


Pedagogy of Place & Sustainable Culture

A misty landscape with a body of water, a bird, and tall grasses. The scene is overcast and foggy, with a bird standing on the grassy bank near the water's edge. The water is calm, reflecting the bird and the surrounding environment. The foreground is dominated by tall, dry grasses and reeds, some with dark, seed-like structures. The background shows a line of trees and a distant horizon under a grey sky.

In Defense of the Commons: A Manifesto for Sustainable Culture – Astra Taylor (2014)

The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins – Anna Tsing (2016)

Between Geography and Philosophy: What Does it Mean to be in the Place-World? – Edward Casey (2001)

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Study: Focus Groups on News Framing, Climate Change, and Personal Sense of Efficacy



News Media and Climate Politics

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND POLITICAL EFFICACY IN A CLIMATE OF RELUCTANT CYNICISM

By Kathleen Cross, Shane Gunster, Marcelina Piotrowski & Shannon Daub

SEPTEMBER 2015



PART 4

Engagement and efficacy in a climate of reluctant cynicism

I've grown quite cynical and jaded over time, and it just makes me sad to think about climate change and I don't think anything's happening. — Group 1

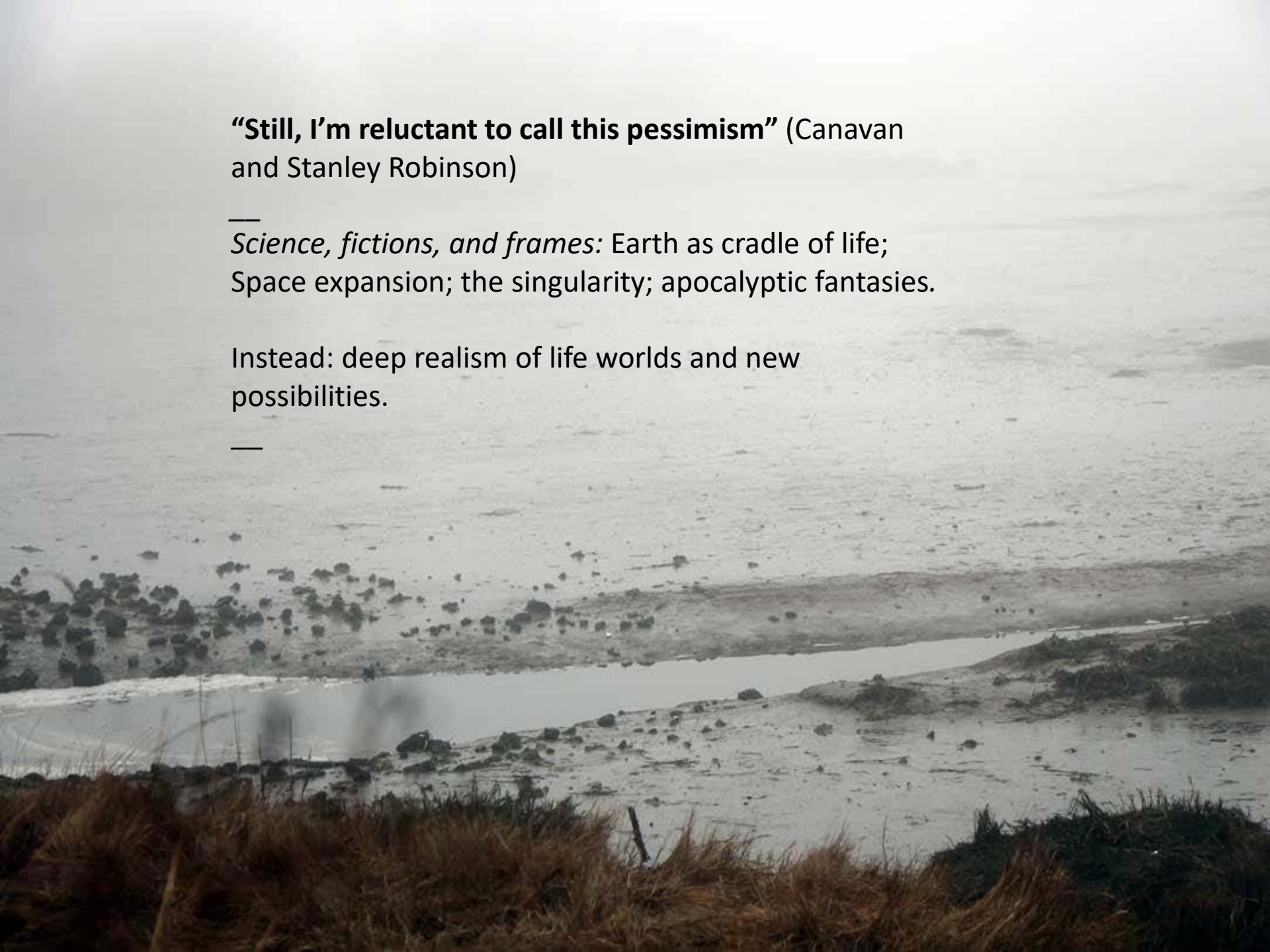
Virtually all of our participants expressed considerable skepticism that governments, corporations or even significant numbers of their fellow citizens could (ever) be convinced of the need to address the problem (or even recognize its severity).

THE OVERWHELMING RESPONSE OF OUR PARTICIPANTS to news about climate politics was cynicism. While there was a strong desire for more aggressive political action to address climate change, virtually all of our participants expressed considerable skepticism that governments, corporations or even significant numbers of their fellow citizens could (ever) be convinced of the need to address the problem (or even recognize its severity). Even more troubling was the tendency of many participants to dismiss collective action and political engagement as irrelevant given their perceptions of the seemingly insurmountable barriers to social, economic and political change. This cynical disposition to climate politics was thoroughly normalized during our discussions and simply accepted by most as an obvious, natural and “common sense” approach to thinking and talking about climate change. Evidence, anecdotes and arguments in favour of a cynical position came quickly and easily to most, were frequently affirmed by others and were almost never challenged or questioned. On the contrary, making the case for political activism and engagement appeared more difficult for most participants and did not occur easily or frequently during the discussion.

“Still, I’m reluctant to call this pessimism” (Canavan and Stanley Robinson)

Science, fictions, and frames: Earth as cradle of life;
Space expansion; the singularity; apocalyptic fantasies.

Instead: deep realism of life worlds and new possibilities.



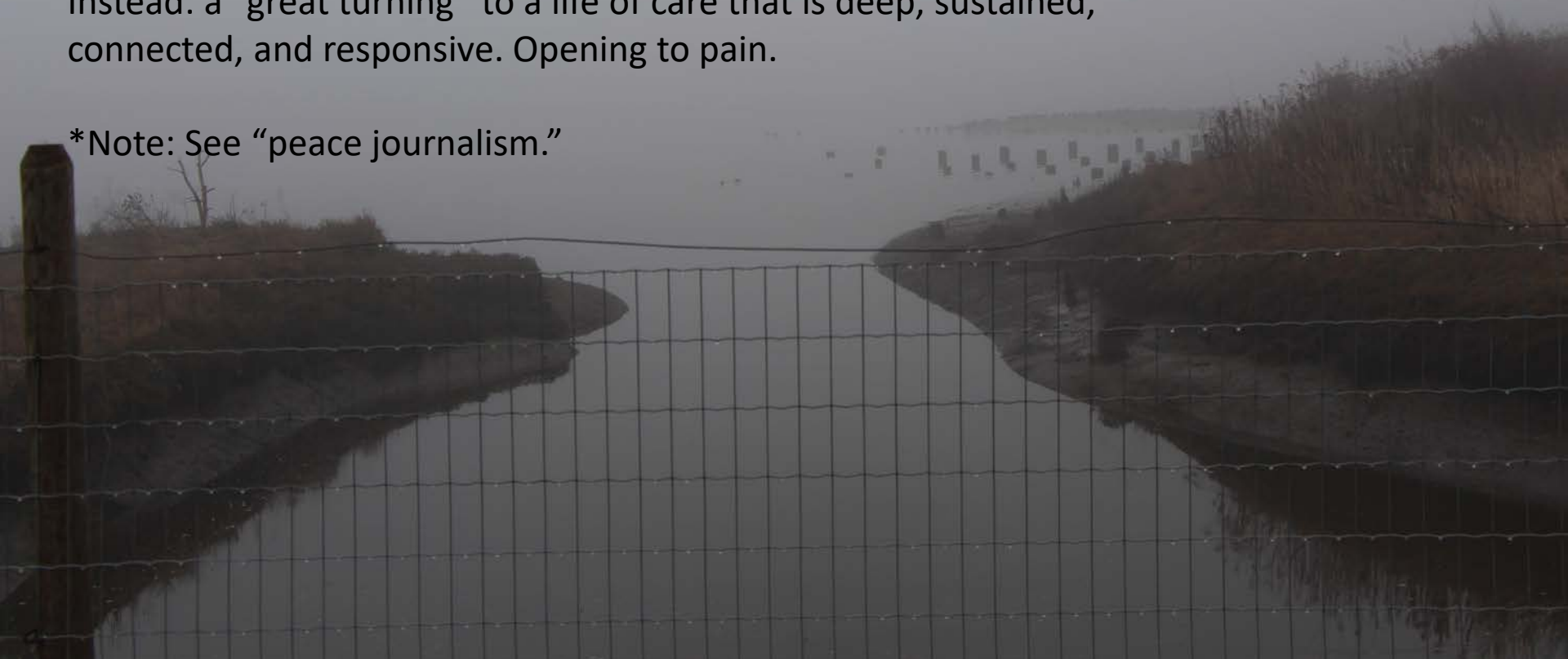
Noticing Stories, Calling for New Narratives:

“Why Restorative Narratives are an Important Part of the Media Landscape” (Tenore) and **“Transforming Despair”** (Macy and Nurriestearns)

Community narratives: Guilt, avoidance, personal failing, conflict/event based narratives.

Instead: a “great turning” to a life of care that is deep, sustained, connected, and responsive. Opening to pain.

*Note: See “peace journalism.”



New Boundaries & Spatialities for Habitation... a Call to Notice

IT IS NO MEASURE OF HEALTH
TO BE WELL ADJUSTED TO A
PROFOUNDLY SICK SOCIETY.

~JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI



Edward Casey “Place” and “Space” /// Habitus and Habitation

- Thickness of place (use and familiar interactions)
- Being in place co-creates sense of self
- FROM “More independence, more self” TO “More place, more self”



Surface spaces (screens) that can reconfigure quickly BUT can't “hold” identities, roots, depths

Consumption spaces: more generic uses, less “self”

“Thinned out” place – desiccated, “leveled” out



...But space can never be pure space; it is always somehow lived place.

Just as even people highly programmed to be adjustable to uniform surfaces will always still be individual *selves* connected to *places*.

This conception of place and self suggests a need for intervention into current structures and systems...

“We are embedded beings who create work in a social context, toiling shared soil in the hopes that our labour bears fruit. It is up to all of us whether this soil is enriched or depleted, whether it nurtures diverse and vital produce or allows predictable crops to take root and run rampant” ~ Astra Taylor

In Defense of the Commons – How do cultural industries distribution and “free culture” connect to environmental issues?

Taylor makes a link between local food movements and local cultural distribution and Internet/cloud archiving.



BUDGET 2016 | Budget boosts funding to Canada Council, CBC

Government to invest \$1.9B in the arts over the next five years - including \$675 million for CBC

By Sandra Abma, CBC News Posted: Mar 22, 2016 4:39 PM ET | Last Updated: Mar 23, 2016 10:04 AM ET



Canada's Heritage Minister Melanie Joly had promised an increase to the CBC's funding prior to the budget. (Chris Wattle/Reuters)

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The Weather Network
Today
A few flurries
1°C
Low -1°C
POP 40%
Hourly

Astra Taylor: Cultural Policy And Regulation

Berkeley Votes to Boost Co-op Economy In the Face of Gentrification

A growing number of cities are investing in co-ops to keep money local and neighborhoods affordable.



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FROM Narratives of rapid growth, market competition, individualism, free culture

TO localized collectivities, skilled workmanship, ethics of care, caring frameworks, community initiatives, cultural commons as part of social fabric

Anna Tsing: The Mushroom at the End of the World

FROM narratives of promise and ruin / progress and teleology / industrial rhythms
TO multiplied awareness (arts of noticing), polyphony, assemblage



A photograph of a forest with a dirt path. The path is in the foreground, leading into a dense forest of tall evergreen trees. The ground is covered in green grass and fallen pine needles. The sky is visible through the canopy of the trees.

“Assemblages drag political economy inside them” – Anna Tsing

- * Cascade mountain region
- * Peripheries and valued space/labour
- * Assemblages as inquiry

New Narratives of Place



- Thickness (entanglement, inhabitation)
- Slowness (metabolism, pulse, restoration)
- Collectivity (aggregated risk, collective action, institutional frameworks)
- Arts of noticing (mindfulness, sensory experience, counterpoint and polyphony)
- No space is 'empty'
- Precarity and collaboration vs. teleology

- Can current policy and regulation interventions, e.g. CBC funding, speak to the absence of public cultural space? I.e., does the existing framework allow for the types of ethical cultural production and ethical/accessible commons Taylor is advocating for?
- Can ‘arts of noticing’ and new life rhythms be enacted personally, on an individual level? On a group level? A community level? Where do you think it runs into obstacle? Where do you think it gains traction?
- What is the balance between striving for new awareness and fighting against corruption within the existing framework? I.e., can we live in the world we want to be living in simply by doing so, or do we have to “unbuild” first?
- Considering everything we’ve discussed about scale, (how) can we persist in slow movements and encourage participation, even if results do not seem to appear?
- Without a grip on mass media, what other techniques of broader connectivity can we explore?

