader conceptualization of education presented in this chapter. I have made an effort to select criteria that paint environmental education in the widest sense possible (Walsh, 1993), rather than limit my analysis to any one venue or delivery point for environmental education. Certainly there are things that I have left out or overlooked; I mitigate this concern by remembering that I have not set out to define environmental education, but rather to highlight an understanding of significant contours, in the spirit of conceptual analysis. In some cases this means drawing the contours in new ways—an attempt at recreating the way environmental education is generally understood (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994; Peters, 1966). With these qualifiers in mind, I believe that environmental education:

- Exposes students to a variety of environments—natural and built, urban and rural. It is conducted through activities and content in a variety of subjects, curricula, or interest areas, and is best not reduced to any single discipline or subject.
- Facilitates opportunities for students to reflect on their place in, and relationship to, the environments that they live in, and near, or are exposed to in the process of educational experiences.

- Attempts to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and judgment to make thoughtful and critical choices about how to live well in their environments (Hart, Jickling, & Kool, 1999; Orr, 1994).
- Encourages students to connect with the natural environment in ways that promote personal development and a sense of social and ecological justice that can be demonstrated through reflective action during and beyond environmental education experiences (developed from Fawcett, Bell, & Russell, 2002; Russell, 1997; Sauvé, 1999).
- Inspires hope for the future; a hope that generates feelings of agency in students which empowers them to engage in the struggle of building positive futures (Giroux, 2004).

Given these criteria, when are we doing environmental education? When are we not? These questions address the scope of environmental education. Orr (1994) argues that all education is environmental education, in that a message about human relationships with the earth is sent either explicitly or implicitly in every lesson in any subject area; the content of the message varies, but it is always present. Orr's thinking is congruent with Eisner's (1985) notion of three curricula that all schools teach. Eisner posits that any school in addition to teaching the explicit curriculum also instructs students through the implicit or hidden curriculum (those things that are taught without being explicitly instructed), as well as the null curriculum (those things that are learned by default because they are ignored in the curriculum). Eisner's implicit and null curricula are one way of explaining Orr's statements about environmental education. When messages about the environment or the more-than-human world are sent, either implicitly through curriculum in any subject, or through their omission from curriculum altogether—environmental education (for better or worse) is happening.

Working from Orr (1994) and Eisner (1985), there are quite a number of possibilities for environmental education to be woven into school curriculum and other educational programs, and an equal number of chances to help students experience an *educative activism* that is not only based in feelings of hope (Giroux, 2004), but that also expand that hope by sharing it with others. This also resonates with Peter's (1966) second criteria of education, which calls for pedagogy that builds dynamic knowledge that is responsive to dialogue and new information. Returning to the previous discussion of the education/indoctrination tension, developing activism that meets educational criteria is no small task, and requires more analysis. Specifically, some discussion of the educative activism that I am describing is required.

Activism or Advocacy?

In developing this section, and the idea of action in education that I am using in this thesis, I have struggled with what words to use to describe what I mean by action in environmental education. I feel like the words activism and advocacy both convey the type of activity that might have educative potential, but both also have the potential to give the wrong impression about what it is that I am suggesting. The word activism, for example may connote ideas of rallies, placards, banners, and civil disobedience. While none of these images are necessarily negative (in many cases they are examples of engagement, commitment, and passion on the part of the participants), these things are often considered outside the realm of traditional pedagogies because of the politically loaded nature of the activities (Fawcett, Bell, & Russell, 2002; Lousley, 1999). Consequently, even in cases where students feel moved to action about a cause or issue, avenues for taking action are often limited because of the "null" or silenced position of

activism within the curriculum (Eisner, 1985). Educators can cling so tightly to the open end of Walsh's (1993) continuum that the passion and care for issues that are of relevance to students are sanitized out of education (Jickling, 2003), perhaps even cleansed so much that teaching about environmental issues is no longer educational, when considered against Peter's (1966) second criterion.

This sanitization of education leaves teachers with strategies that fall, in my thinking, under the heading of advocacy. For me, the word advocacy conjures a picture of activities like letter writing, petition signing, and leafleting. These things are fine examples of social action—and they should be used as pedagogical tools—but somehow I don't get the sense that the same engagement, commitment, and passion are attached with these activities. Clearly, this feeling is inaccurate to some degree, as there are countless letter writers, petitioners, and leafleters in the world who are achieving social change through their efforts—some who are willing to die for their writing. I think, though, that in an educational context, these activities are incorporated into pedagogy more often than the more controversial activist methods because they are perceived as being “safer” for use in classrooms (Lousley, 1999). This makes we wonder if the reason that activist endeavours are viewed as rash (or even miseducational), is that most people have never had the opportunity to develop a sense of what thoughtful and effective activism looks like through their education.

In this thesis I will use the term activism to refer to social action that I think has educative potential. This decision is based on the analysis of education that I have just completed, and the forthcoming analysis of activism. Illuminating these analyses is the

notion that developing students as caring, politically engaged, passionate agents of social change is central to both education and activism.

Educative Activism

Næss, in an interview with Bob Jickling (Næss & Jickling, 2000) on Deep Ecology and education, calls for “invite[ing] relaxed debate on a large scale” (p. 50) where disagreement over difficult issues can occur within an educational context. This relaxed debate is characterized as a respect for a diversity of opinions among community members, a place where dissent is welcome, and dialog is critical but friendly. Næss (Næss & Jickling, 2000) describes this debate as occurring on a large scale; this has two implications in my mind. First, that there is not a rush to reach any conclusion, but rather a focus on continuing the discussion, and second that the learning that is gained from the debate is “big picture”—that is, it highlights the interconnectedness of the issue(s) rather than fragmenting students’ thinking. Næss’s proposal for large scale relaxed debate is one of the characteristics of the type of learning community that I would like to facilitate and participate in as a teacher, as well as the type of educational environment that I would like to inquire in, and about, as a researcher. Not coincidentally, it is also copacetic with my discussion of the criteria and aims of education in its demand for students to use critical thinking skills, and for student agency in the process of their education.

It is in this type of environment that I believe that the educative potential of activism can flourish. The relaxed and large scale atmosphere of the learning community that Næss (Næss & Jickling, 2000) describes is, I think, an example of a middle ground on Walsh’s (1993) spectrum of open/loaded politics of education—neither open and

sterile, or loaded and slanted; rather, it is an atmosphere of engagement and commitment to continued dialog about issues that are socially relevant. This type of atmosphere may create an opening for contentious issues to be discussed and acted on in ways that promote further student agency.

One of the ways Næss (Næss & Jickling, 2000) suggests we might foster an atmosphere of relaxed debate is through careful choice of our words. He speaks of the importance of qualifying “if” statements. By beginning a statement with the word “if” as a qualifier, students are given an opportunity to consider what is said, and accept or reject it for themselves. Næss postulates that “if” statements are one means of validating the inclusion of one’s own opinion in an educational context. “And if you always use these qualifying ‘ifs’ then you are on the right side” (p. 61). For me these “ifs” are a symbol of possibility and potential. For example, as a teacher dealing with the issue of protecting campus green space in my class, I might use the statement “if you believe that we are responsible for protecting green space on our campus, then you might be interested in participating in a campaign to convince the school not to allow development along the river.” The use of terms like “if” and “might” offer students choices about if and how they engage in opportunities for activism. A respect for, and encouragement of choice is what separates education from indoctrination (Hare, 1964).

Using words like “if” and “might” opens the door for a large scale dialogue within a learning community, a dialogue that has potential to move beyond the classroom or educational environment, and into a larger community discourse. This dialogue is an understanding within the learning community that there is no rush to reach “the” answer or immediately convert others to one’s own position or way of thinking. It emphasizes

both education (and/or environmental education) and activism as processes, rather than places to end up; although, particular goals or resting places (Jickling, 2005b) will most certainly arise from the process.

The rests that Jickling (2005b) refers to provide a literal rest stop from the exhausting work of continuous reflection as well as a vantage for doing the work that has been suggested through reflection. For example, they allow for making decisions and acting on them. For educators and students, rest stops provide an opportunity to break from discussion and reflection that is critical to education, and opens a window to action based on the best of what has come out of reflection and discussion. During these rests, the thinking of both the teacher and student(s) is shaped through activism. In this way, rest stops enable a connection between reflection and activism—a praxis. This, in addition to student choice, separates the idea of educative activism from more indoctrinatory processes.

Troubling Næss. While Næss's interview with Jickling (2000), as well as some of his other work (c.f. Næss, 1965), have been very helpful in the development of my thinking, I also approach some his ideas about the way we influence students with caution. Næss (Næss & Jickling, 2000) suggests that it is acceptable for teachers to challenge students in regards to the formulation of their basic premises. I cautiously agree. However, educators need to be careful about how they “nudge” students whose formulation of ideas differ from their own. Næss (Næss & Jickling, 2000) makes two statements of importance here. First, he says that we can tell students that we “strongly object” to some of the consequences of their premise formulations, and second he says that we might ask them “Could you modify the formulation of your basic views?,” or

“could you accept to formulate the premise a little differently” (p. 49). I like the direction that Næss is going in here, in that it is dialogical in nature; still, I worry that this line of questioning could move towards coercion, or some other misuse of power or influence in the teacher/student relationship. In the hustle and bustle of contemporary education, educators may overlook, or be unaware of the degree of influence that they have over students. For me, helping students “rework” their thinking would require the disclaimer that I am okay with being uncomfortable with their thinking, that they needn’t change their ideas only because I disagree. I think that for education to be activist in nature it cannot be imposed by the teacher, but must rather be offered to and/or invited by the students. This invitation is an excellent example of how Hare’s (1964) notion that education and indoctrination can be separated by their aims. By extending an invitation for students to rework their thinking, the teacher demonstrates care, concern for critical thinking, and a respect for student choice. These characteristics of pedagogy indicate an aim towards education and not coercion or manipulative influence.

Extending Næss. While Næss is a significant influence in my thinking about activism in education, it seems narrow to focus a concept around only one scholar’s work. Looking beyond Næss, I am influenced a great deal by other scholars working from the critical tradition. Brazilian educator, academic, and activist Paulo Freire is particularly inspiring. His (1968/1970) development of the concepts of praxis and conscientization are important for my understanding of the possibility of educative activism. Thinking about critical consciousness building (conscientization) and reflective action (praxis) in Freire’s terms has allowed me to examine my own practice as an

educator in search of ways that I can more deliberately expose students to these concepts in my own work.

My work as an outdoor and experiential educator has revealed for me many ways that the concepts of conscientization and praxis connect nicely with Næss's take on the role of activism in education: "the education itself should consist of actions. You cannot have a dichotomy there...you cannot draw the line sharply at all between education and action" (Næss & Jickling, 2000, p. 60). Whereas Næss is not explicit in saying that these actions are activist in nature (although one could certainly read this into his work), others have made more explicit links between education and activism.

Within the context of environmental education research, these ideas continue to be forwarded today by scholars such as Lousley (1999), Malone (1999), and Clover (2002), among others. Insofar as education occurs in schools, I am interested in Lousley's use of McLaren's words: "critical pedagogy considers the school a terrain of cultural struggle 'function[ing] simultaneously as a means of empowering students around issues of social justice and as a means of sustaining, legitimizing, and reproducing dominant class interests'" (Lousley, 1999, p. 294). If we assume this to be so, what place does activism have in the context of education? How should activism be included so as to allow for engagement in the cultural struggle that McLaren (1989) identifies, but without overshadowing other purposes of schooling and education,³ like socialization? Knowing the potential for activism in educational contexts to stray from the aims of education, in what way might a researcher/teacher/activist include activist notions

³ While socialization is generally more connected with the idea of schooling, and not of education (particularly in the analytical tradition, c.f. Barrow & Woods, 2006), I do not think that education in the most commonly understood contexts is without socializing tendencies.

educatively within a school, and how might an activist approach interact with the hegemony that McLaren describes? Lousley's (1999) effort to politicize her research in schools, given that environmental education and environmental issues are typically included in schools in "safe" or apolitical ways, is one strategy for counter-hegemonic action.

Lousley (1999) and McLaren's (1989) work draws my thinking to the tension between education and socialization in the analytic tradition of educational scholarship. Barrow and Woods (2006) explain that

what is meant by socialization is the development of certain attitudes, habits, and behaviours that are regarded as an integral part of the culture or society in question, primarily by a process of example and expectation, without any particular attempt to provide understanding of or any reasoning to support such behaviour. (pp. 14-15)

They go on to say that socialization is at various times an untoward effect of schooling as well as an intended outcome; some aspects of socialization are culturally desirable (the expectation of punctuality, in some cultures, for example) while others are more objectionable (like the tracking of students into pseudo class-based streams of the school system).

These observations are similar in many ways to the work of Lousley (1999) and McLaren (1989), although these critical pedagogues bring a flavour of dissent to the discussion about this tension that is not highlighted by Barrow and Woods (2006). The critical pedagogical stance on this issue (as much as such a generalization is appropriate)—that socialization in schools has a dubious tendency to favour the

privileged and powerful—resonates for me, and is one example of ways that I think critical discourse in education has the potential to “nudge” more traditional analysis towards engagement with a mood of concern for social justice in educational scholarship.

Issues of praxis and conscientization are also explored in Malone’s (1999) work. Here she conceives of the environmental education researcher as environmental activist. I extend this thinking to see the environmental educator as environmental activist. I see a praxatic link between teaching and activism, and I wonder if it is possible to draw firm distinctions between these subjectivities at all (Barrett, 2005). This point is critical in my conception of activism as an educational pursuit. It is the convergence of my praxis as an educator/activist that allows for the integration of educational aims and activist activities. The connectedness of these subjectivities (educator and activist) protect one from the other—If my activist-self is integrated with my educator-self, *qua* educator, I cannot knowingly betray the aims of education in the pursuit of activist aims. Conversely, *qua* activist, the education that I conduct cannot be sterile and apolitical; I must conduct education that engages students as agents in a democratic society.

As a final point, I think that it is important to develop the idea of conscientization. From a critical perspective, conscientization forms the basis of educational practice (Clover, 2002). Freire (1968/1970) describes conscientization as “the deepening of the attitude of awareness characteristic of all emergence” (p. 109). From this I understand that a process of critical consciousness-raising in education is focused on awakening students to those things around them that they often take for granted—this might mean showing that they can make change in their worlds, or exposing ways in which each student has privilege. There is a connection between conscientization and my earlier

analysis of Næss's ideas about a dialogical approach to activism in education. By participating in "relaxed debate on large scale" as Næss suggests, students' attention may be drawn to ideas, concepts, and situations that they may otherwise take for granted, and that otherwise go unquestioned.

A dialogical approach in the vein of conscientization underlies my premise for an educative activism. While my approach is certainly not the only possible formulation of an activism that is educational, it is dialog that I see as being central to any approach to integrating activism and education. Again, I see dialog (particularly between students and teachers) as one of the key factors that separate the notions of education and indoctrination (Hare, 1964).

On Ethics

If activism is a process that can be used in the pursuit of educational aims, which I have argued that it can be, then what are the ethical implications that come with this integration? Certainly, in pairing two such normative concepts as education and activism, the concept of ethics cannot be ignored. The doing of education or activism is an ethical undertaking by its very nature. In preparation for the upcoming chapter that outlines the concept of appreciative resistance, a deliberate discussion of ethics will help to outline what I mean by this concept, and its importance in a relationship between education and activism.

It is difficult, and unnecessary for me to assign a single place for the discussion of ethics in this thesis. The concepts such as education, activism, and indoctrination are connected with the idea of ethics in complex ways, which are explored throughout the thesis. Carol Geddes (Wren, Jackson, Morris, Geddes, Tlen, Kassi, 1996)

asserts that from the viewpoint of her aboriginal culture, “we would never have a subject called environmental ethics; it is simply part of the story” (p. 32). This resonates, because it helps me to understand that I needn’t necessarily “carve out” a specific place to discuss ethics in relation to education or activism, but that the notion of ethics is infused within all of the concepts with which I am engaging. That being said, I should make clear the view of ethics that I take, so as to provide some clarity to my analysis.

Given that ethics is of central concern to all of the concepts that have been analysed in this chapter, it is important to point out that much like education and activism are processes (both conceptually, and pedagogically), ethics is also a process, and not merely a code of conduct as it is so often conceived of in contemporary understanding (Saul, 2001). In this way, ethics become relevant to the analysis that I am conducting because the consideration of ethics is not reduced to “checking the rule book;” rather ethics are an integral part of the analysis itself—the conceptual analysis becomes an enactment of ethical practice. This means that ethics isn’t an obligatory bother of doing research, rather, it is an integral and worthy part of the analysis itself.

I am a supporter of the notion of ethics-based epistemology (as described by Cheney & Weston, 1999 and developed by Jickling, 2005a, 2005b). This ethical formulation asks, according to Cheney and Weston, “what if the world we inhabit arises most fundamentally out of our ethical practice, rather than vice versa” (p. 116)? In this asking, Cheney & Weston (1999) question the foundation of traditional ethical thinking that moral actions arise from a knowledge of the world. They suggest that such a conception of ethics is a contrast to the more common assumption that ethics are derived from knowledge of the world (epistemology-based ethics). If we accept Cheney and

Weston's (1999) reversed formulation of ethics and epistemology, there are a variety of implications for the integration of activism in education. An epistemology based in ethics means that ethics becomes foregrounded in ongoing discussions within the field of epistemology, and also in wider educational contexts that may intersect with activism. Such discussions open up possibilities for ethics to be thought of and enacted as an everyday activity (Jickling, 2004). Considering ethics on a day-to-day basis allows for opportunities to identify ways that knowledge may grow out of ethical concerns. For instance, regular day-to-day engagement with activism could work as a window to discussing connections between how we act or live in the world, and the ways that we understand knowledge. In this way, the notions of ethics-based epistemology and ethics as an everyday activity are mutually supportive. Central to the idea of ethics-based epistemology is etiquette. An ethics-based epistemology is not a set of beliefs about the world so much as it is an etiquette from which we can begin to engage with the many possibilities that the world offers. The etiquette which leads ethics-based epistemology is a critical feature of the concept of appreciative resistance that I will develop in Chapter III, in part because it brings the notion of ethics into everyday practice.

Another advocate of engaging in ethical thinking on a regular basis is Saul (2001), who characterizes ethics as "a muscle that must be exercised daily in order to be used in a normal manner" (p. 66). I don't take this thought to mean that ethics can be reduced to a "20 minute workout" each day, but rather that ethics becomes something that is part of everyday experience, rather than something only considered on particular occasions, or by those with special expertise. The everyday consideration of ethics mirrors, and connects to my conception of an education that begins to centralize activism. Activist

approaches in education may be most effective when they are conducted as long-term everyday processes; however, they are all too often included in education as special events or one time happenings, much like ethics are generally considered outside of regular routine of living.

The idea of ethics is essential to a thesis on activism in education, because the question of what constitutes “a good life” is traditionally a core question in ethics.⁴ Inquiry around a good life is also central to including activism in education, because it can help students in making decisions about how and where to direct their activism. The notion of a good life is perhaps underrepresented in the critical theory and critical pedagogy that informs my analysis (or at least, it is not represented in this way), but it is important in a conceptualization of education that includes activism as a central feature. If we want to see activism as an everyday activity within education, it must be developed alongside an everyday consideration of ethics, as well as a connection between the ethics that we live (or would like to live) and the activism that we conduct as education. Accordingly, thinking about ethics makes up a good portion of my thinking about appreciative resistance, which is introduced in the forthcoming section, and explored in greater depth in chapter III.

⁴ What constitutes “a good life” is a question of great ethical importance that I cannot give adequate treatment of in this thesis. I introduce the concept here only suggest that normative questions must be considered in the process of integrating education and activism.

Educative Activism: A Foundation for Appreciative Resistance

The central purpose of this chapter so far has been the analysis of the concepts of education, and activism, for the purpose of recasting, or recreating, the concept of education to include activism more centrally. The places where education and activism intersect are the focus of this thesis, as well as consideration of ethics that is critical for educational activism. Figure 1 shows the positioning of education, activism, and educative activism as a Venn diagram. The top diagram shows the concepts of activism and education separately, and the bottom diagram shows them overlapping, creating a space for activism. Such a configuration emphasizes the point that the education and activism may overlap some of the time, but not always. This may be based on situational

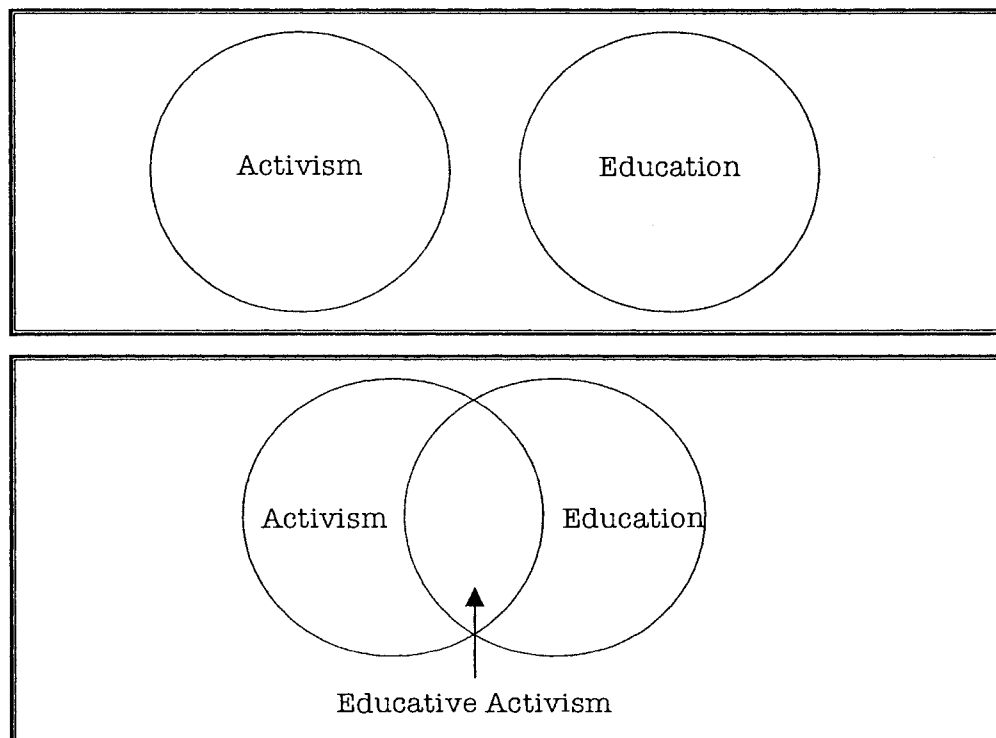


Figure 1. Educational activism

circumstance, or be affected by the actors (teachers and students) in the situation. That is to say that some activist situations by their nature may not meet the criteria for educational activism (because they aren't educational), and others may have the potential for educational activism, but the kinds of praxis needed to bring the events into an educational context are absent.

Moreover, activism is complex, and some roles in an activist situation may allow for participation that meet the criteria for educative activism, while other roles in the same process may not. Teachers and students who are engaging in educative activism should be mindful of this in their processes, reflecting carefully to be comfortable that they are forwarding educational aims through their interpretations of activism (Hare, 1964). Educative activism might be structured in many different ways, and still be both educational and activist in nature. In the forthcoming chapter I will explore one possible approach to an education that draws activism more central to aims of education. I propose that this might be achieved through an approach that I have named appreciative resistance.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined my position on conceptual analysis as a research strategy, and explained my approach to a conceptual analysis that is based in the analytical philosophical tradition, and illuminated by ideas from postmodern critical pedagogy, in particular the importance of plural understandings of concepts. Pluralism and the flexibility to view concepts from a variety of positions and points of view is critical both to the analysis that I conduct and to the concept of appreciative resistance that I develop in this thesis.

In this chapter, I have conducted analysis of the concepts of education and activism, which recreates the concept of education to include activism as a more central component (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). In support of this recreation, I have named the overlapping area of the two concepts “educative activism.” Educative activism, as I have described it, is characterized by a relaxed, friendly, and respectful learning environment where students can explore socio-environmental resistance without influence from an educator to think or act in any particular political direction. On the part of educators, this kind of environment may be achieved by implementing dialogical pedagogies in the vein of conscientization (Freire, 1968/1970). Such approaches to teaching about activism may enable the development of critical consciousness amongst students, which is a central goal of educative activism, and forward the aims of education as a more general concept. A genuine risk in introducing activism to education is a slide towards indoctrination or manipulation by the educator. I have suggested that one strategy for educators who are interested in pursuing educative activism with their students is an integration of the roles of educator and activist, which creates a way for educators to model activism for their students, but without allowing activism to overshadow educational goals.

To further separate manipulative teaching from educative activism, I have identified the need for the consideration of ethics in integrating education and activism. Educators must be aware, and cautious of the potential for indoctrination and other coercive processes that fall outside of the concept of education. This tension has been explored through the lens of the aims of education, and how intentions can separate educative activism from other more insidious activist endeavours.

The concept of educative activism provides a foundation for the development of the concept of appreciative resistance that I will present in the Chapter III. While educative activism could be enacted in a number of ways, appreciative resistance, through its focus on etiquette that is respectful and reflective provides a buffer that may ease the tension between education and indoctrination that has been explored in this chapter. In Chapters IV and V, I will test the concept of appreciative resistance (and also educative activism) through an exploration of sample cases.

CHAPTER III

Appreciative Resistance

In the introductory chapter, I told a story about commuting on highway 401 across the top of the City of Toronto. That story represents the genesis of this thesis in many ways. I was concerned about the problem of gridlock and the environmental and social concerns that accompany it; I wanted to resist the notion that commuting a long distance to work was “just the way it had to be.” I felt frustrated and wanted to do something about the problem, particularly as an educator.

In thinking about how this dilemma might become a part of my thesis topic, I moved away from the idea of “car culture,” and towards thinking about possibilities for activism in education. The value of my 401 anecdote is that it prompted me to think about ways in which social issues can be addressed through activism conducted with a view towards education. Thinking about activism and education helped me to form the primary research questions that I am exploring in this thesis: *Is there a place for sociocultural activism in environmental education, and can an appreciative approach support such political resistance, educationally?* In this chapter, I explore the second question in greater depth, by considering more specific questions about the characteristics of an appreciative resistance. Specifically, I wonder what parameters are offered by an appreciative approach to education that enables activism, and discourages indoctrination? What sort of ethical position, or etiquette, is required to enable such an approach? And, how can such ethics and etiquette be co-enacted in day-to-day practice?

Certainly, these questions do not have singular answers that fit neatly into the compartments of education and activism as concepts; however, in this chapter I suggest an approach to educative activism that I think begins to address questions about the characteristics of an activism that overlaps with education. As I have foreshadowed, this promising approach is named appreciative resistance. It grows out of the literature of appreciative inquiry and the analysis conducted in Chapter II, but it is a new concept. In this chapter I describe a concept of appreciative resistance that may help educators and students to enact the type of educative activism discussed in Chapter II. The concept is unique in that it draws together ideas from ethics (Cheney & Weston, 1999), appreciative inquiry (Cooperider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider et al., 2005; Stavros & Torres, 2006), and critical pedagogical praxis (Breunig, 2005) to suggest a way in which activism might be conducted to further the aims of education. Such a formulation, while not the only possibility, means that the processing and reflection that can help students to make important decisions are balanced with engagement in activist activities; students are concurrently discovering and reflecting on their values, and participating as members of a democratic society.⁵ Appreciative resistance suggests a potential answer to the research questions of this thesis by shaping an etiquette-driven approach to sociocultural and socioenvironmental activism within educational contexts. It is designed to allow for the practice of political resistance without overshadowing the larger aims of education.

Before proceeding further with a description of appreciative resistance, a quick outline of my conception of appreciation is required, particularly where it intersects with

⁵ I use the term *democratic society* with caution, as it is a nebulous concept that could be interpreted in many ways; however, the scope of this project is too narrow to warrant a closer analysis of such a broad concept.

the more critical discourse of resistance, through activism. The primary challenge that I have encountered (both for myself, and the reviewers of my thesis) in developing the concept of appreciative resistance is the perceived incompatibility between appreciation and activist resistance. Critics might (and have) argue that resistance is fundamentally a critical or adversarial undertaking—that people take to the streets when they are angry and frustrated. In many respects, I think that this is an accurate assessment of the emotions that give rise to sociopolitical and socioenvironmental resistance. Anger and frustration are powerful, and important emotions. However, I wonder if these and other negative expressions of affect best serve the outcomes sought through activism, particularly where activism is approached within an educational context? I believe that appreciation may serve as a means of channeling the passion and enthusiasm that characterize activism away from deficit focused feelings that may be miseducative (Dewey, 1938), and towards a more positive approach to activating change.

A second and related criticism is that appreciation may undermine hard work undertaken by critical activists working from a variety of theoretical positions (in particular, the analytical and critical traditions, which I work from in this thesis). This is an important and legitimate concern, and in response to it, I suggest that appreciative resistance is not an *either/or* proposition—that is to say, appreciation needn't be void of criticism, nor should criticism be without appreciation. It is possible, and I believe educationally desirable, to conduct appreciatively critical activism. Appreciative resistance offers a means of framing criticism positively, in a way that draws on the demonstrated power of the principles of the appreciative paradigm for creating long lasting and stable change (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider, et. al, 2005;

Stavros & Torres, 2006). It should be also be noted that I have created the idea of appreciative resistance in, through, and for this thesis. As such, it is in its infancy as a concept, and should be viewed for its potential rather than its shortcomings, of which I'm sure there are some.

A Framework

In Chapter II, I conducted an analysis of the concepts of education and activism in order to recreate each concept, and to facilitate their partial integration. I called the overlap between the two concepts educative activism. The concept of appreciative resistance that I present in this chapter is one approach to educative activism. Figure Two shows the position of appreciative resistance within educative activism, while Figure Three shows the component ideas of appreciative resistance.

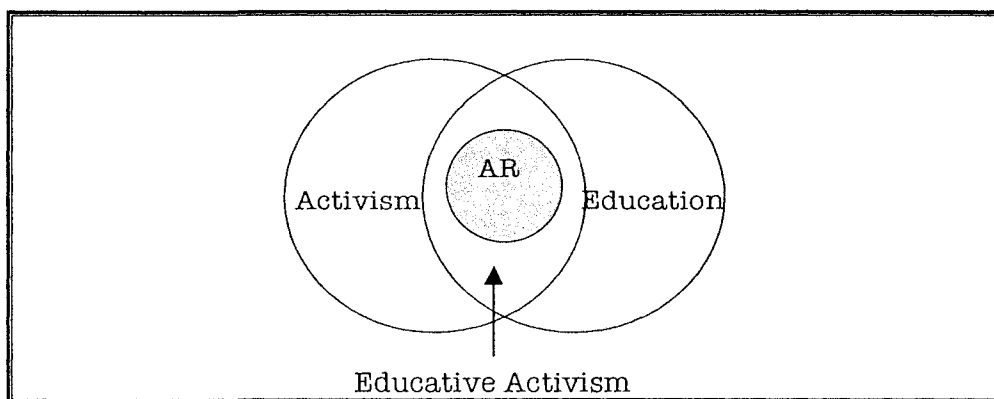


Figure 2. Appreciative resistance in relation to educative activism

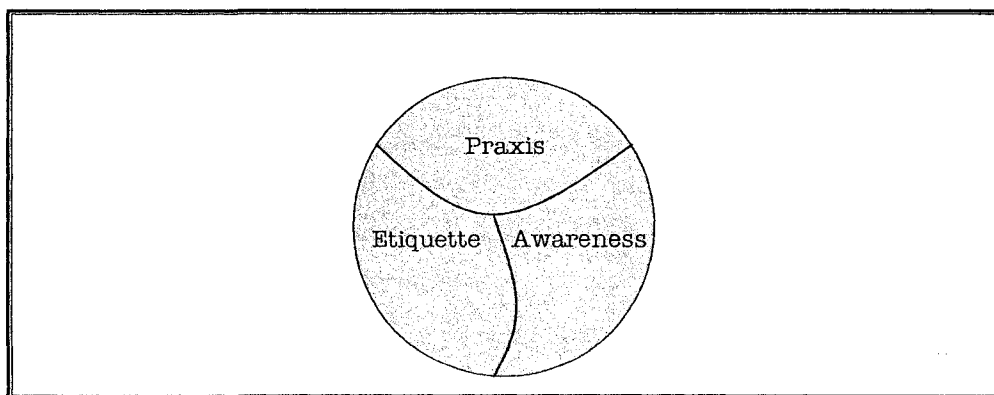


Figure 3. Appreciative resistance

What follows is a brief review of the literature that underpins appreciative resistance. Through this review I am able to explain connections between the various ideas that constitute the concept of appreciative resistance, and connect appreciative resistance to the wider field of educative activism. Following the literature review, the chapter will continue with a discussion about deliberate efforts to avoid manipulation, coercion, and other indoctrinatory tendencies, which I argue is the primary value of appreciative resistance as an approach. Also, I offer some discussion of the limitations of appreciative resistance. The chapter will conclude with a primer of the cases that follow.

Appreciative Resistance Foundations

The foundation on which appreciative resistance rests is my understanding of literature in three areas, appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider et al., 2005; Stavros & Torres, 2006), critical pedagogical notions of praxis (Breunig, 2005), and the idea of etiquette derived from ethics-based epistemology (Cheney & Weston, 1999). In this section I provide some background literature in these areas and how it illuminates my thinking about appreciative resistance, the connection amongst its central concepts, and their connection to the analyses conducted in Chapter II.

Appreciative inquiry, a qualitative research strategy for systems change, is based in a paradigm⁶ of positive thought. The *appreciative paradigm* promotes the notion that “every person, place, and thing has something of value, some worth, some untapped opportunity; one simply has to inquire into it” (Stavros & Torres, 2006, p. 38). While I am not conducting an appreciative inquiry in this thesis in the commonly understood

⁶ I use the term *paradigm* here because it is used in the appreciative inquiry literature to describe the field of appreciative thought (c.f. Stavros & Torres, 2006). I’m not sure if this is an accurate use of the meaning of the term paradigm as popularized by Kuhn (1962).

sense, the underlying principles of the appreciative paradigm permeate my thinking about educative activism, and significantly influence the notion of appreciative resistance I am developing.

The basic processes that constitute the doing of appreciative inquiry are founded upon principles conceived of by Cooperrider (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider et al., 2005) and developed by Cooperrider and others thereafter (c.f. Ludema, 2001; Stavros & Torres, 2006). The five foundational premises of the appreciative paradigm are:

- **The constructionist principle:** an assertion of the socially constructed nature of knowledge and change.
- **The simultaneity principle:** an understanding that inquiry and change are simultaneous processes.
- **The poetic principle:** a reminder of the storied nature of our worlds, with many possibilities for interpretation.
- **The anticipatory principle:** a view that the future is built by individuals looking forward to it, and that the images that we hold of the future influence ways that we live in the present.
- **The positive principle:** the foundational understanding in appreciative inquiry that inquiry based in hope, joy, inspiration, and other positive outlooks can generate long lasting and stable change (Cooperrider et al., 2005).

Other principles have also been suggested that expand or develop those originally put forward by Cooperrider. The appreciative principles outline an approach to change that may be copasetic with postmodern thought, in that change is viewed as socially constructed; it is coauthored by individuals and groups of people who seek to live that change. Change is understood as a movement towards what is best, and not a retreat from deficits or problems. The principles of the appreciative paradigm are synergistic

with my development of a concept of educative activism, which seeks positive change that is conducted in line with the aims of education. Herein, I will not carry on an in-depth discussion of the principles of appreciative inquiry, but rather will focus my exploration on the specific facets of appreciative inquiry that further a synergy between education and activism.

While Cooperrider's work is foundational in appreciative inquiry literature, and is an influence on my concept of appreciative resistance, the primary link between appreciative inquiry and appreciative resistance lies in newer work by Stavros and Torres (2006). They suggest that the appreciative paradigm has potential as a change agent in everyday lives, outside of formal organizational contexts. This effort is important work as it creates openings in the appreciative paradigm beyond organizational (what some might call "work-based") change into a wider field of understanding. In particular, Stavros and Torres (2006) focus on dynamic relationships. They argue that actions between individuals define our relationships, and that "moving towards appreciative action means stopping to reflect and consider your present way of acting and reacting to others in your associations...and to consider what actions will positively influence your relationships" (Stavros & Torres, 2006, p. 93). This resonates with Cheney and Weston's (1999) notion of ethics-based epistemology, as both suggest a sort of etiquette that informs the way that people interact with the world around them. (I'll return to this idea in a discussion of ethics-based epistemology in a moment).

Awareness

Stavros and Torres (2006) also suggest a new foundational principle for appreciative inquiry in support of their thinking on its role in everyday contexts: the

principle of awareness. Awareness is not only an understanding of the other appreciative inquiry principles, but is also the ability to self-reflectively examine the “intersection of the principles and your way of knowing and being in the world” (p. 79). I understand this to mean that individuals who demonstrate awareness are able to act on the appreciative principles based on a sort of “big picture” understanding of themselves and how they are connected to the world around them. Presumably, ethical reflection within the appreciative paradigm supports the development of such “big picture” understandings.

Like Jickling (2004) does with ethics, Stavros and Torres (2006) ask people engaging with appreciative inquiry to draw its principles and practices into their everyday relationships, sketching the connections between each principle (appreciation, positivity, poetics, anticipation, simultaneity, and constructivism) into a “big picture” understanding of their worlds. Assuming that appreciative inquiry has an ethical component (and I think it does), Stavros and Torres (2006) bring the notion of ethics into everyday practice by asking individuals to make connections between their ethical operating assumptions and the way they enact the appreciative paradigm principles on a day-to-day basis. Making connections between ethics, the appreciative paradigm, and everyday practice uncovers the importance of etiquette in integrating activism into educational contexts. Here, and throughout this thesis, I take etiquette(s) to mean a level of awareness, in the sense of Stavros and Torres (2006), that enables reflection before action. Pausing before action allows for consideration of an action’s effects on others, and the appropriateness of an action based on an understanding of the situation at hand. Etiquette, conceived of this way is inherently connected to praxis, and while it is not automatically appreciative, the

frequent reflection associated with praxis provides educators with the opportunity to direct student reflection in appreciative directions.

Etiquette

I have described etiquette as a level of awareness that enables reflection before action. Viewed this way in the context of appreciative resistance, etiquette becomes a product of the appreciative principle of awareness suggested by Stavros and Torres (2006), and a forerunner of activism in educational contexts that exemplifies praxis.

Figure 4 represents this relationship graphically.

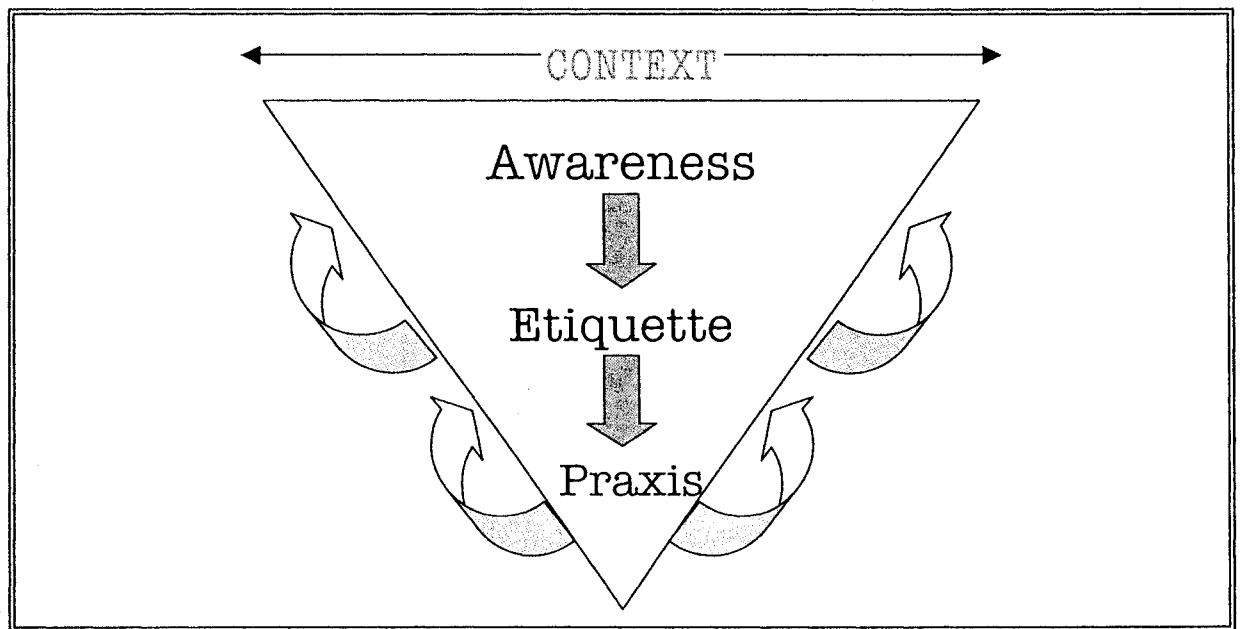


Figure 4. Suggested relationship among component concepts of appreciative resistance

The relationship between awareness, etiquette, and praxis within appreciative resistance is one of context. Awareness, as Stavros and Torres (2006) describe it, is an understanding of one's connection to their world, in a large scale context. Etiquettes that follow from awareness are more contextually narrow; individuals may practice more than

one etiquette in the course of navigating their world. Finally, activist praxis, which forms the largest part of *doing* appreciative resistance, is generally conducted in response to contextually specific situations; an appropriate etiquette for each situation should lead the activist praxis that is taken. While praxis is lead by etiquette and awareness, the relationship is not one way. In conducting activism that is reflective in nature, praxis generates feedback that influences the broader constructs of etiquette and awareness. While many formulations of etiquette may be appropriate starting places for activism, appreciation offers a particularly good place from which to begin resistance in education, because the awareness (Stavros & Torres, 2006) that is central to appreciation can enable consideration of right relationships (Cheney & Weston, 1999) that may guide activism in an educational direction.

The benefit of an appreciative approach as a starting point for the joining of activism and education is that appreciation can serve as an invitation to participate in a positively focused process. While education or activism may be foreign concepts to some individuals, most everyone understands appreciation—people like to be appreciated and in many cases like to give appreciation to others. When appreciative awareness informs an etiquette that underpins educative activism, a positive tone can be set that steers the process towards Walsh's (1993) middle ground of education that enables educational aims to a greater degree than may be achieved from another starting point. Other starting places for activism may be rooted in the loaded range of Walsh's (1993) spectrum. For example, activism that is more connected with a political agenda than it is with an appreciative awareness, embodied in etiquette, may lead students' thinking

towards a predetermined end more than it opens students' thinking to consideration of possibilities that will help them form their own opinions.

Appreciative resistance attempts to provide educators and students with possible directions in which to conduct activism within educational contexts that are consistent with an everyday etiquette, and that consider how actions affect others in the world. In this way, appreciative resistance offers a possible answer to the second half of my research question on the possibility of an appreciative approach to educative activism: appreciative awareness can give rise to etiquettes that successfully join education with activism.

In Chapter II, I briefly described ethics-based epistemology as a key way that I understand and use the concept of ethics throughout this thesis. Here, I expand on the idea, with particular focus on the performed nature of ethics, and the idea of ethics as etiquette that shapes, and is shaped by, praxis and understanding. Perhaps the most significant idea that I draw from Cheney and Weston (1999) is their invitation to understand ethics not as an object to be considered, but as an action to be performed. They note that "practice is no longer some application of ethical knowledge: it is now *constitutive of ethics itself*, our very mode of access to the world's possibilities" (p. 125). The notion of ethics as practice sounds much like the praxis that Breunig (2005) describes as contextual, purposeful, active, and reflective. A link between praxis and ethics as etiquette becomes even more clear in Cheney and Weston's assertion that "'etiquette' is a genuine means of discovery" (p. 125). This statement not only links etiquette with praxis, but also with education as a larger concept. Participation in an etiquette of appreciative resistance can connect participants with the kind of learning

experiences that conform to educational criteria such as Peters' (1966) three criteria of education. Links between etiquette, praxis, and education are critical for appreciative resistance because they help to situate it as a concept within the larger concept of educative activism, which joins the concepts of activism and education. One way that appreciative resistance (as one approach to educative activism) joins activism and education, particularly in the context of environmental activism, is by facilitating what Weston (1994) calls self-validating invitation. Self-validating invitation may be understood as respectful invitations to relate with more-than-human worlds. Weston (1994) suggests that our relations with the more-than-human world are more-often-than-not characterized by a self-validating reduction, whereby the more-than-human is systematically devalued over time, until it becomes hardly worth consideration at all, and is easy to treat as an object for human control.

Weston (1994) discusses the work of musician Jim Nollman to provide examples of self-validating reduction and self-validating invitation. Nollman's website, interspecies.com, showcases his and other's work to make music with whales. The interspecies website notes that "our intent is straightforward: to seek out the whales where they live, and invite them to join an interspecies band" (Music with whales, 2004, ¶ 1). It is the musician's approach to the project that characterizes this effort as self-validating invitation; they anchor their boat, and invite the whales by starting to play. The whales are never chased, or otherwise lured into participating in the musician's project, and the music played in the water is never louder than a small outboard engine. The artists involved with the interspecies organization approach the more-than-human world in a way that is quite different from the approach of many other humans. They

make an invitation, and wait for animals to respond. If the animals choose not to respond, the artists respect that choice and try again another day. This is a stark contrast to the way that animals are commonly forced into engaging with humans, and then thought less of for being reluctant or unwilling participants in the interaction. The example of an etiquette of appreciation demonstrated by the interspecies musicians may be a harbinger of the kind of etiquette that can help educators to integrate activism into their educational practices. By beginning resistance efforts with an etiquette of appreciation, conceptual space can be created that discourages reduction, and encourages self-validating invitation (Cheney & Weston, 1999; Weston, 1994). In Chapter V, I will present of a story of activism that involves self-validating invitation.

Praxis

The notion of praxis is critical to enacting appreciative etiquettes, which are a central element of appreciative resistance. Praxis empowers educators and students engaging in educative activism to be reflective as they conduct sociocultural and socioenvironmental action, so that they might better understand the context of their actions, and how they shape, and are shaped by their underlying ethics. The following section outlines one conception of praxis from a critical pedagogical perspective, and shows a co-evolving relationship between praxis and the development of appreciative etiquette that is central to appreciative resistance.

The notion of praxis is not new. Scholars from Aristotle to Marx (Smith, 1999) and more recently critical educators in the vein of Freire (1968/1970) have explored the idea of integration between theory and practice (c.f. Breunig, 2005; Giroux, 2007a&b; marino, 1997; McLaren, 1989). Praxis, according to Breunig (2005), is a process of

reflective practice that is “reflective, active, creative, contextual, purposeful, and socially constructed” (p. 111). Through its focus on context, purpose, action, and reflection, Breunig’s (2005) description of praxis parallels my concepts of appreciative resistance, and education. If students are able to act reflexively in activism, then they are more likely to understand the context and purpose of their action. They may also construct knowledge and understanding of the issue that is inaccessible in activist situations that lack an intentional reflective component.

Praxis is a thread that ties the concepts of activism and education together. By linking together thoughtful reflection and the action that students take around socio-environmental issues, activism can take on educational characteristics consistent with the conceptualization of education outlined in Chapter II. For example, Peter’s (1966) first criteria of education is met if the subject of activism, and its related activities, are deemed contextually worthwhile (as constructed by the members of the learning community); this understanding amongst members of the community may be arrived at through shared community experiences gained through praxis. Peter’s second criteria can be achieved if knowledge developed through the activism is responsive to growth and change through ongoing reflection and dialog. Praxis-driven activism can enable the kind of dynamic knowledge that Peter’s calls for in education. In appreciative resistance, the dynamic knowledge that is derived from praxis is profoundly linked to co-evolving etiquette and ethics, because action begins with etiquette, and the knowledge that arises from taking action feeds development of ethics that in turn (circularly), inform etiquette. An approach to teaching activism grounded in appreciative resistance is a demonstration of Hare’s (1964) assertion that education and indoctrination are separated by aims. The aim

of appreciative resistance falls in the realm of education because of its commitment to the dynamic understanding that is fundamental to Peter's (1966) second criteria.

The relationship between etiquette and praxis within appreciative resistance is dialectical—the two ideas feed each other. Etiquette precedes praxis, as it helps students and educators to enter, and navigate the field of educative activism from a tentative middle ground (in the vein of Walsh [1993]) that is open to possibility, and not rigidly focused on a goal while ignoring the means of arriving there. Both Cheney and Weston (1999), and Stavros and Torres (2006) might describe narrowly constructed approaches to activism as lacking etiquette, or awareness. While etiquette enables praxis, praxis also informs etiquette; the experience and reflection that constitute reflective practice provide students and educators with valuable information that helps to shape the etiquettes which activism lead appreciative resistance. Cheney and Weston (1999) note that “knowledge follows upon correct behavior” (p. 129). I agree that we must enact an ethic or etiquette before we can claim to know it, but I would also suggest that knowledge and behaviour are not entirely separate occurrences, but that they are, at least to some degree, co-occurring in praxis. In the section that follows, I will further explore the idea of etiquette that is essential to ethics-based epistemology, in order to highlight the central place of such etiquettes within the concept of appreciative resistance.

Appreciative Resistance and Manipulation

Given my understanding that appreciative resistance is only one possible route to educative activism, and the focus in Chapter II on the tension between education and indoctrination, a discussion of the benefit of appreciative resistance in avoiding manipulative means of teaching activism may be helpful. This section will also connect

the notion of appreciative resistance to the research question primarily addressed in this chapter on the educational viability of an appreciative approach to activism. The primary benefit of appreciative resistance is its intentional effort to ensure that activism in educational contexts remains consistent with the concept of education, and does not become intentionally or unintentionally manipulative or coercive. Its ability to manage this effort is directly connected with an understanding of appreciation as an invitation to an educational process.

An appreciative outlook on educative activism centres on what is positive and worthwhile. It provides a basis for epistemology that has capacity to create educational environments where resistance can be conducted that is open to possibility. Its openness to possibility gives participants in appreciative resistance choice in how they assert their agency, averting a slide towards indoctrination. Certainly in terms of aims (Hare, 1964), openness to possibility keeps activism consistent with education. By addressing loaded issues from a place of appreciative resistance, educators can be mindful of tensions between education and indoctrination. For example, in engaging with the issue of climate change and global warming, an educator might begin by presenting a variety of differing positions on the issue, and position these views fairly in relation to their own position on the issue. This is consistent with Næss's (Næss & Jickling, 2000) position on fairness, as well as Stavros and Torres' (2006) principle of awareness. Within appreciative resistance, practicing awareness becomes part of the etiquette of dealing with loaded issues, and from this position, activism can move forward educationally.

Certainly, an appreciative approach does not *a priori* make activism copacetic with education—educators must always be mindful of the undue influence they may have

over their students; however, by beginning with an appreciative outlook towards activist processes, a buffer of sorts is created that may mediate education/ indoctrination tensions. Buffers may be created by a focus on awareness that is connected to the notion of etiquette that I present in this chapter. Awareness calls for reflection, which may help to create learning atmospheres that fall somewhere on the middle ground of Walsh's (1993) open/loaded spectrum. It is in this tentative middle ground where contextually worthwhile knowledge may be constructed, and where students can adapt prior knowledge in response to context and dialog (Peters, 1966). An appreciative approach may help to develop an atmosphere that is neither politically fragmented, nor apolitically sterile, but rather that allows for discussion and consideration of difficult issues with a mind to finding points of synergy on which the learning community can begin to enact positive (in their eyes) change through activism. In subsequent reflection, these changes may bring about calls for more activism—participants are invited again to appreciative resistance.

By making deliberate choices about their approaches to activism and maintaining awareness of those choices throughout the activist process, educators demonstrate the social and educational importance of activism; an intention to teach their students about what educational activism looks like, and how they might build activism into their own lives. This is congruent with Hare's (1964) suggestion that the distinction between indoctrination and education is in the aim. By aiming at producing mindful activists, rather than coaching their students towards any particular cause or agenda, educators offer their students something that is much more educational than doctrinaire.

I am optimistic about appreciative resistance and its potential to guide educative activism, and I think that it opens up a wide range of possibilities for educators and students to make positive change in the world through education. However, I also recognise some of its limitations. What follows are some cautions that I have considered in the scope of appreciative resistance.

Cautions and Limitations

Appreciative resistance is a new concept created through this thesis. As such, there are two points of caution that I would like to raise. First, the concept is based on an etiquette of practice, yet by virtue of being developed through conceptual scholarship, it is in many ways tied to philosophy in ways that could betray its lived foundation as etiquette. Second, the concept of appreciation can be interpreted in a variety of ways, some of which could weaken strong activism made possible through appreciative resistance.

Living the Etiquette

Cheney and Weston (1999) point out:

The ontology of one's world is a kind of residue from one's ethical practice and the modes of attaining knowledge associated with that practice. This residue is highly prized, and receives intense scrutiny, in Euro-American cultures, but etiquette is the fundamental dimension of our relationship to, and understanding of, the world. Ontology is a kind of picture, or metaphor of ethical practice. (p. 123)

In this vein of thinking, I worry that appreciative resistance's birth in scholarship may limit its potential to be performed in the world. In my own case, it would be easy to

continue to write about appreciative resistance, and build concepts, theories, and philosophies about it for a long time. However, that wouldn't be consistent with the fundamental purpose of appreciative resistance. Jickling's (2005b) notion of resting places is, I think, helpful in this regard. A resting place provides a pause from constant reflection, and the opportunity to take actions and make judgments on reflection. While concepts, philosophies, and the like are perhaps helpful in prompting us to reflect, they may isolate us from practice altogether. Appreciative resistance *lives* in the resting places of philosophy, where the real praxis of appreciative etiquette is carried out. Knowing the importance of resting places, I wonder in what ways we can carve out these rests from the fast-paced, continuously programmed structure of many contemporary educational venues.

Strong Appreciation

My second concern, or caution is that the idea of appreciation may be co-opted by those who tend to sanitize education and activism, and might be presented in ways that do not awaken the agency in students and educators that will be effective in bringing about change in the world. The concept of appreciation can be seen in many ways, and indeed, is left intentionally broad in this thesis to allow for multiple interpretations. In particular, I used the name appreciation in this thesis to describe both a kind of respect, as well as an openness to a plurality of positions around an issue. Both of these are valid and important interpretations, and certainly there are others. What is crucial, though, is that appreciation not be interpreted as a passive approach to educative activism. The appreciative approach to activist pedagogy should not be thought of as weak, or compromising. Appreciative resistance aims to create students who will stand up and say

no to some issues, and who will do so in a way that is respectful of others, and that focuses on building futures that are inclusive of everyone. Appreciative resistance ought to be subversive, as it is critical of complacency and apathy in political arenas, a position that is underemphasized in many facets of contemporary education—particularly the western school system.

Taking an appreciative approach to educational activism is not intended to water down the tension inherent in difficult issues, but rather to allow for a strong resistance that has integrity. This is akin to my earlier comments that appreciation and criticism needn't be mutually exclusive. By beginning from a place of appreciation, educators can instill in students a positive drive to make the world better through activism, but they must also give parameters to that activism. There are limits to the techniques that are appropriate for achieving activist goals within education. For example, a concept of appreciative resistance excludes miseducative or indoctrinatory activities. In creating appreciative resistance this way, I do not prescribe what counts as education or indoctrination within a particular community or society, but I suggest that the intent of appreciative resistance as a concept is to further the aims of education, and avoid manipulation or coercion of students. My particular understanding of the education—indoctrination tension is situated within my own participation and socialization in an Ontario school system, and is further influenced by analytical and critical theory that I have explored as a graduate student (as described in chapter I, and chapter II). Individuals as part of communities, and societies need to decide for themselves what counts as educational, and based on those understandings, to decide if appreciative

resistance is an appropriate fit for their conception of education, as it would seem to be within the conception of education that I have developed.

Appreciative resistance generally avoids coercion by beginning from an invitation to an appreciative activist process. An invitation allows participants to make choices about how they participate in educative activist processes; educators working from a position of appreciative resistance encourage participants to say no to ideas or actions that aren't consistent with their own etiquettes (which should be defensible within the conceptions of education and activism to which a person or group generally subscribes). By beginning from an appreciative etiquette, appreciative educator-activists have to put extra effort into designing pedagogy that will help student-activists develop creative techniques that are in line with living an appreciative and respectful etiquette, and with living a good life. These pedagogies, when well conceived and acted on can result in a range of approaches to activism from subtle resistance to public protest. In whatever form the activism takes, a pedagogy of appreciative resistance exposes students to a type of social action that is personally educative and socially and environmentally just.

Chapter Summary: Preparing to Look at Cases

In the initial three chapters of this thesis, I have explained my conceptualization of an education that brings activism toward its centre. I have outlined the notion of appreciative resistance, which is my particular approach to an educative activism. Appreciative resistance is most succinctly described as an etiquette-based concept that helps educators invite students into a process of praxis-driven and appreciatively focused activism within educational contexts. The three elements of appreciative resistance that I have identified are awareness, etiquette, and praxis. The element of awareness is based

in the principle of awareness suggested by Stavros and Torres (2006). To be aware means to have a “big picture” understanding of self in relationship with others in the world; this connects directly with the element of etiquette, which I have described as a level of awareness that enables reflection before action, in order to consider how acting effects others. These two elements of appreciative resistance are enacted through praxis, which considers the context and purpose of educative activism and integrates reflection into activist process (Breunig, 2005).

Throughout this chapter, the concept of appreciative resistance has been constructed in relationship with ethics. The ethics of appreciative resistance are deeply connected to the etiquette that characterizes the concept, and feed one another through praxis. In this sense, the ethics of appreciative resistance are performed; right relationship in activist situations is understood because it is lived. This is consistent with Cheney and Weston’s (1999) ethics-based epistemology from which appreciative resistance is in part inspired.

In the two following chapters, I will present cases that will serve as opportunities to test the analysis that I have conducted thus far. These cases provide examples of activism that, at least in some ways, fit with my idea of appreciative resistance. They offer stories about situations that are both activist in nature, and have an educational component. The cases are an important part of this analysis because, as stories, they offer access to the everyday doing of ethics (Jickling, 2005b). By telling and examining stories of appreciative resistance, I am able to dig deeper into the concepts that I have outlined in this chapter and draw further connections between appreciative resistance and educative activism, as outlined in Chapter II.

CHAPTER IV

The Lakehead Landswap

During part of my graduate studies (January to March 2006) I was involved in activism surrounding a land exchange issue that was being considered by the Lakehead University administration, the Lakehead District School Board, and the Thunder Bay Golf and Country Club. As plans began to take shape for an awareness campaign around the issue, I became increasingly uncomfortable with the tone of activism that was being set by the student group, Lakehead University Community Taking Action Locally (LUCTAL) that had formed to protest the plan. I couldn't put my finger on my discontent until after a long period of reflection on the campaign. In retrospect, it seems that the approach taken by the student leaders polarized the issue to an extent that many of the diverse community interests were lost in an oversimplified "us" and "them" tug of war.

The proposed "deal" involved annexing a portion of the university's property along the McIntyre River to give to the adjacent Thunder Bay Golf and Country Club on a 99-year lease. In turn, the country club would sever a different portion of their property to provide space for the Lakehead District School Board to build a new secondary school, at the corner of Oliver Road and Golf Links Road. Finally, the school board would pass a building, formerly known as Port Arthur Collegiate Institute, to the University.

The proposed "deal" was hotly debated both on campus, and in the local community. The story came to a climax on February 20th, 2006 at a meeting of the Thunder Bay City Council. The issue was debated for several hours, and more than 30 individuals gave deputations against the proposed zoning changes that were required for

the landswap to work. What follows is one story, mine, about participating in the campaign against the landswap.

My Landswap Story

In beginning to (re)construct a story about my experiences with the landswap deal, I struggle to recall how I first heard about the issue. Rumours of an idea to swap land between the three parties had been in the wind since I had been at Lakehead University doing my undergrad degree (circa 2001); more recently, I had heard news of a plan in the works to make it happen, and soon. I first heard about an action campaign from my friend, Suzanna. She told me that some students were meeting on Saturday afternoon to talk about ways of resisting the plan. She wasn't able to make the meeting, so I agreed to go and report back.

The meeting took place at the student coffee house, The Study. I was glad to see that 40 people had come out to see what was going on. Such a good turnout was a surprise; to the best of my knowledge the meeting had only been advertised by word of mouth. Some of the students who had taken a leadership role introduced themselves, and there was a go round for the rest to say their names and describe their interest in the issue. After that, some details of the landswap arrangement were provided, some of which had been revealed to students through "official channels," some of which became known through "unofficial channels," along with abounding rumours about the issue.

At some point, it became apparent that the group was too large to work effectively as a whole, and we broke into committees. There were opportunities to declare our interests in public activism, or more "behind the scenes" work, including committees for media relations, posters, artwork, and the like.

I joined the committee responsible for awareness-raising at the university, and in the local community. I accepted responsibility for raising awareness in the Faculty of Education. I felt this was important as education students in their professional year often seem out of the loop on campus issues because their building is distant from the main campus, and because their class term is short (9 weeks versus a standard 12-week term), making it difficult to engage them in semester-long projects.

I set two tasks for myself. First, I felt someone needed to take responsibility for putting up posters and generally disseminating information to students in the Bora Laskin Building (home of the Faculty of Education). Second, I was interested in opening a conversation with the faculty administration about the stance that the Faculty of Education took on the issue. Both of these tasks turned out to be frustrating in some ways, but also provided experiences to reflect on, and build from, particularly relating to activism and education.

The Beginning: Postering

In retrospect, my experience with postering revealed the first signs that should have given me concern about the campaign. The LUCTAL student activist group had prepared a series of posters, with an accompanying information page. These colour posters featured the university president, Dr. Fred Gilbert, posing with the university mascot, the “Thunderwolf” (see Figure 1 for an example of the posters). Each poster offered a different message about ways that Dr. Gilbert was selling off university property, and selling out student interests in the process. When I first looked at each of the posters, I thought they were very clever—in fact, I still do. However, in looking back

at the posters, I think that they villainized the president beyond what an awareness-raising



Figure 5. Landswap Campaign Posters

device should do—they tried to pin the whole deal on him. The university president is the head administrator, of course, but certainly it took more than one individual to put together the plan that LUCTAL opposed. This scapegoating technique was not in line with a kind of activism that appealed to me. As I became more involved with the campaign, I witnessed this villainization go much further than clever posters.

An interesting thing that I learned was how difficult it is to receive approval for posting controversial posters, particularly in the Bora Laskin building. In all other buildings at the University, the Lakehead University Student Union (LUSU) approves bulletin board postings. In the Bora Laskin building, however, posters must be approved by the Faculty of Education, not LUSU. When I took posters to the undergraduate studies office for approval, I was informed that there was only one bulletin board in the

building for student postings, and that *any* postings on other surfaces would be removed. The person responsible stamped the approval on one copy of my information sheet. I hadn't offered the colour posters of Dr. Gilbert for stamping (I didn't want to go there); my plan was to attach them alongside the information sheets that had been stamped (in retrospect, this somewhat deceitful approach is contrary to some of the attitudes on activism that I discuss in my thesis).

In the end, I decided just to put the posters up, and see what would happen. On any given day, the Bora Laskin building is full of non-approved postings on non-approved surfaces (everything from concert advertizements, to books for sale, to lost and found notices). I kept a stock of back-up posters, in case I needed to replenish. Sure enough, the next day all of my posters had been removed. And yet, I couldn't fail to notice all of the concert advertizements, books for sale, or lost and found notices that were illegally posted were still intact. After a few days of replacing posters I was tired, and decided to make small handbills that I could scatter around classrooms and other public spaces in the building. The handbills were informational, and did not include the clever but dubious images from the posters.

A Midpoint: Meeting the Dean

My second task was to approach the Faculty of Education administration and discuss the issue. I had heard in the initial LUCTAL meeting that the Geography department was going to push back against the university administration and oppose the landswap (in hindsight, this was probably an exaggeration, or perhaps an outright mistruth). I thought some expression of interest on the part of students (or at least one student) might push the Faculty of Education to do the same. I sent an email to the Dean

of Education outlining my concern about the difficulty of getting information out to students in the Bora Laskin building, as well as inquiring about possibilities for the Faculty to take a formal position on the issue. I was pleased when I received an email back asking me to drop by and see her.

I made an appointment with the Dean, and emailed the LUCTAL leaders to let them know of my activity. A LUCTAL coordinator wrote me back to say, “great work,” and to ask if he could attend the meeting, as he had first-hand information about the situation. I forwarded his request to the Dean for confirmation, and we were set to go. The meeting was another interesting experience. My intent from the beginning was to open a dialogue with the Dean, and let her know that students were concerned about the issue. Certainly, I did have an agenda—I wanted the Faculty to take a formal stance against the landswap, but I knew going in that this was secondary to just talking about the situation. The LUCTAL representative had other ideas. He was unwilling to waver from the LUCTAL campaign platform. About halfway through the meeting, I regretted having invited him (even though he was able to answer some of the Dean’s questions in a more detailed way than I would have been able to). In the end, the Dean rejected my appeal to have the Faculty of Education take a formal position on the issue (she likened the proposition to “your hand attacking your face”). The meeting did, however, have some positive outcomes. The Dean offered to raise the issue at the next Deans’ Council, acknowledging that the issue was important to students.

I was most excited by the Dean’s willingness to engage in conversation with me about the issue. As our meeting was ending, she leaned back in her chair, smiled, and said that the issue was “interesting” from a variety of angles. I appreciated this point. It

made me feel that a student activist could approach the school administration, and that the issue was not cut and dried from her perspective. While she was unwilling to take a formal stance against the landswap, she was certainly interested in the conversation—and encouraged me to carry on. It was almost as if her sly grin and “interesting” comment were challenging me to continue my work to preserve campus green space. I left the meeting satisfied that my voice had been heard. It seemed like the Dean’s approach to the issue might resemble the type of appreciative resistance that I discussed in Chapter III. Without championing the cause for me, or pressuring me to take my activist passions in one direction or another, she subtly enabled my process by being open to talking with me about a controversial issue within the university community. Such openness characterizes the respect and awareness that in part constitute appreciative resistance. The Dean’s approach to the situation seems to me to be an example of a direction that an educator working from a concept of appreciative resistance might take in enabling students to work through contentious issues. The sly grin and encouragement of my work on an “interesting” issue were perhaps her way of demonstrating etiquette that allowed me to assert my agency to create change as a student activist.

A Troubling Point

At the height of the campus fervour, LUCTAL arranged a rally to demonstrate student opposition to the landswap issue, and I think the demonstration was a very important part of the campaign. It heightened awareness of the issue on campus, and probably had a significant effect on the outcome of the situation. Having said that, I am still critical of some of the things that transpired during the event.

I should also note that I chose not to attend the rally because of my growing frustration with the LUCTAL campaign. This was a difficult decision to make: on one hand, I was passionate about the issue, but on the other, I didn't want to attach my name to the angry mood that threatened to define the tone of the demonstration. The attitudes displayed by some of the members of LUCTAL at meetings and in emails led me to believe that the rally would be a cacophonous gathering. While a noisy rally is nothing to be critical of, I worried that a respectful message about preservation that could make the event an example of appreciative resistance would be lost in the noise, and that possibilities for a resistance of etiquette and respect could not be realized. My description of the demonstration is based on reporting posted on the Thunder Bay Independent Media Centre website (including an audio recording of the Agora portion of the rally), as well as articles published in the *The Argus: Lakehead University's Student Newspaper* and *The Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal*.

The event began in the student pub, The Outpost, where there was an information session. The session transitioned into a rally that moved across campus to the frozen Lake Tamblyn, underneath Dr. Gilbert's office, and finally led to 100 or more students occupying "Deans' Row" outside the president's office, until Dr. Gilbert agreed to address the crowd in the Agora, a large open space at the heart of the university campus. (Hadley, 2006a). An interesting scene played out during the rally that is telling of the activists' tone. During the Outpost presentation, a student dressed as a caricature of Dr. Gilbert wielded a chainsaw (with the chain removed) and melodramatically "cut down" other students dressed as trees (twig, 2006). This further villainization of Dr. Gilbert was matched by scathing interactions between some of the protesters and the university

President during his coerced meeting with students in the Agora. In reviewing the reports, and listening to an audio recording of Dr. Gilbert speaking with the protesters, I am happy with my decision not to attend the event. However, I am sad that there was not an opportunity to participate in resistance that more eloquently presented a positive message of preservation. For me, this could have brought a broadly educational flavour to the event, in the spirit of the educative activism that I described in Chapter II, achieved through a concept of appreciative resistance. Beginning from an etiquette of appreciation, the demonstrators could have enacted a protest that showed the university administration both the importance of preserving the green space along the river, as well as highlighting an integrity in student activism that would warrant respect in return. In practice, the rally organizers could have set a tone for the event that was more deliberately appreciative. Alternatively, individual activists could have approached the proceedings with an appreciative attitude to open possibilities to new knowledge and understanding (in the vein of Peters [1966] second criteria of education on the dynamic nature of understanding) as they are exposed to new stories and perspectives at the rally.

A Successful Finish?

I participated, finally, in the city council planning meeting on February 20th, 2006, where the city decided not to approve the zoning changes that were required for the landswap to work. The meeting was attended by a huge number of people who wanted to speak out against the landswap, and those who just wanted to be present to support the speakers. It is difficult to describe the energy created by such a good turn-out. Not only was the council chamber and the side room full, but people also lined the hallway between the council chambers and the elevator. Additionally, when it was felt that it was

unlawful to fill the council chamber floor any further, people stayed to listen to an audio broadcast of the proceedings in the main lobby of the building. A friend who watched the televised proceedings noted that the number of people packed into the building created a visual statement about the importance of the issue in the community. At the meeting, council members, staff, and citizens commented that this level of attendance was unheard of at a city meeting.

In the opening moments of the council meeting, the city planning department spoke briefly about the application, and affirmed that the zoning changes as proposed were consistent with the city plan. (I learned through chatter in the side room that the city plan is the document that describes the planning vision for the city, and is the ideal against which all applications are compared). There were some questions for the planning department about the environmental assessment process, which was incomplete due to snow cover on the ground. Deputations were then heard from the applicants. Dr. Gilbert and Michael Pawlowski (Vice President of Administration and Finance) spoke for the university; Ian Sutherland, acting Director of Education, spoke for the school board; and, Frank Talarico of the Thunder Bay Golf and Country Club also spoke.

Finally, deputations against the application were heard. More than 20 people had signed up to speak: students, faculty members, parents of students affected by school closure, people concerned about sacred Aboriginal space adjacent to the proposed property boundary, as well as concerned community members who shared stories about their history with the land. Many impassioned voices were heard. When points were made that were critical of the landswap, activists would cheer, stomp feet, and bang chairs—often to the dismay of council members. As midnight approached, the council

voted to continue the meeting rather than table the discussion. As the hour got later, chairs were freed up, and I was able to sit in the council chambers. Several representatives of LUCTAL spoke against the application. Petitions were presented. The council asked questions of some of the speakers.

At last, nearing 1:00 a.m., the council members began to debate the issue. My memory of this is a little foggy as the hour was late and my notes were non-existent by this time. I do remember a clear division of opinion on the matter. Some council members were very rigid in their interpretation of the city plan—if the application is consistent with the plan, it should pass. Others were more inclined to hear concerns of community members, and consider factors other than the city plan in casting their vote. In the end, the council voted against the application in a 7-2 majority (Hadley, 2006b). The LUCTAL crew (myself included) was ecstatic, but the celebration was short given the late hour, and obligations early the next day.

After the city refused the zoning changes, the landswap issue quickly died on campus. Students and faculty discussed the issue casually for a few days. Some faculty members in Education, who I had emailed to garner support for the cause, congratulated me on the success of the meeting. Media covered the council meeting, otherwise the issue was quiet.

About a week after the meeting, a small group of LUCTAL members (including myself) met to discuss ways that the issue could be kept alive, as there was some fear that the three applicants would appeal the council's decision to the Ontario Municipal Board. Much to my chagrin, most of the suggestions revolved around pinning the issue on Dr. Gilbert by making him look silly based on things he said at the meeting. Happily,

another member discouraged this (more happily, it was the same person who had met the Dean of Education with me). I suggested that the best approach to keeping the issue alive was helping students understand the wider importance of green space preservation on campus. The small committee liked this idea, and some plans were made to put it into action; however, nothing tangible ever came of it as far as I know. That meeting was the last I heard of LUCTAL.

A few weeks following the council meeting, Dr. Gilbert made a presentation in the Agora that released some more details about the proposed plan that were no longer confidential. For the LUCTAL activists, the most significant announcement was that any decision to appeal the rejected zoning application would be left to the Lakehead District School Board.

In the months following the landswap, I transformed an article that I had written on the issue for the Thunder Bay Independent Media Centre website (Niblett, 2006) into a more academic paper on the educative potential of activism. That paper was the genesis of my thinking about a thesis on activism in environmental education, and some of it is present in the analysis of my landswap narrative that follows.

Linking the Landswap with Educative Activism

Throughout the landswap experience, as noted above, I was often frustrated with the antagonistic quality of the activism. I hoped for a more reflective approach to resolving the conflict, consistent with etiquette as in appreciative resistance. It was this failing of the campaign that led me to think about educative activism, and develop the concept of appreciative resistance.

In offering this critique, I am not suggesting that I was entirely unsupportive. The students who made up LUCTAL worked tirelessly to ensure that their goal of squashing the landswap deal was achieved, and they were successful in realizing this end. It would be easy for me to begin an analysis of this experience by pointing out all of the ways that LUCTAL's efforts fail to fit within the concept of appreciative resistance; however, such a strategy would not be consistent with the openness and etiquette that I advocate in appreciative resistance. By highlighting what was open and respectful about the landswap campaign (related to openness and etiquette), the focus is put on capitalizing on the most effective points of the project, rather than deconstructing ineffective points. This approach does not preclude criticism, but rather approaches criticism from an etiquette of appreciation. This approach may provide insight into educative activism that is not always gleaned through more rabble-raising strategies.

With this in mind, I conduct an analysis of my experience with the landswap issue by identifying qualities of the activist campaign that seem to fit, or nearly fit, with my notion of appreciative resistance. In this way, this analysis of a case, or example, attempts to find similarities in the contours of the landswap campaign and the concepts of educative activism and its manifestation in appreciative resistance that have been developed in Chapter II and III respectively. Identifying and explaining links between the landswap campaign and an educative activism extends and develops the analysis that I am conducting throughout this thesis.

Finding Appreciative Resistance in the Landswap Campaign

In some sense, it is of little wonder that I dug to find examples of appreciative resistance in the landswap campaign, as the concept of appreciative resistance was

developed as a part of this thesis after the campaign was over (although certainly the underlying ideas are not so newly conceived). Moreover, I am not criticizing the campaign for not having a clear educational current to it; the LUCTAL organizers did not plan the activism around educational outcomes. That said, the campaign did take place on a university campus, initiated and facilitated by university students—so in a sense, educational outcomes cannot be separated from activism carried on by students, *qua* student. Attending university, and participating in student life, can be considered an educational endeavour both within formal fields of study, as well as in the wider university experience. From an idealist standpoint, a universal student identity is a nice idea; however, it is certainly not without problems, given that the degree of participation in student life activities (and what counts as those activities) varies greatly among university students, and that universalizing a student identity is problematic (Barrett, 2005) because few would fit a single profile of what it means to be a student.

I do not expect that the landswap campaign must, or even could, fit some perfect mould of appreciative resistance. This wasn't the intent of the campaign, and appreciative resistance as I have described it, offers no such "perfect mould." Rather, I offer this analysis as an example of a situation that had some qualities of appreciative resistance, and *might* have had more. Identifying appreciative resistance in the landswap also serves as a means of testing the viability of appreciative resistance as a concept, in its relationship with educative activism. My landswap story offers a unique opportunity to characterize potential for intersections between activism and education, which is my conceptual task in this thesis.

Three elements of the landswap campaign resonate with the spirit of appreciative resistance: (1) a “dress like a golfer” demonstration at the very beginning of the campaign; (2) the Agora rally, in some respects; and (3) individual efforts of LUCTAL members and supporters. The following analysis highlights the role of appreciative resistance in these examples and links each to the conceptual work of connecting education and activism from Chapter II.

“Dress Like a Golfer Day”

Early in the development of the landswap campaign, shortly after the initial meeting, some members of LUCTAL arranged a “dress like a golfer day” where interested and informed students dressed up in historical golf clothing (argyle and plaid, high socks, tam-o’-shanter hats, and so forth), and putted golf balls around various parts of the university, mostly the Agora. This provided a small spectacle, in the style of street theatre, that was creative, tongue-in-cheek, and gave the activist students an opportunity to speak to other students, to spread the word about the campaign. While presenting golfers in this way is in some ways appreciatively problematic, I think that overall an exercise like this has great potential as an activity of appreciative resistance. In this instance, I am thinking particularly of the conceptualization of appreciative resistance as etiquette conceived as mindfulness of right relationship (Cheney & Weston, 1999). The aim of the dress like a golfer day demonstration was to spread knowledge of the issue. The approach of this particular demonstration, if it is used well (and I can’t know if it was always done well during this demonstration), offers a grassroots strategy not only for spreading information, but for opening possibilities for new understanding between student-activists and other members of the campus community (e.g., other students,

faculty, staff, third party employees). Direct conversations between activists, supporters, and opponents have a high potential for a mindful, appreciative resistance. The praxis that is demonstrated through one-on-one or small group activism creates a valuable opportunity for learning and reflections, which brings an educative dimension to the activism (Breunig, 2005). The educative dimension is characterized by opportunities to share and construct new knowledge and understanding between activists and passers-by. Learning this way is consistent with Peter's (1966) second criterion of education, in that participants in the process manipulate ideas through constructing knowledge, as opposed to learning by rote. Furthermore, the event showed commitment to educational aims by avoiding manipulative or coercive approaches, that is, by focusing on *asking* members of the university community to consider the issue rather than preaching or guiltling people into thinking about the issue in a particular way. To some degree, this respectful approach was laced throughout the landswap campaign, even at events like the Agora rally about which I was so skeptical.

The Agora Rally

I think that a rabble-rousing approach to activism employed in a demonstration can sacrifice some of the clarity of the protest point (the main issue that the activists are attempting to resist). Without clarity about the protest message there is erosion of educative potential. This is how I often think about the rally that was staged as part of the landswap campaign. For me, the drum-banging, bagpipe-playing, chainsaw-roaring approach to drawing attention to a resistance effort can disrupt the clarity of the message. In these cacophonous events, it is clear that there is protest, but not always clear *why* there is protest. Although I was not, generally speaking, a supporter of the rally

demonstration that LUCTAL staged, this is not to say that no elements of the event can be counted as an example of appreciative resistance. Certainly, in some ways, the rally held an educative context for those who planned it or participated. Elements like the bagpipes and chainsaw can detract from an educative context, but if we look beyond those elements, some degree of the etiquette that underlies appreciative resistance may have been present even in the Agora rally event.

In essence the students were saying that expanding the golf course onto campus green space was not a way to live well in a place (Orr, 1994), and this was a matter of ethics. The activists felt that their right relationship with the land on which the campus rests was of higher ethical importance than the benefits that the landswap might bring. The individual voices of *some* of the students demonstrated clearly their message that campus green space that makes Lakehead a unique place, and that compromising green space on campus is unacceptable.

While listening to an audio recording of the rally, posted on the Thunder Bay Independent Media Centre website after the event (twig, 2006), I heard many voices of students who wanted to share their thoughts about the landswap issue with Dr. Gilbert. The voices are varied, and some are filled with frustration and spite directed at Dr. Gilbert and the university administration. Others are calm, respectful, and demonstrate a passion for the culture and atmosphere of the Lakehead University campus, and the community that lives in and about the campus each day. By sharing their stories, these more respectful voices enacted the openness that characterizes an etiquette of appreciative resistance. This is witnessed through the evident care in their words, and the respect for competing positions surrounding the issue illustrated through their thinking.

Characteristics of appreciative resistance such as care and respect create an educational dimension to the stories lived out at an event like the Agora rally. In activism, demonstrations infused with care and respect may relax the tension between education and indoctrination, and when conducted with awareness (Stavros & Torres, 2006), may draw the proceedings towards the aims of education, as is the aim of appreciative resistance described in Chapter III.

Cheney (2002) and his alter ego Hickory (2004) discuss the concept of lives lived as stories. They suggest that the stories that are enacted in the world are varied, dynamic, and dialogical; and that even when they have different plotlines, they carry on without the need to square off like “arguments in competition with one another” (Cheney, 2002, pp. 97-98). This idea is also central to Cheney and Weston’s (1999) ethics-based epistemology, where they note that we all tell different stories, and that they needn’t necessarily compete with one another. The appreciative voices that can be heard through the din of drums, chainsaws, and angry activists at the Agora rally represent an enactment of the story of appreciative resistance—a very different story than the drums, bagpipes, and chainsaws. By focusing on a simple message, and by sharing their positive stories of experiences in the green space near the river, these individuals live the framework of appreciative resistance—as a story.

The experiences of the activists who came to the rally with an appreciative mindset creates a practiced understanding of the activists’ ethics, demonstrated through etiquette that shows the activists feelings about what a right relationship with the more-than-human world on campus should be (Cheney, 2002; Cheney & Weston, 1999). The appreciative activists presented this story, and it stood as an example of appreciative

resistance, an educational opportunity for everyone who was present. Their story was different from the story enacted by the majority of the activists. A louder story tells us that Dr. Gilbert is evil, and that he only wants to cut down the forest for a golf course, and that we should be angry about this, and that we should ridicule him until he changes his mind, and that if the forest is cut down for a golf course that we should vandalize that property, and so on. This story, while perhaps more flashy/noisy/provocative, does not meet with the criteria of the framework for an appreciative resistance, and may lean away from the aims of education. On the other hand, the stories of the appreciative activists (whose voices focus on possibilities of what could be in the green space on the river, and who are not belittling towards others who have different ideas) do represent an appreciative resistance that is more educative than other stories being lived at the rally because it invites everyone to consider the possibilities that may come out of an etiquette-based relationship with the space by the river. By demonstrating a kind of etiquette (as discussed in Chapter III) at the rally, appreciative activists also open space for educative activism that can be used to further the goals of both activism *and* education. Both in the landswap campaign, and in future activist projects, it allows appreciative activists and others to negotiate the character of a society that people want to live in, and the kind of actions that can take them there.

The educative nature of appreciative resistance at the Agora rally lies in praxis. In this case, praxis was manifest as a thoughtfulness that connects values with words and actions. For some of the participants who brought this approach to the rally, the choice was not a conscious decision to practice appreciative resistance; it was simply part of

their action. Regardless, their presence at the event brought a flavour of appreciative resistance to the happenings, which in turn created an opportunity for educative activism.

It is those individuals who brought a sense of appreciative resistance to the Agora rally that are the source of my third example of appreciative resistance during the landswap campaign. Their efforts at the rally were not isolated—rather, their thoughtfulness about resistance to the landswap helped to bring an air of appreciative resistance to the whole campaign.

Appreciative Efforts of Individual Activists

Throughout the landswap campaign (I conceive of the campaign in a very broad sense, from formal acts of protest to casual conversation around the issue) there were moments of appreciative resistance. Even if these moments were fleeting, or overshadowed by more antagonistic forms of resistance, it is important to acknowledge the role these instances and their actors played in the campaign and its “successful” outcome. When I speak about the efforts of individual activists enacting activities consistent with a concept of appreciative resistance, it is not possible to isolate specific individuals who consistently epitomize this approach to activism. In some cases, individuals represent the concept in some instances, and not in others—and that is okay. As Næss suggests, “It’s a high ideal to be consistent. And, you will achieve it when you die—not before” (Næss & Jickling, 2000, p. 58).

I have made the important realization through my observations and analysis that it is probably very difficult to develop an activist campaign entirely around the concept of appreciative resistance. Within educational settings, activist planning may be out of the hands of teachers and students interested in being involved, particularly in large scale

campaigns. My answer to this challenge is that the concept of appreciative resistance lives not in a campaign, protest, or event, but within the individuals who participate, and their relationships with others. Activism and resistance are dynamic processes that are influenced by the approaches, voices, and actions of the individuals involved. In this way it would be difficult to mandate an appreciative approach to activism. However, I am beginning to see the concept of appreciative resistance less as a concrete “way” of conducting activism, and more of a frame of reference that might influence the flavour of an activist event, process, or campaign. While perhaps appreciative resistance cannot be mandated, educators’ can certainly create conditions in their practices that enable appreciative etiquette as a starting place for activism. Seen this way, appreciative resistance may provide educators with an understanding of the ways that education and activism might intersect, and how their pedagogy might highlight that intersection for their students when it aims to help them become independent thinkers (Hare, 1964). As I have pointed out in the Lakehead landswap, appreciative resistance can serve as a guidepost to point out directions that may help educators and students develop a link between education and activism that holds true to the aims of education more consistently than activism might outside of appreciative resistance.

///
the landswap is wrapped.

No more
Posters.handbills.rallies.chainsaws.granola hippies.meetings
success
seemingly
achieved

/conceptual/ test complete (?)

what about another case?

all's quiet on the activist front.

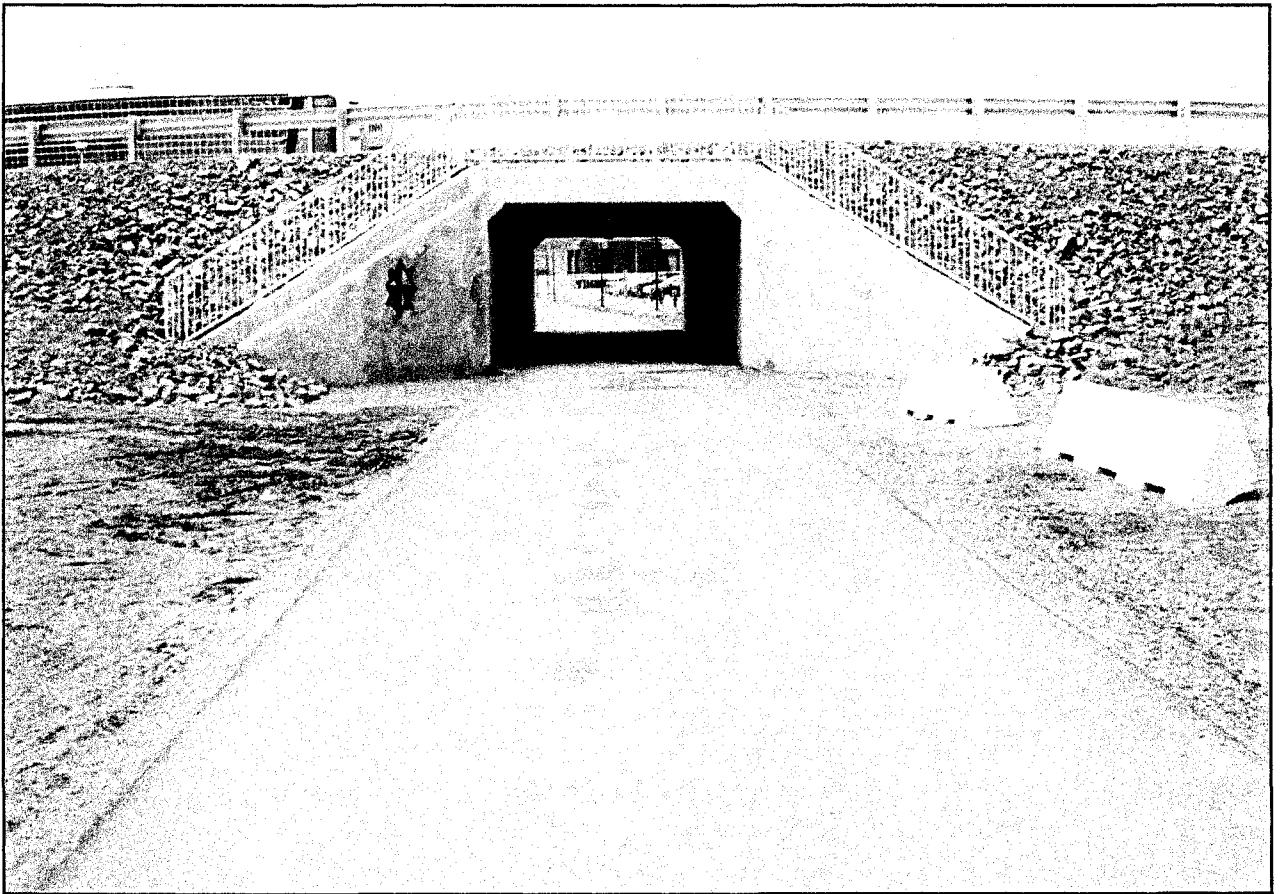
"we'll just have to make our own!" thought coyote
to him.her.its.more-than-human self.

CHAPTER V

Over/Passing the Lakehead Campus

overpass, n.

A raised stretch of road or railway line that passes over another road or railway line; a flyover; a footbridge.



overpass, v.

6. a. *intr.* To pass or remain unnoticed, to be let alone or ignored. Chiefly in to let (something) overpass: to let it pass, take no notice of it. *Obs.*

b. *trans.* To pass over, leave unnoticed or unmentioned, ignore; to omit; to overlook. Now rare. (Simpson & Weiner, 2004)

and so it begins

///

coyote awoke with a start
 a horn honking
 brake skweeeeling start
 uncertain of where

he.she.it.more-than-human was.
 he.she.it.more-than-human dove out of the way
 just in time to miss being road.killed by a
 tim horton's wielding
 pick-up truck driving
 student/prof
 on the way to class/meeting/exam/gym/computer lab/swimming pool.food court

coyote ducked under the steel guardrail and trotted down the rocky embankment
 of the over/pass where he.she.it.more-than-human had awoken

"Where have I found myself now," wondered coyote to him.her.it.more-than-human self.

"You're in a thesis," thought the author to coyote.

"Not another one of those," grumbled coyote. "What's this one about?"

"Appreciative Resistance...it's a new framework."

"Is it cedar strip? Or birch bark?"

"Well, I hadn't thought of it like that before—it's conceptual."

"I'll try not to hold that against you," coyote giggled.

"So," said the author to coyote, "I was hoping you might be able to help me with something."

"Really!" coyote danced excitedly. "I love to help." He.she.it.more-than-human grinned, tongue dangling from his.her.its.more-than-human mouth.

"You see, I'm trying to tell a story."

"Does it have a coyote in it? Is it a coyote story? I think it should have a coyote in it..." interrupted coyote excitedly.

"Well, that's where I was hoping you might help..."

"Ya ya...lemme help...coyote LOOVVVES to help."

"Well, I'm not quite sure what direction exactly that I'm moving in...but I've been thinking about a trickster story."

"Well," exclaimed coyote, reaching into a pocket in his/her/its/more-than-human fur, "I happen to be a well-known and certified trixter." He/she/it/more-than-human held up a roughly scratched business card.

"Hmmm...I wonder about appropriation," sighed the author.

"I will be on my best behaviour," promised coyote.

"No...*appropriation*...not appropriate...I'm not sure how to draw you into a white person's story, as I've taken you out of Aboriginal literature."

"Hmm..." thought coyote, "what kind of story is it?"

"It's about an over/pass, that over/pass." The author thought of the newly constructed over/pass on the lakehead university campus, and his thought was transmitted to coyote, who turned to face the ominous grey structure.

"It's pretty UUUGGGGLYYY," said coyote.

"Ya, I think so too," thought the author. "The story is about how we might push back against the over/pass."

"It looks pretty heavy, I don't think you can move it," said coyote.

"I think you're right," the author smiled, "but that's not exactly what I meant by push back. I want to resist the overall trend of development on campus."

"Oh," said coyote, "well, that's a different story."

"First they plowed the land to make a parking lot, then because it was just a parking lot, it was ok to just build this ugly and senseless bridge. Next thing you know they'll want to put in a multiplex arena!"

"I love hockey!" exclaimed coyote.

"Right..." thought the author. "So, about this story...I'm looking for an agent."

"Are you buying land? I've been in one of those stories before. I thought

you were looking for a trixter?"

"Not that type of agent. Yes, a trickster. I need a trickster who can be an agent of appreciative resistance."

"The Concept!"

"Yes. In the story, the trickster will act as a facilitator, or a catalyst for the concept of appreciative resistance. They'll set things in motion, I think."

"Wow, this is great," laughed coyote. "I think I have an idea." coyote ran back to the over/pass, and trotted back up the rocky embankment. Two students, girl and boy, were walking underneath. Once on top, coyote began to dance.

"Wait wait," thought the author, "I still haven't figured out this appropriation business...I'm not sure if you should be in my story."

"I said I'd be on my best behaviour," said coyote as he.she.it.more-than-human continued to dance.

"You don't seem to understand," thought the author.

"I'm very smart," said coyote, "just leave everything to me." With that, coyote stopped dancing, and trotted off into the story.

///

girl and boy walked under the over/pass
 curious about the silliness of constructing such an immense bridge to span such
 a small path
 as they under/passing they turned their eyes drawn by coyote's fleeting exit
 dust from his.her.its.more-than-human dance still lingered in the air
 they walked on towards the bora laskin building

///

girl awoke early
 bright sunlight over the sleeping giant pouring through her window
 lucid dreams still
 rattling/racing/roaring/rearing
 in her head

putting pencil to sketchbook
 she jotted/doodled/sketched/graphite sculpted
 the over/pass

and more
 flowers
 plants
 paint
 chalk

reimagination

her background as A/R/Tist (à la Irwin & de Cosson, 2004) pushing her to over/pass the dreary cement.rock.steel beast with a new coat of POSSIBILITY

she rolled out of bed

towards the telephone

dialing

boy

“The usual?” she asked.

“Agreed,” he said.

///

boy eyed her rough sketch

and they discussed

alongside the din of

coffee splashing

glasses clinking

forks piercing

bacon/sausage/hashbrown/poached/scrambled/over medium

and chewing

“We need to find some way of resisting this mess,” she noted as she milked her coffee. “I mean, already we see the resistance, in the garbage, and the graffiti and the broken lamp, but it needs resistance that makes a positive statement about the potential for the space.”

“Indeed,” said he, spilling his tea from its small tin pot. “How do you see it going?”

“See what going?”

“We’re talking about a mural, right?”

“Well...something like that.”

“Guerrilla styles?”

“Hmmm...not sure.”

“It’ll be great...can’t you just see their faces after it’s done?”

“We’ll need to think this thru more.”

“Midnight, balaclavas, backpacks full of paint, lookouts, decoys!”

“It’ll need to be community based.”

“We’ll take them by surprise!”

“How will we get permission?”

“Surprise?” said she.

“Permission?” said he.

///

“coyote?” inquired the author.

“mmhhmmmm” replied coyote.

“How’s it going...I mean...what have you been up to?”

“Oh, dancing.”

“I see.”

“And swimming...that lake is cold!”

“Yes.”

“And this morning, I ate scraps from the dumpster at the Hoito, and this afternoon, I’m going to check out that Old Fort William place...I’m excited about that.” coyote took out a visitors map from his.her.its.more-than-human fur. “This place is great.”

“But...what about the story? Haven’t you been paying attention? I thought you were going to be the agent?”

“Relax,” scoffed coyote, “haven’t *you* been paying attention? It’s all underway.”

“What is?”

“The story...the—what did you call it—‘app/rec/i/ative resistance,’” coyote said mockingly.

“So, shouldn’t you be there, or here...or, I don’t know...*doing something?*”

“Just trust!” smirked coyote.

“I’m not sure about trusting my story to a coyote, this is my thesis after all!”

“Well, you should have thought of that before you asked me to be your agent of appreciative resistance.”

“Hmm...perhaps. Oh, by the way...have I mentioned **self-validating reduction?**”

“WHOZAWHAT?” said coyote.

“SELF/VALIDATING/REDUCTION?” mocked the author.

“This just gets better and better” coyote rolls his.her.its.more-than-human eyes. “Let me guess...it’s part of the concept.”

coyote rummages
in his.her.its.more-than-human tattered
seemingly bottomless
backpack
random personal effects
litter the ground
until

his.her.its.more-than-human uncovers a manuscript
entitled

**RISE UP!? AN ANALYSIS OF APPRECIATIVE RESISTANCE IN
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

coyote fingers the tattered pages

“This isn’t in the proposal!” coyote argues.

“You’re a version behind. I emailed you. Check your iPhone.” coyote rummages deeper in his.her.its.more-than-human back pack, and finds his.her.its.more-than-human newfangled.iphone.gadget

“Dead Battery.” coyote reports. “So, give me the reader’s digest.”

“Self Validating Reduction, and its partner concept, **Self Validating Inclusion** are an obvious fit with appreciative resistance—they speak to what’s going on with this over/pass development. I’d like to work it in,” thought the author. “I mean, this is an education thesis, and I think that by promoting self-validating inclusion could be a really educative way for educators to start using activism in their work.”

“Well...where to start explaining these concepts”

“At the beginning, please.”

“Well, yes, but...”

“Just the facts.”

“Ok...we start with relationships between people and other people/things/places/coyotes.” The author scratched his head. “Let’s take coyotes as an example.”

“Oh, this is gonna be a good one,” nodded coyote, clearly amused.

“So, coyotes are tricky more.than.human creatures, right?”

“Ohhhhh yessss, the trickiest.”

“Well, in some parts of the world, coyotes are not respected by people in the same way they used to be, or could be.”

“Don’t I know it!”

“So, for ranchers, coyote are varmints, right?...coyotes need to eat, and often find a meal at the rancher’s farm.”

“Misunderstood, as usual,” remarks coyote with a roll of his.her.its.more-than-human eyes.

“So, the rancher starts shootin’ at coyotes to make them stop shopping for dinner at the ranch...and in response, coyotes become more tricky/sly/underhanded/dubious in order to get a meal every now and again.”

“Those Nasty ranchers,” says coyote.

“But coyotes were bein’ **shot at**...so, of course they had to resort to sneaky tactics...but the ranchers see those coyotes’ tricky/sly/underhanded/dubious tactics as **proof** of what they already **think they know** about coyotes. The circle closes.”

“Mhmmm...” nodded coyote. “I’m not sure I get it yet. Maybe I need a better story. Can you make a story about this?”

“But, we’re in a story, remember?”

“Oh... It’ll be a story within a story, then. I just love those. Do you remember *Noises Off?* All those doors and sardines!” coyote laughed.

“Right...” thought the author. “So, how should our story within a story start?”

“You’ll never believe what happened?”

“You’ll never believe what happened!”

///

and so author told coyote a story
within a story
and the story had a coyote/island/car/backpack/jedi knight/ring of power
and folks named Peter Cole (2002),
Ursula Le Guin (1998)
Thomas King (1994, 2003), and
Anthony Weston (1994)

and at the end
coyote said “**So, the connection between self-validating inclusion, and appreciative resistance in environmental education is in the effort to reverse reductions in our world and create time, space, and place for self-validating inclusion as an educational activist process?**”

“Umm...Yes...Well...” thought the author. But coyote had already packed his.her.its.more-than-human backpack and trotted off into the story.

///

girl passed under the under/pass
and waded through the sintered snowbank
until she could climb up the
talus-like

embankment
 of the over/pass
 in search of specimens
 for the first act of resistance

she collected rocks
 big enough to notice
 small enough to lift
 placed them in her backpack
 and headed back towards the Bora Laskin building

boy waited in the grad lounge
 with the can of spray lacquer that he had been asked to bring along
 as well as bright cans of spray paint in

yellow
 orange

 green

girl entered the lounge
 and dropped her bag with a noisy
 clunk
 she hefted it to the table and
 spilled the rocks loudly.

“What’s the deal?” boy inquired.

“We’re going to paint rocks,” explained girl.

“And, how will that disrupt the over/pass? I thought we were going to paint a mural.”

“Baby steps.”

“So, we’re painting rocks in the university colour scheme?”

“Yes.”

“Doesn’t that play right into their neo-liberal development marketing machine?”

“Maybe it does. But, at least it’s colourful.”

“So, how is this a resistance project, then?”

“Can you grab that cardboard box...and line it with this plastic, please.” She handed him some plastic sheeting and pointed to a box in the corner. “The project is a small effort at turning the negative resistance we’ve seen at the over/pass—the garbage and graffiti, into something a bit more aesthetic, and it helps me deal with my concerns about “guerrilla styles” mural painting, where, we’re basically doing the same thing as the graffiti artists, even if our art is a little more planned and prepared before it goes on the wall.”

“I guess,” said boy. “But, what are we going to do with the painted rocks?”

“Well, I was thinking we’d put them back at the over/pass.”

“Just, back on the slope?”

“Some, maybe. Others I think can be arranged more artistically”

“Like cairns! inuksuks!”

“That’s **one** good idea. I was also thinking we could line the inside of the underpass tunnel with painted rocks.”

“Cool.”

“So, shall we get to work?” a spray can rattled as she shook it.

“But, what about community? I thought you wanted to do a community art project?”

“Today we have a community of two.” She nodded and smiled. “You have to start somewhere.”

“Good point. I think we should put these rocks out as a sample, then next week we can set up a rock painting centre somewhere on campus, where people can paint their own rock.”

“And then, they could either leave the rock with us to put out on the over/pass, or they could take it out and place it themselves.”

“We’ll make up a leaflet that goes with their rock, that explains a bit about what we’re trying to do, and gives them some advice on where and how they might put their coloured rock.”

“And, we’ll make sure they know that our suggestions are just that— suggestions. That they could put their rock anywhere on campus that they like— in particular, places that they think have been **reduced** by development.”

“Imagine the possibilities—small, medium, and large colourfully painted rocks popping up all over campus, in places where people want to see a change in the way that we relate with our space.”

“With a whole lot of them placed at the over/pass, like a shrine to the symbol of thoughtless development that it is.”

“Brilliant.”

“Indeed.”

And so the two painted
and painted
and painted
and painted

until they had
quite a mountain
of yellow

orange

green

rocks

and then they found a resting place to reflect
(since the rocks had to dry anyways)

about the over/pass

how did it come to be?

what kind of suggestion did their efforts make about the over/pass?

about the university

who's in charge?

committees?/BOGs?/Presidents?

LUSUs/students?/communities?

about resistance

were they being effective or "true" in their approach?

and who decides what's *true*

whose interests should be served by the resistance?

whose interests *can* be served given their privilege as white north american university students?

about development

and what constitutes appropriate development at a university campus?

at lakehead university?

about self-validating reduction

and the ways that we reduce the more.than.human world
and thus reduce ourselves

about a shift to self-validating inclusion

and how much education.activist potential it holds

and how HARD and IMPORTANT it is to persevere towards

///

"So, I think my work is done here..." said coyote.

"**BUT**..." protested the author, "What happens next?"

"You're the author, aren't you?"

"Well, yes...but, I thought you were the agent of...what's that concept?"

"**App/rec/i/ative re/sis/tance**," mocked coyote, again.

"Right, so...how will the story finish without an agent of appreciative resistance? Your dancing, and swimming, and dumpster diving, and tourism...it was making it all happen. How can the story finish without you?"

"Well, the wind is changing, and it's time for me to go now. You don't need me any more. You said it yourself...the agent just gets things started." coyote rummaged in his.her.its.more-than-human bag again and grabbed his.her.its.more-than-human umbrella from a hat rack.

"Well... thank you for your help. When will you return?"

"When the wind changes, I guess."

and with that coyote opened his.her.its.more-than-human umbrella
and sailed away with the wind.

the author lamented the loss of the agent

and the (un?)finished story.

like what happens

to girl

and boy

and the over/pass

and colourful rocks

and a mural?

does the resistance go on?

is it a success?

Is there pushback to the process/product/praxis?

the author wonders

if these questions are part of this story

and thinks that they are

just more stories

within stories

within stories

that will be written/read/told/heard/lived

all in good time.

///

Beginning with Thank You!

The sudden transition between voices in my work is always a shock to me. In my endeavours at writing in a discursive, non-linear voice, I always struggle with making a transition to or from a more traditional academic style. In this piece, I wish to ease that transition by using my traditional voice to acknowledge sources significant to the creation and narration of my less traditional story. My story would be lost without allusion to important stories that came before. Cole (1998, 2002), King (1993, 1994, 2003), and Weston (1994) are significant influences in this chapter, and many allusions to their work are offered in the telling of the story. Recognising my debt to those who have come

before, some thanks are in order.

My initial attempt at representing research in a style other than traditional academic voice in an earlier paper was inspired after I engaged with a piece by Cole (2002) as part of my masters coursework. I was interested and amused by his “tongue in cheek” approach to representing research in a unique way. In particular, I was inspired by the visual use of written words, and the space between words to emphasize the auditory nature of language. While I had not noticed a connection at the time, this style supports the oral and performative nature of etiquette in appreciative resistance (Cheney & Weston, 1999). Cole’s work has provided me with inspiration for bringing a non-traditional flavour to the representation of my own research. For this, I am thankful.

In reviewing Cole’s (1998, 2002) work, I was also attracted by the figure of coyote, and began to ponder trickster characters—and what they might have to do with activism and resistance. While my thinking about tricksters was by no means deep, or theoretical in context, I did upturn the notion that the trickster (coyote, in particular) might serve as an “agent of appreciative resistance” in the story I wanted to tell.⁷ While coyote as a character turns up repeatedly in Cole’s (1998, 2002) work, the inspiration for coyote in my story comes from stories by King (1993, 1994, 2003). I was familiar with King’s work, and was fond of his irreverent portrayal of coyote. King’s coyote, while foolish, juvenile, and tricky, is an inherently likeable character, something I wanted very much for the trickster in my tale. I wanted a trickster who would radicalize the more sensible persona of the author, but also one that was nice enough to fit the bill as an agent of

⁷ It seems to me that this might be a significant point of analysis in a literary context. Acknowledging this, I would like to put literary criticism aside, and focus the analysis in this chapter on the connection between appreciative resistance and self-validating reduction that is highlighted in the story.

appreciative resistance. Once I decided on a dialogue between coyote and the author as the central piece of my story, everything else fell into place very quickly. I am thankful for King's wonderful stories, and the inspiration they have provided me in bringing the element of story into my thesis.

A note of appreciation is also extended to Weston (1994), whose thinking about self-validating reduction and self-validating inclusion features prominently in my story, as well as a part of the concept of appreciative resistance. While he is cited elsewhere in this thesis, I think that it is important to acknowledge that his voice speaks through my voice in many parts of the story, in particular the "story within a story" about the reduction of coyotes. Weston's message that "the circle closes" (p. 96) is a key symbol in my understanding of self-validating reduction.

This simple message conjures an image of the isolation that can be created between humans and the more-than-human when the status quo is accepted without thought or question. The closed circle represents limited possibility, potential and value in human existence. Weston's (1994) reimagination of this situation through the concept of self-validating inclusion is a window of opportunity for resisting the reductions of the more-than-human (as well as human reductions) that are ubiquitous in our lives. If self-validating inclusion is a window to possibility, potential, and value, then education is a tool which can help us to open that window. A framework of education that is inclusive of praxis-based activism can help societies to move towards questioning unquestioned assumptions (Evernden, 1985) that lead to self-validating reduction, in turn building a more just world for human and more-than-human alike. My development of this line of thinking is strongly influenced by Weston's work. I offer thanks to him for informing my

story, and the concept on which this thesis is based.

As a final note of thanks, I would like to extend my appreciation to the work of a fellow student, Ali Solaja. While Ali's work is not cited broadly throughout my thesis, her thesis on community art making as environmental education (Solaja, 2007), as well as our friendship, have had immeasurable impact on my work in general, and on this chapter more specifically. Thank you, Ali; I look forward to many more beautiful acts of appreciative resistance.

In closing my acknowledgement of significant inspirations this story, I would like to take a moment to assume responsibility for borrowing from their work. If in "appropriating" voices, characters, and concepts for use in my story, I have somehow taken a misstep in their interpretation or representation, the mistake lies squarely with me.

Approaching Analysis

In approaching the analysis of this case, it is not my intention to simply retell the story in new words. Rather, it is my hope that the over/pass story serves as an entry point from which to continue a discussion about the conceptual analysis that I have conducted throughout this thesis, in particular the potential for an educative activism that begins from an etiquette of appreciation. In many ways, the story itself *is* an *analysis* of this situation; but I wish to augment the analysis conducted within the story. What I hope to achieve in the following pages is to clarify and reinforce, in a more traditional voice, what I have already put forward in my story about self-validating inclusion and its connection to educative activism.

The Over/pass Development as Self-validating Reduction

The story that I have told in this chapter focuses on a fictional activist project that is critical of the recent construction of a new parking lot and roadway with a large over/pass on the Lakehead University campus. My intention in telling this story has been to highlight the importance of resisting development that degrades our relationships with the more-than-human environment around us, and how this kind of resistance can be achieved through activist based education. Towards this end, a clear understanding of the concepts of self-validating reduction and self-validating inclusion (Weston, 1994) are required.

In the story, the author tells coyote a story about the reductions of relationship between coyotes and humans in order to illustrate the nature of self-validating reduction. The overarching story about the development of the over/pass at Lakehead mimics the same pattern of self-validating reduction. A few years ago in response to a shortage of parking spaces on campus, a new gravel parking lot was built adjacent to where the over/pass stands now. Some members of the campus community complained that the construction of a new parking lot was not consistent with the environmental values that university claimed to hold. Others didn't understand the concern—the extra parking spaces were needed, and after all, “it's only a grassy field.”

Later, the gravel parking lot became part of the new ring road that was being constructed on campus to facilitate better access and traffic flow around the university. The giant cement and gravel over/pass is a feature of the ring road, allowing pedestrian and bicycle traffic to pass below the cars. Further along in the planning for campus development there is a plan to build an arena on campus, in a multiplex arrangement that

includes shops and food vendors.

In the context of self-validating reduction, the parking lot leads to the ring road, which quite literally paves the way for the over/pass, which makes parking and car access to the university easier, in turn providing a convenient location for an arena, and while you're at that, you might as well build in some shops and services and whatnot. Each stage references the last, and reinforces the next. After a while it becomes difficult to remember that there was once a more natural space on campus. This process of self-validating reduction is subtle (Weston, 1994), and as such can be difficult to notice and resist against—almost everyone in the campus community just accepts development as just the way things are (marino, 1997)! As the circle closes, “even more drastic and complete types of exploitation become conceivable” (Weston, 1994, p. 96). My story in this chapter is one of educational resistance against the over/pass development, and against self-validating reduction as a broader context. The activist response to the over/pass that is detailed in the author/coyote/boy/girl story is, I hope, an example of the opposite of self-validating reduction, a self-validating inclusion.

Appreciative Resistance:

Towards Educative Activism Through Self-Validating Inclusion

Weston's (1994) notion of self-validating inclusion can be thought of as a manifestation of what marino calls “cracks in consent” (1997, p. 23). Appreciative resistance, in its focus on openness to a range of possibilities and perspectives, offers students and educators an invitation to fracture the consent that incubates self-validating reduction. By fracturing consent, I mean that students and teachers engaged in educative activism cut holes in the hegemony that convinces us that the status quo is the only

possible way things can be. It is from this invitation to disrupt hegemony that there is potential to turn self-validating reduction on its head, to create a self-validating inclusion.

Calling on students to question their consent of the status quo through an invitation is a critical factor in doing appreciative resistance (and thus, educative activism). By inviting students to begin a journey of questioning previously unquestioned assumptions in their worlds (or by accepting an invitation to appreciative resistance that is made by the students), tensions between education and indoctrination may be relaxed. There should not be a baited lure with which students are drawn in a particular direction, but rather a modest invitation to explore an example set by an educator. Making or accepting such an invitation is an example of the reflectively tentative etiquette that characterizes appreciative resistance, and is consistent with Næss' (Næss & Jickling, 2000) thinking about pointing students in a direction when dealing with controversial issues, as discussed in Chapter II. Næss (Næss & Jickling, 2000) advocates the use of open-ended statements, like "if statements" to help students understand the educator's position without unduly influencing the students' own positions on the issue. In a reverse formulation, students bring the invitation to the teacher for consideration—think of the educational possibilities created by carefully accepting such a gift!

In the story, two graduate students begin a resistance effort against development on campus using techniques of appreciative resistance that are consistent with an educative activism. Their rock painting adventures represent an invitation to transform self-validating reduction into self-validating inclusion. Their efforts open possibilities for thinking about the over/pass in new ways. One way of seeing their resistance is as a "reimagining"; the over/pass doesn't have to loom over the landscape as an example of a

domineering, human-centred relationship with the land—rather, it could act as a question mark, enticing community members to think about practices of development on campus, and the types of relationships that the campus community wants to pursue with the more-than-human world. Asking these kinds of questions of the campus community also invites them to participate with an etiquette of appreciative resistance.

As the character boy in the story suggested, the coloured rocks have the potential to emanate from the over/pass, and be placed all around campus, in places where community members want to draw attention to reduction. The colourful rocks have the potential to serve as a central symbol of the cracks in consent to which marino (1997) refers, and could recast the meaning that community members ascribe to the over/pass as a symbol. Educative activism offers a means of realizing potential fractures in hegemony through opportunities to engage in ethical decision-making and to take actions alongside those decisions, as part of a resistance to self-validating reduction (Cheney & Weston, 1999; Jickling, 2005b). In this way, appreciative resistance is both a roadblock to self-validating reduction, and a vehicle towards self-validating inclusion. Through a commitment to respect for a range of positions around an issue, demonstrated in etiquette, appreciative resistance is intentionally aligned with educational aims (Hare, 1964).

Final Thoughts

The stories told in these two cases are a test of the conceptual analysis conducted in preceding chapters. In reviewing the “results,” it seems that creating a symbol of our commitment to improving human/more-than-human relationships is not a short or simple task—and neither is educative activism. Much like the story told in this chapter finished

without a concrete ending, building a healthy relationship with the more-than-human world through educative activism will take time, and will likely be resisted. For some, these ideas will seem far-fetched or absurd. Asking the field near the over/pass to join our campus community simply isn't within everybody's comfort zone, but given the right invitation, perhaps it could be. Such an invitation may be a first crack in consent (marino, 1997) on campus that appreciative resistance can infiltrate, and with an approach founded in awareness respect, initiate further disruption of hegemony that excludes the more-than-human world.

These cases build on, and test the analysis that I have conducted in Chapters II and III. In the landswap case, I was able to explore an example of activism that I have been personally engaged in and parse it for examples of the kinds of openness and respectful etiquette that characterize appreciative resistance. The test revealed that while it may be difficult to structure a whole event or campaign around appreciative resistance, individual activists, prepared with appreciative skills such as awareness (Stavros & Torres, 2006) and respect are able to implement an etiquette of activism that will bring a flavour of appreciative resistance to the activist event.

In the over/pass story, I have constructed an invented case (Wilson, 1963) that allowed me to test my analysis of educative activism and appreciative resistance in an ideal example. This approach has revealed nuances of the concept of appreciative resistance that may not have been evident in a more traditional analysis. The primary learning drawn from this case is the close connection between the elements of appreciative resistance (appreciation, etiquette, and praxis) and Weston's (1994) concept of self-validating invitation. The two concepts are mutually supportive; invitation

initiates appreciative resistance, which in turn validates and perpetuates the invitation further. We see this in the rock painting initiative in my story; the characters plant a seed that may grow into a symbol of self-validating reduction that could entice others to reconsider take up the cause of reframing self-validating reduction as self-validating invitation. The over/pass case shows the potential for appreciative resistance (through rock painting, in this case) to be used as a means of pointing out self-validating reductions and creating fractures in the hegemony (marino, 1997) of reduction, so that reductions might be repositioned towards invitations, and in the longer term, inclusion.

///
 the author surveyed the story
 at dusk
 bright rays of vermillion refracting
 off the ATAC bora laskin glass
 the over/pass a dark silhouette
 a tiny four-footed figure
 is perched on its apex
 dancing and laughing
 in the sunset

///

Chapter VI

Conclusion—Returning to Highway 401

In beginning this thesis, I told of my rush hour commute across highway 401 as a genesis of my interest in studying environmental education. Later in Chapter III, I discussed this story again in the context of appreciative resistance as a form of educative activism. In this chapter, I return to my commuting anecdote to review the significant points of each chapter and apply them to see if educative activism through appreciative resistance might have promise in resolving the physical, environmental, and emotional gridlock I experienced in the time that I was commuting.

In Chapter II, I outlined a conceptual understanding of education that includes some degree and form of activism in the achievement of its aims. This requires that the approach to activism used in an educational context has the intention of education, and not of indoctrination. To achieve an educational focus, educative activism is characterized by a relaxed, friendly, and respectful learning environment where students and educators can explore activism together. Such a learning environment is supported by a dialogical approach to pedagogy in the vein of conscientization (Freire, 1968/1970; Clover, 2002). In an environment of educative activism, the educator fills an integrated role of educator/activist. This integration creates a check and balance system, that prevents the aims of either concept from marginalizing the other. This is an important factor in educative activism, as it limits potential for educational aims to be overshadowed by activism, or for education to become sterile and apolitical if activism is excluded. The concept of educative activism is carried forward in Chapter III in the development of my concept of appreciative resistance.

Appreciative resistance (developed in Chapter III) is a concept that may help educators to enact educative activism and avoid coercion or manipulation of students' opinions, ideas, or actions, through a commitment to student empowerment through the development of critical thinking. Three elements constitute appreciative resistance: appreciation, etiquette, and praxis. Appreciation is characterized through Cooperrider's principles of appreciative resistance (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider et al., 2005), and Stavros and Torres's additional principle of awareness, which is interpreted as a big picture understanding of one's self and relationships with others as they relate to living the appreciative principles (constructivism, positivity, poetics, simultaneity, and anticipation). Appreciation provides a context for enacting etiquette; which I have described as a mindful tentativeness of action. The tentativeness of etiquette buys time for considering appreciation, and how actions will affect relationships with others in the world. The element of praxis connects both appreciation and etiquette with knowledge and understanding, through reflection that co-occurs with action. These relationships between the concepts that constitute appreciative resistance are further explored in the cases examined in Chapters IV and V.

The cases that show possible examples of appreciative resistance created space in which to test, and extend the analysis of education and educative activism that I conducted in earlier chapters. These tests revealed nuances of the concept of appreciative resistance in ways that could not have been achieved through traditional analysis. Uncovering the finer contours of educative activism and appreciative resistance strengthens the concepts and their usefulness in helping students to become engaged members of society through education.

In returning to my 401 story, I wonder, given the elements of educative activism in the analysis of cases in Chapters IV and V, what would an appreciative resistance to the gridlock problem on GTA highways look like? Certainly, an appreciative etiquette characterized by consideration and respect would be the starting place—inviting students to consider or re-consider their ethics as they build an understanding of the importance of activism as a process of democracy. Through praxis, student voices would be central in making decisions about approaches to activism, and whether car culture and commuting is a subject needy of activism at all. This could mean that students engaged in educative activism through appreciative resistance are empowered to lead their own activist learning while the educator serves as a facilitator who takes responsibility for navigating away from potential pitfalls that may take activism outside of educational aims.

What kind of means might an appreciative resistance incorporate, specifically where my commuting story is concerned? Drawing on the cases that show characteristics of appreciative resistance, the approach would need to be thoughtful, but is also likely to be unconventional and clever, like the golfer demonstration of the landswap campaign, or the rock painting of the over/pass story. The key to educative activism in both of these examples is that the activism gets both the activists and those who they are informing and protesting to think about the issues in meaningful ways without belittling or demonizing those with differing views. The activists are not about converting or forming peoples' opinions based on slogans or clever persuasion, but rather by helping themselves and others to take time and work through the difficult thinking required to take an ethical stance on the issue. Providing an inspiration for real thinking about difficult issues is a keystone element of both educative activism and appreciative resistance.

Drawing parallels between the cases I have considered, and my commuting anecdote, I think that an appreciative resistance to this issue would require students to conduct activism that invites and entices people to reconsider the notion that driving your car a long distance to work each day is simply the way our society operates, but that doesn't force or guilt people into thinking in any one direction. It is just such approaches in the case examples that have brought on marino's (1997) cracks in consent—for instance helping people to rethink the importance of green space on campus, or of how our consent to thoughtless development enables a self-validating reduction of that green space in the first place. These small cracks that pave the way for large scale change, and I hope that throughout this thesis I have begun to uncover ways that educators might help their students to recognize their ability to be agents of these changes, to be active in building the future that they want to live in.

Significance and Limitations

The significance of this thesis lies in helping students to understand their own ability to make change in the world, and to mobilize that ability through education without brainwashing students, overtly or subtly, into any particular ideology. Contemporary educational environments are often politically and ethically sanitized (Jickling, 2003); Educators are afraid to help their students to think about controversial issues for fear of drawing negative attention to their practices, even if those practices are pedagogically sound. Given such an educational climate, it seems to me that a conceptualization of education that is inclusive of a type of activism that will help students to become engaged and informed citizens is a timely theoretical development, one that both draws on and extends existing conceptualizations of the criteria and aims of

education (Hare, 1964; Peters, 1966). Furthermore, a concept that provides educators with direction for applying a conceptualization of educative activism to their daily practices is a useful tool for drawing the idea of educative activism into regular use in education.

A second point of significance in this project is the application of my approach to conceptual analysis, which I outlined in the first part of Chapter II. My approach is based in the conceptual analysis pioneered by philosophers of the analytical tradition (c.f. Deleuze & Guetarri, 1994; Peters, 1966, 1967, 1973; Wilson, 1963), but is illuminated by ideas from postmodern examples of critical pedagogy (c.f. Giroux, 2004, 2007b; Kincheloe, 2005; McLaren, 1989). Conceptual analysis is a powerful tool for outlining the characteristics and contours of concepts, and for highlighting the interrelationships between concepts. In a project on activism and education, though, power and influence are major considerations. While the analytical tradition certainly investigates the education indoctrination tension, critical pedagogy brings a clear message about the importance of socio-ecological justice issues in education, as well as the primacy of student agency in educational milieus, which I felt was very important to include in my discussion of an educative activism.

While bridging the analytical and critical traditions is a task much larger than a thesis of this size could accommodate, I think that by illuminating my conceptual analysis with ideas from postmodern critical pedagogy I offer a “nudge” to analytical philosophy to consider questions about identity, subjectivity, and the nature of concepts that are central to postmodern discourse in education. While this effort might be disparaged by some (c.f. Barrow & Woods, 2006), I think that it is an important step forward in

educational theory, and that both traditions are strengthened and validated through collaboration with, and challenge by the other.

While this thesis provides some significant questions and directions for thinking about activism as an educational endeavour, it is not the whole story. The project is limited by its scope and by what can reasonably be included in a project of this length. The conceptualization of an education that embraces activism is a career's work; this is the tip of the iceberg, so to speak. Moreover, the concept of appreciative resistance, which I have developed herein is newborn, and therefore is necessarily under development and refinement, and will continue to be until well after this thesis is printed and bound. Working with a concept that has been developing as my thesis is written means that it is difficult to draw sweeping conclusions from these cases. However, given the postmodern influence on my approach, and the focus in appreciative resistance on everyday ethics (Jickling, 2004) and ethics-based epistemology, it seems that sweeping conclusions might be undesirable anyways.

Returning to Jickling (2005b), I think that the end of this thesis (for me, at least) signifies the beginning of an important rest stop—a place to put into praxis the ideas conceived of in this thesis. At this juncture, some important summary ideas arise from the conceptual work I have undertaken, which can provide guideposts for action as this rest stop begins. To further develop and support the concepts of educative activism and appreciative resistance, educators (myself included) can:

- Enact a conception of education that includes activism as a more central process. Recognizing that education works on both conceptual and practical levels, the ideas about education and activism discussed in this thesis must be lived in the real world in order to make a difference. Educators (myself included) can watch

closely for lived examples of the overlap of education and activism in their practices, and work hard to highlight such examples for others, so that conceptions of educative activism, and recognition of a place for activism within education might become more widespread.

- Be mindful of tensions between education and indoctrination. In the practice of educative activism (through appreciative resistance, or otherwise), educators can take stock of their approach to activism, and reflect on the aims (Hare, 1964) connected to each. It is important for the success of educative activism that educators aim at teaching activism in ways that empower learners to be independent critical thinkers. Where environmental education is concerned, students may apply these skills to advocate on behalf of a variety of important local and global issues; such engagement is a crucial part of citizenship in the modern world.
- Continue to test and recreate the concept of appreciative resistance. By acting on the above two points, educators can quite literally field test the concept of appreciative resistance by practicing educative activism that begins with etiquette and environmental ethics. Such appreciative approaches can serve as an invitation for students to engage in positively driven activist processes that show them that their efforts can lead to change in the world. This notion is not often made explicit in the sanitized models of education in common use today.
- Include appreciative approaches in their pedagogy. The case examples discussed in this thesis highlight the potential for educative activism when an appreciative approach is taken to teaching about activism. Educators who use positively focused approaches to educative activism create more possible evidence to support the concept of appreciative resistance as a means to educative activism.

Where to from Here? Directions for Further Research

The analysis conducted in this thesis opens a variety of avenues for future research in conceptual, and empirical (both interpretive and positivist) arenas of study.

The cases that are presented here are conceptual in nature, and my voices narrate the stories throughout. In further inquiry, it would be informative to draw on the voices of

others—teachers and students involved in the praxis of appreciative resistance. The *doing* of appreciative resistance will be of critical importance in the future of its development as a concept. It is not enough to postulate about frameworks of educative activism, they must be practiced and storied, both at the performed level (the doing of appreciative resistance) and at the research level. Telling more stories with a diversity of voices will add a richness and depth to the concept. An empirical (qualitative or quantitative) approach to research would bring a different flavour to the inquiry, and might further test my conceptual findings. This may be important work in a research climate where “empirical” scholarship sometimes carries more weight than other avenues of research.

In particular, I am interested in further investigation of the role that educative activism and appreciative resistance might play in schools specifically. In this thesis I have made an effort at positioning education in the widest sense possible (Walsh, 1993). I thought that it was important that a first attempt at conceptualizing appreciative resistance represented education widely, and not only in the most commonly understood context of schools. However, schools are an overbearing landmark in the contemporary educational landscape, and they serve many more social functions than just education (Barrow & Woods, 2006), some of which are a hindrance to the development of a socially engaged citizenry (Kincheloe, 2007). Further exploring the notion of educative activism in schools through both conceptual and empirical approaches may help to expose the fallacy of neutrality that schools seem to perpetrate, which would help move schools toward a more central position on the continuum of open to loaded understandings of education (Walsh, 1993).

Final Thoughts

I began in Chapter I with a personal rationale for undertaking this study. It seems fitting to end with some personal reflection as well. Producing and developing this project over the past 15 months has been at the same time an exciting and stressful process. I have moved in many different directions before arriving at the product that you see before you, and I anticipate that this development will continue indefinitely after these pages are printed and bound. While my interpretations of literature and discourse has and will change over time, my initial belief that prompted me to undertake a thesis on environmental education remains unchanged—that environmental education can help us solve many of the ecological and social problems that our world faces. I hope in these pages that I have created a thesis that through stories and cases asks difficult questions, and begins to provide some possible guideposts for thinking through activist problems, and that readers leave these pages with those questions and guideposts in mind as they set out to enact their own stories of etiquette, create new questions, and erect more guideposts.

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