

# Introduction

## Why Encounters?

In October 2017 I became a student again—at a boarding school. Not the usual kind. This one was in a public art space in the center of Copenhagen. Sisters Hope, a feminist art collective, is known for creating installations based on enacting a “sensuous pedagogy” as part of a larger project entitled Sisters Academy ([www.sistershope.dk](http://www.sistershope.dk)). The one I attended for forty-eight hours as a student-researcher was, in fact, eponymously named the *The Boarding School*. The transformed space was dreamlike, both in its setup and in the intensity of sensation it evoked. Its soundscapes, soft furnishings, velvet draperies, and dimmed lighting were utterly enveloping, folding in and out and at the edges of experience, like a Möbius strip moving through time and space. A journal entry from breakfast the first morning speaks to this feeling, prompted no less by a serendipitous encounter I had with a pat of butter:

The mind is tricky. Black butter on the table. Had all kinds of narratives flash through my head about what it should be; took some time to become aware of what it is. It’s taken a good long time to begin to do that with myself. Like butter once it is in the mouth, so my self melts into the environment and yet not “at one” with it precisely, but in connection, reaching to fill the outer corners of the space and returning to my own deep recesses. I do not become butter but am definitely related to it as it is—now.

This kind of meandering and quite non-commonsensical reflection was a regular occurrence during my time there. The aesthetic practices that

Sisters Hope curate are both rooted in and occasion a sense of self that is porous and liminal.<sup>1</sup> At *The Boarding School*, the encounters staged with various artist-teachers were the relational spaces that allowed for a flow of experience and a transformation of both body and materials. Each artist-teacher curated experimental synesthetic spaces in their own “classes,” as well as in the dining hall and the dorms we slept in, sometimes playfully at other times troublingly. Prior to entering *The Boarding School*, I had been interested in aesthetic practices for the way they challenged conventional ways of seeing and being in the world (see Todd 2015a, 2018). However, participating in these sensory encounters made me realize how what passes for familiar and normal perceptions in regular educational settings are also very much part of a sense-scape that intersects deeply and inextricably with our everyday educational experiences.

In fact, the inextricability between our sensory and educational experiences makes it difficult sometimes to distinguish between them. Each of us is continually touched by and touches the world, and what we come to know about it cannot be divorced from our living in/with/through it. Learning to multiply numbers as a child is bound up with the smooth surface of my math textbook, my hunched shoulders over my school desk, and the feel of my pencil between my fingers as I worked on problems; learning cursive writing is intricately connected with the sound of my fountain pen scratching across the paper and the shape of words as they appeared in liquid form through each stroke of my hand; learning the history of early European “explorers” is inseparable from the musty smell of the colonial wall maps with their fading colors, as well as from the deeply disturbing portrayals of First Nations in our textbooks and the grotesque images of so-called Christian martyrs. Through touching and being touched by the world, associations were made that connected some sense of “me” to the curriculum, or rather *created* a sense of “me” through my relation to it, generating a sense-scape that was and continues to be intimate with what I now see to be the work of education. There were also a host of other sensations not directly connected to the official curriculum at all—the heavy, guilt-laden silences following an act of witnessed cruelty, the eruptive bouts of loud laughter that threatened all order, the sharp odors of other bodies, the fresh scent of pencil shavings, and the dank smell of frozen mittens thawing on the radiators during a typical Montréal winter morning. These sensations nonetheless also permeated my understanding of the world, the knowledge we were

learning about it, and my and others' place within it. Encounters with, in, and through things and people are the very stuff out of which not only education, but ourselves and the world are made.

The recent years of the pandemic, however, have brought certain questions about our encounters to the fore: What kind of encounters and sense-scapes have educators been able to create for and with students within the constraints of contagion? How has the move to online education shaped the ways we think about encounters more generally? And, more broadly still, how has our planetary interconnection so evidenced by the virus's disregard for species borders impacted how we understand ourselves in relation with the more-than-human world? While this book was born out of a "boarding school" experience which would not have been possible to stage during the lockdowns, precautionary measures, and institutional closures that hit the globe with such force in the past few years, the bodily insights gleaned from that experience have enabled me to see that encounters take form through all kinds of circumstances. That is, teachers still stage them and students still participate in them in whichever conditions prevail, even if they do so very differently than the ways we are used to. Encounters, while constrained and limited, nonetheless still *happen*. And they, too, give rise to the world and ourselves in the process, even within the restrictions we face.

*Encounters*. The word is often used by educators, artists, and activists to talk about a significant aspect of the work they do. They stage, create, and make certain encounters *happen*; it is part of their planned practice, whether this takes place in schools or other educational sites. They act as introducers of things, events, and happenings through lectures, seminars, activities, performances, and protests. They create encounters with artifacts, such as books and maps, plants and stones, texts and numbers. Through these encounters their aim is to create an alternative way of seeing, experiencing, and perhaps ultimately being and living with others—an alternative to what students, participants, and audiences already take for granted as commonplace. In this way, education, like art and politics, offers an occasion for *becoming* that opens students up to new ways of thinking, doing, and living; encounters, as Maxine Greene would put it, that have the power to make the familiar strange.

But the demands made upon educators' practices are significantly different to those made upon artists and activists in the sense that education is bound not only to ideas of transformation, change, and freedom but is also burdened with a certain amount of transmission, concerning

the inheritance of ideas, norms, and social codes. Society tasks educators, particularly those who work with children and youth (whether in schools, preschools, museums, community centers, or in face-to-face or online settings) with ensuring that the young not only learn *about* or *from* their environments, but also *inhabit* those environments in particular ways. On this view, educators are thought to play an important role in shaping a young person's embodied understanding of themselves and their social and cultural environment. This raises a huge problem, however, of how these normative demands have worked in deleterious ways, which have at times contributed to outright forms of violence and abuse, as well as to the creation of unjust and unwelcoming spaces for neurodiverse, disabled, working-class, indigenous, LGBTQ, and minority students. Indeed decades of critical multicultural, anti-normative, and decolonial projects in education have focused precisely on the need to recognize that there are multiple ways environments are inhabited across social and cultural differences and how injurious it has been to individuals and communities to erase these differences. In this, there is a tension that all educators need to face between participating in this social and cultural work with its risk of reproducing what might be harmful, on the one side, and the transformative potential that education aspires to, on the other.

Reflecting on my time as an educator for well over thirty years, first in an elementary school then in various universities in Canada, Sweden, and Ireland where I have taught both teachers and student-teachers, I feel those tensions deeply still. My professional life has been infused with a genuine (if not always successful) attempt to create encounters with and for others that optimally could be transformative for students, enabling them to become more expansive versions of themselves, opening them up to new ways of seeing and being in their own intimate corners of the world. There has been an overarching sense that such encounters can assist students in living and leading lives worth living with others. This has often taken the form of exposing students to ideas that bring to the fore issues of social justice. And yet, I have always felt an enormous responsibility to acknowledge students as being also good enough as they are—without me and my pedagogical interventions—that they are subjects of value and worth in their own right, living complex lives, coming to class from a range of different and unique experiences. Questions have gathered over the years, like heavy clouds at times, settling in and around the work I do: Who am I to teach someone else? What kinds of being or becoming do I make

possible or limit through the encounters I stage as a teacher? How do I create spaces for students' becoming someone different in a gesture of affirmation and acceptance for who they are right here and now? What does my teaching *do* to my students—and myself? These are not mere academic queries, but haunting existential questions for me. But stage encounters I must, for that is what I do as a teacher and as a professional committed to equality and justice. However, I do so now, more so than I was able in those early years, with a fuller sense of the fine line I walk with students between hubris and humility, between critical change and affirmation. Admittedly, though, the walking itself is just as demanding as it always was, and perhaps that is as it should be.

Such questions concerning the relationality of teaching and the affect, ethics, and embodied nature of it, has informed a great deal of my scholarly work (see Todd 2003, 2009, and 2016b in particular) and continues to shape the angle I take in this book, which is primarily from the point of view of the pedagogical relation and the act of teaching and educating. In this way, my being a student again at *The Boarding School* prompted me to face those persistent questions I've had as a teacher, to face more directly the practices of encounter that shape pedagogical engagement, and to face the ways the boundaries between subject/object (and sometimes subject/subject) become blurred—like that pat of black butter. That is, I began to understand—to *feel* even!—how the encounters I stage as a teacher are living, bodily forms of contact with various things, people, and other living beings. And I began to wonder about the complex entanglements encounters always engender and in which sense they are educational.

Strangely, from a scholarly point of view, while encounters appear to be somewhat foundational to what is *done* in the name of education, they are little theorized and conceptually underdeveloped. A body of work that is promising for remedying this occlusion and for paying attention to the way bodies interact with the materiality of educational settings can be found in the turn to “new materialism,”<sup>2</sup> represented through materialist and vitalist frameworks (Ringrose et al. 2020; Hickey-Moody 2016; O'Donnell 2018), sociobiology (Youdell 2017) and posthumanism (Mikulan and Rudder 2019; Taylor and Pacini-Ketchabaw 2015). This work has been instrumental in highlighting the generative aspect of these interactions in engendering bodies, their surfaces, borders, and fleshly substance. Moving beyond the discursive constitution of bodies, this focus on embodiment in education has enabled a significant shift

toward viewing the centrality of the physical, material dimensions of educational practices.<sup>3</sup>

Specifically, they place an emphasis on nondualist thinking, which has drawn together—in not so easy fashion at times—scholars of Spinoza and Deleuze, those concerned with the sciences and technology, and those who write on ecology and posthumanism. Collectively, their work represents a turn to ontology as being rooted in the complex interplay of relationality that makes it difficult to distinguish the boundaries and borders between things—both human and more-than-human alike. It is a *relational ontology* that recognizes the centrality of the interdependence of all life, which is also represented by numerous indigenous thinkers (Ahenakew et al. 2011; Cajete 1994; Mika 2017) along with those interested in questions of the planetary crisis (Braidotti and Bignall 2019; Haraway 2016; Latour 2017). With respect to education, relational ontology shifts our understanding of spaces and places from being the context *in* which educational stuff happens, to being an active player in the processes of education itself.

Yet, knowing how certain encounters have also worked to further injustices, Sara Ahmed (2008) cautions against what she sees as the “fetish of matter” in some works of feminist new materialism. For her, this work does not account sufficiently for culture, language, and discourse, which translates into an attention on matter that is somewhat skewed and ahistorical.<sup>4</sup> More recently, Rosi Braidotti (2019) has echoed a similar point in her critique of the nihilist tendencies within new materialist thinking when it is cut off from processes of racialization, capitalism, and colonialism. While seeking to build on the ideas of nonduality and relationality that have been discussed within new materialist work, I also seek to look at the complexity of relational encounters in ways that do not always sit firmly within this materialist approach. Indeed the focus on attending to the physical and material conditions of materialization leaves aside important questions concerning culture, the senses, and affective experience, which constitute my own focus here. That is, what tends to be undertheorized within certain new materialist frameworks is how our interactions and interdependence with things, plant life, humans, and other animals are both inflected by and generate complex matrices of sensations, affects, and attachments. In this way, this volume is rooted within a relational ontological framework that is not solely concerned with the material.

However, it is also important to signal that the senses and experience are often theorized as something bodies *have* as opposed to

what bodies *do* and have been traditionally associated with the fields of phenomenology and psychology, where some scholars have noted a tendency to abstract living physical bodies into categories that remain oddly dematerialized. This is perhaps why it is not entirely surprising that some new materialist scholars have largely stayed clear of the senses and experience. Moreover, as Ahmed (2000) points out, this dematerializing move of abstraction has often erased the fundamentally different ways bodies both create and are created by the world around them as racialized and sexualized subjects. My focus on the senses here seeks to avoid the pitfalls of replicating an abstract, white-washed, desexualized (and hence depoliticized) notion of *the* body (in the singular), while also understanding that sensory experience and not only materiality is part of the space and time of bodily encounters. I do this primarily by referring to bodies in the plural and by focusing on the specifically *political* and *aesthetic* dimensions of the senses in educational encounters. Each brings bodies into conversation with their environments in complementary ways, and each helps to chart a course for educators between the poles of social norms and transformation mentioned above.

First, with respect to the political dimension, sensory encounters are deeply involved in the ways bodies come to be embedded within what Jacques Rancière (2006, 46) refers to as “regimes of perception.” That is, what is taken to be common sense, appropriate forms of sensation, and proper affective expression are experienced and felt in particular ways by particular subjects. This has been borne out by a range of scholars, from early postcolonial writers such as Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire to later feminists of color such as Audre Lorde, Sylvia Winter, and Sara Ahmed, who have all depicted how colonial and racist regimes of perception not only categorize or imprint themselves upon bodies, but how they come to be blended with one’s own sensations and experiences of oneself. On this view, becoming racialized (as well as gendered and sexualized) is a relational process that involves both the inner self and outer social realities, a process which is never fully complete or deterministic.

In line with this, decolonial educational scholars, such as Vanessa (Andreotti) Machado de Oliveira (2021),<sup>5</sup> call for a radical understanding of undoing the terms of “modernity/coloniality” (Mignolo and Walsh 2018) through working at the self’s borders of inner and outer. Machado de Oliveira calls this work a “non-western psychoanalysis,” one that faces how our bodily affects and sensibilities are interlaced with modern/colonial forms of desire—and the harmful relationalities to

self and other they are based on—in order to begin the difficult work of self and social transformation. While affects and sensibilities may be experienced singularly and at varying levels of intensity, they are communal in how they play out as well as in how they can be unraveled. Machado de Oliveira sees this double move of facing and undoing as a process of social, psychological, and affective “decluttering:” a process of taking stock in order to activate change. While the adage that the personal is political is fitting here, what Machado de Oliveira (see also Andreotti 2021b) underscores is that this “depth education” is not only political but also requires collective aesthetic practices that can offer new sources of imagination and new opportunities for re-sensing the world, what Rancière (2009) would see as creating new “communities of sense.”

Secondly, seeing encounters also through an aesthetic lens allows for an exploration of the ways in which bodily encounters can create new relational (and political) formations. Although often conceived as a branch of philosophy having to do with art, aesthetics has its roots in the Greek understanding of perception. Aristotle refers to aesthetics as a sensory faculty and Seremetakis (1994) notes the complex and rich etymological associations aesthetics carries: “The word for senses is *aesthísis*; emotion-feeling and aesthetics are respectively *asthima* and *aesthitikí*. They all derive from the *aesthánome* or *aesthínome* meaning I feel or sense, I understand, grasp, learn or receive news or information, and I have an accurate sense of good and evil, that is I judge correctly. *Aesthísis* is defined as action or power through the medium of the senses, and the media or the *semía* (points, tracks, marks) by which one senses” (4–5).

Accordingly, aesthetics is fundamentally a term of encounter that captures its multiplicity, where the borders between feeling, perception, affect, understanding, and art are constantly shifting in relation to whatever it is I am encountering. The aesthetic dimensions of educational encounters thus do not only pertain to whether or not they are creating some kind of art form, but rather *how* the encounters can be seen as (artistic) formations of sensory experience. As I discuss in chapter 4, this way of understanding the aesthetic dimensions of encounters lends itself to a consideration of how we stage, curate, and design encounters as educators. Attending to the senses thus means to attend to the forms and formations of educational practice.

Through these lenses, my intent is not to tell educators (or artists or activists or anyone else for that matter) what they/I should be doing, but to open up questions that might inform what encounters can



become in educational settings, what they can lead to, and how they form a central element in any educational practice. In this, I am not interested in offering a theory of encounter (in the singular) that can then be *applied* to education, but to take seriously what *transpires in and through* encounters (in the plural) in order to better understand what education is capable of.

### The Touch of the Present, or What's in a Title?

The current pandemic has occasioned some deep reflection about the significance of touch in our everyday lives, how desperately it was longed for by those living alone, how strangely it was absent from children's and youth's regular interactions, and how teachers suddenly needed to shift from physical places to online spaces to do their work. The lack of physical touch and existential feelings of isolation went hand in hand, one might say. And while this book is very much about physical bodies, touch, as I understand it here, and as I develop more explicitly in chapter 2, is not simply one of the senses, but is the primary way we experience the world through all our senses: each sense is a form of touch, a form of encounter. So, even during the pandemic—albeit through different encounters than conventional face-to-face ones—we continue/d to touch and be touched by things and people around us. Circumstances only change the *kinds* of the encounters we have; they do not stop encounters altogether. Encounters are a marker of our interconnection with whatever and whomever we are in contact.

Thus I use the idiom *touching and being touched by* throughout the book in order to call attention to that interconnection and to the anticipatory and transitive state of touch; the *by* is open to what is about to approach, it implies a something or someone on the other side of the act of touching. So a hand, eye, or ear is always encountering *something*, and that something, in the very moment of contact, is also touching a hand, eye, or ear. Together they generate an encounter. Following Brian Massumi (2002), I treat touch primarily as an “event” of contact and sensation that is not only *in* but *of* the present. In this sense, touch conveys a liminal space and time: the dynamic of “touching and being touched by” transpires at the threshold of here and now, a transient moment that arises and passes. However, as I explore in chapter 5, this transient time of the present is also complex—not simply a passing

between past and future, but an opening through which bodily acts of “presencing” bring past and future into conversation.

Since contact is not an abstraction, but a concrete relation that arises when (at least) two things come together, it is important not to use language that tugs us back into overgeneralizations and away from the particularities I am seeking to hold onto here, even while recognizing words themselves have a tendency to do just that. One prevalent way of speaking of contact is to say that we encounter the *world*; but this I feel, despite its poetic intimations, conjures an image of a great amorphous form that does not address *what* it is we are actually encountering and entangled with. So, instead of the *world* which erases the particular in its shorthand, I have chosen the perhaps less elegant phrase “elements of the environment” to indicate that our encounters are always with something more intimate in our immediate surroundings than the *world* can convey and to remind us of that very specificity. Elements can range from tangible objects to the air we breathe, from words or ideas to animate beings, from human to more-than-human entities. The book is committed to understanding the educational significance of the imminent, immediate, and sometimes irreverent ways encounters are practiced, on the ground, through our daily encounters with these elements. In this sense, what I am calling the touch of the present is an attempt to work through the ways in which encounters create, as Erin Manning (2007) remarks, “spaced times and timed spaces” of interdependence and how those events speak in very concrete ways to educational processes of enculturation and becoming.

I am especially concerned in this book with directly enhancing our educational commitments to these educational processes (which are given full attention in chapter 1), particularly at this critical time where they are so desperately needed, for two reasons. The first is the rise of digital educational experiences, especially prevalent since the pandemic, which challenge us to think about bodily relationality and its educational significance differently. The second is the increasing difficulties of teaching youth who are deeply affected by the climate emergency, which challenge us to question the kinds of relationality that have led to ecological collapse in the first place and how education can respond with new approaches. As Rosi Braidotti (2019) suggests, shifts in modes of subjectivity have been ushered in by the decentering of the human through biotechnological developments and environmental crises, and this requires different kinds of education, aesthetics, and politics—ones that

do not simply seek to reinstate a noncritical humanism, but that take a thoroughly affirmative stance to confront the effects of these transformations. To this end, facing the planetary crisis and posthuman modes of digital relationality are central to understanding educational encounters at this point in the twenty-first century. These two contexts, to me, are defining the very shape of how we interact across times, spaces, devices, and species, and they link in complex ways to ongoing issues of equality and social justice across multiple subjectivities. My intent throughout the volume is to provide new vocabularies, forms, and images for thinking through the significance of educational practices of enculturation and becoming, and the final two chapters of the book bring these directly into conversation with these contexts.

### My Approach

*Approach.* It is a very bodily word, implying as it does a movement or style, the act of drawing near or sidling up to something. Approaching encounters from the perspective of practices means exploring that what we do and how we do it actually matter in constructing these new vocabularies, forms, and images mentioned above. Taking my cue from Isabelle Stengers (2005), this book proposes viewing education *as* and *through* an ecology of practices. For Stengers, an ecology of practices is a tool for thinking which “aims at the construction of new ‘practical identities’ for practices, that is, new possibilities for them to be present, or in other words to connect” (186). This means seeing educational encounters not simply as objects of analysis, but as interrelated happenings that can tell us something vital about *what* education is doing, the claims it is making *about* what it is doing, and how it might shift our understandings of what it *could* be doing. Moreover, as it names those practices, it allows for new connections to be made, as Stengers suggests, and new terms, vocabularies, and forms to be developed. An *ecology* of practices means investigating education not as *containing* certain practices, but as being *comprised of* the interrelationship of those practices. It is neither pure description nor pure critique, but a movement of tracing the interconnections of practices to see how education might take form differently, “fostering its own force, [and] mak[ing] present what causes practitioners to think and feel and act” (195). Thus for Stengers, an ecology of practices is not simply a matter of describing practices “as

they are,” but “practices as they may become” (186) and the impact this has on the domain of what practitioners *do*.

Rather than approaching or drawing near to practices from a singular theoretical perspective, I have let the specific dimensions of encounters under discussion guide me. This book seeks to perform what is intimated in the title, a form of touching and being touched by as it feels its way through a number of theoretical viewpoints. My eclecticism is not intended to string together incommensurable notions, concepts, and ideas; theoretical bricolage risks creating a whole that is less than the sum of its parts. Instead, I have attempted to create more of a montage, whose integral elements inform each other through their juxtaposition and contrasts while nonetheless maintaining their singular integrity. Traversing across different philosophical, educational, aesthetic positions I have sought not to appropriate them in ways that divorce them entirely from the contexts in which they were generated, while also seeking to give them space to breathe life into a new context. In some sense, this compositional strategy is very much about creating conversations between various positions that help to highlight the particularly *educational* issues at stake in order to generate a theoretical stance that is internally diverse and multiple.

There are three major commitments that inform my choice of scholarly work here: (1) that it speaks to the relational interdependence of the body, materiality, and the senses; (2) that it considers the experiential, sensate dimensions of this interdependence; and (3) that it can address the political and aesthetic aspects of this relationality. Each chapter brings into conversation a diverse range of positions in order to think through the central ideas under study. While the project overall is informed by relational ontology (Brian Massumi, Erin Manning, Bruno Latour, Rosi Braidotti), I draw on ideas that are rooted within a phenomenological frame (Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, Sara Ahmed, David Abram). Moreover, in turning to the political-aesthetic dimensions of encounters, I draw upon ideas from art theory and political philosophy (Nicolas Bourriaud and Jacques Rancière) that have no clear alignments to either of these philosophies. The psychoanalytic work of D. W. Winnicott and Mark Epstein is discussed in relation to time and ideas from Buddhist philosophy (Nagarjuna, Dōgen) are interwoven throughout as well, particularly as they speak to the nondual aspects of relationality and interdependence I am developing here. Since my priority is to explore educational encounters through and as an ecology of practices, I believe

this theoretical diversity can shed light on the complexity of educational relations through which new modes of becoming can arise.

### Structure of the Book

The book is divided into two unequal parts. The first, and larger, one deals with Theoretical Framings; the second one with Encounters in/of Education. Part One is composed of five chapters that present a theoretical understanding of encounters, their relation to the senses and education. Chapters 1 and 2 are foundational, setting out the terms of education, encounter, and the senses which are used throughout the rest of the volume.

Chapter 1, “The Present Tense Incarnate: Education as Encounters/ Encounters as Education,” draws primarily on educational scholarship to argue for what I see to be the two cornerstones of educational encounters, namely enculturation and becoming. I contend that both of these resist the determinism embodied in the grid of social identity, positionality, and cultural background without decontextualizing education in the process. To do this, the chapter poses and responds to two interrelated questions: How is education sensually *encountered*? And, what is specifically *educational* about such encounters? In response to this latter question I show how education is not simply the work of either socialization and cultural transmission, on the one hand, or subjectification (Biesta 2010, 2014), on the other. Instead, it involves elements of cultural translation (Bergdahl and Langmann 2018a) and processes of becoming that involve living bodies of sense. In response to the first question, I turn to a critique of Masschelein and Simons’s (2013) notions of “suspension” and “profanation” as a way of bracketing off students’ backgrounds to suggest that the materiality of student bodies and lived realities of their contexts (as well as material relations of objects of study themselves) matter to education.

Chapter 2, “Senses of Encounter,” explores the centrality of the senses to encounters, seeing touch as vital and as having a relationship to all of the senses. I begin with discussing the meaning of encounters, drawing on Sara Ahmed’s (2000) work to explore how they participate in processes of racialization and colonization and then investigate how our sensory encounters with the world can also exceed these logics. To this end, I discuss Brian Massumi’s understanding of encounter as an

event of sensation, along with Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's understanding of encounter as the movement and interrelationality of organisms with their environment. Here I establish how the dynamic of touching and being touched by is central to both our becoming and enculturation, and can offer insight into living realities of encounters, which are marked through (and not by) our differences.

Chapter 3, "Enculturation, Regimes of Perception, and the Politics of the Senses," concerns the ways in which enculturation can enact a politics of the senses to resist dominant forms of signification and expressions of inequality through alternative sensory experiences. I begin with a challenge to "common sense" as a function of socialization and move to discuss the ways in which the senses and bodies have been theorized as central to enculturation. Here I draw on the discursive constitution of the body advanced by Judith Butler (2015) and the socially coded sensory body explored by David Howes and Constance Classen (2014) and suggest that the politics of the senses lies not simply in how the senses are policed—what Jacques Rancière (2006) refers to as a "regime of perception and intelligibility"—but also in how they exceed these normative frames. Thus, I explore the aesthetic politics of Rancière, who claims that new "communities of sense" are only made possible through a "sensible or perceptual shock." I argue that this aesthetic shaking up of common sense is the task of enculturation within our educational encounters.

Chapter 4, "Forms and Formations of Encounters," looks particularly at the aesthetics of encounters as relational, spatial formations, drawing on the relational aesthetics developed by Nicolas Bourriaud. Here, notions of spaces of becoming and enculturation are theorized in terms of the forms education takes. I focus in particular on the form of the teacher as the one who points and explore its underlying relational dynamics, or formations. Through a reading of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "Pedagogy of Buddhism," I outline how this formation of pedagogy presents us with a complex relational choreography of moving bodies. I then discuss these relations through touch and movement, drawing on Erin Manning's (2007, 2012) work to show how bodies cocreate spaces of educational encounters.

Chapter 5, "Becoming as a Time of Unfolding," discusses the temporal dimension of encounters, seeing the present as a complex enactment of *presencing* that is divorced neither from past nor future, yet is not determined by them. I begin with exploring six different ways time is

usually invoked within education and suggest that any transformational focus on becoming needs to think about education's relationship to time differently. Here I draw on Zen master Dōgen's notion of "being-time" to argue for the fluidity of the present through which we touch and are touched by the world. I explore the present as a *presencing* of past and future, drawing on the psychoanalytic understanding of the traumatic time of the past, through the work of Mark Epstein (2013) and D. W. Winnicott (1974), and the notion of touch as embedded within the future anterior, as discussed by Erin Manning (2007). As a living time where past coalesces with future, the present, I argue, is continually unfolding through our educational encounters.

Part Two addresses specifically educational questions of encounter from the point of view of two key issues facing education today: the climate emergency and online education. Rather than see these chapters that compose Part Two as *applying* the theoretical discussion that precedes them, I zero in on how the specific issues offer up their own nuanced understandings of educational encounters that are particular to their contexts. In this, these chapters are not meant to be empirical or analytic chapters, but ones that show how what has been discussed heretofore can inform and be informed by contemporary concerns.

Chapter 6, "Digital Encounters: Online Education and the Space-Time of the Virtual," explores how bodies and the senses can be understood as having an important role to play even within online spaces. I begin by examining the issues that have been raised with respect to online education, many of them emerging particularly with the move to digital forms of pedagogy since the pandemic. In order to address these, I suggest that our digital encounters need to become *more* not less virtual, drawing on Massumi's (2002) understanding of the virtual as potentialities and incipient tendencies which are felt by the body. Moreover, outlining distinctions between the virtual and the actual, the analog and the digital, I argue that pedagogies within the space of online education also need to be analogical in their design and execution. I suggest how curating digital encounters can both be an aesthetic act and address a decolonial project that challenges the ways students are cut off from their relations to and with the world.

Chapter 7, "Encounters with Climate Change: Teaching in the Presence of Climate Sorrow," begins by identifying a common response particularly experienced by youth in relation to the current planetary crisis, namely, overwhelming sorrow. Through this lens, I explore Olafur

Eliasson's artwork *Ice Watch* as a sensory encounter that lives in the complex time of the present, or *kairos*, as well as in chronological time. Drawing on the work of David Abram and Bruno Latour, I discuss educational encounters that can open up the sensual dimension of our interconnectedness to the elements of the environment, seeing how we are not just in relation to the environment, but are fundamentally *of* the environment. I argue that climate sorrow can be explored through educational encounters that take this aesthetic dimension seriously.

In the afterword, I offer some thoughts on how the touch of the present can act as a way of bringing the aesthetic and political dimensions of our educational encounters together to reframe the work we do as social justice, forever mindful of our own implication in the world we share with others. The aspiration behind this book as a whole is to contribute to new ways of thinking that frame what we do as educators as times and spaces that expand our vistas of what education can offer, right here and right now.