




# Sounds of Life and Concern: Echoing Through Lively Storytelling in Early Childhood Education

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Résumé de l'article

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## Sounds of Life and Concern: Echoing Through Lively Storytelling in Early Childhood Education

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*This paper emerges from the journey of a group of early childhood educators seeking to reconnect with land in meaningful and ethical ways. Reorienting from humancentric views, the authors explore "lively storytelling" to bring attention to overlooked stories and create alternative ways of being and thinking. We are called into new relations and ecological entanglements through a sensitive and responsive attunement to the soundscapes of Lynn Creek and Hastings Creek in Vancouver and Bow River in Calgary. Our engagement encompasses a posthumanist framework while weaving interdisciplinary studies in environmental humanities, materiality, and architecture to encourage generative inquiries and dialogue in early childhood classrooms and communities.*

*Walking towards the creek, my curiosity about the mysterious gurgling water sound I hear brings me to the creek bank. I lean my body down, and when my hand touches the water in Lynn Creek, my memory flashes back to the stream in front of my childhood house in Xinjiang, China. Trying to hold on to it is impossible as it slips through my fingers. Part of my identity with water is becoming lost, and part of my memory has been sealed since the stream in front of my house dried up. (Li, Shuxiao)*

**Key words:** *lively storytelling, soundscapes, matters of concern, river assemblages, anthropocentrism*



Figure 1. Where the Xinjiang stream used to flow. Now just a childhood memory.

This vignette highlights the beginnings of a journey of a group of early childhood educators seeking to reconnect with land in meaningful and ethical ways. These beginnings stem from an anthropocentric view of the world. What ensues illuminates our transformative journey through our involvement in an outdoor environments course project in the Early Childhood Care and Education Program at Capilano University in western Canada, situated on Coast Salish lands. This collective endeavour kindled our dedication to reflective pedagogical practices in early childhood outdoor education. It fostered specific dispositions that compelled us to contemplate how we listen, acknowledge, and converse about the places we co-inhabit. As educators in early childhood, we were prompted to reevaluate our approach to the world by purposefully foregrounding place within our local communities. This involved attending to interactions often taken for granted and embracing the presence of often-overlooked members of our broader community—the more-than-human entities such as rivers, creeks, elements, plants, and animals. These diverse aspects of place demand our attention and beckon us to understand the intricate relationships that shape our shared existence.

As our initial engagement we visited local rivers attentively, aiming to diverge from humancentric ways of seeing and thinking by attuning, listening, and noticing. In reorienting from anthropocentric perspectives where humans are superior to other beings and matter (Taylor, 2017), the authors aimed to create a different relation with five rivers: Lynn Creek, Hastings Creek, Renfrew Ravine, and Stó:lō (Fraser) River, all in the Greater Vancouver area, and Bow River in Calgary. In this article, particular attention is given to Lynn Creek, Hastings Creek, and Bow River, but this link will guide you to the remaining lively stories: <https://rivergroup2021.wordpress.com/lively-stories-3/>

Fully aware of the necessity for new engagements, orientations, and practices in our field of early childhood education, we start thinking with Bruno Latour (2004) in an effort to stretch beyond “matters of fact” toward “matters of concern” in the situated places. Attuning to matters of concern allows us to consider ethics and care for the other living and nonliving entities and inheritances when walking on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish and Blackfoot peoples. As settlers, immigrants, and early childhood researchers, it is imperative that we attend to the settler colonial histories and ongoing colonial practices while engaging with difficult questions



regarding the complexities of living on colonized lands (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Indigenous worldviews, while present for millennia, have been diminished and ignored but “have persisted and thrived despite settlement” (Tuck et al., 2014, p. 8). In times of environmental precarity, Indigenous knowledges, beliefs, and respect for land and more-than-human entities could invite educators to reevaluate ECE practices by reconsidering how and what we pay attention to and focusing on the complex entanglements and multiple dynamics in the contextual lifeworld we share with more-than-human communities. This awareness could bring us into new relations and make space for alternative ways of being by pushing us to think otherwise in the search for pedagogies more responsive to our pressing times.



Figure 2. Entangled lifeworlds.

Becoming tangled within the challenging context of the COVID-19 global pandemic and our different geographical locations, as students then, we met online for three months to weave our noticings and meaning making into an ongoing process of documentation, known as pedagogical narration in BC. Pedagogical narration entails a living process that nurtures reflection and open dialogue within the learning community in early childhood classrooms. Our engagement with pedagogical narrations was not straightforward. It took many challenging turns as we ruminated, discussed, and expanded significant ideas. There were moments of doing and undoing. This difficult work made us reflect critically on our experiences, orienting us toward a commitment to responsive practices.

To activate ethical practices in our work as educators through a posthuman lens, Thom van Dooren’s (2014) notion of lively stories was introduced. Lively storytelling aims to create a space where overlooked stories can be heard and become powerful contributors to new relations and “response-abilities” (Haraway, 2016). To challenge human exceptionalism, it is crucial to place significance on the dynamic multispecies relations and entanglements that compose the world (van Dooren, 2014). These vibrant relations have always been active, marked by complex and continuously unfolding webs of life and death. However, the ability to honour these stories has become fogged by the lens of human exceptionalism. Therefore, we were called to rethink our positionality and learn collectively in the presence of others, responding with a commitment to staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) regarding the complex stories entangled in these places. Critical questions resonate as we become accountable for the stories

we share: Who is telling a story? “Which story is being told[?]” (van Groll, 2020, p. 45). Whose voices are heard? Is it only a human voice? Who else are we walking with? Do our stories render a dominant narrative, or are they situated, partial, and interdependent? Indeed, a new awareness challenged us to move from being the centre of attention and focusing only on children to composing lively stories in relation to place and more-than-human others. This connection inherently requires a shift in perspective and an acknowledgment of the intrinsic value of all nonhuman others by noticing and making more visible their always already presence as agents and cocomposers of the world.

Lively stories urges a new writing practice that pushes us to experiment with more animate language to highlight the liveliness and agentic characteristics of the respective creeks and rivers and the multiplicity of entities who live and die there. Most importantly, lively stories work to resist linguistic imperialism and its pervasive effects in distancing humans from the world and reducing nonhumans to inanimate objects in nature by assigning the pronoun “it” (Kimmerer, 2013). Language is neither neutral nor innocent; “it” can either enliven or marginalize others. Therefore, in becoming aware of how the imagery of certain words or phrases does something, constructing particular identities and crystallizing certain realities, we understood that cocomposing our lively stories demanded political and response-able practice (Blaise et al., 2017). Within this pedagogical commitment and working through the limitations of language, the authors aim to activate a kind of writing that is not hierarchical and works to blur the division between nature and culture. In writing with the world, we draw on a language that acknowledges Lynn Creek, Hastings Creek, Bow River, the land, and more-than-human communities as subjects rather than objects, opening different ways of knowing that could allow new thinking to emerge.

From diverse lived experiences, an unexpected encounter with the sounds of a lively river and rocks provoked curiosity, considering that rocks are usually seen as inanimate and static objects that sit beautifully in the backdrop of a landscape. This encounter inspired a desire to know more about these life forms, and it made us wonder why humans tend to be drawn to animals’ liveliness rather than entities such as rocks. Water flows through rocks, and rocks flow through rivers, proposing a question of who shapes whom? Do rocks shape these rivers, or do the rivers shape these rocks?



Figure 3. Sunlight, rocks, and river assemblage.

Over the following weeks of attuning, listening, and noticing these places' rhythms, flows, intensities, and tempos, a realization came that it was not only about rocks and rivers, but there were assemblages of many relations and intra-actions affecting and shaping each other. Ripples of hope surfaced when we started thinking with Lynn Creek, Hastings Creek, and Bow River, stressing the interconnections of plants, animals, changing elements and weather patterns that transform and shape these places.

Often, sounds disappear as a backdrop to a place. However, in becoming more sensitive and responsive to the environment and learning to listen attentively to the soundscapes of Lynn Creek, Hastings Creek, and Bow River, we started to consider sonic experiences highly "informative and relevant" (Wallace, 2019, p. 5657), sparking the focus of our inquiry. Diverse voices echoed through the *sounds of life*, representing each place's liveliness, and *sounds of concern* shaping our contemporary life as they communicated what was happening in our places (Gilmurray, 2016). Sounds allow us to engage, relate, and come to know the world differently by inviting us to move toward matters of concern as audible reminders, for instance, of the interconnectedness of glaciers, rivers, and urban-life vulnerabilities. Learning with soundscapes and silences could raise awareness of ecological and environmental issues, intersecting questions of life and death, and presences and absences (Haraway, 2016) in a way that could become a transformative experience that might incite a desire to act.

By challenging each other, we attempt to write our lively stories with humility and honesty within a situated and particular context. As our living experience gathers and elaborates, stories, sounds, and different voices are able to live and relive. Curiosity and unknowability invite us to see what is unseen and become woven with our pedagogical sensitivity. What follows are our never-perfect lively stories as a modest offer that could foster significant changes in practices and enact pedagogies in outdoor education that bring young children, their places, and communities together.

As you walk with us on this journey, close your eyes and dwell for a moment before reading the lively stories. Become immersed in sound by entering a conversation with Lynn Creek, Hastings Creek, and Bow River. You will



have an opportunity to sense subtle reverberations in a heartfelt and embodied experience that allows the sounds of each river to unfold the stories and lead you to see behind what is seen. (Click links to listen.)

## Lynn Creek

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1a9TtD8rKkV\\_3MIsZlqOEe8p9UES2Ge\\_t/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1a9TtD8rKkV_3MIsZlqOEe8p9UES2Ge_t/view?usp=share_link)

*Situated along the western flank of the Rocky Mountains within Lynn Valley on the ancestral lands of the Tsleil-Waututh people, Lynn Creek reverberates with a symphony of ecological surroundings, meandering through the valley and eventually merging with the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean. In a secluded enclave of the creek, where the fragrant aroma of pine trees intermingles with damp earthy scents, a gathering of vibrant green flora comes together, creating a living tableau where life intertwines despite the challenges it faces. The rhythms of the river, akin to the heartbeat of the land, echo with the melodies of nature, forming a rhythm that sways between gentle whispers and powerful crescendos. In this dance of water and stone, the river's pulse rises and falls, a testament to the interconnectedness of all beings sharing this space.*

*Amid this delicate balance, sunlight and rocks collaborate, casting a luminous radiance that unveils the intricate textures of deep ridges, sleek contours, and the graceful dance between water and stone. Within the river's stony bed, small pebbles emerge into view, their presence illuminated by the play of light, altering the ever-evolving tapestry of water's mysteries. As the currents weave their way through the rocks, the dance of splashing water is an ode to the unceasing interplay of textures and forms. This choreography of light and water traces captivating patterns on the river's surface while shadows dance in the embrace of sunlight filtering through the branches of the neighbouring trees. The wind, a silent conductor, orchestrates the movements of these branches, adding an element of unpredictability to the intricate play of light and shadow.*

*This natural symphony, a swift and agile motion, captures the eye—an enchanting flicker of tiny tails darting in and out of the interplay of light and shadow. With attentive observation, one might discern these agile beings as newly hatched salmon fry, partaking in a spirited game of hide-and-seek amid the ever-shifting dance of shadows, stones, and plastics. The sight of the fry swimming upstream alongside human waste awakens the devastating realities of human actions. The once-pristine waters of Lynn Creek have suffered due to pollution, climate change's warming effects, and habitat destruction. The intricate dance of life that has been playing out in the depths of Lynn Creek has been hindered by these changes that threaten the foundation of the ecosystem's vitality and endanger salmon's reproduction and survival. Nearby, a signpost presents itself—"Help us take care of the spawning salmon"—selling a narrative on recognizing human efforts in saving salmon. What an illusion! Lynn Creek knows a bigger story lies underlined as water flows downstream, carrying the implications of human footprints.*

River images have been intentionally represented as collages to honour their ever-changing qualities as we linger with their enigmatic languages in particular moments. The authors want to distance themselves from constructing a fixed identity for the respective visited rivers.



Figure 4. Lynn Creek, a paradoxical meeting place.

## Hastings Creek

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iqATTfkY6zQPmRhc67nalWAUM0Q7UXV/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1iqATTfkY6zQPmRhc67nalWAUM0Q7UXV/view?usp=share_link)

*Rain falls and patters on the surface of the fabric, stretching on a metal skeleton. Raindrops bounce off the fabric, creating a makeshift trampoline; the sound of rain vibrates through the air. The sound of the raindrops and the sensations of soft soil invite a walk upstream of Hastings Creek. On this wet morning, the raindrops have coated a massive fallen tree, the creek banks, ferns, and surrounding moss; the dewy wetness highlights their vibrant colours. But this fallen tree with long, tangled roots has witnessed the dynamic history of Hunter Park and the changes the habitat has experienced. For more than a century, Hastings Creek has met human-borne challenges: the creation of a dam due to the agenda of the logging industry and, presently, water contamination due to urbanization (LynnValleyLife, 2016). Now, there are seemingly no longer any coho, cutthroat trout, or crayfish in the creek. Many native plants have also been struggling amid the rapid growth of invasive species. At times, wind blows invasive seeds around, but perhaps most significantly, each time humans and their dogs march through the forested areas off the trails, soil and seeds of invasive plants follow their footpaths, allowing them to spread quickly. At this very moment, the assemblage of leafy ferns, smooth stones, fallen branches, and velvety moss creates an inviting space for small and large beings to inhabit or visit.*

*Hastings Creek is open and quiet but not lonely. At first, the sound of the raindrops overpowers all other sounds, but as time passes, the sounds of life and death at this creek begin to trickle in. And unlike the creek on brilliantly sunny days, the voices of birds and their calls to each other are absent. The river is urged to move much faster—gurgles gurgle. Water bubbles emerge from the rush of water, meeting many more-than-human creek beings.*

*Small drops of rain patter lightly on the surface of rushing Hastings Creek. The creek's dribbling sounds meet the*



*energetic showering raindrops, sleek and slippery stones, fallen branches and timber, verdant ferns, and soft soil in a friendly greeting. A dynamic, responsive, and animate conversation is unfolding: bubbling, trickling, gurgling, rippling. The creek murmurs and babbles musically in response to these more-than-human creek beings, their sounds intermingling as Hastings Creek continues their morning greeting, engaging on a trickling journey downstream.*

*Much like an orchestra performing on the stage of a large, open hall for eager audiences, all along the bank, the animate greeting between the creek and the more-than-human creek beings echoes and resonates through the cool, tranquil morning in Hunter Park—a beautiful, melodic composition of the babbling creek and creek beings.*

*Babbling melodies of Hastings Creek drift eastward to meet the Bow River's lively and intertwined ensemble.*



Figure 5. Hastings Creek sonic entanglements with histories.

## Bow River

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sj2wE2ZZ-P1LAMSazZ7IMJxXHW0qDe52/view?usp=sharing>

*On the east side of the Rocky Mountains, the traditional lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy, now known as Bow River, were named Makhahn by Blackfoot ancestors. The name means “river where bow reeds grow” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2024). Bow River gives life to varied landscapes and ecosystems through a long journey from the mountains’ glacial ice through the foothills into the prairie. Sounds of life echo in the broader riverbank area: Wind blows strongly, swaying trees back and forth; birds chirp, moving swiftly from one branch to another. Reeds move with nature’s ebbs and flows, joining a dance with the wind, providing shelter, forage, and nesting grounds. Reeds were held in high regard by the Niitsitapi, who made bows with the reeds that grew along the banks.*

*River rocks become a hideout for baby brown trout and a place where geese can rest after a long flight. A babbling river merges with rocks; sometimes, water flows gracefully through the stones and at other times collides with force, creating overlapping, bubbling waves. Despite the weathering and carving, rocks' strong presence has been here for more than a thousand years, witnessing the history of this land. As temperatures rise, floating ice crashes with stone while moving through the current, slowly melting and merging into the bluish-turquoise waters. At first glance, the misleading blue colour hides the turbid and polluted river state originated by human impact. What started in the Rockies as glacial-fed water now carries contaminants from agricultural chemicals, urban stormwater, and industrial waste (Newton, 2006), causing adverse effects on the biodiversity of these habitats.*

*Sun slowly peeks through the cloudy sky, offering a new wonder: Rocks are alive, full of energy circulating in a mutual and ongoing dialogue while sunlight-river-wind form shimmering lights that resemble stars fallen from the sky, bouncing and exploding in the water like fireworks with a fire-crackling sound. Within this ensemble of lively sounds, overtaking noises from the Trans-Canada Highway and the Canadian Pacific Railway disrupt habitats and negatively impact many wildlife populations, while past and ongoing construction projects risk the loss of wetlands and native grasslands. Wild bison and burrowing owl were once plentiful in these lands, and birds' presence is rapidly decreasing in this river. Now, their calls and songs are disappearing. What are these ominous silences evoking, and are they the only ones?*

*Not far away, in a narrow area, a frozen river is waking earlier and earlier each year. Suddenly, a loud and groaning sound: ice fracturing, breaking apart, conveying the devastating shrinking of Bow Glacier, the genesis of Bow River. A haunting sound is begging us to listen, bringing closer climate warming realities. At an unnaturally rapid rate, Bow Glacier is melting and receding as temperatures reach record highs due to increasing concentrations of greenhouse gasses thrown into air by human activity. As Bow Glacier's voice continues to fade and grow quiet, an eerie silence evidences an imminent loss that will determine Bow River's fate and the lives of many others who depend on this ecosystem.*





*Figure 6. Bow River's lively and intertwined ensemble.*

The three vignettes above illuminate the journey from the west to the east side of the Rocky Mountains, where we witness how Lynn Creek, Hastings Creek, and Bow River landscapes are constantly transformed “within their relationships with other human and non-human bodies” (Weldemariam, 2020, p. 936). For instance, weather is continuously shaped by human-induced climate change, alterations in the earth’s overall temperatures, emission of pollutants by factories nearby, effluent, decomposing waste from landfills, fossil fuels from industries and cars, and deforestation. Humans are never separate from the world or the places they live; instead, there is an assembled nature of place-making where diverse natural and human forces will mutually change and alter each other in a world that becomes and reconfigures through entangled relations (Duhn, 2012; Taylor, 2013). Awakening to this new perspective of place as an assemblage brought transformation to our thinking and challenged us to resituate in relation to other entities, bridging the gap between nature and culture and recognizing the agentic forces of more-than-human others and their contributions to the creation of a place, as well as making more visible anthropogenic environmental impacts and implications.





*Figure 7. Enmeshed nature of place.*

Most significantly, the vignettes serve as windows into the possibilities of working with children in an educational space by weaving together the thread of lively storytelling and a deepening connection to creeks and rivers. These practices can enrich generative engagements with children, rivers, and the subtle multiple languages of nature. Bridging theory with practice with a commitment to highlight the nuanced relationship between early childhood education and ecological awareness might be a transformative endeavour for educators seeking to create meaningful place-based learning experiences for children.

Attempting to slip loose from the vigorous and persuasive currents of dominant discourses and their cyclical agendas of reiterating what we already know, we have been making an effort to meet the realities of Lynn Creek, Hastings Creek, and Bow River. Thinking with the notions of staying with the trouble (Haraway, 2016) and matters of concern (Latour, 2004), we aim to tell honest stories of creeks and rivers that recognize both the beauty and sometimes harsh realities. Even though the stories might evoke an urge to turn our attention away, they could allow children and educators alike to become more intimately entangled with the realities of the ever-increasing climate crisis.

Decentering the human and resisting anthropocentrism through lively stories makes it possible to develop an awareness and unsettle the almost imperceptible, undisputed language of human exceptionalism. Doing so could provoke new questions and understandings, encouraging educators and children to reevaluate their relations with water, for instance, by moving away from the dominant perspective that maintains “colonial human-centric approaches and extractivist relation[s] of seeing water as a resource for children’s development” (Nxumalo & Villanueva, 2020, p. 209). Shifting our orientation and attending to relational pedagogies that listen to and make visible multispecies relations and silent stories could disrupt these dominant narratives and help articulate political and ethical implications. Working with matters of concern raised by Latour (2004) is actually not a grand scheme; the lively stories here are derived from simply walking beside, pausing, and breathing with the rivers. We strongly

believe this ordinary practice could make it possible for children and educators to collectively attend to local riverways and begin unsettling the status quo.

Sounds of life and concern have stirred our thoughts, influenced our stories, and brought us closer to earthly relations by calling us to respond to land and the forces of the elements. Soundscapes offer one of the numerous ways of encountering the world by heightening an engagement with what is felt and heard. In doing so, overlooked voices strongly resonate and speak, making us pay attention to those sounds, sights, and warnings already present. In acknowledging sounds as catalysts for new relations, responsibilities, and imaginings, we search for creative ways to represent the aliveness and entanglement of the soundscapes. We draw inspiration from the work of Josh Wallace, an architect who experiments with polar spectrograms, an innovative mapping of sound intensities. His process also involves layering and augmenting recorded soundscapes to generate architectural imaginations, bringing awareness to climate change realities (Wallace, 2019). As his work encourages divergent thinking, it could invite others to enter into dialogue with the image of a sound in an aesthetic and affective way that could unlock an emotional, behavioural, and visceral response by offering speculative provocations that could disrupt dominant ways of knowing.

### Awakening soundscapes into polar spectrograms experimentation

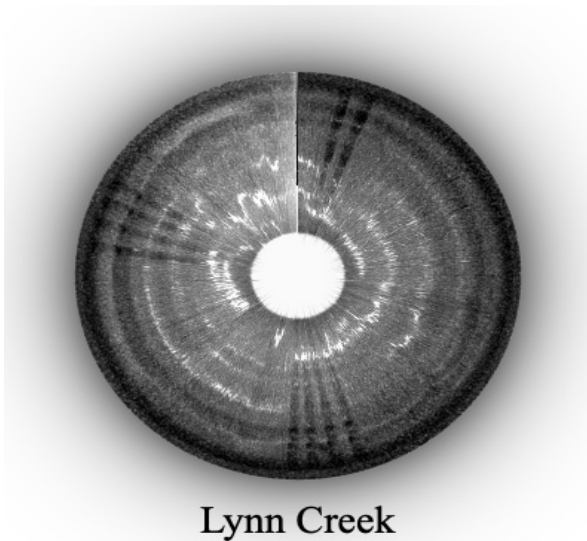
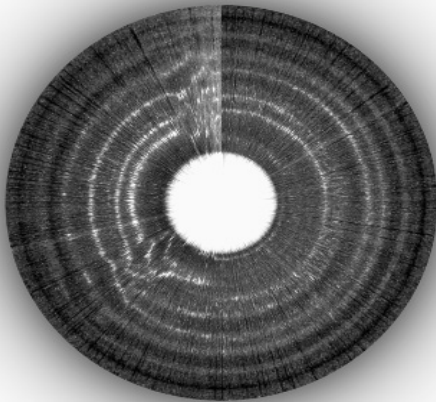
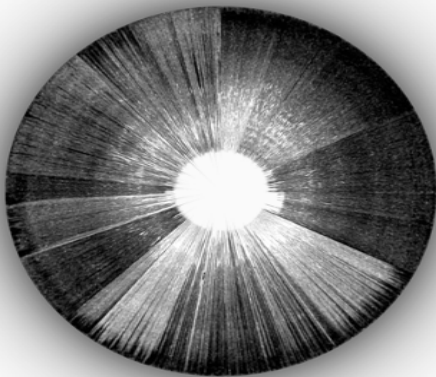


Figure 8. Lynn Creek polar spectrogram.



**Hastings Creek Rain**

*Figure 9. Hastings Creek polar spectrogram.*

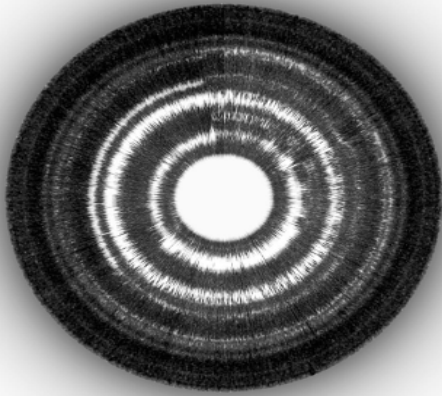


**Bow River**

*Figure 10. Bow River polar spectrogram.*

Continuing the experimentation, the authors invite you to listen to each soundscape while dwelling with the polar spectrogram images. What would these encounters evoke? (Click links to listen.)

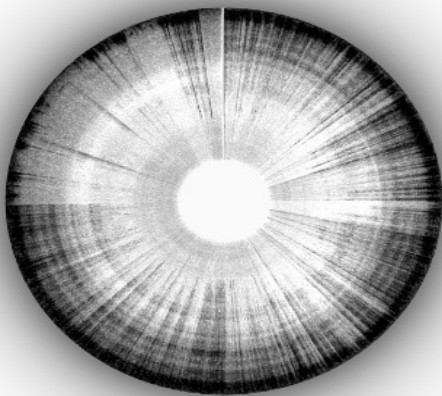




### Hastings Creek Gurgling

*Figure 11. Hastings Creek gurgling.*

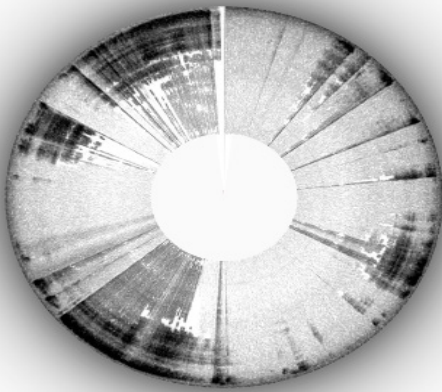
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s9nQAf6mIPiy59CcR0-qklBv\\_JwfVS9h/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s9nQAf6mIPiy59CcR0-qklBv_JwfVS9h/view?usp=share_link)



### Bow River Firework Crackling

*Figure 12. Bow River fireworks crackling.*

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qMqdQYLGAASabXkOg2GQ5rCxMBTqcU5/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qMqdQYLGAASabXkOg2GQ5rCxMBTqcU5/view?usp=share_link)



## Bow River Glacier Fracture

Figure 13. Bow River glacier fracture.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BosQKs3BLrmQBQ-B3gOiWI6iQUAqJZex/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BosQKs3BLrmQBQ-B3gOiWI6iQUAqJZex/view?usp=share_link)

Responding to the call of our respective places and with the desire to disrupt familiar understandings, how do the polar spectrogram images open the door for dwelling in a moment of unknowing? How might they provoke a different way of engaging with the subtleties of soundscapes?

In early childhood education, one approach for integrating sound that is commonly taken up and desired is for children to develop the ability to distinguish various sounds “correctly” and effectively. While these practices are not inherently troubling on their own, the aesthetic dimensions of both the spectrograms and the soundscapes could challenge early childhood education’s traditional, instrumental, and often reductive practices. This innovative approach could open the doors to more profound, meaningful experiences for young children. For instance, the aesthetic dimension of artistic practices like drawing as a language of experimentation, inquiry, and research (Kind, 2010) could open a space to reconsider teaching and learning differently. How might drawing and soundscapes, with their generative, relational, interactive processes, bring new ways of thinking and meaning making? Could we invite children to an aesthetic experience of listening and drawing to the subtleties of soundscapes in their particular communities? As educators become open to embracing diverse ways of knowing and learning, they might also see opportunities to notice the colours of their particular places through the seasons or through smelling the aromas of their communities and the ever-more recurrent smoky wildfire smells. These creative processes could serve as a call to action for transformative pedagogies that embrace the world’s intricate, multisensory, and interconnected nature.

## Lingering thoughts for practice

Two years have passed since we engaged in this course project. However, the traces left still linger and call us as educators to reinvigorate our practices: disrupting the limits of our knowledge, encouraging us to pay attention to the world with curiosity and sensitivity, not only “interrogating and responding to the conditions of our time” but also reflecting on what kind of lived “experiences are made possible in our educational contexts” (Vintimilla, 2019). In dwelling on these concerns, we hope the ideas expressed in this paper evoke truthful conversations that could spark relational pedagogies in outdoor education that are reflective, situated, and responsive to the challenges posed

by the Anthropocene (Nxumalo, 2018). These pedagogies are vital for our field to start unsettling romanticized engagements with nature, as children do not live individually from the world and the issues that surface; children are always in relation and entangled with worldly concerns. These practices relate to messy lifeworlds in “ways that are non-innocent, implicated and foreground mutuality” (Nxumalo, 2018, p. 155) and could help not only to disrupt human exceptionalism but also to gesture children and educators toward the ethics and politics of learning with the world alongside more-than-human others. In this respect, attending to a place’s subtle multiple languages holds rich possibilities for drawing us into new kinds of relations, engagements, and responsibilities.

In our specific case, attuning to the soundscapes of Lynn Creek, Hastings Creek, and Bow River brought us closer to ecological vulnerabilities and implications as they communicate the transformations of a landscape and the complexities of living in a shared place. This experience challenged us not to shy away from the messy lifeworlds we co-inhabit and to act with response-ability (Haraway, 2016). Soundscapes live and vibrate; they have the power to draw children and educators to live curiously alongside more-than-humans others. Beginning a journey of questioning through a curriculum-making process that reflects current times and embraces relational, embodied, and affectual learning could teach us to live ethically in less destructive ways (Nxumalo, 2018).

As the sounds of life and concern have inevitably changed us with their gifts of wisdom, we are curious to know how the soundscapes of particular places will continue provoking new ways of engaging with the world, the land, and more-than-human communities. Perhaps these new dispositions will elicit a reflection on what might happen if we invite children to connect to land through walks in their communities exploring soundscapes. How does listening deeply to the soundscapes open opportunities for invisible stories to become visible? Moreover, what could be possible if we learn to listen, linger, and dwell beyond human notions?

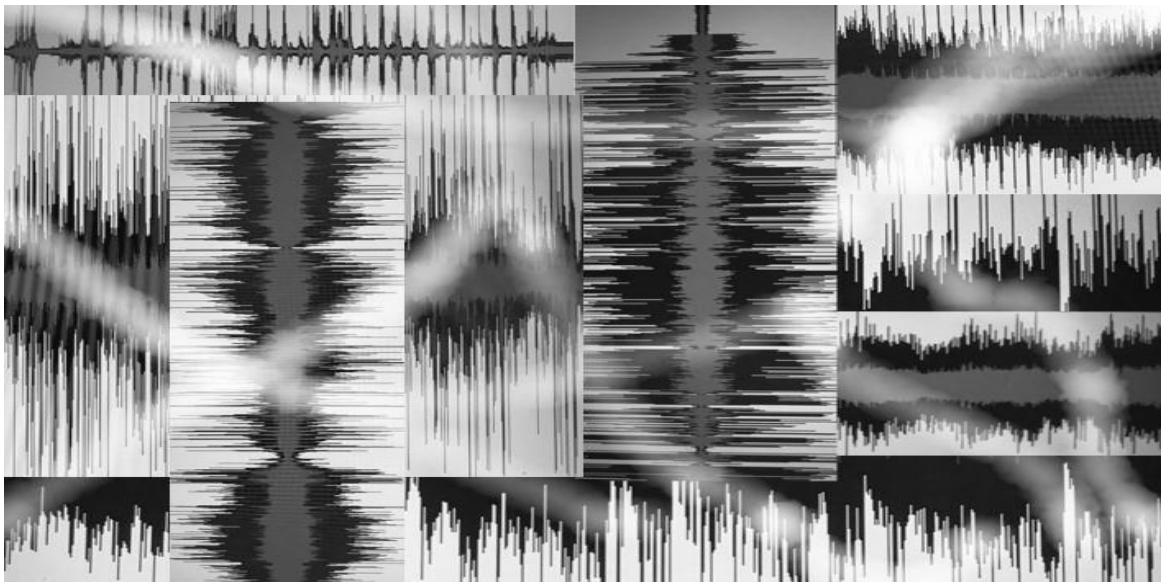






Figure 14. Transformative disruptions: Bow River's ephemeral and elusive layered composition of multiple voices and multiple lives.

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