

## Introduction

William Scott

Andrew Stables

It was a great pleasure for us to accept the invitation to guest-edit a special edition of *The Trumpeter* as, for several years now, we have been trying to address issues around education and the environment from a philosophical perspective. There is little point in educationalists merely operationalizing societal assumptions about the environmental crisis when such assumptions are diverse, diffuse, seldom shared, and controversial.

Despite this, there has been less treatment of educational issues in the environmental philosophy and philosophy of education literatures than we would have hoped for, though there have been some notable exceptions, including a special edition of *Educational Philosophy and Theory* in early 2001. Michael Bonnett wrote, in the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* in 1997, that there was work of the greatest philosophical importance to be done in this area. At that time, very little indeed of that work had been done. Since then, we are privileged to have developed a debate with Michael and others, most notably at the 2000 European Conference on Education Research (EERA) in Edinburgh. As part of that debate, Michael presented a paper entitled *Sustainability as a Frame of Mind*. The central idea of that paper inspired the contributions to this special edition, and the invitation seminar at the University of Bath that preceded it, at which the draft papers were discussed.

The starting point for this collection is that it is unlikely to be possible to solve environmental problems by means of a simple “policy fix,” and that, in some sense, a new way of living in the world is called for. Perhaps the “policy fix” of global environmental totalitarianism, in which individual and civil liberties were severely curtailed, trade and travel were restricted, and ecologically suspect practices were banned might have some effect, but we would rather the situation were ameliorated before such a drastic remedy were considered. Education, while not by any means capable of solving all the world’s ills, must have some involvement in the development of whatever changes of frame of mind might be possible.

To have the richest debate we could on this, without long-term planning or the funding for fully international participation, we invited contributors who not only shared our interest in this question, but also would be able to provide a wide variety of views. In this, at least, we seem to have succeeded! The papers in this collection range from the reasonably sanguine to the almost fatalistic; More importantly, along this continuum, we believe that a number of important issues are raised and variously developed.

The title of the seminar was “What kind of frame of mind could bring about sustainability, and how might we develop it?” Beyond that, the agenda was left open. However, the papers that emerged throw up some strong common concerns. Perhaps the most notable among these are the value of the poetic, and the sort of attentiveness it demands; the degree to which human flourishing presupposes environmental flourishing; the power of individual consciousness to produce social change; and issues of pedagogical/educational practice relating to both formal and non-formal provision.