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Fulfilling the Regenerative Potential of Higher Education: A Collaborative Auto-Ethnography

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Abstract: Moving towards sustainable futures in which human and natural systems increasingly flourish together asks not only for technological innovation but also for social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual transformation. Regenerative education is an upcoming strand of theory and practice seeking to understand the enabling role educational systems can fulfill in this process. This paper aims to advance the notion of regenerative education from the perspective of two regenerative principles: (1) living the question of vocation and (2) embracing emergence. To do so, we—as a teacher–researcher and a student–researcher—engage in collaborative auto-ethnography against the background of a regenerative educational experiment we participated in together, which we refer to as “Graduate with Hope”. Our collaborative auto-ethnographic process was built around the practices of journaling and diffractive letter conversation. Through it, we meditate how (1) fostering a regenerative educational experience asks for the embrace of the pedagogical paradoxes of structure, shared agency, educational space, and transformation, (2) embracing these paradoxes can be confrontational and trigger inner development, and (3) sustaining commitment in this context asks for an ongoing practice of “talking the walk”. These perspectives can inspire educational professionals to design for, engage in, and study regenerative forms of education.

Keywords: regenerative education; collaborative auto-ethnography; vocation; emergence; pedagogical paradoxes; talking the walk



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1. Introduction

Moving towards thriving, sustainable futures asks—deeply—not just for innovating technologies and social structures but also for profound cultural, psychological, and spiritual transformation in how human communities and individuals relate with themselves, each other, and the more-than-human world [1,2]. Regenerative education is an upcoming strand of educational theory and practice that puts this growing awareness to work [3,4]. The core purpose of this emerging field is to design educational systems and develop pedagogical approaches that make the mutual flourishing of human and natural systems increasingly possible [5]. It is the capacity to do so that we hope to strengthen through the work we present here. In what is to come, we—a teacher–researcher (i.e., Koen) and student–researcher (i.e., Lotte) participating in a 2-year master program in sustainable development at Utrecht University—ponder the question of how teachers and students can collaboratively fulfill the regenerative potential of higher education. We do so through collaborative auto-ethnography against the background of an educational experiment we participated in, to which we refer as “Graduate with Hope”. This experiment was grounded in two regenerative principles: (1) living the question of vocation and (2) embracing emergence. In it, six students and four practitioners came together to learn, experiment, and develop societally engaged thesis projects around the theme “the post-fossil good life”. In what follows, we will present our collaborative auto-ethnography’s empirical and theoretical context, method, and results in depth. Yet first, let us introduce and contextualize the notion of regenerative education in

more detail. To do so, we will briefly discuss two different ways in which the educational community currently responds to the planetary crisis and illustrate how, together, they give rise to an explicitly regenerative educational agenda.

Firstly, within the educational community, the awareness has indeed been growing that contemporary human societies are largely driven by growth and an extractivist relationship to the natural environment, e.g., [6,7], and that this causes a cascade of ecological disasters [8,9]; also see the overwhelming accumulation of evidence integrated into the IPCC reports. For many educators, this triggers a sense of urgency and awakens the responsibility to respond educationally. Illustrative for this development is the explicit attention in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (i.e., Quality Education) for education focusing on knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development [10]. As Reid and colleagues analyzed [11], the tone of such sustainability-promoting education has, over time, moved from an initially moralistic to a more participatory, democratic approach. Today, indeed, challenge-based pedagogies in which students actively engage sustainability transition questions in collaboration with societal partners are becoming increasingly popular [12].

Secondly, a smaller but still significant amount of thinkers and educators are raising attention to the ways in which the planetary crisis is not only about environmental degradation but also about human beings suffering from growing up in a culture and economy that encounters the world as a point of aggression, e.g., [13]. It is noteworthy to highlight that humanity currently both transgresses planetary boundaries and dramatically fails to provide social minimums for dignified and just living for all [9]. There is also accumulating evidence of widespread existential/emotional suffering triggered by the planetary crisis, not the least among younger generations, the people currently in our classrooms. It is not uncommon for today's students to feel a sense of deep sadness and despair about the state of the planet and a disconnection from the world around them [14,15]. Nor is it uncommon that students experience a range of negative emotions related to their own actions or inactions—e.g., guilt, shame, lack of agency, regret—or feelings of anger, disillusion, and disgust toward politicians, older generations, big companies, and so on [16,17]. Whereas in sustainability-promoting education, as considered above, the emphasis lies more on system change and societal impact, teachers departing from these more existential and psychological observations tend to turn the matter around and ask: how can we support students' well-being in troubling times and empower them to find their place and purpose in today's world? Consequentially, interest is also rising among many educators for "softer" educational innovations, such as including contemplative practices [18], teaching in and experiencing connection with nature [19], and arguing, more generally, for creating more space in education for processes of inner transformation [20]; n.b., in this context, it is also interesting to observe the Inner Development Goals initiative as an attempt to complement the Sustainable Development Goals.

As an emerging educational approach, regenerative education is grounded in both the developments described above—the development of educating toward a neutral or positive impact of humanity on the natural environment and the development of educating toward experiencing meaning, connection, and authentic purpose in the often troubled reality we find ourselves in. Building on living systems thinking and holistic/integrative pedagogies [1,21,22], regenerative education is about appreciating the entanglement of these two processes and about foregrounding, therefore, the whole-system question of *mutual flourishing* [1,3,23,24]. As Pamela Mang and Bill Reed put it [21] (p. 116): 'the "pole star" or overarching source of direction for regenerative projects derives from the ultimate effect every regenerative project seeks to achieve: an enduring and mutually beneficial relationship between the human and natural systems in a particular place'. And as Daniel Wahl [25] tentatively describes the corresponding educational impetus, 'education for regenerative cultures is about the life-long process of enabling and building the capacity of everyone to express their unique potential to serve their community and the planet and in the process serve themselves'.

Speaking with Karen Barad [26], we can observe that a regenerative educational agenda proposes a relational onto-ethical turn. On the ontological level, it suggests a move from thinking the world apart to thinking the world together through interconnectedness and co-evolution. To quote Rosa [13] (p. 31): ‘subject and world do not simply exist apart from each other as independent entities, but rather emerge first from their mutual relatedness and connection to each other’. On the ethical level, the corresponding suggestion is that our collective responsibility—to which education thus is to be aligned—is to cultivate the desire and ability to foster worldly relationships from which mutual flourishing can increasingly emerge. We write “increasingly” here on purpose, for—echoing Donna Haraway [27]—we should be careful that care for all life on earth does not turn into a form of idealism and perfectionism that becomes naïve and unrealistic. That is to say, the all-encompassing realization of mutual flourishing is, indeed, a utopia, and regenerative education is not so much about reaching this utopia as it is about the willingness to try and take meaningful steps forward within the concrete materiality of our lives.

2. Research Context and Methods

Regenerative educators, as we thus see it, use the light of the pole star of mutual flourishing to critically reflect on and transform contemporary educational practices. Although recognizable by this core principle, regenerative education can take myriad different forms, depending on place, context, and who is involved [21] (n.b., for a broader discussion on education and educational research as situated practices, see [28–30]). We would like to turn now, therefore, to introduce the Graduate with Hope experiment (henceforth referred to as “GwH”) that constitutes the empirical heart of this paper.

2.1. Research Context—Graduate with Hope

The idea for GwH originated when Koen started working on an action research project called Academy of Hope at the Department of Sustainable Development at Utrecht University in the spring of 2022. Familiarizing himself with his new faculty and its educational programs, his hunch was that a relatively easy and promising opportunity for (better) fulfilling their regenerative potential awaited in the graduation year of the sustainable development master tracks on offer. For, in their graduation year, students have a relatively large amount of freedom and opportunity to follow their own interests and passions and engage with societal stakeholders around contemporary questions and challenges related to sustainability transitions. Students’ core responsibility in their graduation year is to conduct a master thesis project comprising three-quarters of the year’s study load. In our faculty, a master thesis is an individual research project, and how it generally works is that a list of potential supervisors and projects is published for students to pick from. What kind of experience a thesis project becomes, and the degree to which we might call it regenerative, heavily depends on the motivation and approach of an individual student and their supervisor. Notably, there is no group process organized as part of the graduation year curriculum in which, for instance, a group of students regularly comes together around their experiences of and approach to conducting their research projects. What if we were to break with this individualized approach to a master thesis and bring a group of students together with the explicit intention to conduct their graduation year—with the master thesis as an “anchor”—in a regenerative way? Against the background of this question, GwH emerged. In it, two concrete regenerative education principles played a central role, which we introduce next.

2.1.1. Living the Question of Vocation

The first principle is to approach the graduation year as an explicit invitation to *live the question of vocation*. This phrase—living the question of vocation—is playfully inspired by Parker Palmer’s invitation [31,32] to inquire into our unfolding life stories and listen, as he puts it, for the voice of vocation, and Daniel Wahl’s argument [1] that to embark on the path of regeneration asks of us to live the questions of our time rather than to expect

final answers and depend on predefined pathways. What we are after with the notion of living the question of vocation is the idea that if one dares to listen to their life, they might discover that—for one reason or another—they are *touched by* the world in a particular way, and that this calls them toward a particular *touching of* the world that not only provides them meaning and fulfillment but also offers something that the world needs. Especially in light of the existential/emotional dimension of being confronted with the planetary crisis—as we hinted at in the Introduction—we feel that foregrounding the question of vocation is crucial. It might help, indeed, to avoid (over)stretching oneself in all directions to save a world on fire (n.b., with the students joining GwH, we came to refer to this as “the bodybuilder approach”) and enable an engagement with the planetary crisis that is, in a way, more realistic, modest, and purposeful. Especially in a department such as ours (i.e., sustainable development) where enabling and accelerating sustainability transitions is on top of everyone’s agenda, we feel this deserves explicit attention. For, if we let go of the idea that we should be perfect in all regards and should be heroes who save the world, we allow ourselves to offer a more humble and sincere contribution that aligns with our evolving biographies and comes with genuine care, focus, and determination.

The notion of vocation, of course, is not new and has multiple interpretations, and hence we care to reflect briefly on what it means to invoke this concept in a regenerative way. Grounded as regenerative thinking is in an ecological, relational worldview [1,21], we want to stress, firstly, that living the question of vocation is something very different from the popular self-development idea that, through willfulness, we can turn our lives into whatever we desire them to be (for an example of this approach, see, for instance, [33]). As Palmer [31] considers it, vocation is not something we plan and control in that sense; it is not so much about wanting something with our lives, but about our lives wanting something with us. Or, hinting at the Christian spirituality that Palmer often touches upon in his writing: vocation is not about playing God. Yet interestingly, Palmer simultaneously distances himself from the opposed stance that to find vocation, we should turn to God who bestows it on us as the ultimate knower of absolute truth. As the title of his book [31] puts it, he rather invites his readers to *let their lives speak*, and to listen for vocation in their unfolding encounters with the world. Whereas what we could call “the American Dream version” of vocation puts the world out of the equation—it is just about what I want,—explicitly Christian interpretations of vocation run the risk of, to speak with Barad [26], cutting the worldly, relational threads that constitute our lives and biographies. Now, similar to Palmer, our intention here is not to oppose Christianity, or religion in general, but simply to suggest that an explicitly regenerative understanding of vocation begins by seeing it as a highly dynamic and unfolding experience in relation to the world. Vocation, understood in this relational way, bears resemblance to Rosa’s work on resonance [6,13] and Haraway’s work on response-ability [27], all being attempts to articulate a sincere, caring, dialogical way of showing up in the world.

Furthermore, although this might sound counterintuitive at first, living the question of vocation is not only something *you* can do but also something *we* can do. In light of a whole-systems perspective [1,21], the question of “what am I called to do?” is a nested question that can be answered by a person just as much as by a collective. Notably, as we know from complexity theory [34,35], the answer to the collective question of vocation is not simply the accumulation of individual answers; through self-organization, a collective (project) can truly emerge with an identity, purpose, and function of its own.

2.1.2. Embracing Emergence

The second principle is to approach the graduation year as an invitation to *embrace emergence*. At first sight, this might sound like a secondary idea, for we have just considered vocation as something that emerges rather than as something we plan and control. Yet, the inspiration for and importance of this idea run deeper and are grounded in the philosophical and practical study—which plays a central role in living systems thinking—of the indeterminacy of our shared world, e.g., [26,36,37]. Increasingly, this work reveals a world continually unfolding through the myriad intra-actions of the agentic beings that

co-constitute it, continually creating new realities with new (im)possibilities for action. For Rosa [13], re-appreciating what he refers to as *the uncontrollability of the world*—the fact that control continues to elude us no matter how hard we try—lies at the heart of his sociological criticism of modernity and is, indeed, his primary diagnosis of why the world, as he puts it, has increasingly turned mute on us. For, if we try to control what we cannot, are we not bound to get ourselves into trouble and get frustrated or even alienated (n.b., Laloux provides a powerful metaphor as he considers meticulously planning a bike ride through a busy city and then jumping on your bike, closing your eyes, and hoping for the best [37])? It is in line with this understanding of the emergent, uncontrollable nature of life—and the observation that working against it, in fact, often causes unintended harm—that regenerative scholar Daniel Wahl [1] built his aforementioned plea that we need to let go of our firm grip on the world through plan-and-control mechanisms and start living the questions of our time in a humbler, more co-creative and responsive manner. A similar move can be recognized in Haraway’s plea to playfully practice the art of becoming response-able in the concrete materiality of our lives [27]. What such pleas share is the invitation to stop seeing ourselves as the “outsiders” in control of a world at our disposal and to explore a more caring and viable alternative as the entangled insiders that we inevitably are.

As Rosa convincingly shows [13], the tendency to simplify, predict, and control—both intellectually and in terms of organization—still dominates contemporary culture and institutional logic. In an educational context, this analysis has been repeatedly echoed, e.g., [24,29,35,38]. The logic communicated with the master thesis course guides we work with at our university is no exception to Rosa’s analysis; students are instructed to submit a detailed research proposal with a precise description of research questions, relevance, step-by-step research plans, and expected outcomes *before* starting their actual empirical research. In other words, the dominant narrative portrays research as something we plan in advance and then execute. An emergent narrative, in contrast, would emphasize how deep engagement within a research context leads to co-creation and ongoing refinement of research plans and activities. Although we care to emphasize that numerous contemporary educational approaches are “shaking up the tree” in this regard, such as Crowell and Reid-Marr’s seminal work on emergent teaching [35], the approach of living labs [39], and a rhizomatic view of sustainability education [40,41], our impression is that we have a long way to go. If we care to co-create more regenerative educational experiences, resisting the control impulse and opening up space for encountering and embracing emergence might, indeed, be a good place to start.

2.1.3. Graduate with Hope

Of course, the regenerative principles of living the question of vocation and embracing emergence are not only relevant for the sustainability master’s graduation year. Indeed, we believe that these principles, and regenerative education in the broader sense, need to be explored and developed throughout the entire educational system. Neither are these two principles the whole story of regenerative education. However, focusing on what we can do in our own immediate educational context—the sustainability master’s graduation year in our university—this is the opening that we saw and decided to explore. We now turn to describing GwH as it took shape between June 2022 and June 2023.

GwH began with an open invitation to students of our university’s 2-year sustainable development master tracks to shape a thesis project within an overarching regenerative agenda referred to as “the post-fossil good life”. Before the summer break, Koen took students interested in working within this loose umbrella for a 1 h informal walk to get to know each other. On these walks, he foregrounded his intention to offer them an opportunity and support system for shaping a societally engaged thesis project close to their heart under his or a close colleague’s supervision, in an emergent setting with fellow students and—as shall be further explained underneath—a small group of practitioners. From this, a group of six students formed and, throughout the following academic year, worked on self-chosen thesis projects around “resonance in mobility”, “care-work in the

recycling street”, “energy poverty”, “aesthetic experience of nature”, “polarization in the public debate around climate policy”, and “sufficiency–economy”. The second author of this paper—Lotte—was one of these students and combined her participation with a part-time job as a research assistant to work on this paper.

Through co-creation (e.g., using co-design sessions), GwH took shape in three phases, divided over four 10-week periods that structure the academic year in our university, running from September to June. In phase one (period 1), bi-weekly sessions were hosted by Koen. These sessions were designed from session to session to allow for emergence and the incorporation of students’ input. In these sessions, we collaboratively explored the overarching theme of “the post-fossil good life”. Amongst other things, we spent considerable time reading literature together (n.b., we especially remember discussing a paper from Rosa on resonance and reading Rebecca Solnit’s book “Hope in the Dark”), brainstorming possible thesis projects, and getting to know each other on a more personal level. Phase two (period 2) was the most intense phase and had two components:

- Component 1: Weekly sessions with the student group, either hosted by Koen or by two students (i.e., each student co-hosted one session). Sessions hosted by Koen focused on exploring personally and societally engaged research methods and deepening the understanding of one’s own positionality as an emerging professional. The student-led sessions allowed students to explore themes they considered important in self-chosen ways. Typically, these sessions were used to explore emerging themes related to thesis projects—e.g., “what does it mean to embody a care-lens?” or “what is our emotional response to the planetary crisis?”—and were experiential and creative in design.
- Component 2: Five bi-weekly sessions and a 2.5-day retreat in Eco-village Mandora in the vicinity of Utrecht with an extended group in which four practitioners joined the students. These practitioners had experience in, amongst others, regenerative farming, sustainable finance, personal leadership, and activism. Koen was the host and facilitator of this group. Its process was to (1) openly share experiences, visions, and challenges related to a post-fossil good life with each other, (2) collectively explore what it might take to commit to such a good life, and (3) use the emerging awareness of the group to create two interactive evening programs for inhabitants of the aforementioned Eco-village and contribute to a public end-event on sustainable futures organized in collaboration with another experimental elective master’s course that ran parallel to GwH. This process ended with a 2.5 h evaluation session with the whole group of participants. For an impression of what emerged throughout this process, see the blog post written by the group [42].

In phase three (periods 3 and 4), lastly, students worked intensively on their thesis projects, which we combined with three weekly sessions hosted by students in alternating duos. These sessions were designed to accommodate two purposes articulated collaboratively in a co-design session: (1) creating a safe space for intervision around thesis challenges and (2) creatively exploring and expressing a shared narrative on the group level by bringing thesis projects in conversation with each other. Regarding the latter, the student group decided to work with collaging as a method and worked towards a set of collages representing both their individual thesis projects and a shared narrative focusing on the notion of justice in sustainability transitions. Subsequently, they integrated these collages into a recorded Prezi presentation openly available on our website [43].

2.2. Method—A Collaborative Auto-Ethnography

Our interest in this paper is not to test the effectiveness of GwH as an intervention but to reflect, through shared experience, on what it asks of us—teacher and student alike—to make the sustainability master graduation year a more regenerative educational experience. In many ways, “what it asks” is not something we have mastered, but rather something we are—in part through writing this paper—growing into. We furthermore believe that “what works” in education is highly contextual and should, as Akkerman and colleagues [28]

(p. 421) articulate it, always be nuanced into ‘what once worked for whom, when, where, how and for what purpose and with what kind of expansive possibilities.’ Thus, although we do not provide a blueprint for regenerative education, we hope to trigger you—our dear reader—to reflect on the educational practice you are part of yourself and discover new avenues to explore your commitment to it.

Looking for a research method befitting these purposes, we landed on an auto-ethnographic research design [44,45]. In brief, auto-ethnography entails to ‘retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity’ [45] (p. 276). It foregrounds how researchers—especially in social research contexts like ours—are fundamentally part of the phenomena of their interest and how the systematic reflection of the researcher on their “being part” can generate valuable knowledge [46]. The legitimacy of auto-ethnography, accordingly, depends on the degree to which a researcher can transparently show how systematic reflection on their own experiences leads to a profoundly personal learning journey and their effort to bring insights into dialogue with others and relevant theoretical frameworks [45]. Related to the latter, a strength of our inquiry is that it is a collaborative endeavor combining teacher–auto-ethnography (i.e., Koen) and student–auto-ethnography (i.e., Lotte). Collaborative auto-ethnography is increasingly acknowledged as a promising, social version of auto-ethnography, which involves ‘researchers pooling their stories to find some commonalities and differences and then wrestling with these stories to discover the meanings of the stories in relation to their socio-cultural contexts’ [47] (p. 17). As Lapadat [48] suggests, collaborative auto-ethnography extends the reach of auto-ethnography as it ‘supports a shift from individual to collective agency, thereby offering a path toward personally engaging, nonexploitative, accessible research that makes a difference’ (p. 589). We now present a brief overview of our inquiry process, structured into three phases.

2.2.1. Phase One—Exploration

In the first phase, running parallel to phases one and two of the GwH experiment, we started by collaboratively defining the focus of our inquiry and familiarizing ourselves with the auto-ethnographic research method (e.g., writing in a first-person, narrative, and searching style, creatively establishing links between personal experiences, social context, and the literature). In this phase, Koen, who already had experience with auto-ethnography, trained Lotte, for whom this was a first-time experience, to grow into the auto-ethnographic practice gradually. We wrote weekly journal entries reflecting on our ongoing GwH experiences and met approximately once every 2 weeks for a debrief session. Having read each other’s journaling in advance, in these debrief sessions, we would share what triggered us in each other’s writing (e.g., something different, similar, stimulating, insightful) and tune in on the research process itself to (re)focus attention and plans if necessary.

2.2.2. Phase Two—Diffraction

The second phase of our inquiry was more explicitly designed to challenge ourselves to “wrestle” with our stories, as Chang, Ngunjiri, and Hernandez put it [47]. In doing so, we built on the theory of diffraction [26,49,50], which proposes to understand the process of drawing valuable insight from data as one of intentionally challenging and creatively obstructing those data so that patterns of difference and deeper understanding can emerge (i.e., diffraction), rather than as a process in which the data are treated as distant, stable material to be dissected. In shaping this phase, we were particularly inspired by the creative practice of letter writing to turn the more individual practice of auto-ethnographic writing into a dialogical practice of thinking with and through each other’s reflections. So, over the course of 8 weeks, we went through four letter-conversation cycles (i.e., we each wrote four letters of about 1500 words). Holding our focus on “what it takes to open space for vocation and emergence and turn the sustainability master graduation year into a more regenerative educational experience” in mind, in these letters, we challenged ourselves to illuminate

and deepen patterns of insights we recognized in the data of phase one and asked each other thought-provoking questions aimed at looking yet deeper into our experiences.

2.2.3. Phase Three—Consolidation

In phase three, lastly, we started working more explicitly on writing this paper. In what follows, we try to provide a coherent, stimulating meditation that puts our main patterns of insight into a coherent narrative. At the start of phase three, we organized a 3-hour design session with each other, in which—after a close reading of all our output up to that moment in time—we co-created the core structure of our meditation. From there, we started co-writing and in doing so, inevitably, refining. We care to emphasize that we do not provide a final theory of sorts but rather an effort to articulate and share what we have learned within the context and limits of our collaboration. In articulating these insights, we regularly establish links with the work of (educational) thinkers whose shoulders we stand on (e.g., Palmer, Crowell and Reid-Marr, Freire), a practice we experienced as crucial to uphold throughout our auto-ethnographic process to add depth and context to our sense-making process. For this reason, we combine our Results and Discussion section in what follows. We acknowledge, simultaneously, that—perhaps especially in the reading experience of the reader with extensive knowledge of the fields we touch upon—there are plentiful connections that can be made that we did not. This feeling of “open-endedness” in a text, however, is characteristic of auto-ethnographic research [45], in which links with the literature are made precisely when—but also only when—A particular piece of writing takes on significant importance in the hands-on sense-making process of the researchers. We consider it important to honor our auto-ethnographic process as it took shape and to leave space, in a way, for the reader to make their own connections as they engage with our writing. Without further ado, we now move on to sharing our findings.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. *To Foster a Regenerative Educational Experience, We Need to Embrace Pedagogical Paradoxes*

Soon after we embarked on our journey of collaborative auto-ethnography, we stumbled on a theme that would continue to fascinate us throughout the year. Namely, we came to experience the process of making GwH come alive as deeply paradoxical. For example, already after our second joint session in phase one, a design session in which the students were actively involved in shaping the educational experience and exploring and communicating their interests and desires, Koen journaled extensively on how he, on the one hand, recognized the importance of his leadership in planning, framing, and organizing the GwH process but on the other hand had to take several steps back during that session and radically open himself to students’ ideas to make its co-creative, emergent potential come alive. Or, as early as after our third get-together, we discussed in a debrief session that the initial phase of a master’s thesis seems to involve some tension between accurate planning to generate orientation and focus and free exploration within still prevailing vagueness and openness. Holding this tension, so it seemed to us, is crucial in creating a setting for actively and open-heartedly exploring what one really feels called to explore in-depth and how.

As it turns out, Palmer—whom we draw on with the notion of vocation—wrote extensively on pedagogical paradoxes as design principles for holistic education [32], and—given the close link between holistic and regenerative thinking—a deeper engagement with the notion of paradox felt natural to us. We share the impression that in a polarized society such as ours, in which we tend to think in dichotomies [51,52], it is challenging to “do things differently” without tipping the scales to some opposite side. Yet do we not all know, deep down, that life-affirming conditions often depend on a fusion of seemingly contrasting elements—like the very act of breathing itself—and that the challenge is to learn to approach paradoxes and tensions as productive wholes? We feel that Palmer expresses it quite well when, following this line of reasoning, he refers to embracing paradoxes in

education as ‘a way of holding opposites together that creates an electric charge that keeps us awake’ [32] (p. 76).

So, what paradoxes do we need to (learn to) embrace to invite a degree of emergence and vocation that make for a (more) regenerative educational experience? Keeping this question alive throughout our inquiry, we stumbled on four paradoxes: (1) the paradox of structure, (2) the paradox of shared agency, (3) the paradox of educational space, and (4) the paradox of transformation. These pedagogical paradoxes, so is our suggestion, can function as pedagogical design principles for educators embarking on the path of regenerative education. To help introduce these four paradoxes and make them tangible, we would like to sketch the general progression of the first day of the GwH retreat in the Eco-village (see phase two of the GwH experiment):

Scene 1: After we arrive at the Eco-village in the morning, familiarize ourselves with the surroundings, and receive an introductory explanation of the village from one of the inhabitants, we sit in a large circle in the Eco-village communal space—which we have been granted to use as our living room—to discuss our goals, expectations, and wishes for our stay in the Eco-village as well as our ideas for its outcome. We know already that we are going to work on the theme of “tensions we encounter in committing to sustainable futures”, as we had gravitated towards that topic of inquiry in our previous sessions, but we do not know yet what exactly we are going to do with that theme and what we will end up with as an outcome. As, therefore, the agenda for the retreat is relatively open, Koen invites everyone to share what they hope to get out of the retreat. Together, we decide that we understand the three purposes of the retreat to be (1) getting a stronger sense of the creative potential of our group, (2) deepening our connection with each other, and (3) making something together that we can share with the Eco-village and beyond.

Scene 2: That evening, a meet and greet with inhabitants of the Eco-village is scheduled to take place, and Koen shares an initial, minimalistic plan to host and facilitate that session in a way he thinks would be meaningful. We then decide as a group that we want to use redesigning and preparing the program together as an opportunity to work on the three purposes articulated that morning. After an initial brainstorm, we split up into three groups that, in open space, take over responsibility for different parts of the evening planning and preparation.

Scene 3: In the evening, we host the prepared session for the residents of the Eco-village who wish to join us. After Koen’s introductory words, a portion of our group initiates a round of self-introductions. Someone else then takes over to welcome the participants into an open-space session. For this session, all tables and chairs have been cleared from the room, and—taping large pieces of paper to the floor—the bark of a tree is represented in the middle of the room with large leaves spreading all around the floor. Each leaf depicts a tension we had been exploring in committing ourselves to sustainable futures (e.g., “the need/desire to slow down”—“the urgency to act and make an impact”) and invites everyone present to engage in conversation about the experience of these tensions in the Eco-village and beyond. The evening concludes with a reflective session in which everyone can share general reflections and takeaways (for a more detailed description of the session format and the rationale behind leaves as a metaphor for exploring tensions, see [42]).

3.1.1. The Paradox of Structure

We decided to refer to the first of the four paradoxes as *the paradox of structure*. At the heart of this paradox lies the insight that to create the conditions for emergence and vocation in education, we need both openness to the unexpected and to what wants to become and the direction of boundaries, a shared narrative, and plans. In Palmer’s words, this dynamic would translate to the paradox that the classroom space needs to be both ‘bounded and open’ [32] (p. 77). Similarly, in Crowell and Reid-Marr’s work on emergent teaching, we recognize this paradox in their proposition that creating the conditions for emergence necessitates ‘a continuous process of opening and closing’ [35] (p. 48). We share

Crowell and Reid-Marr's [35] observation and concern that in contemporary educational systems—with learning outcomes defined in minute detail, curricula with little room for unplanned activities, and rigid test and control mechanisms—the space for spontaneity and emergence is constantly under pressure. Yet, we soon found out that the solution here is not to create spaces with radical openness and no structure at all. While one might initially assume that emergence asks for such conditions, our experience has taught us that some guidance, boundaries, and limitations are crucial. While too many restrictions and clearly set-out plans likely take away from the fundamental freedom of following what wants to become rather than what must become, complete openness lacks purpose and focus. As Palmer puts it, 'space without boundaries is not space, it's a chaotic void and in such a place no learning is likely to occur' [32] (p. 77).

Our dance with the paradox of structure was very present on the first day of the retreat. When we sat together in the morning to figure out how to spend our time at the Eco-village, it was not yet set in stone that we would spend the day together designing the evening session for the Eco-village inhabitants. We could just as well have spent the day differently and trusted the hosting of that session on Koen, who did have a plan ready. However, having collectively figured out the purposes we saw in the retreat, the scheduled evening program provided the perfect boundary object for shaping the GwH's creative learning process. Our shared experience is that in this day, the simultaneity of boundaries and openness gave rise to a meaningful, co-created learning experience. To quote Palmer again, 'if boundaries remind us that our journey has a destination, openness reminds us that there are many ways to reach that end' [32] (p. 77).

3.1.2. The Paradox of Shared Agency

In spaces like GwH, which are more co-creative than the traditional classroom, roles, responsibilities, and decision-making power become more evenly distributed between participants, particularly between teacher and students [24,35]. This, so we have found, gives rise to a second paradox: *the paradox of shared agency*. When referring to the paradox of shared agency, we hint at the seemingly opposite needs to "lean out" by following the initiative and needs of others and the group and to "lean in" by speaking one's mind and taking individual leadership. We say "seemingly opposite" as for emergence and vocation to flourish, either-or thinking in terms of agency does not work. Instead, so is our experience, we—student and teacher alike—need to find ways to carry out both in alignment with each other, which requires a combination of self-awareness, empathy, and a willingness to co-create [24]. By valuing the energy and needs of others while also asserting ourselves when and where appropriate, we can then create a harmonious and effective dynamic that works for our individual and collective needs (on the challenge and experience of entering into a more co-creative teaching style, see, also, [53]).

In the exemplary case of the first day of the GwH retreat, we experienced the paradox of shared agency to have been present in two distinct manners. For one, Koen had already pre-designed an agenda for the evening session; however, when we collectively decided to dedicate the day to reconfiguring that session, the agency shifted. Koen had to give up some control and leadership while the remaining participants assumed the helm. Secondly, the process of designing the evening session itself served as a testament to embracing shared agency. As we split into different groups, each focused on different facets of the session's design, individuals naturally assumed leadership roles for specific aspects yet simultaneously had to surrender a considerable amount of control over other elements delegated to their peers. Through this collaborative sharing of agency, we engendered a highly fruitful and dynamic planning environment in which trust and responsibility—or at least so we experienced—gained a new meaning.

In light of these reflections and experiences, we started noticing how, in educational debates on teacher roles and authority (see, for instance, [54,55], but perhaps you also recognize this in daily conversations amongst educators at the coffee machine), the embrace of this paradox is often missing. At times it feels, at least to us, as if two camps are opposing

each other. Camp “restore the traditional authority of the teacher” and camp “the teacher must become a coach/facilitator”. Our work suggests that it might be more fruitful to think about educational relationships in more fluid forms, more like a collective dance in which “leading” and “following” are ongoingly renegotiated for the sake of “a good dance”. What would happen if, rather than getting caught up in power struggles over the authority to lead, we would prioritize “the good dance”—and the question what constitutes it—itsself?

3.1.3. The Paradox of Educational Space

Another paradox that seemed to hold relevant pertinence during our endeavor was *the paradox of educational space*, which links to the idea that educational space should be both ‘hospitable and charged’ [32] (p. 77). We understand this paradox to be related to the concurrent needs for a safe or even closed learning space in which intimacy and trust can grow and the simultaneous experience that such a space only becomes truly meaningful if it also allows and encourages us to be confronted by the world and all the otherness in it [56]. The large body of research around Vygotsky’s well-known work on zones of proximal development (see, for instance, [57]) also suggests quite convincingly that we learn best when placed in a learning environment that is neither too comfortable nor too challenging. As Palmer puts it [32] (p. 78), the art is to build learning spaces that ‘help students deal with the dangers of an educational expedition’.

During our time at the Eco-village, we experienced the community house we stayed in both as a safe, intimate space—in which we did check-ins, meditated, discussed our collective purpose, cooked and ate together, and so forth—and as an open space in which we were invited to witness and experience how the human and more-than-human life co-exists in the Eco-village and engaged in thought-provoking and unpredictable interactions with its inhabitants. Yet interestingly, during the evaluation session at the end of GwH phase two, we both became increasingly aware that there was still considerable room for improvement. In that session, the intensity of being together in one shared space for 2.5 days of deep collaborative learning was discussed in detail. Both from our own experiences and the overall consensus in the group, we feel that a bit more opportunity to “retract” oneself to process and rest individually would have made the whole retreat a more regenerative experience. To engage in challenging experiments together, so is our experience, it is crucial to cultivate an environment where everyone can feel comfortable and where people’s diverse needs are thoughtfully incorporated.

With respect to this paradox, too, it seems to us that educational debates often get stuck in polarization. Following more conservative sentiments (see [58], but also Dasberg’s historical pedagogical work [59], which does a fascinating job of tracking the history of these sentiments back to the onset of the Enlightenment), there is much to say for the importance of providing students with a safe space, where they can learn through mistakes, protected from some of the risks and forces of “the outside world”. Yet, we also live in a time full of initiatives and pleas to provide students with more opportunities to meaningfully engage—beyond the walls of the classroom—with complex, often confrontational societal/ecological issues that affect their current and future lives (think, for instance, of examples we shared earlier like challenge-based learning and living labs). Should we not avoid either-or thinking here? Is the main question we should be asking not how can we create as much safety and support as possible so that we can expand our ability and courage to encounter the world just as it is?

3.1.4. The Paradox of Transformation

The last paradox we stumbled upon was what we refer to as *the paradox of transformation*, the seeming juxtaposition between consciousness and action in processes of transformation. Often, in classroom settings, we prioritize one or the other. Despite plenty of pushing toward a more holistic education—emphasizing the importance of alignment in transformative learning processes between head, heart, and hands [22,31,35]—the university’s focus typically lies on consciousness, and even that is usually in a relatively narrow,

cognitive sense [22,60]. Yet, are the most powerful educational experiences not those in which our thinking, feeling, and acting mutually inspire and deepen each other? Readers familiar with his work will undoubtedly also recognize Paolo Freire's theory of praxis here [61], in which he convincingly argues that transformation and emancipation can only occur through the ongoing combination of deep reflection and action and never through either alone.

Our experience with GwH has indeed been that, to experience individual and shared vocation within the overarching theme of “the post-fossil good life”, it was crucial to create the time and space for deep and critical reflection and dialogue around past and present experiences and future aspirations (i.e., emphasizing reflection, head, and heart). Yet, we simultaneously see that for vocation to truly come alive and for new perspectives and directions to emerge into our collective awareness in the first place, we deeply depended on the extent to which each of us had dared to engage in creative or activist projects (i.e., action, hands) in the past and the extent to which we started doing the same within GwH. During the evaluation session at the end of phase two of GwH, there was a general consensus that our whole journey truly came to life, and started feeling more transformative and satisfying when we were at the retreat in the Eco-village and created the evening program for the inhabitants. In designing this session, we heavily built on our previous “slow” reflective work, and we both found ourselves writing afterward on how we would not have been able to co-create that program in such a smooth and fast way without it. We experienced, thus, that by fostering shared consciousness, we can lay the groundwork for collective and creative action, which in turn triggers new reflection and insight [62]. Of course, this insight is not new; it has been articulated over and over again in traditions of holistic, emancipatory, and transformative education. Yet, we suspect that the Insight—articulated repeatedly in both our journaling and collectively discussed within GwH in the evaluation session at the end of its second phase—that effectively bringing head, heart, and hands together was both a difficult and unfamiliar experience for the GwH group is illustrative for the work that remains to be done within our higher education system.

3.2. To Embrace Pedagogical Paradoxes, We Need to Dare Take on the Inner Work They Confront Us with

If our auto-ethnographic journey has made one thing clear to us, it is that to fulfill the regenerative potential of higher education, we need to take on the inner work required to show up in ways conducive to it [3,24,32]. Through auto-ethnography, we both, so to speak, “bumped into ourselves” on several occasions and discovered that what often stops us from embracing paradoxes such as those just explored are things like fear, insecurity, and a desire for control or recognition. Taking the effort to recognize these moments and feelings and to ask oneself “if I truly want to contribute to a regenerative educational experience for myself and the larger group, how am I to show up?” are, so has been our experience, of the utmost importance. It is exactly for this reason that we find ourselves becoming increasingly critical of often prevailing instrumental approaches to the teacher profession and teacher training [63]. Teaching, as Kelchtermans puts it [64], is a vulnerable profession, not just because teachers often have to act without being sure what the right decision is, or because teachers fundamentally lack control over students' responses, but also because as a teacher you are often exposed and triggered to the core of your own being. We agree wholeheartedly with Palmer [32] that we need to become better at recognizing the quality of teaching at stake here. Palmer describes this quality as *integrity*, meaning, in his words, that ‘I choose life-giving ways of relating to the forces that converge within me [...] ways that bring me wholeness and life rather than fragmentation and death’ (p. 14). For him, such integrity needs to be nurtured through individual practices—e.g., journaling—and teacher community practices of support and co-learning. To this, we wholeheartedly agree, but we would like to add that, in our experience, the same kind of integrity is asked of students. We feel, indeed, like we could write up an entire paper about how, through GwH, we were both confronted with ourselves and felt the responsibility to practice integrity and show up

in a regenerative way. Yet we do not have such space here and limit ourselves to sharing some snippets from our auto-ethnographic writing around the paradox of shared agency. Independent of each other, we both wrote about this extensively in relation to the first day of the retreat in the Eco-village illustrated in Meditation 1, but it also popped up in other journal entries throughout the GwH experiment. Here, follow some auto-ethnographic excerpts from both of us, illuminating some aspects of the inner work involved for us in showing up ready and open to share agency.

Lotte: “Throughout my prior academic journey, I have experienced that agency is often held by those in positions of authority, with the split between teacher and student being quite clear: the teacher holds and gives the knowledge, while the student is expected to receive and internalize that knowledge in the way the teacher wants. This has shaped me into a student who is often more concerned with meeting the requirements set by my teachers than with pursuing my own unique path or actively stepping in or taking leadership. It has, thereby, also influenced my perception of my own potential and what I can achieve by limiting my ability to take risks and explore new ideas, driven by a fear of being penalized for deviating from the norm. While this might at first sound like something extremely limiting and unenjoyable, it also comes with a sense of security in which one can enjoy the comfort of letting go of a lot of control, trusting in the teacher’s wisdom, and absolving from stress and accountability by enjoying little responsibility. Taking agency, therefore, demands me as a student to give up on a certain amount of comfort by committing in a more engaged and active way. Embracing this new responsibility demands me to reflect on my limits and needs and asks of me to openly and proactively communicate those boundaries”.

Koen: “I’m starting to understand and appreciate more and more that, as a teacher, I’m not alone in the task of facilitation. I’ve started noticing how often the actions of others than myself enable a group to learn and move forward. For instance, on Tuesday morning during the retreat in the Eco-village, after a guided meditation, I wanted to move on to the next part, and I remember feeling time pressure. However, one GwH member sensed that I went too fast and that there was a need to share some reflections from the meditation. So she interfered and asked for this space, which we created and turned out very valuable. What is interesting to observe in myself is that even though I am quite sure such interventions of others are not meant as a criticism towards me, it does immediately awaken a voice in my mind that asks the question: “should/could I have done better?”. In such moments, I try to be kind to myself. I try to remember that others caring enough to intervene in such ways is, in fact, a big accomplishment, that other people complementing me also means that I don’t have to be perfect and that this is a beautiful invitation to remain open to learn. Yet, quite frankly, just as it can be comfortable for a student to lean back and consume knowledge passively, it can be comfortable for me as a teacher to approach the job as a one-directional interaction in which I am superior and in control. I reckon teachers and students alike sometimes love to hide behind an authoritarian relationship. It’s up to me, time and time again, not to fall into this trap”.

Lotte: “Given the opportunity to take more agency than I am used to from other educational contexts, the GwH experiment confronted me with a surprising fear that exercising overly active agency and steering the process in a certain direction might come at the expense of other group members (including the teacher) and their needs. For me, this is very much related to the general struggle of dealing with insecurities about the relevance of my own needs and desires in education, which had previously often been overruled or ignored in educational contexts. Moving beyond this fear involves quite a shift in mindset and the realization that one can take agency in a particular way—open to other’s perspectives and willing to co-create—that doesn’t have to overrule anyone”.

Koen: “I am becoming increasingly aware that, although I really appreciate sharing agency with students, the educational system I am part of implies boundaries I must consider. In the end, I—as the teacher—am the one who is held accountable for the quality

of education by the university and my colleagues. And as a teacher, I am, of course, not neutral; I'm trying to facilitate particular learning processes, it's not "anything goes". And I'm often dealing with practical boundaries as well, like limited time and space or a deadline approaching. A consequence hereof is that I sometimes feel pushed to be rather goal-oriented, like "in the next 30 min, I need to accomplish this", and then it can feel quite disruptive or even threatening if someone else enacts agency. Under the influence of such constraining forces, it is so easy to give in to the comforts of authoritarian leadership and "approval of the system". I really have to keep reminding myself of the importance of co-creation and nurture a space—even if at times this is only a small space—that invites students to step in and take the lead".

3.3. To Sustain Commitment Amidst Paradox and Confrontation, We Need to Talk the Walk

All in all, as we have been exploring it, regenerative education emerges to us as quite a challenging, paradoxical, often confrontational practice. Navigating pedagogical paradoxes together is quite a subtle art, and taking on the inner work it often triggers in us asks for courage and active commitment. The last insight that we want to explore here is that nurturing this courage and commitment, particularly in highly emergent conditions [35], seems to ask for ongoing, collective process dialogue. Hence, we here suggest playfully inverting the conventional saying of "walking the talk" to "talking the walk". While walking the talk emphasizes the need for consistency between words and actions, with the notion of talking the walk, we seek to emphasize the value of—in turn—collectively interpreting and shaping shared and individual experiences [65,66]. As we have come to see it, talking the walk is not a solely retrospective exercise—as process reflection is often understood—but instead constitutes an ongoing dialogue that connects past experiences, future plans and aspirations, and current needs and commitments into—to speak with Haraway [27]—a "thick present". To illustrate the kind of ongoing dialogue about the educational process we thus came to value, we crafted Figure 1. In it, we use the holistic symbol of a lemniscate [35] to depict the ongoing dialogue about *commitment*, *the emerged*, and *the emerging*.

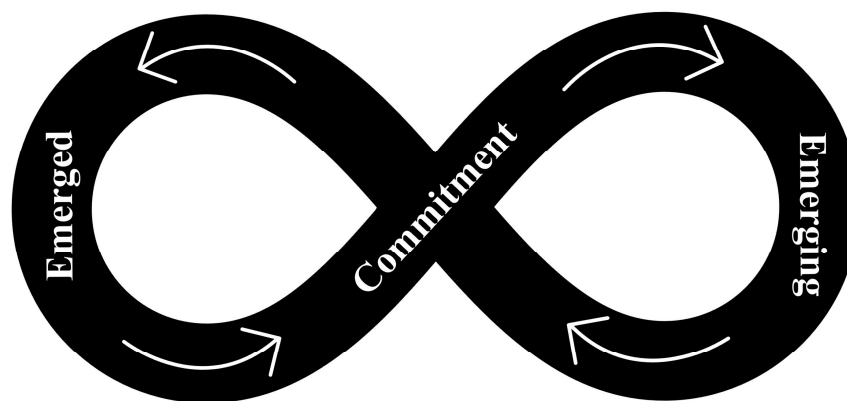


Figure 1. Visualization of the ongoing dialogue about the regenerative education process.

At the core of this symbol lies commitment—the driving force that sustains the progress of the educational process. Talking about commitment entails sharing and harmonizing diverse needs, interests, and constraints to forge a cohesive foundation upon which collaborative learning journeys can thrive. Connected to commitment, on the left side of the lemniscate, we have “the emerged”, representing the need to diligently seek comprehension of what has been experienced and learned on a shared journey so far, to enable a collective evaluation of progress, collect insights, identify areas for further exploration, and celebrate achievements. On the right side, the emerging represents the ongoing exploration of and adaptation to the path ahead, building on collective visions, aspirations, and potential. Talking about the emerging involves aligning goals, making plans, and creating shared visions, thus inevitably asking for re-assessing commitments in the present moment.

The further GwH progressed, the more aware we became of the importance of ongoing process dialogue. This awareness peaked in the letters we wrote to each other shortly after the aforementioned evaluation sessions with the GwH participants, in which “personal engagement in the group process” had been extensively discussed. We both started seeing how we had the tendency—as teacher and student alike—to transition between talking about “the emerged” and “the emerging” without adequately traversing the space in between. Especially with busy social/study/work agendas, we started observing—in ourselves—how incomplete process dialogue can lead to feeling overwhelmed. Had we better taken the relevance and complexity of ongoing process dialogue to heart from the start, we might have managed to create a more supportive and understanding environment, inviting everyone to speak openly about their concerns, limitations, and constraints. Potentially, we could have collaboratively created the conditions for a more sustained and sincere commitment from all participants throughout the educational process. Essentially, it became apparent to us that maintaining cohesion and engagement amongst a collective through open communication is crucial for harnessing the transformative potential of emergent educational environments. The lemniscate of ongoing dialogue, so we hope, can assist educators in this process.

4. Conclusions

In light of the current momentum and urgency for regenerative education, we hope our findings can be of value. In this paper, we explored how at the heart of regenerative (educational) approaches lies a commitment to the whole-system question of mutual flourishing, a question grounded in a deep awareness of interconnectedness and an ethics of care. We argued that regenerative education both builds on contemporary approaches to education for sustainable development—i.e., approaches that prioritize raising sustainability awareness and engaging students in projects that contribute to sustainability transitions—and tends to transgress them by opening space for less mainstream pedagogies (e.g., contemplative pedagogies, learning in nature, emergent teaching) that accommodate more existential and intimate learning processes around questions of psychological well-being, belonging, and authentic purpose. Our argument throughout this paper has been that this *integrative move*—i.e., seeing inner and outer development as nonseparable in a collective learning journey towards mutual flourishing—is crucial if we are to develop appropriate educational responses to the planetary crisis. We hope that the emerging notion of regenerative education can serve as a “carrier” of this integrative move and that our learning journey, as we presented it here, can provide some insight into what it takes to commit to it in practice.

More specifically, in our inquiry, we drew lessons from our participation in an experiment in which we co-created space to live the question of vocation and embrace emergence in the graduation year of our university’s master track in sustainable development. Through auto-ethnography, we provided an in-depth exploration of the importance and potential of embracing pedagogical paradoxes in educational design and practice—i.e., the paradoxes of structure, shared agency, educational space, and transformation. We observed how thinking about educational relationships in paradoxical ways—e.g., the teacher as both a leader and a follower—is often counterintuitive in contemporary educational systems and discourses yet crucial for co-creating more inspired, emergent, and transformative educational journeys. In the course of the GwH experiment, there were many moments in which we managed to embrace such paradoxes and felt that we could unfold a collective creative potential through them. Furthermore, we realized that navigating these paradoxes often required an honest examination of our fears, insecurities, and desires. For both teacher and student alike, showing up in regenerative ways entails living the question “How am I touched by what is happening now and, in response, how can I show up in a way that contributes to a mutually transformative educational experience?”. Given the courage, self-reflection, and integrity this takes, we care to stress the importance of devoting sincere attention to the inner development of teachers, both in their initial training and on the job. Lastly, we experienced that sustaining commitment whilst “navigating paradoxes together”

and “bumping into ourselves” asks for ongoing dialogue. Our work suggests, notably, that this dialogue should hold together the past (i.e., the emerged) and future (i.e., the emerging) in a “thick present” (i.e., commitment and needs). Our work additionally demonstrates that collaborative auto-ethnography holds promise not only for educational research but also as a pedagogical approach itself. We witnessed, indeed, how our collaborative inquiry helped Lotte transform her conception of “being a student” and develop a profound commitment to the GwH process, and similarly enabled Koen to see his role as a teacher through a new perspective and become more sensitive to the needs and potential agency of students.

Having arrived at the end of our inquiry, we care to acknowledge that our meditation only tells a partial story within the larger endeavor of creating regenerative education systems. Our primary emphasis rested on the regenerative education principles of living the question of vocation and embracing emergence. Had our point of departure been different—emphasizing, for instance, the regenerative potential of fostering a deep connection to a place [23], artistic expression and biologically inspired design [1], or acknowledging nature as a teacher [67]—our findings would surely be different. Therefore, we offer our findings with a sense of humility and hope they will contribute to a larger conversation focusing on the regenerative potential of educational systems and the scope of regenerative pedagogies. We fully acknowledge, furthermore, that the insights articulated through our auto-ethnographic method are neither definitive nor absolute but simply our best attempt to make sense of our experiences and bring them into conversation with educational debates. Having said that, we would like to end by expressing the hope that our work can encourage the educational community to commit to a more regenerative education. Together, we can stand for a future in which mutual flourishing within planetary boundaries becomes increasingly possible.

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Informed Consent Statement: Although this study was deemed not applicable for ethical review, we did obtain informed consent from all members of the Graduate with Hope experiment (i.e., the empirical context of the collaborative auto-ethnography). Herein, we explained our research and guaranteed not to include others’ personal data in our auto-ethnographic writing.

Data Availability Statement: Because of the highly personal nature of auto-ethnography, the complete data collected in phase 1 (individual journal entries) and phase 2 (letter conversation between the two authors) of the research process have not been made publicly available in repositories.

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