**Extinction, rebellion and systems thinking in the Legends of the Carrs**

I came into storytelling seeking an alternative to bullet-pointed statistics, behaviour change models and doom-mongering in environmental education. I sought in the stories of the past models of regeneration and transformation for the future; templates for understanding the rules of the settlement between human and non-human nature. And I found them, but the process was perhaps as much about coming to terms with my own grief as it was about solutions.

One of the story collections that gripped me most were the Legends of the Lincolnshire Carrs, collected by Marie Balfour in the 1890s. They are stories of a marginal, desperate, suspicious, dispossessed people, bitterly conscious of their own fragility and the darkness surrounding them, and the wisps of knowledge and social ties that could just keep them gripping onto life. Until, that is, the fens were drained and ‘all an anders went arsy-varsy’ – forcing the fenlanders to take unprecedented action to restore balance.

Many COP summits and IPCC reports later, the clock is running down, and education needs to look the urgency of climate change in the face. But if we are to move on from ‘nudge economics’ and positive psychology, and rather ‘tell the truth and act as if it’s real’, as Extinction Rebellion and the Climate Psychology Alliance urge, how do we shepherd young people through the fear and grief this will engender, to a position of what Johnstone and Macy (2012) call ‘active hope’? In this talk I comb through my own ecological education journey for lessons.

It will not be enough for us to throw water into the ditches. There is no new equilibrium lying in that direction. We will have to go out together to face the dark, trackless fens if we are to resurrect our dead moon.

REFERENCES

Balfour, M.C. (2011) *Legends of the Lincolnshire Cars.* Redditch: Read Books.

Johnstone, Chris and Macy, Joanna (2012) *Active Hope: how to face the mess we’re in without going crazy.* San Francisco: New World Library.