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# Discerning Hope: Intra-Actions of a Philosophy for Children Workshop and the Eco-Socially Just Potential of Practising Hope

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ROSAMONDE BIRCH

## *Abstract*

*This article is an extended discussion from the recent opening presentation for the Annual Winchester Advanced 'Philosophy for Children' Seminar in Climate Change Education, Hope and Philosophy for Children. The presentation and text originate from Rosamonde Birch's (2019) Masters' dissertation research discerning hope through an Education for Sustainable Development Philosophy for Children workshop.*

## INTRODUCTION

Hope. A word, phenomenon, presence, concept or disposition recently brought into focus by a variety of writers, and notably by youth activist Greta Thurnberg (2019) in her speech about climate change and government inaction in response to her frustrations about empty promises and not wanting 'your hope... I want you to act'. (p. 24). Connected to this recent amplification of youth voices, my past Citizenship Education teaching meant I had previously encountered a young person's frustrated question, 'What is the point Miss?' The question from my student stayed at the back of my mind and with the recent youth activism led me to inquire about hope for my Masters' dissertation. What is the point to learning about being sustainable? What is the point of hope in relation to unknown futures? Where does pointlessness and hopelessness emerge from? Is hope entangled with a sense of agency or action? Does pointlessness inhabit our spaces and dull

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our enthusiasm and anticipation of the future? Is it a *force* against ‘habits of despair’ (Solnit, 2016) or ‘convenient cynicism’ (Giroux, 2001)? Could hope be vital to materialising eco-socially just futures?

### HOPE AS A LIVING ‘CONATUS’ NARRATIVE

The research began with the metaphysical origins of hope, charting the perception of hope from antiquity through Christianity to continental philosophers *problematizing* it as a phenomenon and most recently across contemporary academic, popular and philosophical inquiry. The exploration and discerning of hope through the research was therefore Eurocentric and influenced by Christian perspectives, but this was predominantly due to there being little or no research or translated texts accessible for cross-cultural inquiry at this time. The metaphysical exploration suggests hope, through its ambiguous, illusory and incorporeal essence, has characteristics of *aliveness*, which Pieper (Schumacher, 2003) refers to as ‘entelechy’, Heidegger (1962) calls it ‘potentiality-of-being’ and recent research by Averill *et al.* (1990) suggests hope is a ‘vis vitalis’ (i.e. ‘vital force’). Bloch (1986) perceives of hope’s relationship with utopias and Marcel (1951) perceives of hope as ‘memory of the future’ and only possible on ‘the level of *us*’ (p. 10). These perceptions position hope as way of realising possible and potential futures through solidarity and community, and that hope is a phenomenon that affects bodies (Bennett, 2010) and is actant in our lives but often invisible and incorporeal until materialised (Bryant and Knight, 2019).

The research being conceptually positioned through post-humanism and new materialism led to a re/turning with Spinoza’s ‘conatus’ (Bennett, 2010), which when re/explored relationally with continental philosophers became a way of perceiving of hope alongside ‘entelechy’ and ‘vis vitalis’. *Conatus*, as the striving to live and persevering beyond what is perhaps perceived as possible, suggests itself as hope; an ‘active impulsion’ and is ‘a power present in *everybody*’ (Bennett, 2010, p. 2). Massumi and Zournazi (2002), in discussions of hope, furthermore add how Spinoza’s theorising of affect interconnects with concepts of emotion, where affect even becomes the ‘virtual co-presence of potentials’ (Massumi and Zournazi, 2002, p. 213), which could be interpreted as hope. These interpretations and discernments of hope as a phenomenon led to defining hope as a *Living Narrative*, entangled through past, present and future with an ‘aliveness’, ‘conatus’ or ‘entelechy’ of resilience and resistance to despair, death or suffering – it is in-between the bodies that affect *becomings*. It compels action towards a futural possible place to inhabit; a place unknown and unfinished yet tangible somewhere.

#### *Playthinking with Hope*

The research and reading of hope through the dissertation extended into contemporary research and philosophy that attempts to define, discern and describe hope in a variety of ways, including an attempt to make a tangible and material framework. Through ‘playthinking’ the material experience and process of hope was given finer detail, especially in relation to

'ordinary hope' (Schumacher, 2003) and the suggested conative, affective, emotive and actant qualities or characteristics of hope. Ordinary hopes exist on a spectrum of 'hope locutions' (Godfrey, 1987), ranging from 'everyday hope' (Waterworth, 2004) through to 'complex/critical hope' (Webb, 2013), 'sound hope' (Godfrey, 1987), 'audacious hope' (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) or 'radical hope' (Lake and Kress, 2017). They are all rooted in our experience of struggle and awareness of historical and structural hegemonic inequalities and therefore are a *hope* for social change with utopian imaginings.

It is also important to mention 'false hopes' (Duncan-Andrade, 2009), which are the realm of wishes and unrealistic desires, aspirations based completely on naïve optimism and myth or fantasy crossing into fanciful utopias (Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Godfrey, 1987). Hope must therefore also not become a way of ignoring or denying there is struggle or despair, where hopefuls are required to have awareness of struggle and not use hope as a distraction for altruism (Godfrey, 1987). Additionally, Marcel's 'level of *us*' (1951) and the necessity of hope emphasising collective potential with 'openness' is vital to add here. 'Openness' and 'openings' are described as an essence of hope (Marcel, 1951; Solnit, 2016) as this state of being materialises possibility, uncertainty, anticipation, change, transformation and imagined or unimagined potentials. To be closed and certain leads to determinism, fatalism, measurability and reductionism but hope's essence defies knowns, predictabilities and probabilities (Waterworth, 2004), as well as defying categorisation (Webb, 2013).

For the purposes of the dissertation, inter-subjective hope (Godfrey, 1987; Halpin, 2003; Waterworth, 2004) and the mutuality of hope's process were explored further due to the research focus on education and the classroom as a material-discursive (s)place (Barad, 2007). Hope is perceived as inter-subjective due to it being a reciprocal and predominantly relationally orchestrated phenomenon (Godfrey, 1987; Halpin, 2003; Waterworth, 2004), occurring in response to a collective struggle (Duncan-Andrade, 2009) that requires collective solidarity and action. The inter-subjectivity of hope and deciding an object of hope to work towards occurs across a diverse 'neighbourhood' of phenomenon (Waterworth, 2004), which include relationships between affective dualities of optimism and pessimism, certainty and uncertainty, trust and doubt or fear and courage (Halpin, 2003; Schumacher, 2003; Waterworth, 2004).

### *Doing Hope*

Phenomenon in the neighbourhood of hope is entangled in how hope materialises and the affect hope has as part of relational and dynamic interactions. The relationship of hope and despair is especially tangible. Despair can be fleeting, and a small burst of hope can switch one's sense of agency and optimism; but where hope is then lost suddenly or significantly, finding a small drop of hope can seem almost impossible. Yet circumstances change and our own perceptions shift, therefore hope can occur unexpectedly and grow or change

Hope is therefore, also associated with the experience of agency and if the sense of agency is diminished then hopelessness and pointlessness seeps in (Waterworth, 2004), leading to cynicism and scepticism about the future.

Hope as a conative practice involves the perceiving of struggle and suffering, of inequalities and injustices whilst planning, critically thinking, problem-solving and making decisions collectively to take action (Duncan-Andrade, 2009). Emotively hope does involve intense feelings that may come from joy, fear, anxiety or sadness and they motivate movement towards a futural place, whilst also possibly being stirred by a deep sense of despair (Schumacher, 2003; Waterworth, 2004). The morality, values and ethics of individuals and a group also become entangled across the conative and emotive fields of doing hope and are amplified through hope (Godfrey, 1987). Inter-subjectively a singular impulse of hope and possibility, or an idea shared of an imagined futural world to inhabit, could shift a sense of helplessness or pointlessness and instead bring renewed optimism and trust. As a phenomenon and a 'doing', hope is infinitely entangled through intra-actions and world-making practices (Barad, 2007). Consequentially, 'doing hope' is a material practice in-between and through 'bodies', and hope can be perceived as an 'actant' of an assemblage that 'makes things happen... the decisive force catalysing an event' (Bennett, 2010, p. 9).

Through the 'doing' of hope reading and research, a clustering concept (Waterworth, 2004) was formed by imagining moments of hope and how it materialises through the inter-subjective intra-actions of the classroom. It was important to consider this clustering concept as a way of discerning hope during the research but also as a visualisation, which I completed as an art-graphic illustrating the relational *fields* of different phenomenon, emotions and affects that align or converge when a futural object of hope is materialised (Birch, 2019). The clustering concept also exemplified the complexities of (*s*)*place/time* in relation to hope. For the dissertation (*s*)*place* was introduced as a way of perceiving space and place as relational and entangled, adapted from Payne and Wattchow (2009) as a hybrid of space (as moving through) and place (as dwelling with), but also to emphasise the importance of place on identity and culture through the material-discursive intra-actions (Barad, 2007). The temporal consideration arose through further research into Rovelli (2017) and Barad (2017) where the former requests perceiving of time as 'partially ordered' yet not linear, universal or iterative, and the later argues that place is temporal and never discreet or controllable. In addition to the temporality of hope's (*s*)*place-time bubble* Solnit (2016) considers the importance of how hope can 'lie in the records and collections of the past' (p. xix), adding that a 'lack of memory of a dynamically changing world' (ibid) can lead to fatalist perceptions of an unchanging future. The importance of the past to inform our perceptions of the present and thus our imagining of the future relationally influences the 'doing' of hope and how objects of hope are decided as potentialities.

### *Practising Hope*

The relationship of education and hope was one I initially had not considered as intrinsic nor so vital. Yet, children and young people ‘embody the projected dreams, desires, and commitment of a society’s obligations to the future’ (Giroux, 2003, p. 153) thus the importance of researching hope through education was profound. Freire (1994) in *Pedagogy of Hope* argues that ‘hope, as an ontological need, demands an anchoring in practice. As an ontological need, hope needs practice in order to become historical concreteness... Just to hope is to hope in vain’ (p. 2), which reiterates the emphasis of ‘critical hope’ (Webb, 2013) and ‘sound hope’ (Godfrey, 1987). The pedagogy of hope exemplified through Freire’s (1994) work is the request to dig deep down into community and acknowledge the struggles of others, humans and non-human, even more-than-human, and to practise a way of being that is in solidarity and commitment to something else being possible. There is a sense that ourselves, our relationships, our communities, our democracies and our global interconnectedness is always becoming and that is how we have a sense of our own agency with the world.

Halpin (2003) additionally argues that education has a fundamental role to play in materialising possible socially just futures, and here I add ecologically just futures. Through the relationally constructed hope of a classroom Halpin (2003) suggests that teachers unconsciously/consciously have a significant role in enabling students to practise hope as a fundamental human ‘disposition’ for future potentials and unknown utopias. Alongside Freire (1994) and Halpin (2003) my dissertation also explored the work of Ruth Levitas (2017), where she argues for a ‘utopian ethic’ as a way of transforming futures through forms of transformative learning and especially focusing on environmental education and outdoor learning. Education as a (s)place for imagination, practising hope and visioning possible and impossible utopian societies (Levitas, 2004) socially and ecologically is vital. Thus hope, utopias and humanness are entangled (Levitas, 2017) and are always becoming through discourse of hope. I concluded that to teach with a pedagogy of hope not only assists students to explore their own agency in present hegemonic struggles and possible future worlds but also asks students to consider what it means to be human.

### *The Pluriversal Classroom*

While exploring utopias, education, hope, ‘epistemic injustice’ (Fricker, 2007) and the potential of the ‘classroom’ as a (s)place of these entanglements I additionally argued in my dissertation that the teacher is situated as a facilitator of a ‘world of many worlds’ (Zapatista’s translation by Blaser and De La Cardena, 2018). The ‘world of many worlds’ classroom led to defining a classroom that is a (s)place of ‘practising hope’ with ‘pedagogies of hope’ as a *pluriversal classroom* (Birch, 2019). The definition and still emerging concept grew from hope as an inter-subjective, even intra-subjective and relationally constructed phenomenon inspired by William James’ *Pluriverse* (Blaser and De La Cardena, 2018) and thus a (s)place of heterogeneous becomings. It is where students and teachers

encounter diverse and different onto-epistemologies, positions of power, agencies, knowledges and ‘knowers’, always becoming and where new worlds and new knowledges can come into ‘affective’ being. Using the *pluriversal classroom* as one aim for the research, alongside discerning hope, meant a method and methodology would be required that could embody the entangled and complex relationships of phenomenon, dualisms and learning environment.

### *Workshop Method: Philosophy for Children*

Philosophy for Children (P4C) (Lipman *et al.*, 1980) has become a worldwide pedagogical approach for ‘communities of inquiry’ and was originally conceptualised by Lipman and Sharp in response to concerns about the purposes of education and how to encourage children to become philosophical thinkers. The P4C approach opposes the banking system of education and instead aims to encourage wonder and meaning-making through questioning, discussion, exploration of themes and topics, as well as developing critical, caring, collaborative and creative thinking skills as a community of learners (Lipman *et al.*, 1980). The pedagogical approach embodies socio-cultural and democratic educational perspectives as it ‘makes a proposal about the kind of society that is desirable and about the kind of people we should be forming through the educational system’ (Hannam and Echeverria, 2009, p. 5). Consequently, P4C as a ‘thinking in community’ process dialogically, morally and philosophically has potential as a pedagogy of hope and utopian imaginary approach for the *pluriversal classroom*.

Hannam and Echeverria (2009) in *Philosophy for Teenagers* explore the role P4C can have in moral imaginations and that education systems need to prepare young people for ethical dilemmas they will face in the future. They argue that P4C can be used as a way to build ‘ethical democracies’ through philosophical dialogue about ‘troubling’ issues that are happening in communities, nations and across the planet. Through P4C young people can develop ‘personal qualities of self-governance, of self-control... taking others’ viewpoints into account while at the same time developing one’s own’ (Hannam and Echeverria, 2009, p. 65). P4C has been chosen as a ‘practice’ of hope for the workshop research method as it embodies the *pluriversal classroom* and ‘educating for hope’. The significance of pedagogy, plurality and ‘openness’ to *becomings* is reiterated with emphasis on hope’s vital role as ‘actant’ in classroom assemblages specific to the teaching about a planetary-scale crisis. The entanglement of hope, socio-political, environmental, cultural and democratic utopias alongside the educational imaginary further adds to the profound role education has in embodying the eco-socially just potential for the future and how relationally and collectively ‘new worlds’ are materialised.

### **DIFFRACTION AND ‘DATA THAT GLOW’**

*Diffraction* as an *ethico-onto-epistemology* methodology and reading of data (Barad, 2007) was chosen due to its non-reductionist, non-representational and non-binary approach to research. Haraway (1997)

describes *diffractive* practice as a *response-ability* to plurality, where ethics and social justice have ongoing presence and consideration. Barad (2007) further adds that these becomings are *entangled* through knowledge-making practices as ‘social-material enactments’ (Barad, 2007, p. 26) and therefore require the researcher to ‘re/think’. Through *diffraction* there is an ethical mindfulness about how research is designed, what role the research serves in reducing ‘epistemic injustice’ (Fricker, 2007) and importantly how the data are constructed and analysed through *diffraction*.

The discernment of hope, as a ‘conative’, ‘emotive’, ‘affective’ and ‘actant’ phenomenon with *Living Narrative* requires a particular sensitivity and attentiveness to the data. In light of this *entanglement*, the research analysis used Maggie MacLure’s (2010) ‘data that glow’ approach, which is based on Brian Massumi’s (2002) ‘exemplary method’ and proposes that, through exemplification, the researcher can remain open to new concepts, connections and potentialities. The emergence of *glow* from the data can occur through any detail, which in itself becomes ‘affective’ to the researcher, and then ‘connections start to fire up: the conversation gets faster and more animated as we begin to recall other incidents and details in the project classrooms, our own childhood experiences, films or artwork that we have seen, articles that we have read’ (MacLure, 2010, p. 288). Thus, ‘data that glow’ can lead the researcher to explore and experiment (Massumi, 2002) with concepts, ideas, theory and practice with ‘opening’. I argue that if hope is ‘openness’ (Marcel, 1951; Solnit, 2016) to future potentiality then exemplification, experimentation and being open to happenings and occurrences through the research analysis embodies an ‘openness’ to data potentiality.

### *‘Data That Glow’ Episode One: Consensus with Unfinishedness*

The water card activity (DFID, 2005) as a learning process poignantly illustrated the unpredictable, dynamic and open-ended intra-actions of the P4C workshop ‘classroom’. It did this through students exploring together the different uses, experiences and ‘need’ of water for survival through the visual images of the cards and paired discussion, and then as a learning community negotiating the positions of the cards on a scale of ‘least important uses’ to ‘most important uses’. From paired to class intra-actions there was an amplifying ‘affect’ as students began to perceive the interdependent relationship between cards, which was due to the students attributing importance to different cards and then going through the process of difficult decisions and reasoning the re/negotiation and re/arrangement of the cards. Here are a couple of examples from the students’ dialogue:

The two on the end. That, that scuba diving one. It’s exploring the ocean, whereas the other one is just swimming where you can even see your feet.

I think that one should be moved because you can’t survive without food. I think it should be moved there.

(Birch, 2019, p. 59)



In field notes as participant-observer I commented:

The ‘meaning-making’ through the cards and the interconnections of the relationships with water brought dissonance and, oddly, vibrant enthusiastic ‘discord’ to the classroom and not in an uncomfortable way. Instead it felt determined and challenging with a comforting bustling of ‘unfinishedness’.

(p. 59)

The complexity of the card arrangement process meant the classroom encountered bursts of vitality, ‘bodies’ in action; ‘conatus’ in the co-constructive striving for new knowledges to exist with flashes of engagement sparking around the room among students. Through exemplification of trust, intra-action, courage and the co-creation of new knowledges, where the willingness and courage of the students to express ideas inter-subjectively and be open to changing knowledges or co-constructing ‘new worlds’ was one discernment of hope.

*‘Data That Glow’ Episode Two: Thing-Power of the Talkative Cat*

The reason for this exploration is the significant and immediate interest the students had in the ‘Talkative Cat’ as a material artefact, having ‘affect’ and as ‘actant’ effecting the material-discursive (s)place. Upon setting the object down on the table at the start of the workshop the first question arose and with further discussion there were mixed responses about the object. Some students were intrigued and liked it, others seemed indifferent, unsure or even repulsed by it, but throughout the workshop the ‘Talkative Cat’ became another ‘body’ intra-acting with non-human ‘conatus’ or ‘Thing-Power’ (Bennett, 2010). Student comments included:

S1: “Oh, the cat!”

S2: “It’s got a big bum.”

S’s: “Meows.”

(Birch, 2019, p. 62)

Bennett (2010), also taking influences from Latour’s (1996) *interobjectivity*, argues ‘Thing-Power’ not only has ‘agency’ but is a ‘rhetorical advantage of calling to mind a childhood sense of the world’ (Bennett, 2010, p. 20). Thus, the organic, inorganic, animate, inanimate, human, non-human and the imaginary of stories materialise different relationships, intra-actions and importance to objects or artefacts. Bennett (2010) speculates of ‘Thing-Power Joy’, which is a re/awakening of sorts to the interdependence of ‘things’ as materially relational and a way of un-dividing the human/non-human dualism. Objects and artefacts with ‘Thing-Power’ could become ways of telling environmental and eco-socially just futural stories; Bennett’s (ibid.) ‘bottle top, a tale of plastic and human relations’. Could our relationship with carbon be changed through objects, stories and narratives that decentre the ‘human’? ‘Thing-Power’ and *interobjectivity*

also brought to mind *Biophilia* (Wilson, 1984) and how humankind have an urge to relate with other forms of life – nature, animals and our surroundings; a relational urge for that could be another way of amplifying love of place and love of planet for an eco-socially just future.

*'Data That Glow' Episode Three: A (S)place/Time Bubble of Hope*

Participant-observer extinction narratives became central to the P4C discussion during the workshop and led to an analysis focusing on how 'stories' influence meaning-making and 'world-making'. This exploration was necessary because during the discussion very specific 'facts', which I will refer to as 'snippets', were used to argue that humankind is incapable of protecting or saving the planet. However, the 'snippets' used were at times ill-informed, reductionist, generalised and presented as firm 'knowns'. These 'certainties' intrigued me to enquire further into the influence and power of 'narratives' informing the '(s)place-time bubble' of inter-subjective meaning-making. One example was a student bringing up the damage to the ozone layer and using this as evidence that humankind is incapable of protecting the planet. Yet, the ozone layer has now been proposed as healing itself and anthropogenic ozone-depleting substances have reduced due to the rapid international actions from the *1987 Montreal Protocol* (Solomon, *et al.*, 2016). The ozone-layer 'snippet' could have been a 'hopeful' narrative of the student intra-actions, exemplifying the success of international action that has led to industrial changes, product manufacturing change and global unity in mitigating potential irreversible ozone-depletion.

The 'snippets' led me to the work of Stibbe (2015) and *ecolinguistics* theory about 'the-stories-we-live-by', which are *entangled* in the contemporary mass media sphere of neologisms and 'post-truth' (Damico, *et al.*, 2018). The representation of climate change and environmental issues in mass media is highly complex, not only due to neologisms, climate change deniers, misleading claims, misinformation and pervading 'post-truth' but additionally due to how each individual or community interprets the 'stories' presented through beliefs, values and biases (Damico, *et al.*, 2018). The 'snippets' therefore become a vital starting point for exploring the '(s)place-time bubble'; the 'stories-we-live-by' (Stibbe, 2015) and the narratives we are exposed to and choose to ignore or read without criticality or ascertaining reliability, directly influence 'classroom' intra-actions; and, they directly affect and influence the imaginary of possible utopias and futural worlds. Through the research I discerned 'Eco-ing snippets', which as a term I based on 'ecological politics' (Curry, 2011); these are affective dynamic knowledges, generative of meaning-making, open to change, explorative and involve critically thinking and responsiveness to (s)place. 'Necro-ing snippets', which was adapted from Achille Mbembe's (2003) work *necro-politics*, are defined as affective deadening narratives of assumed 'facts' that assert knowns or certainties about the future, and are closed to change, attached to no-place and often outdated or static and fixed.

Here are two examples of a necro-ing affect snippets:

Well, ummm ... I don't think we can, because the Earth has its own protection, like the ozone layer... And we're breaking it, so like, we're like destroying its natural protection and resources.

(Birch, 2019, p. 65)

I don't think we can save the Earth. I think no matter what we do it's still going to get worse and still gonna destroy all our stuff because, like, all the plastic in the ocean it's gonna be really hard to get rid of and there's still gonna be loads of it in there when we think we've got most of it out.

(p. 67)

An example of entangled necro-ing and eco-ing affect snippet:

I think we can save the Earth while we live on... living on it. But I do know it's going to die one day but we should help it until it does die.

(p. 68)

The diverse narratives from mass media, family, school, entertainment and communities directly influence *becomings* and lead back to the argument made by Freire (1994), Duncan-Andrade (2009), Barad (2007) and Haraway (1997) that there must be a *response-ability* for how these narratives are explored with children and young people as they directly affect world-making practices. Using a 'pedagogy of hope' the 'opening' for resistance, questioning, critical research and future potentiality is sustained through the intra-actions where students can re/negotiate their *becomings* with community. It could also be argued that through a *pluriversal classroom* 'pedagogy of hope' approach the *filiated* (Rovelli, 2017) (s)place-time mattering of hope is always generating 'openings' of change for heterogeneous *becomings* of all participants. Re-iterating that the practice of 'critical hope' is crucial to the inquiry of the present 'community' and therefore, vital for co-constructing potentialities that are not 'wishful thinking' nor in ignorance of the suffering and struggle of 'the other'.

I additionally argue that a *response-able*, 'ethics of care' (Held, 2006) educational model requires media literacy and eco-literacy (Goleman, *et al.*, 2012) to explore these narratives as 'Communities of Inquiry' and with (s)place-based examples for young people to practise hope through intra-active heterogeneous *becomings*, materialising hope in relationship with 'other' *Living Narratives*. This conclusion also interconnects with contemporary philosophical discussion focusing on education through Spinozan ethics (De Freitas, *et al.*, 2018). The *worlding* of 'the ethico-political project of education' (De Freitas, *et al.*, 2018, p. 807) especially questions what education might look like if designed around an ethic of 'becomings' and not a 'transmissive' banking model (Biesta, 2006; Freire, 1994). Could educating through an ethic of 'becomings' embody a 'pedagogy of hope' and thus materialise the phenomenon of hope as 'conatus' for making new eco-socially just worlds?

*'Data That Glow' Episode Four: 'Earth is Like a Human' – Planetary Aliveness.* I kind of think it's [Earth] kind of like ah... a human in a way, because... it lives its life and will die eventually. All we can do is slow down the...Process and make it not as bad I guess.

(Birch, 2019, p. 73)

The final *glow* of 'earth is like a human' caught my attention due to the proposed possibility that the earth, like a human, exists as a 'body' with its own aliveness and existence. This conceptualising of the earth as a living entity with its own 'becomings' interconnected immediately with the Gaia Hypothesis (Lovelock, 1979) and ecological complex systems thinking (Goleman, *et al.*, 2012; Sterling, 2010–2011). Both the Earth and human as a living matter, intra-acting (Barad, 2007) with worlds internally and externally encounter inter/intra-dependent *becomings*. To perceive of the earth as a human/non-human/more-than-human with 'vital' intra-activity not only re/negotiates and repositions the 'human' in how 'worlds' are made, but simultaneously proposes that all 'matter' has significance and participates with hope as *Living Narratives*. This returns the discussion to Spinozan 'conatus' (Bennett, 2010), Massumi's (Massumi and Zournazi, 2002) 'co-presence of potentials', Pieper's 'entelechy' (Schumacher, 2003), as well as the proposition of 'the incorporeal materiality, the unseen capacities of other people and objects' (Bryant and Knight, 2019, p. 142). If all 'matter' is guided by a principle of potentiality through co-presence and 'other's' capacities continuously striving for futural existence, could hope exist between the intra-actions of materialising the unending 'narratives' of all *Life*?

### CONCLUDING PROPOSITIONS: DISCERNING HOPE

Through the reading and research, five exemplifications of hope through material-discourse and intra-actions of the pluriversal classroom we discerned, the most profound being the ongoing 'openings' and 'unfinishedness' of the *Living Narrative* as hope. Hope in this case is an essence and characteristic of 'becomings' where our intra-actions contribute to the 'global becoming' (Massumi and Zournazi, 2002), and hope is even in-between the intra-actions and across relational human/non-human/more-than-human 'world making'. Hope is an actant in assemblages and the ethical potential future of communities relies on 'critical hope', 'sound hope', 'radical hope' and 'audacious hope'; the digging down into the joyful and troubling (s)places of our community where we can co-create eco-socially just futures. And hope means the story is capable of changing and that we can never define, control or predict our future landscapes or the worlds we might inhabit tomorrow or in a decade or a century.

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