

Entangle, Entangled, Entanglements: Reimagining a Child and Youth Engagement Model Using a Common Worlds Approach

Virginia Caputo

Volume 47, numéro 3, juin 2022

Ecological Challenges with/in Contemporary Childhoods Special Issue

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1090103ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs202219640>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Canadian Association for Young Children

ISSN

2371-4107 (imprimé)

2371-4115 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Caputo, V. (2022). Entangle, Entangled, Entanglements: Reimagining a Child and Youth Engagement Model Using a Common Worlds Approach. *Journal of Childhood Studies*, 47(3), 8–20. <https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs202219640>

Résumé de l'article

This paper responds to the call to explore pedagogical relations and dialogues in considering how to create climate pedagogies that are responsive, dynamic, and transformative in thinking about human and nonhuman relations. Using the lens of entanglement, the paper attempts to bring into dialogue children's rights and more-than-human ways of thinking to understand what, if any, commonalities lie in these two projects and whether and how a rights-respecting approach can be productively reconfigured in envisaging a dynamic climate pedagogy. It considers several tensions that arise from this entangled dialogue to probe both the overlaps and points of incommensurability in the two approaches. This includes viewing asymmetrical power and logics of coloniality that assert themselves through rights discourses and rights-based techniques based in an Anglo-Eurocentric worldview that narrowly defines who is included in the "human" of human rights. To illustrate these entanglements, the paper draws on a child/youth-led and child/youth-driven participatory model called Shaking the Movers (STM) created in 2007 by the Landon Pearson Centre and used with youth as well as with children in early childhood and other settings across Canada each year. The model aims to enable children's civil and political rights. Shaking the Movers was used as the framework for a workshop held in Williams Lake, British Columbia in 2017. The workshop serves as a case study in this paper to illustrate some of the entanglements that arise in practice when considering rights-respecting and more-than-human approaches. The analysis draws on scholarship from several disciplinary locations, including Stuart Aitken's critical childhood concept of the post-child, Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw and Affrica Taylor's notion of agency as not exclusively human and conceived as collective rather than an outcome of individual intent, and Shenila Khoja-Moolji's analysis of an ethic of interdependency and alliance when understanding human rights in context. Each of these perspectives informs a contemplation of how to reconfigure the Shaking the Movers model amplify its strengths. The paper concludes with thoughts on the ways entanglements create a productive space both for bringing together a more-than-human and rights-respecting approach to attend to actions emanating from the margins and for invigorating and understanding how to meaningfully engage children located in interconnected and interdependent worlds.

Copyright © Virginia Caputo, 2022



Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

é
rudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

Entangle, Entangled, Entanglements: Reimagining a Child and Youth Engagement Model Using a Common Worlds Approach

Virginia Caputo

Dr. Virginia Caputo is an associate professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University, Ottawa, and since 2011 the director of the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights. From 2005 to 2009 she directed the Pauline Jewett Institute of Women's and Gender Studies, helping to design and launch a graduate program on the themes of transnational feminisms and globalization. Her particular contribution is her expertise on girlhoods, gendered childhoods, and the changing contours of young people's lives in global and decolonial contexts. Dr. Caputo's interdisciplinary work lies at the intersection of feminism, anthropology, and childhood/girlhood research. Her ethnographic research focuses on investigating the lives of children and youth, especially girls and young women, viewed as engaged social actors. Her contributions to the literature span anthropology, girlhood studies, the social study of childhood, feminist scholarship, and feminist musicology. She is cofounder, with Landon Pearson, and the managing editor of the *Canadian Journal of Children's Rights*. Email: virginia.caputo@carleton.ca

This paper responds to the call to explore pedagogical relations and dialogues in considering how to create climate pedagogies that are responsive, dynamic, and transformative in thinking about human and nonhuman relations. Using the lens of entanglement, the paper attempts to bring into dialogue children's rights and more-than-human ways of thinking to understand what, if any, commonalities lie in these two projects and whether and how a rights-respecting approach can be productively reconfigured in envisaging a dynamic climate pedagogy. It considers several tensions that arise from this entangled dialogue to probe both the overlaps and points of incommensurability in the two approaches. This includes viewing asymmetrical power and logics of coloniality that assert themselves through rights discourses and rights-based techniques based in an Anglo-Eurocentric worldview that narrowly defines who is included in the "human" of human rights. To illustrate these entanglements, the paper draws on a child/youth-led and child/youth-driven participatory model called Shaking the Movers (STM) created in 2007 by the Landon Pearson Centre and used with youth as well as with children in early childhood and other settings across Canada each year. The model aims to enable children's civil and political rights. Shaking the Movers was used as the framework for a workshop held in Williams Lake, British Columbia in 2017. The workshop serves as a case study in this paper to illustrate some of the entanglements that arise in practice when considering rights-respecting and more-than-human approaches. The analysis draws on scholarship from several disciplinary locations, including Stuart Aitken's critical childhood concept of the post-child, Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw and Affrica Taylor's notion of agency as not exclusively human and conceived as collective rather than an outcome of individual intent, and Shenila Khoja-Moolji's analysis of an ethic of interdependency and alliance when understanding human rights in context. Each of these perspectives informs a contemplation of how to reconfigure the Shaking the Movers model amplify its strengths. The paper concludes with thoughts on the ways entanglements create a productive space both for bringing together a more-than-human and rights-respecting approach to attend to actions emanating from the margins and for invigorating and understanding how to meaningfully engage children located in interconnected and interdependent worlds.

Key words: *more-than human; children's rights; common worlds*

Entangle, entangled, entanglements. Bronwyn Davies (2019) discusses entanglements as a constant interweaving process wherein children “resist, challenge, indulge and transgress gendered ways of becoming through their inter- and intra-actions with humans (e.g., peers, parents, educators), nonhumans (e.g., material, animal) and the more-than-human (e.g., computers)” (p. 37). Using the lens of entanglement, the purpose of this article is to consider the possibility of an entangled space that draws together elements of rights-based and common worlds approaches to bring them into dialogue. According to Affrica Taylor and Miriam Giugni (2012), a common worlds approach is “a conceptual framework developed to reconceptualise inclusion in early childhood communities. Common worlds take account of children’s relations with all the others in their worlds—including the more-than-human others” (p. 108). This view employs an expansive concept of agency where human relationships emerge and are entangled with nonhuman and more-than-human others. While drawing on a common worlds approach, my intent is not to reconcile it with a rights-based one; rather, it is to attempt to create a space to consider how to broaden a rights-based approach with its individualizing tendencies by using a lens of entangled human, nonhuman, and more-than-human relations.

The impetus for thinking about the possibility of overlaps in these two projects of children’s rights and common worlds approaches stems from identifying a gap in the way that a child and youth engagement model called Shaking the Movers (STM), with which I have been involved through the Landon Pearson Children’s Rights Centre, employs a rights-based approach after seeing it unfold several times in practice. Briefly, the Honourable Landon Pearson and her colleagues created the STM model over a decade ago to fulfill their interest in designing a youth-driven and youth-led workshop where young people could explore their rights while adult allies remained on the periphery of the workshop space (Pearson & Collins, 2011). The original idea was to create a model to engage children and young people in rights conversations and activities while disrupting an adult-centric design. The goals of the model are threefold: to gain awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to explore connections between civil and political rights and young people’s lives in practical contexts, and to develop understanding of associations among childhood, young adulthood, rights, and social change in a contemporary context.

The model that Pearson and her colleagues envisaged in 2007 would amplify children’s perspectives and views and offer them an opportunity to learn more about the CRC, their civil and political rights, and how to activate their rights in substantive ways. The idea was to create a design with children and young people at the centre of organizing, directing, and implementing the model with their peers, while adults could act as allies by offering logistical support and by listening and then responding to children’s and young people’s views and concerns with tangible actions.

While a premise of the model is its relational element, one of the issues that came to my attention was how this relational element could be reconciled with the individualized, neoliberal conception of rights used to frame the model that reflects Western notions of autonomy, choice, and freedom. By this I mean that the Shaking the Movers model assumes an autonomous individual and upholds a particular view of children and childhood that is steeped in Western values and norms, presuming, for instance, that children have both the freedom and capability to ensure their rights will be upheld. Thus, the universality of rights is emphasized with duty bearers held accountable, although in practice they merely need to be informed of, and acknowledge, children’s perspectives. While the model has been revised over the years to address relational critiques, gaps remain in the model’s design and how and whether it fully attends to relational and contextual features.

Since 2007, the Landon Pearson Centre has supported Shaking the Movers workshops in many regions in Canada. In 2019, for instance, workshops were held with children and young people aged 8 to 17 in locations including

Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Moncton, Iqaluit, Edmonton, and Vancouver, and Shaking the Movers early childhood workshops were piloted with younger children aged 3 to 5. With the assistance of local academic partners who help to provide the infrastructure for the workshops, young people design the content and lead and facilitate each workshop, which is organized around a particular theme (or an article of the CRC) decided on by the previous year's young participants. Originally, from 2007 to 2011, the workshops were organized and hosted by the Landon Pearson Centre over a two-day weekend on the Carleton University campus in Ottawa. Participants and their chaperones stayed in the campus residences and attended the workshop on Saturday and Sunday, with informal activities on Saturday evening. Since 2011, workshops have moved to regional locations and some have been designed as one-day events. Since 2020, they have been held virtually on Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each workshop has a lead academic organizer who works with several youth facilitators. They meet ahead of each Shaking the Movers workshop to discuss the themes they would like to highlight with the participants and subsequently devise arts-based activities to explore each theme at the event. The workshop usually begins with an overview and discussion of the articles of the CRC that pertain to the theme. Youth facilitators lead this overview presentation. Following this opening session, the day is divided into different activities. The event ends with a circle gathering to acknowledge everyone's participation and to discuss next steps that participants would like to see happen. In whatever configuration, the workshop is in the hands of young people; they act as facilitators, participants, and note-takers and author the culminating report that captures young peoples' words, artwork, perspectives, and concerns. These reports are circulated by the Landon Pearson Centre to "movers"—adults who make decisions on behalf of children and young people in different sectors, including academia, government, policy, education, health and legal sectors, and child- and youth-serving agencies. Landon Pearson circulates the culminating reports to members of her Child Rights Academic Network (CRAN), whose members include academics, advocates, lawyers, nongovernmental and government employees working with child and youth issues, and graduate students.¹ Consistently, STM workshop participants report that STM provides an opportunity for them to participate authentically, in part because the model supports a process locally owned by children themselves. Over the past 14 years, STM has grown into a sustainable participatory structure that forges connections between young people and adults in a dialogue about what is important to children and how this can impact decision-making processes that uphold and respect children's civil and political rights. The workshops have generated a cohort of children and young people who are now aware of their rights, understand how international human rights legislation affects their lives, and are able to speak for themselves and on behalf of their peers from an informed position. STM supports and recognizes children's capacities for participation as active citizens who know and understand that they are important and their civil and political rights matter. What seems evident from feedback from participants over the years is that when children and young people find themselves in places they perceive as safe, they are more likely to express their views and experiences. One clear and consistent message heard from young people after they attend an STM workshop is that it is the first time they have felt that their views and perspectives have been heard and taken seriously. They report feeling an enhanced level of confidence both as individuals and as part of a larger collective to effectively address issues relevant for young people's lives through their new understanding of a rights-based approach. The culminating reports document stories of personal growth and awareness and a broadened view of the ways rights are intertwined with lived experiences. The creative and collaborative STM space enables these connections and reflections to flourish by transferring power to children and young people and consistently positioning them as the ones who lead the movers. Participants have reported leaving STM workshops understanding that as rights holders, they can hold to account the duty bearers who make decisions on their behalf.

Thus the Shaking the Movers workshops have been highly successful in bringing together children and young people to discuss the CRC and learn about their rights. However, a gap remains regarding the model's relational

aspect. In this regard, my argument is twofold. First, given that participation is at the core of the model, more attention needs to be paid to the overemphasis on individuals and less on participation viewed as relational, entangled, and dependent on having access and opportunities in the context of diverse social relationships. The gap in my view is to move beyond a focus on children and youth, to decenter the model (Spyrou et al., 2019), in order to attend to structures of inequality and oppression that situate individuals in contexts and in relations with others in a far more complex way than the present model allows. Second, while the workshop enables children and young people to “shake the movers,” there is no mechanism in place to assess whether movers have implemented the recommendations articulated by STM participants, nor is there any mechanism to make adults accountable to children and young people. This gap could be addressed with an entanglement model that sees intergenerational activism and advocacy as a possibility.

Shaking the Movers: An example from Williams Lake, British Columbia

In 2017, the Landon Pearson Centre supported local academic organizers to organize a Shaking the Movers workshop for children and young people living in Williams Lake, British Columbia. The organizers incorporated restorative justice elements into the original model design, and this modification is what piqued my initial curiosity that eventually led to the question posed in this paper. Given the presence of this restorative justice approach, I was interested in whether the Williams Lake workshop could be used as a case to understand whether and how a lens of entanglement might illuminate a way to reimagine Shaking the Movers to move beyond the individual child figure that anchors the design and is used in children’s rights discourse. My interest is in contemplating youth engagement as an interrelationship among human, nonhuman, and more-than-human elements. Thus, using a critical childhood studies lens, the questions that frame this paper include: How can theorizing the entanglement at the interface of a human-centered rights-based approach and a common worlds perspective offer insights into developing a dynamic and responsive pedagogy? What effect does theorizing this entanglement have on understanding the workings of each approach? Finally, in what ways might the STM model be reconfigured, and how might this revised model account for and attend to contextual and relational elements, including settler colonial logics, racialized histories, and socio-political and economic inequalities that constitute the contexts in which the model is implemented?

Admittedly, theorizing this entanglement is hardly straightforward given that rights-based approaches are human-centered while common worlds approaches move the child focus to the periphery in order to attend to the interdependency of the human, nonhuman, and more-than-human. To consider Shaking the Movers, then, through a lens of entanglement requires a suspension of prioritizing either approach. One must also make a conceptual effort to see beyond discourses, including those that problematically invest in the universal child figure tethered to biology and immaturity, in order to disrupt the focus on the child in need of protection and to use the concept of interdependence to interrupt a static view that depends on a universal, normative, and individualized rights subject with choice, autonomy, and free will. Sarada Balagopalan (2018) traces the reliance on this rights subject and points to three broad models that emerge in children’s rights scholarship: one that is philosophical, a second that has a pragmatic focus on implementation of rights provision, and a third focused on participation and an agentic child subject capable of exercising their rights (p. 127).

Each of the three models rests on a singular child figure and assumes a universal biology according to age that aligns with a Western bourgeois ideal of childhood circulated by the CRC (Boyden, 2003; Nieuwenhuys, 1998). The model in children’s rights scholarship focusing on participation is perhaps most pertinent for the present consideration of Shaking the Movers with its emphasis on “voice” and its intent to provide young people with a space from which to speak. While the emphasis here may highlight agency that is lacking in the other children’s rights models

Balagopalan highlights, which perceive children as needing protection, it nonetheless problematically posits agency as “giving voice” rather than viewing agency as a process. Critiques of this view of agency as transparent authenticity are found in recent critical childhood studies scholarship that seeks to decenter and move beyond the individual child figure to attend more specifically to relationality and contextual features of agency (Krafft, 2006; Spyrou et al., 2018). In these critiques, agency does not begin from the assumption that all children possess a rights-based subjectivity; rather, they critically consider this formulation, the power that informs such a view, and the implications for children of deploying agency as choice and free will, especially for those living in racialized, postcolonial, and settler colonial contexts. Further, common worlds approaches conceptually regard agency by viewing humans as agentic subjects among many (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Khatrar, 2018; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Taylor, 2019), although scholars note the destruction and violence that accrues from human agency (Haraway, 2008; Latour, 2005). Agency is viewed as productive of relations with others in the world rather than solely held by individuals, especially given the urgency that current environmental conditions demand (Cohen et al., 2011).

In addition to agency, the concept of responsabilization that rests on individual children as agents of the future emerges in children’s rights discourses rather than a view that acknowledges their presence in the world of adults and the notion of a collective future. Responsibilization is embedded in the language of children as rights holders and adults as duty bearers, which features in children’s rights discourse, including the Shaking the Movers model, where children also bear responsibility in this formulation. Not only does this language reflect neoliberal ideals, it positions children through individual agency as responsible to act to find solutions to the very problems they encounter in their lives rather than illuminating the structural features and the historical and cultural-political contexts in which children live. In effect, the language positions children as both the source of the problem and those who potentially hold, or could be held responsible to find, solutions to these problems. One example can be seen in how children are responsabilized as individual stewards of the environment and those who care for the natural world (conceived as existing separately from, rather than entangled with, adult’s and young people’s lives) where nature is to be acted upon and controlled. In this formulation, human mastery over the environment is enabled by a view of nature as a human resource. Thus, the neoliberal and colonialist views embedded in the language of responsabilization are at odds with common worlds approaches that attend to the interdependence and indivisibility of the concepts of children, childhood, nature, and environments, each of which is agentic and situated in dynamic historical and political contexts.

In view of these critiques of some of the conceptual features of children’s rights discourse, attempting to locate points of overlap between rights-based and common worlds approaches presents significant challenges. However, Hanson and Nieuwenhuys’s (2013) notion of children’s rights as a “living practice” may provide a fruitful pathway. They argue that rights should be seen as an “imperfect compromise” negotiated at particular points in time and in specific contexts, albeit by individuals in relation with others. The question to consider is whether this view might be configured to recognize that despite the contradictory meanings children’s rights hold, rights as living practice might be extended to encompass material, nonhuman, and more-than-human elements through an emphasis on interdependency rather than individuality to highlight relationality shaped by children’s collective concerns.

In reflecting on the design of the STM model, it seems to me that the notions of both living practice and imperfect compromise might offer possibilities for reimagining this model, in part because elements that are central, such as place making, are relationally understood and rooted in the intricacies of locales that seek to honour children’s lives in respectful and dignified ways. The “compromise” is to consider whether rights-based models that feature value-laden concepts such as rights, freedom, and choice, and that serve to problematically position the human as rational and self-interested, can be reconfigured in reconstituting STM in view of a common worlds approach. Shaking the Movers Williams Lake is an example of a workshop that places value in local, place-based action

thus activating ideas of connection, interdependence, and collectivity in recognizing multiple ways of living. The theme of “displacement and climate change” was explored at the workshop in Williams Lake, the site of a massive forest fire that had a profound effect on the community there. The forest fire is a significant element of the material conditions in which children are emplaced in Williams Lake that goes beyond an isolated incident. Rather, the fire that occurred in 2017 and devastated this community speaks not only to broader issues of the increasing threats due to the climate crisis but to the ways governments prioritize profits over people, neglect to develop sound ecological approaches, and fail to acknowledge a colonial history that enacted racist and violent policies that continue to harm Indigenous communities to this day. Indeed, Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected by wildfires, by contaminated water supplies, by lack of sufficient housing and insecure food sources, among other issues. For instance, according to a 2021 study by Sandy Erni and her colleagues published in the *Canadian Journal of Forest Research*, approximately 4.1 million people, or 12.3 percent of the Canadian population, reside within “wildland–human interface (WHI) areas, where forest fuels intermingle with or abut housing, industry, and infrastructure” (p. 1). The authors go on to say that “fire activity is expected to increase further in the coming decades as a result of climate change” (p. 1357). The deadly fire in Lytton, British Columbia, in June 2021 that killed two people and destroyed the entire town is one devastating example.

The Landon Pearson Centre’s partner at Simon Fraser University organized STM Williams Lake.² They partnered with Punky Lake Wilderness Camp Society (PLWC), a nonprofit organization based out of Williams Lake that runs a variety of culturally and spiritually based youth programs following Indigenous teachings for youth. PLWC’s mission is to create a safe and welcoming space for young people. In addition to PLWC, other community partners were involved with STM Williams Lake, including Right to Play, Equitas—International Centre for Human Rights Education, and Thompson Rivers University. The workshop was held over two days in late October 2017, a few months after the fire. The theme chosen for the workshop continued a topic from the previous year’s STM workshop on environmental rights and the concept of displacement. Ten children and youth aged 10–18 participated (1 male, 9 females). Participants lived in or near the Williams Lake area and all had been impacted by the forest fires. Youth facilitators (2 males and 1 female) were 23–24 years old; two were current Simon Fraser University criminology students and one was a recent graduate from the program. All participants were briefed on the workshop and consented to participate and to have their words and images recorded. Below is an excerpt from the Williams Lake youth culminating report (Taghipour et al., 2017) describing the workshop:

The conference began with a brief introduction of Shaking the Movers and a territorial acknowledgement by an Indigenous member from Punky Lake Wilderness Camp. Participants were welcomed into the room with music, light snacks and refreshments. The [youth] facilitators took the lead and continued to introduce the circle process and our invitations for the participants included a series of circle guidelines. Shaking the Movers is built on the foundation of Restorative Justice and models a circle conference process in which all participants are encouraged to sit in the shape of a circle and use a talking piece. Participants were invited to speak from the heart, speak their own truth and allow each member to participate fully by using a talking piece as a self-regulating tool. When a participant has the talking piece, they have power to speak and other participants without the talking piece have the power to listen. Next, participants briefly introduced themselves and moved on to the opening question. Participants were asked to name three places that felt like home. Responses varied and included connections to the community, nature and family life. Places mentioned were: Band room, Quesnel Lake Playground, in trailer park, School Hockey rink, Places to play music, Places to read a book, Gym because I like to run, Grandma’s house, Library because I like to read, Running around the lake in my running shoes. (p. 7)

Interconnection was one of the core themes that was woven through the STM design of the Williams Lake

workshop, which was intended to foster a collaborative and inclusive approach to shared learning with attention to broader historical and Indigenous elements that infused the local context and with a view to making long-term changes (Taghipour et al., 2017). Learning circles were a key feature of the Williams Lake workshop and all of the workshops held in British Columbia. The concept and practice of the learning circles emerged from restorative justice education. As Evans and Vaandering (2016) note, circles are “a learning community that nurtures the capacity of people to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects the inherent dignity and worth of all” (p. 8). The authors name ten essential elements embodied in learning circles: acceptance of identity; inclusion; safety; acknowledgement; recognition; fairness; benefit of the doubt; understanding; independence; and accountability (p. 8). Several of these elements align with a common worlds approach while others, such as independence and accountability, do not. Nonetheless, the framework develops an ecological approach to children’s rights and might be useful for critically considering the notion of participation (Gal, 2017). As Gal (2017) argues:

The ecological approach to children’s rights stresses that to understand the phenomenon of child participation, it is necessary to consider conditions and processes that affect children and youth, expanding the environment under consideration to include children’s families, communities, the professionals working with them, policy makers, and eventually, the entire regulatory regime. (p. 57)

It is here that I see a point of opening to consider a common worlds approach and to expand this list. This would mean that in addition to regulatory regimes, what needs to be added to this list has to do with the conditions of inequality resulting from colonial histories, uneven access to resources, and the impact of extractive industries for children and their families that deplete local environments, for example.

STM Williams Lake draws on and embellishes the ecological approach to engage children and youth in a number of ways. In facilitator training for the workshop, for instance, they drew from Boyes-Watson and Pranis’s (2015) work on learning circles to introduce and close the workshop. In designing activities for the workshop, facilitators found innovative ways to engage with participants and communicate through imagery, text, and sound about their experiences living there. For instance, as the young participants drew pictures, danced and played in the outdoors, and offered their experiences of the fire, the youth facilitators, in turn, organized their responses using the symbol of a flower to name these experiences. They named the positive responses roses and the experiences that arose from the fire, or something they learned, buds; the negative challenges they saw as persisting after the fire they called thorns. The young people exchanged stories about the fire, recalling how it had displaced people and animals, making them all “leave where they call home.” One person presented an image with a changing gradient (dark to light) as a metaphor for the stages of the forest fires, noting, “first, there was a lot of smoke. Then there was fire.” In envisioning life after the fire, one person observed that “little plants and all the trees grew back from the fires and us growing as a community and supporting each other.” In these words, likening the regrowth of the community to the regrowth of the forest, we hear how the fires activated and reorganized relationships. Another young person recalled that, “when the fires were here, for me, it wasn’t that scary because God would protect our house and not leave us alone. We went to Victoria and the beaches. I liked the beach that I called the crab beach.” She went on to describe how she imagined herself as a crab because “the crabs have a strong coat to protect them.” These words reveal instances that signal human, nonhuman, and more-than-human interdependence that could be embellished by the facilitators with a view to creating a responsive climate pedagogy that moves beyond a focus on the individual child figure as steward.

Another example of an activity used by the STM Williams Lake facilitators that could be expanded to emphasize a common worlds approach, even though it relies heavily on a rights framing, is consideration of the CRC articles themselves. Young participants decided together which of the articles of the Convention could be used as prompts

for discussion or an activity. They selected Article 2, the right to live; Article 31, the right to play and rest; and Article 7, the right to a name, an identity, and belonging. As the young people moved among the trees in an outdoor space performing the ideas in each of the articles, they mimicked swaying branches, lay in the grass with their arms outstretched covering themselves in leaves, and wove in and out of the trees. The young people said that their movements were meant to convey ideas of play, rest, identity, and belonging. It seems to me that each topic, whether the right to live, play, or have an identity, could be considered using a common worlds approach emphasizing interdependence with human and nonhuman worlds in a way that would not preclude critically understanding the CRC, not only as an aspirational document but as one that emerges from neoliberal viewpoints. For instance, in focusing on children's right to live, a fulsome discussion would consider how an individual's right to live is intertwined with the rights of living and nonliving others. This discussion could extend beyond the individual child to consider how historical contexts and legacies create the conditions for inequalities to flourish that enable some to live fully and preclude this right for others. Such a discussion would excavate the system of valuation as well as inclusion and exclusion that is present and that shapes relationships. This would include a critical consideration of how the right to live is interlinked with histories of white settler colonialism, apparatuses of violence, and cultural understandings of relational care as well as an ethic of care. Thus, rather than viewing the article of the Convention in isolation, looking for a point of tension between children's rights and common worlds approaches would enable a broader discussion at an STM workshop. This would entail an instance of both an imperfect compromise and viewing the Convention as a living document with the possibility for revision in practice.

Another point where a possibility presents itself to reimagine the Shaking the Movers model is in the use of the learning circles. Each workshop not only begins with a learning circle but ends with one as a way to celebrate and bring closure to the gathering for participants. The circles offer an opportunity to express gratitude for time spent together, to exchange a marker of connection and care, and to acknowledge their interrelationship with place. During the final circle discussion on day two of the 2017 STM Williams Lake workshop, for instance, the children gathered in the circle to share their experiences of the weekend spent together. Everyone agreed that STM workshops generally should always take place outdoors and "not in rooms inside buildings." One participant noted that

global warming is killing a lot of animals, like up north polar bears—they are not only starving, they are drowning. But like lots of places, kids do have good ideas, but they think people with more experience have better ideas, but nobody asks us.

What these snippets of conversation convey is the importance of place and an acknowledgement that place shapes relationships and relationships shape place in ways that are inclusive of humans, animals, and weather, in this case. The young people's words display an understanding of the broader forces that shape their lives, such as global warming, and how they are not only impacted by these forces but how they, in turn, experience and impact them in ways that entangle with responsibilities and circumstances collectively. It seems to me to be a point of opening that might be leveraged in reimaging Shaking the Movers. Learning circles offer a way to shift children's-rights language to imagine a space beyond the individual child figure and emphasize interdependence, not only with other participants but with materials and nonhuman others that are part of the STM workshop experience.

The final feature of the STM model is the concept of movers. Following each workshop, the culminating reports that capture the ideas, words, artistic expressions, and perspectives of workshop participants are circulated to members of the Landon Pearson Centre's Child Rights Academic Network (CRAN). Landon Pearson has been convening CRAN annual meetings since 2008 at Carleton University to consider the STM reports. At each annual CRAN gathering held in early winter, Landon Pearson requires movers—those adults who have decision-making

powers that affect children's and young people's lives—to respond directly to what the young participants had to say in the culminating reports and to specify a tangible action in how they do their own work that they will take in response. The STM participants are invited to join the CRAN meeting virtually via Instagram Live to hear decision makers respond to their concerns and indicate how their perspectives will make a change in the work they do on behalf of children and young people. Part of the value of this component of the STM model is the possibility for social change led by young people who direct the agenda for adults.

In describing the STM Williams Lake workshop, one sees ways to reimagine the model through the lens of a common worlds approach. While the model begins with a rights-based framing that immediately sets up tensions, as noted earlier, regarding how human rights, undergirded by humanist philosophies and Eurocentric assumptions, inform this discourse (Benhabib, 2007; Merry, 2006) to focus on individuals recognizable as human and as holders of rights, the framing can be productively disrupted. Agency, as noted above, can be reimaged to move away from celebrating it as a mere expression of resistance or resourcefulness toward understanding agency as process that arises from relational, material, and contextual entanglements. While recognizing that STM presently tends to overemphasize the agency and resilience of children and young people, I would argue that through learning circles there is a way forward to offer a counter view to agency that interrogates the notion of resilience by attending to conditions of inequality that arise in historical, cultural, and political contexts. Other points of opportunity are seen in the ways STM emphasizes working collectively to create and enable social action, thereby undermining the notion of a universal, autonomous child figure that presupposes a notion of the subject as responsible citizen. The liberationist notions of voice, autonomy, and participation embedded in rights-based approaches are evident in the STM model; however, rather than foreclose the model entirely, I propose to pursue an imaginal approach with a view to finding ways to strengthen elements of the model for a youth engagement approach that works in a common worlds manner. This means taking seriously the notion of living rights in an expansive way to include human, nonhuman, and more-than-human entanglements. Following Spyrou et al. (2018), this approach demands a conceptual prying open of the concepts that anchor the STM framework—in this case, notions of agency, participation, and responsibility—to refigure them through interdependence and mutual accountability and to expose exclusionary practices arising from racialization, settler colonialism, and other elements that rights-based approaches make invisible.

The concept of participation is particularly problematic in this regard in terms of inclusionary and exclusionary practices. In the case of *Shaking the Movers*, when children and young people are recruited to act on set grounds, some voices are necessarily amplified while others are disqualified and invalidated. Thus, participatory involvement alone cannot overcome these challenges. A critical perspective would acknowledge, instead, that regardless of good will and intentions, giving children opportunities to participate does not always ensure that their perspectives get heard appropriately and equally. In terms of the STM design, while the intent may be to engage children and young people, reimaging the model means attending to the ways knowledges are generated, valued, included, and excluded, which can only be accomplished using a critical lens of interdependence. This revision to the model would significantly improve the STM design.

Finally, in bringing into dialogue children's rights and common worlds approaches through the example of STM Williams Lake, Hanson and Nieuwenhuys's (2013) notion of children's rights as a living practice provides a pathway. It offers a way to consider rights as an imperfect compromise negotiated temporally and contextually. What it accomplishes is to expose the many tensions that arise when attempting to look for points of overlap between a common worlds approach and a rights-based approach, including asymmetrical power, logics of colonialism, and rights-based techniques steeped in an Anglo-Eurocentric worldview that narrowly defines the human of human rights. Once these tensions are exposed, I would argue that negotiating this imperfect compromise is much more

possible. While this movement may not go as far as a common worlds approach demands, it seems to me to be a helpful beginning toward the reconfiguration of the child figure beyond a liberal ethics view at the centre of a rights model. I concur with Stuart Aitken (2018), who argues that “universal child rights have not worked” (p. 707) and calls for a radical, sustainable ethics that “dares to admit that children’s humanity is something more than we, as adults, can imagine” (p. 707). Aitken points to an overlap between children’s rights and all-too-human approaches in arguing for expanding a rights-based approach that would “understand us as all-too human, as more than our corporeal selves” (p. 707); he writes that a posthumanist perspective “questions what precisely we can and should have rights over” (p. 707). Indeed, in contemplating STM Williams Lake, the children and young people who participated there understood this question of rights and power in terms of their lives and lived experiences. Aitken’s notion of *lifespace* comes to mind here. He asks children’s rights scholars: What would happen if we “give up on children as monadic beings, as subjects and objects of rights, with all the specific and singular rights that accrue to those positions?” (2018, p. 709). I would argue that the design of the STM Williams Lake workshop, with its emphasis on communal, inclusive, and shared practices and the use of a restorative justice framing drawing on learning circles in its design, amplifies this view of agency that is not exclusively human and participation that does not rest on individuals but is conceived as collective.

To conclude

To conclude, I point to Shenila Khoja-Moolji’s (2017) concept of an ethic of interdependency and alliance, which seems to me particularly useful in interrogating a rights-based approach and how it might overlap with a common worlds approach. Khoja-Moolji notes that one of the obstacles that prevents us from recognizing alternative conceptions of human dignity and ways of living is the false assumption that the discourse of human rights, with its moral authority and links with powerful mechanisms like the UN institutions, is the only conception of human dignity. She argues for transforming human rights from a call to “commonality in spite of differences to a call that acknowledges differences and seeks to practice pluralism” (p. 398). Reflecting on her own research, she calls for “a strong ethic of alliance with, and interdependence across all forms of living, even as villagers sought to improve individual well-being” (p. 395). She talks about replacing the unitary subject of human rights or the delinked body that is alternately vulnerable, suffering, and empowered, stating that, “in such modes of living, the human body is no longer the center but part of a wider assemblage whose meaning comes from the interactions of all of its parts” (p. 394). Again, it seems to me that this wider assemblage includes nonhuman and more-than-human others, which has relevance for reimagining *Shaking the Movers* with an ethic of interdependency and alliance.

In bringing a common worlds approach into dialogue with a rights-respecting one in this paper, my expectation has not been to arrive at some consensus or uniformity. Rather, my interest has been to offer possible points of rupture to intervene in revisioning the STM model in order to create it in a way that is attuned to a productive common worlds pedagogy. This revisioning includes a call to expand STM to see children as part of a wider assemblage that includes human, material, nonhuman, and more-than-human interdependence.

In *Beyond Stewardship*, Affrica Taylor (2012) notes that

children’s often-playful encounters with the more-than-human display openness to the “becoming with” dance of relating of which Haraway (2008) speaks. As she notes, regardless of the ways in which our human-centric educational frameworks position children—as individuating human beings developing rational autonomy, as individual learners about the world, and/or as individual change agents in the making—children’s actual worldly relations far exceed our binary schema. (p. 10)

The worldly relations of participants in the STM Williams Lake workshop far exceeded a static binary schema.

As a case to consider for moving forward in future with STM, I would argue that the design of the Williams Lake workshop presents an opportunity to embrace dynamism, to promote an ethic of interdependence with nonhuman and more-than-human worlds and to honour the dignity and shared humanity inclusive of children and young people, nonhuman, material, and more-than-human elements of lived experiences. To see these moments as pedagogical openings means to honour silence, to unfix social ontologies, and to actively be in reciprocal relationships. Haraway (2008) calls this “cohabiting with a difference in ways that allow all species to ‘flourish’” (p. 301). Thus, in reenvisioning the STM model, the intent is to provoke an opening up of thought and to acknowledge multiple and diverse conceptualizations of human, nonhuman, and more-than-human in order to see rights as nodes of imperfect compromise in networks of relations. This reimagined Shaking the Movers holds a space to critically consider the entanglements, that is, the tensions that entangle and are entangled when people live their lives being human and more-than-human.

-
- 1 Reports from the all Shaking the Movers workshops are available on the Landon Pearson Centre website under the Shaking the Movers tab: <https://carleton.ca/landonpearsoncentre/shaking-the-movers/>
 - 2 To read the Shaking the Movers Williams Lake report: <https://carleton.ca/landonpearsoncentre/wp-content/uploads/Shaking-the-Movers-BC8.compressed.pdf>

References

- Aitken, S. (2018). *Young people, rights, and place: Erasure, neoliberal politics, and postchild ethics*. Routledge.
- Balagopalan, S. (2018). *Inhabiting "childhood": Children, labour and schooling in postcolonial India*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Benhabib, S. (2007). Another universalism: On the unity and diversity of human rights. *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 81(2), 7–32. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27653991>
- Boyden, J. (2003). Children under fire: Challenging assumptions about children's resilience. *Children, Youth, and Environments*, 13(1), 1–29. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7721/chilyoutenvi.13.1.0001>
- Boyes-Watson, C., & Pranis, K. (2015). *Circle forward. Building a restorative school community*. Living Justice Press.
- Cohen, T., Colebrook, C., & Hillis Miller, J. (2011). *Theory and the disappearing future. On de Man, on Benjamin*. Routledge.
- Erni, S., Johnston, L., Boulanger, Y., Manka, F., Bernier, P., Eddy, B., Christianson, A., Swystun, T., & Gauthier, S. (2021, April 9). Exposure of the Canadian wildland–human interface and population to wildland fire, under current and future climate conditions. *Canadian Journal of Forest Research*, 51(9), 1357–1367. <https://doi.org/10.1139/cjfr-2020-0422>
- Evans, K. R., & Vaandering, D. (2016). *The little book of restorative justice in education*. Skyhorse.
- Gal, T. (2017). An ecological model of child and youth participation. *Children & Youth Services Review*, 79, 57–64. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2017.05.029>
- Hanson, K., & Nieuwenhuys, O. (2013). *Reconceptualizing children's rights in international development: Living rights, social justice, translations*. Cambridge University Press.
- Haraway, D. (2008) *When species meet*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Khoja-Moolji, S. (2017). The making of humans and their others in and through transnational human rights advocacy: Exploring the cases of Mukhtar Mai and Malala Yousafzai. *Signs*, 42(2). <https://doi.org/10.1086/688184>
- Kraftl, P. (2006). Building an idea: The material construction of an ideal childhood. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 31(4), 488–504. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2006.00225.x>
- Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford University Press.
- Merry, S. E. (2006). Transnational human rights and local activism: Mapping the middle. *American Anthropologist*, 108(1), 38–51. <https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2006.108.1.38>
- Nieuwenhuys, O. (1998). Global childhood and the politics of contempt. *Alternatives*, 23(3), 267–289. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030437549802300301>
- Osgood, Jayne and Kerry H. Robinson (2019) Re-returns and dis/continuities of feminist thought in childhood research: Indebtedness and entanglements. In J. Osgood & K. H. Robinson (Eds.), *Feminists researching gendered childhoods: Generative entanglements* (pp. 17-40) Bloomsbury.
- Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Khatrar, R. (2018). *Pedagogies for times of climate change: Closing the gap between nature and culture*. Ontario Ministry of Education. http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/brief_5_pedagogies_en.pdf
- Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Taylor, A. (2019). *The common worlds of children and animals: Relational ethics for entangled lives*. Routledge.
- Pearson, L., & Collins, T. (2011). *Shaking the movers. A model for collaborative engagement*. <https://carleton.ca/landonpearsoncentre/shaking-the-movers/>
- Spyrou, S., Rosen, R., & Cook, D. (Eds.). (2018). *Reimagining childhood studies*. Bloomsbury.
- Taghipour, M., Morrison, B., & Wright, L. (2017). *Children on the move: STM British Columbia on climate change*. <https://carleton.ca/landonpearsoncentre/shaking-the-movers/>

- Taylor, A. (2017). Beyond stewardship: Common world pedagogies for the Anthropocene. *Environmental Education Research*, 23(10), 1448–1461. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2017.1325452>
- Taylor A., & Giugni, M. (2012). Common worlds: Reconceptualising inclusion in early childhood communities. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 13(2), 108–119. <https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2012.13.2.108>