

Satis Coleman's Environmental Philosophy: An Intellectual History

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The ecological crises have emerged as a defining challenge to people living in the 21st Century, including music teachers and learners. Satis Coleman (1878-1961) was an influential progressive music educator whose ideas have been rediscovered, especially since the 1990s (Boston, 1992; Shevock, 2015; Southcott, 1990; Southcott, 2009; Volk, 1996). In the current intellectual history, a historiography of thinkers and ideas (Whatmore, 2016), Coleman's philosophy was analyzed as environmental philosophy.

Environmental philosophy was one part of her overall philosophy of music education: a part that overlapped with spiritual, scientific, and pedagogical practices. Environmental philosophy clarifies how we define concepts related to the natural environment and society, including issues of consumption, conservation, epistemology, ethics, and policy (Sarkar, 2012). With the emergence in musicology of *ecomusicology*, a field studying "music/sound and environment" (Allen & Dawe, 2016, p. 2), and *eco-literate music pedagogy*, an "interdisciplinary, self-reflective and critical, place-based, and constructivist" (Shevock, 2017, p. 50) philosophy, music educators are recognizing the interconnectedness of non-human musics to human musicking and being, emphasizing the role of nature in inspiring musical composition, and learning the place of protest music that has been motivated by the ecological crises in teaching and learning.

Coleman was heavily published—e.g., she published 33 books with major publishers (Boston, 1992, pp. 147-152)—and, by following Whatmore's approach, Coleman's environmental philosophy was revealed. Data were coded qualitatively around four themes: nature/society, consumption/conservation, epistemology/ethics/policy, and science/evolution.

- Music educators have distinctive opportunities to cultivate ecological literacy
- Music educators might use instrument-making activities to lessen consumption (helping to address the waste crisis)

- Various cultures have different epistemologies in relation to nature (what nature is and how people relate to it)
- Evolutionary insight can help us notice some aspects of nature musically, but can also create challenges in regards to understanding other human cultures

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