



# Lying on the Ground: Aesthetic Learning Processes in the Anthropocene

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## PROLOGUE

*On Friday 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2020, Fridays for Future Denmark had a public action in front of the Danish parliament. After a week-long occupation of the square, they collectively performed the funeral of their own future, their hopes and their dreams. After the funeral rite, the young activists lay down on the cold granite setts under the gray autumn sky, silently listening to Greta Thunberg's voice from the loudspeakers: "Right here and right now is where we draw the line" she shouts, "You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words and yet I am one of the lucky ones".*

*Afterwards the microphone is open, and one after the other the activists stand up and bear witness about their hope and dreams, fear and anger. A young girl states: "Climate is a lot about graphs and politics, but it is important that we dare to be together around our grief and vulnerability". In pronouncing the last words her voice breaks. (Krogh, 2020; Skolelever i over 170 timers uafbrudt aktion, 2020)<sup>1</sup>*

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## INTRODUCTION

Today's young people live in a world of limit experiences. Many are haunted by doubts and fear for their future as part of an anthropocene planet. To *Generation Z*, born between the late 1990s and the early 2010s, life-perspectives seem precarious and they generally feel more anxious about their future than previous generations (McMaster, 2020). According to the *Future of Humanity*-survey (Amnesty International, 2019),<sup>2</sup> 41% of young people aged 18–25, consider climate change to be the most important issue facing the world, and an increasing number of them are demanding radical changes to stop the threatening consequences of global warming (Barbiroglio, 2019).

In order to confront the politicians who are responsible, week after week the activists of #Fridays for Future (FFF) stand, sit and lie in front of parliament buildings all over the world. Inspired by Thunberg's school strike, they repeatedly expose their bodies to the public, enacting what Judith Butler (2015, p. 18) has termed "an unforeseen form of political performativity that puts livable life at the forefront of politics". As can be seen from the prologue, the symbolic funeral in front of the Danish Parliament in October 2020 was a direct expression of grief and despair among the young participants. By lying down on the ground as "dead corpses" symbolizing "the millions of humans who have died from climate changes and all the millions who will die" (Krogh, 2020), the activists materially performed the connection of their living bodies to death and with that, as we shall see, to the ground that sustains their human existence.

## PRESENTATION OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter I will use the example of the Danish FFF action as an entrance to an inquiry into which ways human bodies might be involved in the transition from a well-known human-centred way of relating to the world to an unknown anthropocene way. Theoretically, I will focus on *aesthetic learning processes* (ALPs), a notion that is widely employed in contemporary Scandinavian educational research, and one that I believe can gain new relevance in the light of the pedagogical challenges posed by the Anthropocene. Empirically I will zoom in on the moment where the young activists are lying down on the parliament square, and on the meeting between their bodies and the granite pavement. Following object-oriented conceptions of aesthetic experience as *attunement*, I will argue

that, although the attention of the activists was directed at the voice of Greta Thunberg, the lying bodies and the granite pavement were secretly involved in an aesthetic process of tuning to each other. I thus deliberately change the focus of the text from the conscious staging of the symbolic form by the activists to the imagined aesthetic experiences of the bodies and the granite setts, the paving stones. In order to relate these speculative ideas to concrete educational practices, I end the chapter by offering an educational proposition which aims to connect the explicit environmental political intentions of the activists with the implicit political intentions of reconceptualizing ALPs for the Anthropocene.

The inquiry is divided into three separate sections:

- Section I presents ALPs as conceptualized in Scandinavian educational discourses since the early 1990s. Through a discussion of the two partly overlapping approaches of production and reception, it shows how ALPs sustain modernist conceptions of learning as a human-centred activity.
- Section II proposes an object-oriented reconceptualization of ALPs in the Anthropocene in the light of the imagined aesthetic experiences of the bodies of the young activists lying on the ground.
- Section III uses the insights from sections I and II to introduce *proposition* as a creative and experiential way to enact ALPs as part of a pedagogy for the Anthropocene.

## I. AESTHETIC LEARNING PROCESSES IN SCANDINAVIAN EDUCATION

In Scandinavian<sup>3</sup> education, ALPs are considered a key approach to education (cf. e.g. Hohr & Pedersen, 1996; Austring & Sørensen, 2006; Lindstrand & Selander, 2009; Fink-Jensen & Nielsen, 2009; Johansen, 2018). While, according to Tavin (2007), Anglo-American researchers are often familiar with more general terms such as “aesthetic consciousness”, “aesthetic processes” and “aesthetic modes of knowing”, in Scandinavia ALP has been the favourite term to denote processes where learning occurs through sense-based and emotional approaches (Illeris, 2012). Recalling Friedrich Schiller’s early romantic work *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795/2004), ALPs are basically understood as a playful form of mediation between the form-drive of the self-conscious

enlightenment subject and the matter-drive of man as part of nature, living “in the here-and-now, carried along by the stream of time” (Hohr, 2002, p. 64).

Regarding educational practices, the concept of ALPs is used in two different ways: it is used in relation to the pedagogy of specific “aesthetic subjects”, mainly the arts (visual art, music, theatre etc.), and it is used to indicate a dimension of all learning that can thus be connected to all themes and subjects (Lindstrand & Selander, 2009, p. 13; Fink-Jensen & Nielsen, 2009, pp. 192–220). The basic understandings are also twofold. In relation to arts education, ALPs have mainly been understood as a *mode of production* where learners are taught how to communicate their impressions of the world through symbolic form (Austring & Sørensen, 2006, p. 107). As a dimension of all subjects, ALPs are mainly considered a *mode of perception* where learners relate to the existing world through their senses to increase the emotional depth and inner motivation of the learning experience (Wickman & Jakobson, 2009, p. 130). As we shall see, this is especially important for environmental education where ALPs are considered a way of giving learners a deeper understanding of *nature*.

### *ALPs as a Mode of Production*

Historically speaking, the concept of ALPs was developed by critical Scandinavian educational researchers in the early 1990s (cf. e.g. Løvlie, 1990; Schou, 1990). In arts education, ALPs became part of a paradigm shift where the child-centred pedagogy of the 1960s and 1970s, was substituted by research-based approaches inspired by critical theories of cognition and learning (Illeris, 2012). Of particular importance was the redefinition of the aesthetic experience in education from an open and playful approach to creativity, to a specific form of cognition that could be expressed through “form-producing activities” (Hohr & Pedersen, 1996). By combining Schiller’s ideas of aesthetic education with Alfred Lorenzer’s (1972) socialization theory and Susanne Langer (1960) symbol theory, the Norwegian educational researcher Hans Jörg Hohr explained ALP as experiential learning through the production of “created and intentional form”, for example, design, play, ritual, dance, song, music, painting, film, theatre and literature (Hohr & Pedersen, 1996, p. 23).

In later publications on ALPs, such as Austring and Sørensen’s *Aesthetics and Learning* (2006) the “aesthetic mode of learning” is translated into a model of didactic progression “where learners through aesthetic

mediation transform their impressions of the world to aesthetic expressions of form allowing them to reflect and communicate about themselves and the world” (Austring & Sørensen, 2006, p. 107). Through three distinct phases, *impression* provided by direct sensation through contact with inner and outer realities, *expression* focused on the production of own pictures or other expressive forms, and *reflection* where learners communicate about their products, the subject learns how to communicate symbolically about his or her personal way of perceiving the world. In this way, ALPs contribute actively to education as a human-centred activity aiming at elevating personal sensuous impressions to interpersonal communication through form-giving activities where “the world” is understood as a surrounding that provides the subject with “impressions”, or as inert matter, providing the subject with “materials” to be formed 2021.

### *ALPs as a Mode of Reception*

When ALPs are understood as a dimension of all learning, sensuous experiences are more likely to be understood as having an educational value in themselves. In environmental and sustainability education, ALPs are often understood phenomenologically as related to sensuous experiences in, of, and with nature. While most programmes of environmental and sustainability education employ models of understanding from the natural sciences, ALPs emphasizes sensuous and emotional experiences which are able to loosen the separation between the human self and nature as a nonhuman form of existence. According to the Danish researcher and nature guide Lasse Thomas Edlev, in ALPs the learner

has to be able to connect sensuously and to be emotionally open to new sides both of nature and of oneself, maybe even to be able to experience the oceanic feeling it can be when the separation between the I and nature loosens up. (Edlev, 2009, p. 20)

With reference to the concept of *mimesis* as developed by Danish existential phenomenologist Mogens Pahuus (1988), Edlev explains that:

To sense natural phenomena [...] includes a kind of creative activity where the forms and rhythms of nature are bodily experienced, where the senses and the emotional register develops and where the ability to contact and

modes of expression are trained. In this sense an experience of nature can be perceived as an ‘aesthetic learning process’. (Edlev, 2009, p. 16)

The “ability to contact” should be trained to develop the senses and the emotional register as a value in itself. Following environmental phenomenologists like David Abram (1997), we here see a sensibility towards nature not only as surrounding, material or matter, but as a more-than-human form of being that learners can contact.

While in arts education ALPs as a mode of production tend to echo the enlightenment idea of using individual expression to elevate pupils from a state of passive, sense-based reception to a state of active communication (Bengtsson, 2019), the approach to ALPs as a mode of perception employed by environmental education is more open-ended and directed at the value of sensuous experience as related to nature. Inspired by existential phenomenology, the concept of mimesis is used to indicate a reciprocal process where the human body tunes to nature by assimilating its forms and rhythms (Pahuus, 1988). In environmental education, the form-giving imperative of arts education, where the scope of ALPs is to make learners become *more* human, is loosened in favour of ALPs as a way to let go of oneself, becoming more nature and *less* human.

## II. AESTHETIC LEARNING PROCESSES AS ATTUNEMENT: LYING ON THE GROUND

When a lies on the it is as close to as it might physically be, drawn down by the force of gravity. Lying down minimizes the use of physical strength and maximizes the use of other senses. It helps the to feel itself, it allows it to listen, to smell, to see and to touch and it gives room for dreams and , for relaxation and sleep. By being open to sensations and dreams, and by its passivity, defenselessness and , the lying on the ground connects to a realm of unspoken forces and intensities that operate beyond the symbolic messages of acting as “dead corpses”.

In the first chapter of the anthology *Art in the Anthropocene*, the editors Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin (2015, p. 11) argue that in the Anthropocene, “Our sensorial and perceptive systems are being

refashioned at rates that we can barely keep up with, as the world around us changes so rapidly”, and that “our current climate demands a different kind of aesthetic and sensorial attention”. According to them, we need art and aesthetics in order to learn to develop “techniques to begin to think through the limits of our temporal frameworks, and then thinking beyond them” (pp. 12–13).

In pedagogy, this means that we have to think of new ways to support the learner with the refashioning of their human perceptive systems, which will allow them to think beyond their own species, and to connect with other forms of existence on their own terms. In the new material reality of the Anthropocene, we need to find paths to re-embrace the matter drive that aesthetic education, according to Schiller (1795/2004), should help humans to control by elevating it to “play”. What Kant (1798/1991, p. 54, quoted in Bengtsson, 2019, p. 68) saw as the innate “laziness and cowardice” of man, might now be praised as a human strength, forcing us to slow down our ever accelerating level of activity and instead become more receiving, more accepting, more earth-bound. In the words of the three Scandinavian authors of the book *Dark Pedagogy: Education, Horror and the Anthropocene* (2019), the self of Anthropocene *Bildung* needs to be “ecologized”:

The self at the core of *Bildung* is to be ecologized and turned into a primarily natural phenomenon. Or, to put it in another way, the cultural formation of self is to be rethought as a process of natural becoming within the nonhuman parameters of the environmental conditions and foundations of modern societies. (Lysgaard et al., 2019, p. 16)

### *The Bodies*

I will now return to the bodies of the activists lying on the square in front of the parliament after the funeral of “the future as we know it”, and discuss how to relate this action to a reconceptualization of ALPs.

If we follow the arts education approach, where ALPs are understood as a mode of production, the funeral can be seen as a playful way to give form to the young activists’ feelings of anger and despair. By staging a ritual, they manage to communicate not only their political position, but their personal emotions related to climate changes. By lying on the square as “corpses”, they symbolically show their solidarity with the dying planet and with people whose lives are already seriously affected by the changed

human living-conditions of the Anthropocene era (Krogh, 2020; Skolelever i over 170 timers uafbrudt aktion, 2020).

If, in contrast, we follow the environmental education approach, where ALPs are seen as a mode of perception, the action becomes less about political communication and more about getting in touch with personal feelings. Here, the moment of lying down gains significance as a moment where the activists sensuously connect to the earth on which their future depends. From this position the less spectacular moment of just lying on the ground, showing and accepting bodily vulnerability, can be more important than the funeral itself. Instead of a strong, active and autonomous self, the body on the ground represents the greatest fear of many educators: the fear of doing nothing, of passivity, inertia, of pupils acting as objects without the individuality and autonomy so cherished in the *Didaktik*-tradition of European pedagogical thought (Lysgaard et al., 2019, p. 15).

### *The Little Death of the Self*

Stefan Bengtsson, one of the authors of *Dark Pedagogy*, compares the “little death” of the passive subject to human fear in front of our own vulnerability:

As the subject has to think in order to be a subject, the act of not-thinking might remind the subject of its *vulnerability*. We might re-encounter this fear of passivity and the little death in education with the pre-eminent demand of action and focus on activity. (Bengtsson, 2019, p. 69)

Bengtsson relates vulnerability to the (re-)opening of the porous and dependent kind of self that modern education has so eagerly tried to close by understanding education as the formation of a strong, coherent and enclosed self. Instead, the uncontrollable forces of the Anthropocene make us aware that the human self is not transparent, that it is out of our grasp, and that it cannot be given any authentic or new form. Realizing this causes an anxiety that, from a speculative point of view, might also be a reason for the grief of the young activists: What they have lost is not only the future of life as they know it, they are also losing the idea of self as they imagined it. Instead of the promised development of a coherent and capable self, able to design its own future by working hard and making



reasonable choices, what they are actually dealing with when lying on the parliament square is what Bengtsson calls a twilight self:

[...] Vulnerability relates to that feeling of dark, shimmering self not apparent to myself. When the self is reflecting on itself there is not mere nothingness, but rather a *twilight self*, a self barely visible in darkness. What the self finds is not an absolute nothingness, but rather a *presence* of absence. (Bengtsson, 2019, pp. 78–79)

### *Attunement as an Aesthetic Mode of Connecting*

Theoretically *Dark Pedagogy* is driven by Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO, pronounced ‘triple O’), a speculative realist approach<sup>4</sup> coined by Graham Harman (2011, 2018a) and Timothy Morton (2013, 2016). At the core of OOO is the recognition that *being* is not reserved for humans, or that the being of humans is not different from the existence of everything else: plants, bacteria, rocks, monsters or memories. In OOO all forms of being, even ideas and feelings, are understood equally as *objects*, and each object exists in two forms: the *real object* which is per definition withdrawn and unknown even to the object itself, and the *sensual object*, the object as it appears, and which will thus always be a correlate of the experience of another object (Harman, 2018a, pp. 78–80; Illeris, 2020, pp. 156, 162). An important thing to notice is that even if all things, including immaterial phenomena are objects, it does not mean that they are objects in the same way, or that all objects are real. On the contrary, each object has its own form of existence, which it does not share with any other object and that is withdrawn even from the object itself. In addition, there is no privileged interaction between objects, meaning that the interaction between two things is as important as the relationship between a human and a nonhuman form of existence (Harman, 2011, p. 6).<sup>5</sup>

From a background in literary theory, Morton has written extensively about the aesthetic experience in the light of OOO (Morton, 2013, 2018). To him, aesthetics is what happens when two objects unintentionally reach out towards each other, causing a third object, “the relationship”, to come into being (Morton, 2013, p. 23). The reciprocal attention between objects happens through *attunement*, meaning that what Harman terms the *sensual objects* reach out to each other and link to each other’s phenomenological qualities. Morton thus reinterprets Harman’s

description of the interaction between nonhuman forms of existence, seeing these interactions as aesthetic events:

Aesthetic events are not limited to interactions between humans or between humans and painted canvases or between humans and sentences in dramas. They happen when a saw bites into a fresh piece of plywood. They happen when a worm oozes out of some wet soil. They happen when a massive object emits gravity waves. (Morton, 2013, s. 19–20)

From this quote, what was going on the square could be understood as an aesthetic event characterized by the attunement among objects of sensuous qualities such as temperature, consistence and surface. Attunement also incorporates what Morton (2018, p. 128) calls temporality formats: the long, slow, planetary time of the granite against the fast pulsing, short-lived human-biology time of the bodies. The history of excavation and elaboration of stone for human purposes against the stone's resistance, its hardness, its unwillingness to adapt but also its humble acceptance of lying there, paving the streets and squares, firstly in the old baroque city, and later on as part of rapidly changing urban trends, most recently as a part of terror protection measures (Danske Landskabsarkitekter, 2019). Compared to the human bodies that lie down, rise and proceed to live their short lives, the setts are *stayers*. Most humans would not expect them to act differently, to be anything apart from inert matter, but still one could argue that fighting against climate change is also a fight to give something back to the stones, to let them exist in their own right.

Thus, when I imagine the relationship between the bodies of the activists and the granite setts, I imagine the interaction between two forms of existence independently of the mind, attention or consciousness usually thought to be a prerequisite of such a connection. In Morton's vocabulary, the body and granite tune to each other independently of the fact that the thoughts of the activists are directed at something else, for example, at Greta's voice or the consequences of global warming.

### *ALPs as a Mode of Attunement*

In the anthropocene era, human bodies are an inseparable part of geological and biological changes that now are happening so fast that the human time of the historical period intersects with the geological time of the Earth (Colebrook, 2017, p. 1). To grasp the significance of the

Anthropocene it is thus crucial that we as humans get in touch with the planet that we are a part of, not only as a resource for human expansion, but as a world of objects, each with their own mysterious form of existence. The right to be, to live and to die with dignity is not only a human right; it is planetary.

Following Morton's theory of attunement, ALPs can become possible modes of connection among humans and other forms of planetary existence and among nonhuman objects. By revitalizing the idea of the aesthetic experience as attunement between objects, we can find ways for pedagogy to reconceptualize learning as truly situated and practice-bound (Illeris, 2016).

As Davis and Turpin indicate, our modes of perception are changing. Almost without noticing, we have begun to *see* and to sense with whom we coexist and many of us are experimenting with possible reterritorializations of our ways of living. Like the young people on the square, we sense our aching bodies, exhausted from a life of contradictions and dilemmas between what we sense and how we live. In this situation, ALPs are not a mediation between human "drives", but rather a way to learn how to exist as indeterminate, vulnerable beings living in landscapes of multiple densities, temporalities and rhythms. If we stop ignoring everything that does not fit the time line of human progress, we can adopt ALPs as ways to revitalize possible forms of relationship between forms of existence though sensuous attunement and imagination.

Thus, when, for example, I try to understand a granite sett, I search for information from geology and urban history, but what I learn is not so much a series of facts as it is a possibility of attunement to another object. When I relate to the impossibility of imagining the movements that formed the earth and with it the granite, it seems almost impossible that right here and now I can strike the setts with my hand. I can perceive its inaccessibility and I can tune to the melancholia and joy of both of us being here, having sympathy, reaching out, although being apart.

On the one hand, the setts and my human body share some objects, certain minerals, for example, or our presence in the city of Copenhagen, but obviously, we do not share these relationships in the same way. Being a human, I have no chance to feel the minerals inside me, but knowing that my body hosts iron, magnesium, calcium and a number of other minerals, I can feel a kind of chemical solidarity with rocks:

The aesthetic experience is about *solidarity* with what is given. It is a solidarity, a feeling of alreadiness, for no reason in particular, with no agenda in particular—like evolution, like the biosphere... (Morton, 2018, p. 121)

Following this thinking, one could imagine that human bodies and granite sets tuning to each other could indicate a way for ALPs, not as a mode of either production or reception, but as a *mode of attunement* to/with other forms of existence.

### III. PROPOSITION FOR AESTHETIC LEARNING PROCESSES IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

I am lying on the grass. It is a cloudy day. A light rain touches the skin of my face. I can feel the cold of the through my clothes. Gravity is keeping my limbs down. In my ears I hear past voices of teachers telling me to relax. I follow the clouds with my eyes. My tunes to the wind. To the being of wind. Then to the humid ground. My hearing tunes to traffic, wind, birds. I imagine planet traveling through space at an incredible speed. I tune to this speed. The ground tunes to my.

#### *Propositions*

The above text is the result of a proposition that I offered to myself while writing this chapter. The proposition was formulated in these words: *Go outside and lay your body flat down on the ground. When lying there, let the objects around you tune to your body and let your body tune to them.*

During the last year, inspired by a/r/tography (Leblanc & Irwin, 2019) and by the SenseLab collective founded by Erin Manning (Manning & Massumi, 2014), I have worked with propositions as a didactic tool for ALPs in Sustainability Art Education (Illeris et al., 2022). Together with colleagues and students, I have explored how to make and enact propositions as “a theoretical lure or provocation that combines virtual potentials of the speculative imagination with the empirical dimensions of embodied experience in the actual world” (Roussel et al., 2018, p. 25). Inspired by the use of the term by Alfred North Whitehead (1929/1978), a proposition is a situated event, an opening that makes human and nonhuman

experiences with and of the world take new directions, or as formulated by Manning in a chapter written together with Brian Massumi:

The proposition is so much more than a statement. It is nothing less than a worlding. It is a serial iteration of the world's complexing, and re-complexing, of its own relational potential. The proposition is the force of thought gone worlding. (Manning & Massumi, 2020, s. 8)

In philosophy Morton's OOO-approach and the process-philosophy adopted by Manning and Massumi might be seen as difficult to bring together, but as a pedagogical approach, my experience is that propositions are able to draw attention to attunement in a very simple way without reducing the complexity of the event.

In my educational practice, a proposition is a simple proposal aimed at exploratory practices, in order for humans as well as nonhumans to tune to the complexity of the world as it exposes itself through innumerable objects of all kinds. To my students I have described propositions in the following way:

- A proposition is as an open invitation that someone/something offers to you.
- It is not an assignment but an occasion to open your worldviews and let them develop in new and unexpected directions.
- Instead of explain and simplify, a proposition maintains and explores complexity
- A proposition works from a premise of equality instead of hierarchy
- A proposition is an occasion to experience sensuous knowledge in the making
- A proposition is a practice, meaning that you can only create propositions by practising them yourself before you offer them to others

In the proposition *Go outside and lay your body flat down on the ground...*, the important thing is that your body can tune to the ground and vice versa, and that you allow your mind and self to become less while your body attunes to all the objects inside, outside and around you—including sensations, memories and wishes. This implies a suspension of action-oriented forms of being in favour of passiveness, something that we are used to seeing as embarrassing and painful. According to enlightenment philosophy “to be an object” is the worst you can be, but following the

thoughts of OOO this proposition entails exactly this: the presence of the absence of being *someone*, of being a coherent self (Bengtsson, 2019, p. 79).

To me, practising this proposition has given something that is difficult to translate into words. On the scale of human mind, lying down has so many connotations (e.g. of sleep, death, sunbathing), and, of course, many of them appear in my mind when I do it. On the scale of my human body, lying down makes me feel heavy, my breath gets deeper, my senses open. On the scale of the objects tuning to me, yes, we connect or rather as sensuous objects we form a new form of existence, a new object, which I cannot capture at all. I become something like a me-body-grass-wind-air-ground-lips-birdsong-breath-cold-childhood-memories-and-much-more-object. But I also somehow become a lazy-shameful-uncomfortable-stupid-embarrassing-object in need of movement and escape.

Why this discomfort? In the Anthropocene, pedagogy is about opening a vulnerable rift between appearance and essence, and thus of rethinking and re-experiencing the human form of being a part of the world (Morton, 2013, 188; Bengtsson, 2019, p. 80). By enacting a funeral, the young FFF activists have yelled out their grief and desperation regarding the future of the planet. By lying down, they have shown their vulnerability and symbolic connectedness to death. Inspired by this action and by my own experiments with propositions, I am convinced that the Anthropocene calls for a pedagogy of death and of transformation. Pedagogy is the funeral, the first steps into the deep unknown of anthropocene forms of perception where human bodies and granite setts begin to sense each other, explore each other, pay tribute to each other. Although propositions might sound like doing very little, it might be a place to start with in order to re-calibrate human perception to the aesthetic reality of the Anthropocene.

## CONCLUSION

Like the rest of society, the school of today is haunted by a constant and output-oriented demand of activity. Teachers have to make detailed programming of each lesson to “teach to the test” (Biesta, 2009). In such a regime, there is no time for students to delve mindlessly and await other forms of existence to tune to them in reciprocal exchanges.

In school, aesthetic learning processes, initially conceived of as a playful and sensuous form of human experience, are often reduced to stereotyped form-producing activities, at least when it comes to arts education. In environmental education ALPs risk being reduced to an add on to the prevailing science-based approach to nature. However, within Scandinavian environmental education, we also see the contours of a phenomenological approach where attunement to nature can be considered an ALP in itself, outside the artistic demand of expression and production.

Thinking with the action of FFF Denmark and with the young bodies lying on the ground after the symbolic funeral, the phenomenological conception of aesthetic learning processes as “mindless” attunement can be taken further in a reconceptualization of the relationship between all objects, human as well as nonhuman. If we bury the enlightenment idea of ALPs as processes where humans become *more* human by expressing themselves through material production, and substitute it with aesthetic learning processes as processes where humans learn to become *less* human and more attuned to all the objects with whom they co-exist, there is hope for a less anthropocentric (post-)anthropocene era. If we manage to operate with learning as a negative outcome, trying to do less, produce less, consume less, we might actually begin to live the way the young activists wish for: living our lives closer to the ground, to granite, to Earth.

## NOTES

1. All translations from texts in Scandinavian languages are by the author.
2. In the *Future of Humanity*-survey on the most important issues facing the world, conducted in 2019 by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Amnesty International with 10.000 informants aged 18–25 from 27 countries, 41% respondents selected climate change, followed by pollution (36%) and terrorism (31%). Among environmental issues, global warming ranked highest, at 57%. (Amnesty International, 2019).
3. By Scandinavia, I intend Denmark, Norway and Sweden.
4. Speculative realism is a contemporary philosophical current that aims to think reality in itself, independent of the habitual ‘correlationism’ of most modern philosophical thought (see also Harman, 2018b).

5. It should be noted that Harman (2011, Chap. 8) avoids the binary of withdrawn and sensual object through the construction of his own quadruple object diagram with twelve sets of relations between real and sensuous objects and real and sensuous qualities.

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