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Land, Body, Liberation: An Ecofeminist Pedagogical Approach to Place-Based Education

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Land, Body, Liberation: An Ecofeminist Pedagogical Approach to Place-Based Education

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Master of Education

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Master's Field Project

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Abstract

Within this project I applied an ecofeminism framework to the tangible practices of place-based education regarding issues of social justice-based sustainability efforts. In order to recognize the impact of identity-based privileges, I explore how place-based education promotes the development of problem-solving skills, critical-thinking techniques and building meaningful relationships within a community. These goals were achieved by shifting the white settler colonist understanding of human conquest and subjugation over land and bodies from an anthropocentric lens to an androcentric lens. In other words, illuminating the oppressive role *the patriarchy* has continued to play in exploiting natural "resources" and the bodies of marginalized peoples for capitalistic gains. I presented and delivered relevant content to the Methow Valley Community, middle school students from The Bush School, and at the Dimensions of Political Ecology Conference at the University of Kentucky. From these experiences I reflect on the importance of identity representation within the classroom, a positionality and personal biases analysis, and the power of an ethic of care as a teaching tool.

Land, Body, Liberation:

An Ecofeminist Pedagogical Approach to Place-Based Education

Introduction

In the throes of the climate crisis, there is a need for drastic systematic changes to the way humans interact with Earth. This interaction needs to be built around sustainable and equitable actions that support social and ecological systems. Sustainability as a practice and a theory is a multidisciplinary subject. It is defined by The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

> SDGs are a call for action by all countries—poor, rich and middle-income—to promote prosperity while protecting the environment. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, equality and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and working to preserve our ocean and forests.

The success of sustainability is dependent upon environmental stability, economic stability, and social justice. My work is largely focused on social justice, also defined as human health and equity. Social justice is inherent to the field of sustainability because differences between social groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, religion, ability or disability, and age result in the unequal distribution of privileges (Adams, 2018). These systems cause unequal distribution of resource allocation, treatment, and recognition of different groups based on identity factors; A socially-just society must contribute to ensuring a sustainable future. Within this project, I apply theoretical frameworks and tangible practices of place-based education to issues of social justice-based sustainability efforts. In order to recognize the impact of identity-based privileges, place-based education promotes the development of problem-

solving skills, critical-thinking techniques, and building meaningful relationships within a community.

Place-based pedagogy provides a framework for developing curriculum that centers education around the local land, community and the interrelationships between the two (Greenwood, 2003). In this breadth of understanding, lies two main currents: (1) relearning how to inhabit a space without the oppression and destruction of other communities, human or otherwise and (2) promoting curiosity and encouraging socio-emotional learning in a student-centered space. Within this field project, I challenged the understanding of place-based learning beyond the outdoor education sphere and define the environment as the lived environment—meaning that place-based or *situational*-based learning can take place anywhere.

Greenwood's theory in *Critical Pedagogy of Place* (2003) underlines the paradox between place-based education and Paulo Freire's (1970) theory of critical pedagogy (or sometimes referred to as social justice education) as described in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Place-based education traditionally includes human interaction with the land and more-than-human species, while critical pedagogy focuses on the social interactions that humans have with one another within urbanized and anthropocentric spaces. Each of these educational frameworks become more complex when considering how they overlap and parallel each other.

Ecofeminist theory provides an intersectional perspective of how the social aspect of critical pedagogy relates to human relationships with land and place. This is partially achieved by recognizing the power and oppression enforced by patriarchal supremacy as it relates to the bodies of women. This also includes an understanding of the synergistic solutions that ecofeminism provides in a postcolonial society as it relates to political positionalities (Mies &

Vandana 2014) in both rural and urban environments. That same exploitation of privilege and sense of entitlement applies to historical and present white colonist treatment of land and the environment. Studying history through an ecofeminist lens highlights the parallels of colonial oppression of the land and more-than-human species and patriarchal oppression of women and people of color.

To dismantle these forms of oppression and re-center the knowledge of history away from a colonist perspective, I propose *ecofeminist place-based education*. This pedagogical framework works to develop empathetic relationships with humans, more-than-humans, and the lived environment while cultivating a sense of personal responsibility to contribute to a sustainable future.

Project Description

To bring this framework into praxis, I worked directly with two distinctly different audiences: the community residing within the Methow Valley, Washington, and The Bush School, a private K-12 school, based out of Seattle, Washington. With both audiences, I delivered educational seminars on climate change and place-based ecology utilizing an ecofeminist approach. My goal was to identify how each group responded to ecofeminism as a theory and to develop a methodology to effectively deliver education that is rooted within social justice and sustainability. These observations and experiences then influenced and catalyzed the development of educational workshops that focus on three tenets: (1) creating a place-based lens for the students to employ within the classroom, their daily lives, as well as to broaden their understanding of human interactions since time immemorial as well as the ecological facets of their perceived and experienced place (2) simultaneously challenging and empowering the

faculty and staff to critically think about their own positionality as it pertains to how they teach and understand their role (3) emphasizing the importance and relevance of including identity representation and *other ways of knowing* within the classroom.

These goals will be achieved by shifting the white settler colonist understanding of human conquest and subjugation over land and bodies from an anthropocentric lens to an androcentric lens. In other words, illuminating the oppressive role *the patriarchy* has continued to play in exploiting natural "resources" and the bodies of marginalized peoples for capitalistic gains.

Overarching Project Goals:

The following serves as the ethical and practical frameworks I used to guide my work, followed by practical applications within my project:

1. To explore ecofeminist applications to place-based education in both formal and informal educational spaces. To help students, educators, and community members make connections between violence and destruction of land and the oppression of marginalized bodies through a historical analysis of place. To achieve this I:

    - ❏ Developed and delivered lectures on ecofeminism within the context of the socio-political-ecological setting of the Methow Valley. Engaged local community members in discussions around an ecofeminist ethic of care in the Methow.
    - ❏ Developed place-based activities in partnership with The Bush School and their outdoor retreats at the Methow Campus.

- ❏ Presented on the need for place-based discussions of an ecofeminist ethic of care at the 2020 Dimensions of Political Ecology (DOPE) conference. Shared insights from conversations in the Methow with other scholars in hopes of encouraging them to bring similar practices into their own communities.

2. To foster community spaces in which conversations around ecofeminism and place-based education could arise. In addition, to create momentum within these spaces to keep the conversations, knowledge sharing, and self-education going after the completion of this field project. To provide tools and resources to communities to continue to dialogue around these topics. To achieve this I:

    - ❏ Created social media platforms that share ecofeminist and place-based educational resources, ideas, and insights within an online community space. Expanding the reach of my project outside of academic spaces to increase accessibility.
    - ❏ Spoke at a local womens' activist group meeting on how to to be intersectional activists and expand their work on liberation to beyond the white cis female scope.

3. To explore applications of place-based education beyond the scope of "outdoor education". To imagine possibilities for its application in other settings with the goal of increasing accessibility (for both students and educators) around learning about the lived environment.

- ❑ Focused on social media platforms and presentations: bridging discursive gaps between human/nature or culture/nature divisions.

My Identity and Positionality

Moving through this program, a challenge that I felt throughout was figuring out how to incorporate my identity as a white woman into a field that focuses on decentering settler colonialism. We are told as educators, to develop a positionality statement. A statement that describes both our identity and how it informs how we teach. Initially, I found this to be a challenge because I realized, I have no idea how my identity informs my pedagogy. Who am I? Where do I come from? Is my identity more harmful than good in the realm of social justice education?

Thus, I have two identity investigations to share with you. The first being my *positionality statement*, or the statement I present professionally to peers, potential employers, etc. The second being my *land autobiography*. What is recorded below is adapted from an assignment given by Dr. Nick Stanger, for a class called Justice & Equity in Environmental Education. In this essay I take a more personal approach to my identity and look towards my grandparents and beyond, into my ancestry.

[Positionality Statement]

I am an aspiring educator attending Western Washington University, working towards my master's degree in Environmental Education. I have attained my B.A. in Biology from the

University of San Diego. Currently, my main areas of focus are on Place-Based Education, Ecofeminism, and Environmental Justice Education.

My personal and perceived identity are informative of the pedagogy and educational beliefs I stand by. Thus far I have viewed life through the lens of a cis-gendered, heterosexual, white, middle-class, college educated, settler-colonist, U.S. citizen, female identity. I continue to consider how my privilege affects my engagement in dialogues about topics such as sustainability at a global scale and bringing that same lens of necessity to a North American space. Additionally, my identity has allowed for the luxury of inquiry-based learning to inform my educational and professional path. However, it is my goal as an educator to demonstrate the applicability and sustainability of this pedagogical approach within the classroom.

My goal is to educate, equip, and empower educators to bring social justice education into their classrooms across all disciplines. This cannot be achieved without those same educators acknowledging any privileges they may hold, as well as how their identity informs the way they teach and interact with their students. I hesitate to use the word *andragogy* as it is inherently sexist in its linguistic root (andra = man in greek), however the principle still applies. Andragogy is the practice of teaching adults and in this context, I am referring to instructing teachers on how to teach with a social justice lens. This process inevitably will involve corralling egos, including my own. I recognize that all individuals, especially adults, move through life with preconceived notions and ideas and therefore I do not seek to insult or discredit the thoughts and opinions of others. Rather, I aim to continue dialogues amongst educationally-motivated people in how to achieve social equity and sustainability.

My work and personal development is nested within an emerging field but is not independently emergent/new. I see that my role as an educator is to listen, critically receive, and continue to learn as both part of society and as a living being on this planet. Therefore, developing the skills and competency to be an effective conduit of social justice education as it pertains to ecofeminist place-based learning. My line of inquiry explores the works of scholars like *Karen J. Warren, Maria Mies, Paulo Freire, David Greenwood* and more, to better understand ecofeminist, social justice and place-based pedagogical frameworks.

[Land Autobiography]

Introduction

In my exploration of connecting my identity to place and land, I felt as though I needed to more deeply understand my family history. I am a white woman descended from entirely western and northern Europe and an emotional connection to land has not been presented to me in the context of my family traditions or stories. Instead, many of the connections that I am aware of are profoundly engrained in the privileges and opportunities that America provided my ancestors. Both maternal and paternal sides of my family come from affluence and privilege and I believe this has given a false sense of entitlement and that the luxuries we enjoy have been earned or deserved. It is my goal throughout my career and through the relationships I develop, to dismantle these hierarchical structures and recreate my understanding of land and place with humility and respect.

To begin this process, I will move into a brief synopsis and illustration of both sets of grandparents and their historical settlement into America. Following this I will employ some creative expression in interpreting what this means to me and my identity, in the form of poetry;

concluding with a reflective piece in how I plan to bring this greater understanding of positionality into the next steps of my life and career. It should be noted that these summaries of my grandparent's lives are a compilation of my own memories, the descriptions and stories told by my parents and a DNA test completed by the company Ancestry.com. This being said, I may be recounting information that has been exaggerated or inaccurate.

Family History Summary

Valma Heath - Maternal Grandmother

Valma is a first-generation immigrant into the United States from Middlesex, England. She left her home country at the age of 18 after surviving and witnessing the atrocities brought by WWII. Her childhood stories include wearing gas masks while walking to the schoolhouse and diving into bomb shelters at the sound of the sirens. Valma was a beauty, who was crowned Miss Lovely shortly before moving to the United States, where she got married to her first husband, John Hogan. Her good looks helped her gain access to elite circles leading her to settle and re-marry a successful lawyer in Los Altos, California. Her privilege has defined her in more ways than one. Her possessions and the value of those possessions are what are important to her for maintaining a certain "image". In addition, her association with England and mysterious "royal ancestors" is brought up almost every social gathering. Her association to place is seemingly with the image, affluence and lofty connections that she has personally, and not to the land itself.

John Hogan - Maternal Grandfather

John's ancestors came from Ireland on his paternal side and Norway on his maternal side. His great grandparents on his paternal side left Ireland in the mid 19th-century just prior to the start of the Great Irish Famine. They subsequently settled in Minnesota, eventually ending up in North Dakota. John's maternal lineage is slightly more unclear however it is rumored within the family that his great-great grandfather, took a wife that was considered a mail-order bride in Norway. The next generation immigrated to Nova Scotia, Canada and then settled in North Dakota, where two generations later, John was born. His marriage to Valma Heath resulted in the birth of my mother and four of her siblings before they divorced and he remarried and moved to Las Vegas, Nevada. It is here that John has been living ever since and has expressed the struggles of being an older individual in a city that caters predominantly to a younger, more vibrant crowd. I do not have a good understanding of my grandfather's connection to place as I have only had the chance to meet him twice. However, I do know that he loves the desert of Las Vegas.

Sarah (Sally) Gibbs - Paternal Grandmother

I had the wonderful opportunity to access deep ancestral research conducted by my great aunt Carroll, who was passionate about our family's history. The following is according to her compiled research, documents, and family trees. Sally's family history begins in Southern England, in the socioeconomic bracket of the working class. In the early 17th-century her ancestors left England seeking refuge from religious persecution and settled in colonial Connecticut and Massachusetts. Two of those ancestors, John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, were aboard the infamous Mayflower and subsequently got married upon landing in Plymouth. Through early records of land agreements and ownerships, Sally's ancestors moved primarily around Massachusetts, primarily in Salem and Barnstable [two women died in 1692; I'm

convinced they were convicted witches]. There are accounts of family members being killed by "indians" and multiple seasons of epidemics running rampant through communities. Over generations however, her ancestors found their place and settled in the Midwest region of the United States, which eventually led to the birth of Sally herself, in Illinois. Later in life, she married Reed Fitkin and settled in Eugene, Oregon, where she appeared to feel a deep connection to the coast and ocean. Her favorite thing was always wind and standing on a coastline feeling the wind blow in her hair and her iconic retro windbreakers she loved so much.

Reed Fitkin (Paternal Grandfather)

Reed's family history is similar to Sarah's in that it also began in England within the same socioeconomic bracket. It is less known when his ancestors left England to settle and colonize America, but it is guessed to be either late 17th century or early 18th century. Reed himself was born in New York, but immediately after his birth, his family settled on Oahu, Hawaii. In 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed, Reed was one year old and subsequently grew up in a tumultuous era in Hawaii's history. He recounts how tensions between the Japanese-American people and the Indigenous Hawaiian people were extremely high, leading to incidents of hate crimes and discrimination. Personally however, Reed enjoyed a youth of surfing, partying and enjoying the luxurious lifestyle that wealthy white families were privileged with. After raising a family in Eugene, Oregon with Sally, he now spends half of the year living in Hawaii where he is the happiest. Physical activity in a place is how Reed has developed a sense of belonging and this is true for his time in Hawaii as well. Even in his old age, he spends his mornings paddle boarding or riding his bike along the coast.

Poem – Remember, however

The past, present and future define me,

My identity

My essence.

I take what I have learned and reflect inward

How do my ancestors influence who I am today?

What reparations should be made?

Should I be held responsible?

What strength can I find?

No.

I am my own person

I do have to remember however,

That

Sometimes I wonder if there is a royal ancestor,

Whomever that may be and,

It may be trivial, but I really do love my Twining's black tea

Remembering however,

The colonizing exploitation of the East

and the pain caused by English imperialism

Remembering however,

The strength and resilience when faced with a tragedy

and the power of hope and beauty

The sound of skis slapping the corduroy,

Remind me of my Nordic heritage and snow filled joy

Remembering however,

The oppression and use of a woman's body

For misogynistic power.

Remembering however,

The fragility and fear around food security

When I step off the plane and smell the plumeria filled air,

I think to myself, mmm I'm home

Remembering however,

That this is not my home, it never will be

As it is violently stolen land.

Remembering however,

Indigenous displacement is the undercurrent of our nation

As I look out into the great blue sea

The love and warmth I felt from Tutu's hugs

Wrap around me with the salty breeze,

Reminding me to stop and take a breath.

Remembering however,

To acknowledge the land I stand upon

And who it was taken from.

Remembering however,

The hypocrisy of escaping oppression to only enact it on others.

Reflection

Moving forward, I hope to further develop my sense of place and connection to the land. I know that this is an ever-evolving process that requires inflection, relationship building, and ideological exploration. Until recently, my connection to land has felt relatively superficial and utilitarian. My life in Washington from age 1-18 related to the land in the form of recreation. I spent my time valuing my ability and opportunities to ski, hike, bike, kayak, etc. in such a beautiful place as the Methow Valley. However, I failed to acknowledge the land that I was using and the Indigenous presence from time immemorial to present.

My time spent in San Diego, California moved me away from a recreational mindset to an urbanized mindset regarding sense of place. I found it difficult to have a relationship or connection to land when surrounded by human development and felt I was instead, more aware of the social aspect of equity and privilege. This was augmented by the awareness of the physical location of San Diego in relation to a country like Mexico. My first acknowledgement of the systemic problems that our society has in mistreatment of Black and Indigenous people and people of color was through my time at the university. An experience that stands out in my mind was a talk and presentation given by a young individual who came to the United States via the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy. As they told their story, I realized how uninformed I was and so began the stirrings of empathetic concern for these children. However, at the time my own privilege was dictating what I put my energy and time into, and that was myself and my own education. Engaging myself into social justice-oriented activism was not at the forefront of my concerns. I was simply in a selfish mindset.

This moves me into my time spent living in primarily military cities in the south for two years, where I was during the election of Donald Trump into presidency. I remember sitting in my bedroom in Pensacola, Florida with tears running down my face, while people around me celebrated the occasion. In the same month I found myself applying to the Master of Education in Environmental Education program in my home state of Washington, realizing that I had lost my sense of purpose and that it was being rediscovered in pursuing a life of environmental activism.

Reflecting on my time throughout this program thus far; I started out wanting to apply my biology background into "saving" natural spaces and promoting more eco-awareness in the general public through outdoor education. After reading La Paperson's, A Ghetto Land Pedagogy (2014), I realized that I had not personally reflected on my positionality and how it informs my educational career. I distinctly remember asking Professor Dr. Nini Hayes questions such as "How do I create an inclusive classroom?" and "I just don't know what to do next, please help". I realize now that even asking those questions comes from a place of privilege in that I expected them to bear the burden of my misunderstanding and illuminate the answers without me putting in the work of broadening my understanding. This propelled me into the past year where I have chosen to engage in dialogue and conversations with my peers and professors with the effort of both absorbing information, while also being vulnerable in challenging my preconceived ideas. Setting aside my pride and instinct for self-preservation and reputation has been a difficult but necessary process that has helped me grow as both a social citizen and as an educator.

As I step into the next chapter of my educational and professional career, I recognize that I am moving away from campus and the accessibility to like-minded individuals working in the

same field. Therefore, I hope to work on my personal development via three methods: (1) Making a concerted effort to maintain lines of communication to my cohort, the on-campus professors and material being discussed in class; (2) further developing my sense of identity through my family history and relationship to land; and (3) researching current literature as it pertains to my field project, but also to other arenas within the field of social justice. These are topics I am just dipping my toes into and wish to understand further and reflect how that will inform my pedagogy.

Review of Relevant Literature

Introduction

This literature review examines the works of scholars that come from a multitude of backgrounds and privileges that inform their theories and conclusions. I recognize that the authors I have selected for this review are not exhaustive of the diversity of thought from differing cultures and people and therefore some positionalities may be absent. Throughout my field project experience, I aimed to expand upon my knowledge and literary sources to fully inform my pedagogy and theoretical framework. In addition, in favor of employing meta-analysis, as I progress through my career I will always be searching to listen to new ideas, continually learn within my field, and take the time for critical reflection. The following review presents social justice as a theory within education and its importance, then moves into an analysis of place-based education as a pedagogical framework, and ecofeminism as ontological and epistemological theory. I concluded with an analysis of scholars who discuss bringing social

justice and ecofeminism practically into the classroom, as well as formulated personal development skills around positionality and identity.

Importance and Relevance of Social Justice Education

This literature review aims to critically understand, dissect, and analyze how social justice education is necessary in order to move toward a sustainable future. As Earth moves through the geological era known as the Anthropocene[1], the need for better understanding human relationships with other humans, more-than-humans, and place has become imperative. This understanding is built within education in the westernized world, through an education which grooms students to become active participants in a capitalistic society. Nagda, Gurin and Lopez 2003) argue that higher education prepares students to become leaders in their field and to understand social concepts as they apply to democratic action (p. 166). However, the risk of westernized education is that democratic action can fail to serve groups of humans and more-than-humans in ways that are equitable (Griffiths & Murray, 2018). This poses a problem within education that can theoretically be addressed by social justice education. Instructing students to "live well in our world" (Griffiths & Murray, 2018, p. 41) will invoke an inclusive message and practice that is evident in the relationships built within all ecological systems.

Dismantling anthropocentric societal structures that decidedly places humans above more-than-animals in a hierarchical system reassigns moral capacities to entities other than humans (Bell, 1999, Griffiths & Murray, 2018). Miller et al. (2009) describe how to promote

1 "Anthropocene" refers to the geological era where human impact on Earth has caused change in ecological systems.

social justice behavior and attitude change in sustainable action, particularly around equity and human health. They argue that experience and exposure to content and action-based material develops a predisposition to apply oneself to socially and environmentally equitable behaviors (Miller et al., 2009). Miller et al. (2009) supports this argument with a model presented by Moeschberger et al. (2006) that describes key steps in social justice engagement:

> An individual (a) has contact with the reality of oppression and conflict, (b) develops an increased awareness of social injustice, (c) formulates a sense of efficacy to bring about change, (d) understands her or his role in relation to this change, (e) develops a deeper understanding of the sociopolitical context of social issues, and (f) engages in advocacy to bring about change (p. 496).

This model encourages the need for education and development within social justice awareness which therefore correlates to self efficacy and interest in engaging in social justice work (Lent et al., 2008). Paulo Freire (1970), using his own pedagogical theory of "critical pedagogy", ascertains that personal interaction with social groups outside of one's identity, and subsequent critical reflection, will help gain knowledge of social reality. Freire (1970) specifically looks at the oppressed and the oppressors, where liberation must stem from the oppressed and that "a pedagogy must be forged *with*, not *for*, the oppressed in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity" (p. 48). Such a pedagogical focus highlights the intersectionality that exists between social sustainability, education sciences, and social justice (Ketschau, 2015). When all three of these theories are applied to one another in an educational setting, there is a synergistic benefit within sustainable action in society (Ketschau, 2015, p. 15756).

Taking this a step further and pushing the theory of Freire (1970) beyond the anthropocentric scope, is the understanding of the connections and interrelatedness of social and

environmental issues. Not only are the perspectives of oppressed people to be acknowledged, here an attention is called to the liberation of more-than-human beings as well (Maina-Okori, Koushik & Wilson, 2017). This moves the review into an analysis of how to achieve a holistic approach to education that includes critical pedagogy, place-based education, and ecofeminist theory.

Place-Based Learning Application

Connecting Social Issues with Place

Within Western education, place-based education is a relatively new pedagogical framework that was officially developed in the 1990s in an attempt to provide a connection between cultural and ecological aspects of place. Greenwood (2003) argues that place-based education can be categorized as follows:

> Its practices and purposes can be connected to experiential learning, contextual learning, problem-based learning, constructivism, outdoor education, indigenous education, environmental and ecological education, bioregional education, democratic education, multicultural education, community-based education, critical pedagogy itself, as well as other approaches that are concerned with context and the value of learning from and nurturing specific places, communities, or regions. (p. 3)

Through this type of learning there is a greater awareness of place which leads to the decolonization of the way we as settler colonists inhabit space. This reinhabitation acknowledges the powers and privileges that reinforce oppressive forces and recognizes those who are oppressed (Greenwood, 2008). A critique of Freire (1970) that Gruenwald (2003; 2008) elaborates on is that critical pedagogy fails to acknowledge that all aspects of humanity exist

within ecological systems. In reverse however, Gruenwald (2003) recognizes that place-based education in practice has an emphasis on rural and outdoor spaces and does not include urban systems and the cultural structures and issues that reside in those systems.

Addressing the Problematic Aspects of Place-Based Education

Although the premise and theoretical goals of scholars such as Greenwald (2003; 2008) foster a decolonizing lens to place-based education, it is necessary to recognize where their white settler positionality frames their theory. Tuck, McKenzie, and McCoy (2014) make an important distinction between two types of colonization that invariably result in the desired erasure of Indigenous people, cultures and traditions: *exploitative colonization* and *settler colonization.* Exploitative colonization references the enslavement and use of Indigenous bodies for capitalistic gains. Settler colonization is the act of taking land for resource consumption and claiming it as their own (Tuck et al., 2014). In recognizing what type of colonization is being employed, it is always important to remember that white power and oppression is displacing groups of people and there needs to be an acknowledgment of how that white privilege has and is continuing to shape society.

Rose and Paisley (2012) provide a recount of personal experiences as white leaders in an outdoor education settling. Their interactions with students of diverse cultural backgrounds caused them to realize their own privilege and the "dominant racial order" that is prevalent in traditional outdoor environmental education (Rose & Paisley, 2012, p.145). Within the framework of experiential education[2] Rose and Paisley (2012) identify the learning setting to be

2 A methodology of teaching that focuses on teacher and student direct interaction with the lived environment. These experiences are intended to be reflected upon and used as personal development in understanding the context of certain issues and the student's own learning.

that of leisure[3] and that "today, leisure classes all too closely correspond with those individuals who are privileged in terms of race, gender, class, access to private property, sexual orientation, ability, and so forth (Rose & Paisley, 2012, p.145). The experiences that privileged groups of people, including the instructors and participants have, may not be perceived in the same way by those who are considered marginalized. Additionally, within the field of experiential education, particularly outdoor education, there is a universal goal of "overcoming challenges": and how that process leads to personal and educational growth. These perceived challenges however are inherently racialized in nature, because the daily and personal experiences that some individuals either currently endure or historically have suffered may reflect that "leisure activity" (Rose & Paisley, 2012).

Beyond the field of education is the application of land perception and ownership at the societal level. In *A Ghetto Land Pedagogy: An Antidote for Settler Environmentalism*, La Paperson (2014) creates a "critical cartography" of the San Francisco area in California, that reflects settler understanding of what is deemed "the ghetto". Spaces like these are perceived by white saviors[4] as in need of fixing or developing into a more civilized place. This inevitably leads to gentrification of urbanized spaces which mirrors that of the way white settlers colonized land and how they identified land as an object (La Paperson, 2014). There is a certain aura or mystic surrounding the works and accomplishments of historical environmentalists and those who sought to protect the land with conservation and preservation. However, when white settlers came to America, they deemed Indigenous people as uncivilized and therefore concluded that the

3 Rose & Paisley (2012) reference leisure in the context of leisure studies which identifies outdoor education and experiential education as being a place of "vacation" or "adventure" that is inherently steeped in privilege and opportunity.

4 Referencing the savior complex experienced and enacted upon by white people in non-white communities and spaces. Often these actions are termed as being self-serving rather than purely altruistic.

land had not been made into a civilization. In the preservation of "empty land" comes the caveat that that land was made empty by the removal and genocidal acts of colonization (La Paperson, 2014). In comparing Indigenous understanding of land to that of the white "eco-pedagogical" there is a substantive lack of deep understanding and relationships. La Paperson (2014) elaborates:

> Moreover, environmental education has been largely silent on land, that is, silent on the settler colonial recasting of land into 'environment,' and silent on broader Indigenous understandings of land as ancestor, as sovereign, as people-places with their own politics and identities (p. 117).

The land itself is represented by both the physical geography as well as the people who have a deep connection and relationship with the land. La Paperson (2014) is accusatory in the incompleteness that dismantling coloniality provides for Indigenous people whose bodies and land relationships need decolonization. Distinguishing land-education from place-based education in that land-education is the reclamation of Indigenous ontologies while place-based makes space for new and individual stories to be made (La Paperson, 2014, p. 124).

Recentering Around Indigenous Place- & Land-Based Epistemologies

In support of the claim made by La Paperson (2014) in regard to the importance of land-education compared to place-based education, Calderon (2014) suggests the integration of the two pedagogies. An understanding of the displacement and mistreatment of Indigenous people informs social and cultural implications in the reinhabitation of place and moving towards a sustainable future (Bang, 2014; Calderon, 2014; Gruenewald, 2003). A white settler colonial construct is the sense of territoriality which Calderon (2014) points out is upheld in educational textbooks. She presents two characteristics which are, "(1) the role of settler nationalism in

reproducing settler territoriality, and (2) the role of White supremacy in enabling settler territoriality" (Calderon, 2014, p. 30). This appears in academia and textbooks with the "discovery" narrative within the World and U.S. History curricula.

What fails to occur, is although the exploitations of these so-called conquerors are deemed atrocious, the idea of territoriality is not dismantled. There remains a sense of ownership and entitlement in white settlers that land-education has the ability to deconstruct (Bang, 2014; Calderon, 2014). In addition, epistemologies outside of settler point-of-view are not prevalent in academia which shows a sweeping disregard for other truths, including Indigenous knowledge (Bang, 2014). These partial narratives are reinforcing westernized education and the erasure of Indigenous knowledge.

Eco-feminist Pedagogical Framework

Place-based education creates a teaching environment that promotes student knowledge creation rather than knowledge consumption (Smith, 2002) while also fostering an awareness of social and ecological health and relationships in local regions (Greenwood, 20013). Land-education challenges place-based education to take a step further and garner a deeper understanding of how Indigenous peoples have and continue to link their personal and community's identity to a geographical place (Bang, 2014; Calderon, 2014; La Paperson, 2014). In addition, it is important to develop a cognitive connection how a settler colonist's understanding of land, and space occupation reflects the treatment of Indigenous peoples, people of color, and women. La Paperson (2014) provides context within environmental education with thus:

> Environmental education research has made important critiques of the ecological destruction that has accompanied settler colonialism, of environmental racism, of 'nature' as rape-able, and of 'development' as the normalized aim of modernity. In these regards, eco-pedagogical approaches align with anti-racist, feminist and Indigenous education principles. (p. 117)

Ecofeminism aims to dismantle the patriarchal oppressive conceptual framework that degrades and subordinates both the body of women and the environment. A leading figure in ecofeminism, Warren (1990), identifies three key features that define the oppressive conceptual framework within the context of patriarchy. This framework upholds the idea of power and oppression of men over women and therefore labeling men as superior and women as inferior (Harvester & Blenkinsop, 2010; Warren, 1990). Those three features are: (1) value-hierarchical thinking (2) value-dualisms-- i.e. categorizing women with the physical and emotional; categorizing men with the mental and reasoning; and (3) logic of domination (Warren, 1990, p. 128). These features apply to not only oppression over women's bodies but also to nature and the environment. Within western societies, there is a duality in how both women and nature are dominated and seen as disposable and available for exploitation for capitalistic purposes (Harvester & Blenkinsop, 2010; Salleh, Mies & Shiva, 2014; Warren 1990). These dualities contribute to the socially constructed binaries that uphold hierarchical oppression. The patriarchal bias is reliant upon history's preference of reason over emotion, masculine over feminine, and culture over nature (Russell & Bell, 1996).

Ecofeminist theory challenges the work of deep ecology which works to shift the environmental movement away from the anthropocentric view and towards the biocentric view, with the intent of decentering humanity from the preservation of nature and the environment (Guha, 1989). Ecofeminists claim that this anthropocentric view needs to be shifted to an

androcentric view. The oppression and domination of the environment has been predominantly performed by patriarchal powers (Russell & Bell, 1996). Historically and currently, there is environmental and social degradation imposed by the acts of human beings. However, with the understanding of the oppressive patriarchal framework proposed by Warren (1990), the hierarchical and dualistic power structures inform the thought that men are both leading and instigating the harms done both directly, and through women (Harvester & Blenkinsop, 2010; Warren, 1990). These perceived and realized forms of oppression therefore support the need for gender studies to be included into environmental education pedagogies, and therefore, place-based education (Maina-Okori et al., 2017).

This supports that ecofeminism is intersectional[5] with ageism, sexism and racism and that all of these oppressive structures reinforce one another (Gaard, 1997). An understanding of ecofeminism theory can inform and shape pedagogies to both decolonize and address social issues as they relate to identity. Maina-Okori et al. (2017) relate intersectionality with the concept of Indigenous interconnectivity, citing Wilson (1996; 2008):

> Indigenous conceptions of interconnectivity view all parts of our identity as inseparable and interconnected, such as our sexuality, sexual orientation, cultural alignment, heritage, lineage, gender, socioeconomic status, spirituality, and connection to the land. (p. 286)

Indigenous interconnectivity provides a framework that supports an intersectional approach to land and body liberation as it applies to marginalized voices being heard. In the context of sexuality, gender and sexual orientation, those facets of identity are interconnected to

[5] Referring to Kimberle Crenshaw's coining and use of the term to refer to the intersections between race and other forms of oppression. This informs how oppression on social identities contributes to systemic discrimination and marginalization.

other factors such as race, class and age, in a way that cannot be ignored in policy and social health development. The silencing of voices of marginalized groups of people in discussing environmental and social equity issues, is effectively perpetuating patriarchal oppressive forces (Maina-Okori et al., 2017). Ecofeminism connects the rights of all humans, regardless of race, gender, age, class, and other identity factors, with more-than-human species and the lived environment. The oppressions enacted upon the environment cannot be dismantled without the liberation of traditionally marginalized bodies (Warren, 1990). Those bodies in turn, cannot be liberated without the liberation of the environment. Ecofeminism as a theory and framework, seeks to both dismantle the oppressive patriarchal hierarchy that society has been built upon, as well supporting marginalized voices to be actively heard for progressive and sustainable change.

Concluding Thoughts

Applying Theory to Practice as an Educator

As an educator, it is important to acknowledge that any teaching space can include a diverse set of students, whether that be based on race, cultural background, age, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, past traumas, lived experiences, etc. Entering that space with the capacity to actively listen, critically receive, and continue to learn creates a learning environment that is not only inclusive but dynamic and open to change. *Active listening* is beneficial to both the speaker and the listener. This form of listening taps into observing physical cues, attitude changes and emotional responses that helps the listener empathize with the speaker, and allows the speaker to be more self-reflective and clear in their statements (Rogers, 1957). Thus leading to *critical reception* and interpretation of information, storytelling, and/or lived experiences. Does the listener agree or disagree? Do they come from a different

background or identity? How does this support or inform their own thinking? Oftentimes, through critical reception, the listener can consider how their own understanding is challenged and therefore leads to *continued learning.* By embracing the ability and opportunity to continually learn, educators are opening up to bringing more voices and representation within their classroom, while also remaining current and aware of updated language and its use. As an educator, I take these calls to action seriously and in my reflections you will notice some of the materials I created to attempt to integrate these values.

Understanding one's own identity and family history is the catalyst for acknowledging an individual's privilege and power and how it may inform their teaching (Sleeter, 2008). This exploration of positionality is imperative for an educator to undergo, as it provides context to where success and opinion comes from. Those points of view will be racialized and steeped in privilege, and without acknowledgment, oppressions can find their way into how someone teaches or interacts with their students (Rose & Paisley, 2012). I recommend that, based on these principles, educators should seek to understand their biases and how they show up within the classroom or during student engagement. This can look like adjusting language use around derogatory or oppressive terms that may be offensive to different identities; being cognizant of curriculum content that may trigger trauma or fearful reactions; not speaking for those who do not hold the same privileges and allowing those voices to be heard openly and truthfully.

Utilizing an ethic of care within any and all teaching spaces, whether that be an indoor classroom, or an outdoor place-based oriented program, is supported by an ecofeminist framework (Goralnik, 2014). As well as to anyone, including more-than-human species. This ethic of care allows for emotion to enter the classroom and be an integral part of the learning process. Building and fostering empathetic relationships with other humans, more-than-humans

and the environment, counters hierarchical structures and dualistic gender roles that contribute to systemic social inequities (Goralnik, 2014; Maina-Okori et al., 2017). Curtin (1991) encourages the use of a politicized ethic of care as a vehicle to engage in ecofeminist activism as it combats the controversial discourses surrounding the rights of different groups [human, more-than-human, and the environment]. Furthermore, an ethic of care must be politicized as it prevents the privatization of the interests of women (Curtin, 1991). To care *about* rather than to care *for* a particular issue allows the individual to explore and understand the sociopolitical aspects that contribute to the problem and oppression (Russell & Bell, 1996). In practice, this asks the educator to work on dismantling the systemic structures that are perpetuating those problems, rather than focusing on the individual or group suffering from the oppression. This asks for a historical and cultural analysis of how the treatment of nature versus women is mirrored and intersectionality applicable to those in marginalized communities.

Thus, examining the interrelatedness of social, economic, and ecological issues particularly in a place-based setting can help conceptualize the structures in place to uphold oppression and mistreatment of certain groups (Maina-Okori, et al., 2017). The incorporation of diverse voices not only provides a greater, more holistic perspective but also supports representation within the classroom. This in turn, giving students the opportunity to feel seen and to garner a sense of hope for a sustainable and equitable future.

Inquiry Journey and Project Rationale

My entry into the field of education came from my background in the natural sciences and wildlife biology. I began my professional career as a field technician working on various

wildlife management and conservation projects. That passion and interest in biology, and the preservation of natural spaces, predicated my desire to share knowledge and experience with other people. In addition, I found that every project I was involved with closely tied the fate or wellbeing of another species with the presence and influence of human beings. I will quickly walk through three examples and experiences I had:

(1) Okanogan County Lynx Management Zone Occupancy Model

The goal of this project was to assess where lynx were inhabiting Okanogan County in Washington State and therefore determine future management zoning. This was achieved by placing motion-censored trail cameras on established trails, roads and wildlife "highways" to detect lynx presence. These highly trafficked areas were determined based on previous research that lynx utilize paths of least resistance when available in a space. Two conclusions that I gleaned from this project were that first, humans and lynx occupy the same spaces through human recreation. Every single camera that detected a lynx, also detected humans. Second, lynx are heavily impacted by wildfires and the destruction of habitat. Therefore, the human nexus [tie or link] with lynx is climate change and how it is impacting forest composition and food availability. Lynx habitat is shrinking and the predicted future is extirpation in the state of Washington.

(2) Methow Valley Beaver Project

The Methow Valley Beaver project runs through the U.S. Forest Service and its overall mission is to sustain and improve the local watersheds. This is achieved through capture and relocation of nuisance beavers into habitat that would benefit from beaver presence. As described in *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter*

written by Ben Goldfarb**,** beavers are the architects of nature and their fantastic feats of dam construction leads to more water retention in the soil and underground water table, cooler water temperature suitable for fish reproduction and survival, and greater biodiversity within the watershed. Here, the human nexus is coexistence between species. Beavers are inherently destructive towards people's properties as they diligently cut down trees, however they are also an integral part of the health of a community as they lower the fire danger, increase the number of harvestable fish, and are just so dang cute.

(3) Spotted Owl Survey in the Methow Valley Ranger District

The goal of this survey is to determine if the district still has spotted owl occupancy and breeding within suitable habitat. What has been discovered is that there is plenty of suitable habitat, however they have been pushed out and largely replaced by the similar barred owl. Barred owls originate east of the Okanogan Valley, however, due to human manipulation of the landscape, they have been able to populate further west. Farming and landscaping across the open plains creates pockets of forest that allow the barred owl to "forest hop" and reach the spotted owl habitat. Once they had arrived, their more aggressive nature, and greater diversity in prey led to them dominating the forest and creating competitive pressure. The human nexus for spotted owls is recognition of the impacts that human development has on other species and their wellbeing.

Within the scientific and wildlife community, these topics are discussed frequently and are at the center of the conservation and research they do. However, what is experienced on the public interface is not as detailed or nuanced and it often leads to misinformation, ignorance and sometimes anger. There are efforts made at the district level to provide educational forums, talks

or online content but it is not mandatory at the state-level and this work is left up to individuals to do on their own free time. As could be expected, education unfortunately falls down the tier in relative importance to other projects and often that science to public bridge isn't built.

Enter, me; pursuing a degree in environmental education, hoping to contribute at least one stone to that bridge I often saw lacking. Initially my goal wasn't entirely clear. All I knew was that I had felt the power of building a close relationship with nature and the outdoor space and I wanted to encourage others to do the same to potentially lead an environmentally-friendly livelihood. I began my Master of Education in Environmental Education residency program at the North Cascades Institute through Western Washington University with a zealous attitude toward the importance of outdoor education. The program was built around creating close relationships within the cohort, as well as with the land. It was here that I began to understand the meaning of place-based education and the importance of decolonizing education through meeting community members, natural history journaling practice, and participating in outdoor recreation. So why then was I feeling like something was missing?

My decision to transfer my education experience away from the residency and into the more urban setting of the University's campus, was based on two things: (1) greater access to campus resources and urban amenities; (2) wanting to engage with a more diverse audience and to step away from a space that felt decidedly white and privileged. It was within that decision however, that I realized how I was perpetuating racial, gendered, abled and class stereotypes by upholding that divisive outlook. There is a significant lack of representation in the outdoor space, beyond the white, cis-gendered, able-bodied, middle class individual. In order to understand this inequity within the outdoor space I found myself pulled towards social justice and specifically environmental justice in how it affects different groups of people. It was through classes like

Power, Privilege and Environmental Education, Conservation Psychology, & *Justice and Equity in Environmental Education* that I realized my education and values had developed from a primarily westernized settler colonial view. My inquiry then led me to decenter those viewpoints by stepping into work that challenges me and my identity, encourages self-reflection and continues my learning through resources and voices from those that experience different forms of oppression and marginalization.

As a pedagogical and learning framework, I found that ecofeminism gave a perspective that not only acknowledges the oppression of women and nature, but also recognizes hierarchical systems upholding such oppression within westernized society. These systems also uphold binaries such as the human/nature, male/female, and human/animal divides that ecofeminist theory works to dismantle. In congruence with my own love for connection to place, ecofeminism encourages reinhabiting a space with a decolonizing lens and with an ethic of care. Through both empathy and support for other groups of people, and engaging in land education, I seek to expand upon my knowledge and ability to teach on the importance of an ecofeminist place-based approach to education.

Methodology

Initially, this project was meant to focus largely upon a close relationship with The Bush School and its cross-disciplinary educators. In partnership with the program director at the Methow Campus, I had developed a plan to create an educational toolkit that provided guidance on how to implement place-based theory on an already existing curriculum. In congruence with this, I was invited to be a guest educator for student winter retreats at the Methow Campus as well as within the science classrooms at the Seattle campus. However, due to the COVID-19

pandemic and the resulting school closures, my timeline and methodology were forced to change significantly. What resulted instead, was a much more organic process of finding connections within my community and applying my pedagogical theory and practice with various audiences. This process was not particularly linear or nor followed a specific educational trajectory, however it helped shape my opinions, beliefs, and goals surrounding environmental education in a way that has launched me into a lifelong pursuit of learning and educating.

What follows are the practical applications I was able to achieve throughout this project in response to my original *overarching project goals* and the lasting effects of COVID-19.

Field Project Timeline:

Fall 2019

- ❏ Completed Proposal
- ❏ Conducted research and reached out to potential partners
- ❏ Completed DOPE Conference Proposal

Winter 2020

- ❏ Continued research and theoretical development
- ❏ Presented: Methow Conservancy - Climate Indicator Species of the Methow Valley
- ❏ Presented: The Bush School - Climate Indicator Species of the Methow Valley
- ❏ Taught: The Bush School - Snow Adaptations
- ❏ Presented: DOPE Conference - Land, Body, Liberation
- ❏ Presented: Women's Group - Ecofeminism

- ❏ Wrote reflections on presentations

Spring 2020

- ❏ Refined and revisited introduction, methodology, and positionality statement
- ❏ Developed blog and Instagram - Teaching for Equity
- ❏ Continued reflections
- ❏ Final write-up and revisions
- ❏ Defended Project

Engagement with the content took two forms. The first being *Community Outreach* with my local community of the Methow Valley. The second being *Knowledge Expansion* through an education conference in Lexington, Kentucky.

Reflections

I chose to focus on my own community of the Methow Valley for two reasons. The first being that I know there is a stronghold of environmental advocates that live there. I knew that I would have a captive audience to listen to my message and who would engage in challenging discussions, and inspire action. The second reason being that, having grown up in this community, I am acutely aware of how isolated and racially/culturally homogenous it is. Demographically, the Methow Valley is a predominantly white, post-colonial settlement. In addition, the age demographics swing towards middle aged to senior aged. I steeled myself for

the reality that I was going to be working with a community of old white people, challenging them to acknowledge their privilege.

As I reflect on these experiences, I will break down and organize my thoughts chronologically, covering presentations given from January, 2020 to March, 2020. This provides a timeline of insight into my project, **and** demonstrates how each presentation expanded upon the other and continued my own learning in the process. I will subsequently analyze my experiences and how they shaped and molded my project goals and intended outcomes, while concurrently sparking new inquiries and curiosities.

Part I - Methow Conservancy First Tuesday Talk: Climate Change Indicator Species of the Methow Valley (See Appendix A)

When I stepped into the presenting space, I eyed the fifty or so chairs set up and had my first twinge of nervousness. As people started filing through the door, and staff were scrambling to set up all available chairs, I stared at the room full of 300 people and repeatedly had to wipe my sweaty palms on my jeans. I knew the majority of the crowd was there to see my dad, my co-presenter. He is the Okanogan District Wildlife Biologist and regularly presents on local wildlife projects, and gives natural history lessons. His willingness and excitement around educating the public on the plants and animals he loves so much is not only inspiring to me, but also to our community.

If he's talking, people always show up.

The title of our presentation was "Climate Change Indicator Species of the Methow Valley" and the poster was adorned with captivating photos of pika, lynx and wolverine - in

other words, charismatic fauna. My dad is a carnivore specialist, so these animals made sense for him to talk about, but what was I doing there? My role during this talk was to provide the human context, give a land acknowledgement, and to expand the understanding of place-based education and its importance in cultivating a sustainable future.

I also spoke to the harsh realities of climate change and the drastic effects we are seeing in our small frontline town. This was achieved both through anecdotal reference to our local community as well as through scientific research that observed the global impact. In addition, I brought attention to the health and well-being detriments that a changing climate will incur. The Methow Valley is what is considered a frontline community. Frontline communities experience the effects of climate change, at the human level, first and at a greater extreme. These communities are often rural, poor, and/or predominantly inhabited by people of color. Due to the reliance of natural resources, and lack of infrastructure to protect from environmental degradation, frontline communities are in effect the canary in the coal mine. In the Methow, the primary sources of income are recreation, agriculture and small businesses fueled by tourism. In order to connect with the audience, I tapped into those concerns and vulnerabilities to encourage empathetic critical thinking when considering the effects that climate change has on other species.

In order to make these concepts personably relatable, I also brought in an anecdote that tied in **an ethic of care** into our experiences outside and instilling hopeful action.

I began by asking if anyone in the audience has been to a national park. Most of the audience raised their hands.

I then asked if anyone has done a popular local hike, called the Maple Pass Loop. About three fourths of the audience raised their hands.

My next question wonders if anyone has noticed the very common white ropes that block off areas for vegetation restoration.

Once again, a significant positive response.

I compared the feeling and internal thought we have when we see those white ropes.

Is it because an establishment has set a “rule” for us and we don’t want to break the rule? Is it because we actively don’t want to destroy another living being? Do we genuinely care about another species enough to fight the urge to walk to the best vista point for a picture, out of empathy for a seemingly innocuous plant such as alpine heather?

If the answer is yes to either of the second questions, that is an ethic of care revealing itself.

My final question was “Why did you show up here tonight? What motivated you to attend?”

To get to know our local area better.

To understand how climate change is impacting my home.

I really like wolverines and pika are cute!

We always love hearing Scott’s [my dad] talks

To learn what we can do as a community to be better stewards

The takeaway I got from asking these questions was that most of the people attending were there because they had some level of emotional attachment either to their place, the topic species, or us as presenters. The desire to learn and also share in those moments of compassion and grief is a powerful combination that has potential to be tapped. I emphasized that there is power in collective action, especially action rooted in empathy. I urged the audience to continue understanding their own ethic of care and keep the line of dialogue open, because a united community can make immense change.

To counter feelings of eco-grief and the predominant negative narrative that exists around environmental activism, I concluded the evening's talk with messages of hope. I encouraged the audience to look to the media, local stories and even their backyard for instances of hopeful action, and shared some of my favorite hopeful tidbits such as:

- Conservation efforts are working as endangered mountain gorilla populations are growing
- Florida is buying 20,000 acres of Everglades to protect it from oil drilling
- Scotland to be powered by 100% renewable energy THIS YEAR
- Kansas City will be the first major U.S. city to offer free public transit

[And my personal favorite and perfect moment of levity]

- Diego, a womanizing tortoise, single-handedly saved his species from extinction with his overactive sex drive.

After the talk was over, the response I received was overwhelmingly positive. During the question and answer portion of the night I had many questions asking

"Can you define ecofeminism?"

"Are you going to give a talk on ethic of care on its own?"

"How can I contact you?"

In addition, many people reached out to me in the following weeks wondering if I'd be willing to chat with them about this topic. Now I say all of this with a great sense of humility because I realize it wasn't my speaking prowess that was causing these people to reach out to me, It was because this is a topic that people want to discuss. They just don't know how or with whom. As an educator and facilitator, I was happy to provide that space and I attribute this talk to opening up the subsequent series of opportunities and portions of my project.

Critical Reflection

As I reflect on this experience, I recognize that there are many limitations and biases that show up, particularly in reference to my audience as well as the facilitating organization. The Methow Conservancy works with local landowners to create land easements that are maintained and protected for biome preservation. In addition, they focus on environmental and outdoor education on the public interface which attracts a certain audience. The attendees at the talk I gave most likely already had an interest in climate change and making positive changes towards wildlife protection. Therefore, I challenge myself to consider how to reach a broader audience to share this message.

Another limitation was the use of heather plants as an example for an ethic of care. This example is relatively comfortable and not controversial to the point of eliciting a strong, emotional response potentially needed for action and value shifts. A recommendation that I make

to myself as well as to other educators, is to push that level of comfortability in our students/audience. By doing so, we are pressing on the edges of the bubble or box that those listening may exist in. I identify myself as an educator but also as a facilitator of developing inquiries and therefore take on the responsibility of prompting others to challenge themselves and encourage them to challenge me in return.

A moment of realization was the response around the language I used during and after the presentation. I acknowledge that I am fully immersed in educational theoretical texts and therefore the language I use may not be accessible to all that are listening. Clarifying and explaining language use not only makes the presentation easier to listen to, but it also bolsters vocabulary lists and provides the opportunity for the normalization of terms such as: ecofeminism, anthropocene, womxn, latinx, mxt, nonbinary, colonization, etc. As a result of this experience, I move forward in my educational career seeking to broaden my audience, push the limits of comfortability and to take the time to explain the language I use in its semantics as well as its importance.

Part 2 - The Bush School: Climate Change Indicator Species of the Methow Valley & Snow Adaptations (See Appendix B for Snow Adaptation Lesson Plan)

Before elucidating my experience teaching with the Bush School, I find it necessary to provide context and background of the school's mission and demographics. The Bush School main campus is in the affluent and historical neighborhood of Harrison/Denny-Blaine in Seattle, Washington. The Bush School is an independently run private school that has significant tuition costs and provides many opportunities for travel, extracurricular activities, and experiential

education. Thus, it allows for a diverse and unique educational experience beyond the traditional public school format. The school's mission is stated as: "To spark in students of diverse backgrounds and talents a passion for learning, accomplishment, and contribution to their communities." And utilizes the following educational foundations to do so: "Critical, independent, and creative thinking; Ethical judgment and action; Intercultural fluency; Local and global citizenship." The Bush School also has a satellite campus in the Methow Valley whose purpose is to immerse students in experiential and place-based education. In engaging with these students, I kept in mind that their background and classroom environments encourage experiential and student-centered learning and therefore represented a privileged minority in comparison to most grade schools.

I was offered two distinct opportunities to engage with middle school students visiting the Methow Campus. The first was giving a talk very similar to the talk given at the Methow Conservancy. I kept the same title, "Climate Change Indicator Species of the Methow Valley" and the majority of the visual aids, however, eliminated contextual graphs showing population data in the interest of time. This talk was approximately 30 minutes long, and took place at the end of the day as a wrap up to the student's daily activities involving skiing, snowshoeing and crafting. The second opportunity was with a different group of students at a later date. The only parameters I was given was to provide a place-based context while going on a snowshoe hike. The lesson I developed was around snow adaptations we see in the Methow Valley, other winter natural histories, and kinetic play.

I was able to compare the response and level of curiosity that the students gave to the adult audience at the Methow Conservancy talk in regard to Climate Change Indicator Species of the Methow Valley. Overall, when it came to the concept of an ethic of care and engaging with

the environment through sustainable practices, the students were receptive and curious. They understood why it was important and instead of pushing to learn more information or background on the subject, they instead were asking the question of "why".

"Why do we always throw away stuff and buy new versions?" "

"Why don't we just take care of what we already have?"

"Why doesn't every school have recycling programs?"

"Why aren't we doing more to help the environment?"

These are all very valid questions, and ones I'm sure many of us as adults in the environmental field ask ourselves frequently. The positive assurance I got from entering into a discussion around sustainability with these students was that they are idealists and have brilliant ideas. Their aptitude to get involved in local activism is astounding and their innovative ideas reach beyond the practical and pragmatic minds of adults that can inevitably be narrowed by politics and social barriers.

In juxtaposition to the relatively formal presentation I gave, as described above, the snowshoe activity focused on a more tangible and kinetic learning experience. Other than being a lot of fun, I'm not sure this experience contributed to my overall learning and understanding of my research topic. That being said, I was able to witness the power of place-based and outdoor education on a group of students varying in physical ability, age and interests. Instead of framing the snowshoe hike as a "physical activity", it was framed as an exploration of understanding how certain winter dwelling animals adapt to their environment. This lent to questions, slower and more intentional movements through the forest and meadows, and a more in depth visualization

activity observing the different aspects of the surrounding habitat. Of course, this all ended in fun and games, where students were allowed a substantial amount of time to play camouflage, which involves a lot of shouting, running, and snow-scooting. That balance of observation, silence, slowness, intentionality, and fun, engaged the students well beyond the allotted time slot I was given, and in those moments the laughter and smiles was all the reward I needed.

Critical Reflection

As I reflect on this experience, I am aware of the difficulties in maintaining the attention of exhausted 13-year olds, at the end of the day, after dinner, and in a relatively dark room. My interpretation that they understood the concept of an ethic care may have been greatly skewed by the fact that they were tired and just wanted to go relax. This was an opportunity for me to recognize the importance of setting, audience and timing when working with young people. A seminar-style talk late in the day may not be the most effective method for communicating big ideas, as it allows for drifting minds and drooping eyelids. Therefore, I question what was effective during my time with the Bush School.

Comparatively, the snowshoe excursion garnered a lot more discussion, questions and energy. This could potentially be because the activity took place around lunch time, in the sunshine and in the outdoors. The main takeaway I received from this experience is the power of adaptability and listening to your student's needs and interests. Sometimes a topic or an activity just is not working, and to force it is not only a waste of your time as an educator, but a waste of your student's time. That is not to say that some topics and activities should be completely eliminated; being able to reframe or circle back to ideas at a different time or when you're in a different setting is a key component of being an effective educator.

My final piece of critical self-reflection regarding the Bush School is the limitation of exposure and relationship building with the students. In both cases, I was an outside educator that interacted with these students for less than 2 hours. They did not know me well and I could hardly remember all their names. How can I identify what the needs of those students are, if I don't have a baseline of rapport or an established relationship with them? I do see the value of bringing in guest educators into a classroom to include more voices in their learning experience, however I also see why relationship building is necessary when asking your students to utilize critical thinking and dive into their own inquiries. They need to feel supported and safe through that journey, just as much as the educator needs to feel as though they are adequately creating supportive structures. In the future I hope to move away from guest speaking and towards creating workshops and content that classroom educators can use to connect place-based and ecofeminist pedagogies into their work. Additionally, in the event that I have my own classroom, I intend to form close trusting relationships with my students that both fosters student-centered learning and a supported and safe space.

Part 3 - DOPE Conference: Land, Body, Liberation (See Appendix C for Abstract)

The Dimensions of Political Ecology (DOPE) Conference takes place annually in Lexington, Kentucky at the University of Kentucky, hosted by the university's students. This conference invites established and budding scholars from all around the world to discuss *the multidisciplinary fields of ecology, political economics, and science*. To be invited to speak at this conference alongside my peers was an honor and I step away from the experience having grown and learned exponentially in more ways than one.

Engaging in discussion with fellow scholars and educators from different institutions and backgrounds provided necessary context and breadth of understanding to promote the development of further personal inquiries. I discovered through this experience that when working with theory or the field of environmental education, it is easy to get into a circular loop of knowledge and resources as you work within your own institution. What was illuminated for me was the power and value in continually learning and challenging my own set of beliefs and pedagogies. Throughout the conference I had the opportunity to listen to scholars and educators from various backgrounds address similar topics to mine; such as ecofeminism and place-based education. Some of these speakers provided greater insight into the usefulness of a place-based pedagogical approach to environmental work in rural Mexico, however others presented themes around ecofeminism that did not align with what I stand for. It was particularly in those moments that I was able to critically reflect why their approach wasn't something I agreed with and to challenge myself to use a broader perspective on the vast topic of ecofeminism. This push and pull action that occurred in this academic setting pushed me to dive deeper into my own theories and potentially create bridges of knowledge that may have not been there before.

Critical Reflection

As I reflect on this experience, I come away with distinct action items and ways to engage in environmental justice education into the future. I believe that expanding your connections and resources to other educators is an invaluable tool that should be used more often. Speaking at this conference and having the opportunity to listen to other people engaged in similar work re-energized me to create a platform for learning that is accessible and inclusive. As I move forward, I plan to emulate this collaborative experience at DOPE and pursue developing a blog and social media account that would continue to work within the field of environmental

education in an informed and multidisciplinary way. I have chosen to use social media as my outlet due to accessibility reasons. This type of platform has the potential of creating a more attainable learning community with a diverse set of participants, while also allowing for space for personal elements to filter into the academic realm. I look forward to creating a community in this sense, as it will allow me to remain connected to academia and the important movement behind environmental justice.

Part 4 - Women's Group: Let's Talk About Ecofeminism (See Appendix D)

This excerpt is a blog post that I wrote in response to my experience speaking at the Women's Group. This post has been uploaded and shared on my personal blog, Teaching for Equity. It serves as an informal writing piece that walks through my own thoughts as well as the inquiries and questions that arose during that evening.

When I mention I study ecofeminism I usually receive one of two responses: (1) confusion followed by curiosity or (2) a look that definitely wonders if I had traveled in time from the 1970's. All in all, I welcome both responses!

Let's take a moment to talk about what ecofeminism is, or even further, intersectional ecofeminism.

I had the opportunity to be a guest speaker at a local womens' group that called themselves a "discussion group", when really it turns into this organic mesh of happy hour drinking, hors d'oeuvre eating, gossiping, and finally discussion.

This group of women was entirely white, ages ranging from mid-30s to late-60s, and middle to upper class. All of them proclaimed themselves to be feminists, both past and present and were filled to the brim with examples of feminist activism they had taken part of.

I think that's why they had such an interest in my [somewhat limited] knowledge on ecofeminism. Living in a community that has a close relationship with the natural environment, they mostly wanted to know how feminism could benefit the ecological places in our valley.

Eco – Feminism. Feminism for ecology, right?

I could feel the slight air of disappointment when I instead dove into a discussion of identity, Indigenous and black epistemologies (knowledge), and using empathy as a tool for teaching.

"But where does 'eco' come into ecofeminism?

I respond with—the 'eco' comes into this in that oppression of bodies that are not white or male is reflected in the treatment and destruction of land. In order to understand the latter, we need to understand the former. Settler colonialism through history and into the present, treats bodies and the land as dispensable, rapeable, exploitable.

All for what? Power, patriarchy, misogyny and self-serving capitalism.

I occasionally had trouble reigning the conversation back in from talking about the ineptitude of their husband's housekeeping abilities, but overall my audience seemed engaged in the topic, particularly around figuring out our whiteness and its role in feminist activism.

"How do you deal with being white and working in a field focused around environmental justice?"

This is a question I also ask myself regularly and the only solid conclusion I have come up with for myself is to *not center the discussion around my whiteness.* It's important for me and for others to acknowledge their identity and privilege, particularly in how it informs their teaching, activism, etc. However, it is not my goal to center a conversation around myself and the work I do, but rather;

(1) invite individuals who experience privilege to examine and critically think about how race, class, gender, ableism intersects with each other, and

(2) evaluate how we as members of society uphold and perpetuate systemic racism and oppression of marginalized groups.

As the discussion moved into the evening, the glasses of wine and homemade dinner rolls were taking their effect and eyes were getting tired. In conclusion I encouraged everyone to further this conversation with each other, their families, friends, and coworkers. I provided a list of book recommendations and various readings that would expand upon our talk.

I encouraged them all to push their ideas of feminism beyond the white feminist scope, and to recognize the intersectionality of how race, class, ableism, and gender compound on each other to create unique forms of oppression and suffering. How do we move forward and elevate the voices of those who are oppressed and become advocates for anti-racist and anti-based education?

If anything, I know I inspired some new reading content, as I was informed the following month, that the group had chosen *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo as their next book in their book club.

Critical Reflection

As I reflect on this experience I acknowledge the ways in which my positionality and biases were inserted in the way I engaged with the group. I had originally intended to push the ideals and values of a group of women that self identified as feminists, to include other forms of oppression and to introduce language they may not be familiar with. However, what I failed to recognize was that their own lived experiences, particularly within the home, represents their "lived environment". In not giving more time and space to explore that topic, I effectively erasing or sidelining their relationship with feminist theory. As I move forward, I want to embrace the tangential stories or feelings that show up in discussions such as these. Although it may not follow the initial path I had planned for, these moments are crucial in making personal, relatable, and applicable connections to sometimes distant theorizations.

In addition, this experience caused me to reflect on the systemic gendering of places, activities, inanimate objects and the environment. I am challenged even more to move away from a white feminist narrative around environmental education and the outdoor spaces and toward an intersectional ecofeminist narrative. However, what does this look like? By using an intersectional lens, I question the gendering of spaces and the catering of outdoor recreation experiences, but I also aim to complicate this further, choosing to focus on the outdoor experience, and analyze why maleness is associated with cis-gendered able-bodied white males. In addition to this, I look at the common trope of white women choosing to assimilate into white

dominated spaces, and I question how this in itself perpetuates the patriarchal hierarchy. As I move forward I aim to bring these forms of oppression and how they are upheld to the forefront of discussions and work towards looking at the outdoor experience and the environmental education experience as welcoming and inclusive to all groups of people. Thus validating and celebrating the way that all groups of people interact with the environment and dismantling historic white dominating narratives on land

Analysis and Application

Prior to completing the practical portion of my project and presenting at these various events, I had broken down my goals and intentions surrounding ecofeminist placed-based education into four parts:

1. A historical analysis that interrupts the romanticizing of western colonization
2. Recognition of Indigenous ways of knowing
3. Connection to the local community as it pertains to time immemorial to present
4. Establishment of empathetic relationships to humans, non-humans, and the lived environment.

Surrounding these 4 components, I developed two questions:

1. In a practical sense, how can these be applied in an accessible and impactful way?
2. Who is my target audience? Where will there be the greatest impact? The students or the adults?

What I found in response to those two questions:

1. Developing empathetic relationships with humans, more-than-humans and the lived environment OR as I will henceforth refer to as an Ethic of Care, is an accessible and understood concept (within my own community) and acts as a vehicle to better understand the other components of ecofeminism. These relationships are built through continued learning, collaboration, dialogue and positive practical activism.
2. Younger communities connect to topics of environmental justice and an ethic of care differently than adults.
    I. They generally grasp what an ethic of care is, without all the theoretical jargon.
    II. They usually don't need help in understanding why we need to take care of the Earth.
    III. What they do need help with is being given the opportunities and avenues to make changes and to pursue hopeful action.
    IV. Therefore, I believe it is the adults, educators, and leaders in our society that need to be targeted.

Without an ethic of care built into a community, classroom, society, there may not be the desire to understand other components of ecofeminism, environmental justice or sustainable education. There won't be a desire to push our learning and our comfortability. There may not be the desire to become ethical members of a community and environment. Recognizing the power in using an **ethic of care** as a vehicle to exercise ecofeminist theory within place-based education allows for both intersectional and equitable representation.

Conclusions and Future Application

There is a common argument that the environmental movement has not taken hold like other successful social movements such as the Civil Rights, Women's rights & Abolition, because there is no linear focus in the environment. In fact, the subject is a complicated web that includes humans, more-than-humans, the environment (both abiotic and biotic). It is ever changing, fluid, unpredictable and regionally unique. The environmental movement is political, scientific, historical, racialized, socialized, and steeped in art and language. How then, does an educator attempt to create a curriculum or a body of knowledge that is accessible and engaging?

There is not one single solution, the solution comes from engaging in discussion and making changes in multiple places within your teaching practice. This is achieved by many voices contributing and sharing experiences, personal perspective and their specialties. Every audience is going to require different instructions. Every classroom is different and the same "tool kit" cannot be applied to every classroom. Rather, the development of critical thinking skills and place-based knowledge and application needs to be improved in educators, and we must ask ourselves: how can I support my students in a way that is inclusive, equitable and empathetic?

I find myself faced with the question of, how do I educate educators to teach in a nonlinear way, nonlinearly? Westernized education is almost exclusively modeled in a linear fashion, and in order to cover a topic as nuanced and faceted as this, then it would take longer than a weekend or even a semester. Having completed a two-year graduate course in environmental education, with a strong focus on inclusive teaching and social justice, I feel as though I have barely scratched the surface. However, instead of discouraging me, this inspires me. I am inspired to never stop learning as an educator and to never stop building my community

around education and social justice. This is why I have chosen to engage in knowledge mobilization through social media and the world wide web. The internet, albeit a blessing and a curse, provides a platform that allows for broader accessibility and connections to other academics, authors, educators, activists etc. Through the creation of a blog website and an Instagram social media account, I have opened up the door to both share and receive ideas. This is particularly relevant with the current global climate in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic. With schools, institutions, businesses and public spaces being closed, there is risk of those lines of communication or opportunity for relationship building to be lost.

In both response to this social change, as well as the development of my own inquiries throughout my graduate experience, I have developed a mock up educational workshop (see Appendix E). This conference would exist entirely virtually and would elevate, welcome and empower voices from all identities to share their message.

I don't want my journey in this field to start and end with this degree and project. I want to make it my life's work to continue to educate myself, my peers, my colleagues, my family, on the importance of sustainability and a viable environment. And how do I believe that will be achieved? Through the power of empathy, relationships, Indigenous education and other ways of knowing, from dismantling colonizing views and hegemonic structures

Through ecofeminism.

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Appendix A: Methow Conservancy First Tuesday Talk

Methow Conservancy First Tuesday Talk

Climate Change Indicator Species of the Methow Valley

This talk was presented and hosted by the Methow Conservancy, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to land and habitat conservation, place-based education, and supporting local agriculture. The first Tuesday of each month, a guest speaker is invited to give an hour long talk free and open to the public.

Introduction

1. Speaker introductions: Amy Fitkin (M.Ed. candidate of Environmental Education at Western Washington University) & Scott Fitkin (District Wildlife Biologist for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)
2. Land acknowledgement of the Methow and Okanogan people

Climate Change

Discuss and describe the impact of climate change through:

- ❏ Understanding the Anthropocene geological epoch
- ❏ The correlation between emissions and human inhabitation
- ❏ Come away with the knowledge that *climate change is a human issue*
- ❏ Understand and recognize that the Methow is a frontline community, and what that means in terms of feeling the effects of climate change

Differentiate climate change vulnerabilities by species, life histories, and biomes

- ❏ Focus on the high country as the most vulnerable biome

Highlight three local high country species that are impacted by climate change

- ❏ Pika (specialized generalist)
- ❏ Wolverine (generalized specialist)
- ❏ Lynx (true specialist)

Pika

Habitat Range

Ecology

Lifestyle

Physiology

Range contraction due to climate change

Prognosis

Wolverine

Habitat Range

Ecology

Physiology and adaptations

Relevant WDFW study

Competition

Diet

Prognosis

Future studies

Lynx

Habitat Range

Ecology

Physiology and adaptations

Relevant WDFW study

Wildfire impacts

Prognosis

Ethic of Care & Hope

Connecting people's emotional and physical response to learning about how local species are impacted by climate change

- ❏ Climate change is a human issue
- ❏ Ethic of care and ecofeminism
    - ❏ Use anecdotal reference to a local popular hike and vegetation restoration to understand what an ethic of care is
    - ❏ Encourage an ethic of care in day to day interactions with humans, more-than-humans, and the environment
    - ❏ Using an ecofeminist theory, dismantle the idea of human ownership over land, and encourage building relationships
- ❏ Hope as a narrative
    - ❏ Close with messages of hope and activism

Gratitudes and Closing Questions

Appendix B: The Bush School Field Trip

The Bush School Field Trip

Snow Adaptations: Snowshoe Hike

The primary campus for the Bush School is in Seattle, WA and their satellite campus resides in Mazama, WA. The purpose of the Mazama campus is to provide an experiential, place-based educational experience for the students ranging from elementary to high school age. Educational retreats at the Mazama campus range from 3 to 10 days for small and large groups of students.

Audience: Middle School retreat of 10 students

Location: Mazama, Washington: Methow Bush School Campus

Materials (per student)

- Backpack, Water, Snack, Extra layer, Coat, Snow Pants, Gloves, Hat, Snow boots, Sunscreen, Snowshoes

Activity Timeline

11:00 - 11:10: Ensuring all students have necessary gear and snowshoes are applied properly

11:10 - 11:15: Introduction of facilitatory, students and faculty; land acknowledgment

11:15 - 11:25: Snowshoe safety and awareness; plan outline for the day

11:25 - 11:35: Snow adaptations - What animals do you know that have snow adaptations? What adaptations do they have? How do snowshoes help us move through the snow?

11:35 - 12:00: Hike along trail; natural history lessons/observations/questions - focus on lynx/snowshoe hare relationship

12:00 - 12:45: Play Camouflage

12:45 - 1:00: Hike back to campus

Appendix C: DOPE Conference Abstract

Land, Body, Liberation: An Eco-Feminist Approach to Place-Based Learning

By Amy Fitkin

M. Ed of Environmental Education, Huxley College of the Environment

Western Washington University

Abstract

Social justice education is vital to the dismantling of white-settler colonial understandings of land and place, and it is crucial in implementing climate justice education. A multidisciplinary approach will increase student's efficacy in sustainability by enabling inquiry-based futures thinking. As a part of a larger project, over the next 3 months I will develop a suite of workshops to edify and empower educators from The Bush School as a model for work that can be done with educators across all fields. This will be achieved by recognizing the power and oppression enforced by patriarchal supremacy as it relates to the bodies of women, particularly Indigenous women. In this presentation I will demonstrate the use of eco-feminist theory to develop a backcountry survival skills course rooted in place-based learning. The pedagogical framework of which will include: (1) A historical analysis that interrupts the romanticizing of western colonization (2) Recognition of Indigenous ways of knowing (3) Connection to the local community as it pertains to time immemorial to present and (4) Establishment of empathetic relationships to humans, non-humans, and the lived environment. The curriculum presented illuminates the intersectionality of climate justice action, the overarching spheres of social justice, and the ways we are rooted in place.

Appendix D: Women's Group Lesson Plan

Women's Group Lesson Plan

Understanding Ecofeminism

The format of this lesson/discussion is for the speaker to initiate by lecturing on the points laid out below, while opening up to input from all voices at any point. Audience members are welcome to share their opinion, experiences or thoughts on any of the topics and tangential discussion is highly encouraged. Although the lesson plan is presented linearly, the discussion inherently becomes circular.

Objectives & Goals

1. Understand and interpret the definition of 'ecofeminism'
2. Expand and critically think about intersection ecofeminism and compare and contrast to 'white ecofeminism'.
3. Leave the evening with an action item

Location & Audience

- ❏ The home of a member of a local Women's Group in the Methow Valley, Washington. This group regularly meets to talk about books, a current issue, or invites a guest speaker.
- ❏ Setting: Casual and relaxed with food and beverages.
- ❏ Time frame: Casual - expected to run for approximately 2 hours.

Introduction

History & Background -

- ❑ Ecofeminism took hold in the 1970's in response to global industrialization, stresses of war, and environmental destruction.
- ❑ The term, ecofeminism, was coined in 1974 by Francoise d'Eaubonne, a french feminist and was further developed and adapted over the years by feminist activists.
- ❑ It combines and re examines the environmental and feminist movement - explores the oppression of women and the destruction of the environment. Women's liberation is intertwined with the liberation of the environment from human destruction.

Key Points

1. Value hierarchical thinking - using hierarchical and oppositional thinking reinforces the subjugation of both women and nature.
2. Oppositional dualisms (social and cultural binaries)
    a. Example: gender - the gender binary is a human construction, gender is in fact a spectrum.
    b. Apply this concept to the human/nature duality
3. Language around women and nature - compare the use of words like "reap, sow, rape, produce" for both entities. What language do we use to describe women that connect to nature in both positive and negative ways?

The primary goal of ecofeminism is to dismantle the hierarchical structures that uphold systematic oppression and destruction of the environment and marginalized people. In addition, ecofeminism is useful as a lens to understand how misogyny and patriarchal oppressive powers have shaped the lives of women and the use of land throughout history.

Gender inequalities and the structures built around them contribute to environmental impacts

Example: Agricultural Gender Gap

Women in agriculture are not given the same opportunities, resources and capital as men in the same field. The systematic oppression of women in this case, is reducing the potential output of food by about 5%, hurting local economies, the women themselves and by proxy, the environment. Giving women the same opportunities and resources as men would capitalize on the use of already cultivated land, reduce emissions by way of less deforestation, and combat food insecurity.

Ecofeminism's contributions to environmental ethics:

1. Challenges the male-gender bias wherever and whenever it occurs
2. Offers a corrective lens to oppressive male gender bias by self-consciously attempting to develop environmental analyses and positions that are not male-gender biased
3. Offers a transformative perspective in environmental ethics. Pushes feminism into the realm of the environment.

<u>Critiques</u>

- ❏ Ecofeminism is developed and practiced by white women in order to benefit white women.
- ❏ There is a lack of analysis regarding other forms of oppression such as: race, class, abled body-ness, and sexuality
- ❏ It is not intersectional
    - ❏ Often compared to environmental justice as the inferior activism

- ❑ Upholds white settler colonialism

- ❑ Essentializes women and the connection to “mother-nature”

Suggested Books

- Ecofeminism by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva
- Rape of the Wild - Andree Collard
- Ecofeminist Philosophy - Karen Warren
- White Fragility - Robin DiAngelo

Concluding Thoughts

- Indigenous education and ways of knowing - how does ecofeminism apply here?
- Critical animal studies - looks at the intersectionality of animal liberation and anarchism (how does hierarchy apply here?)
- Afrofeminism - a form of intersectional feminism that challenges and expands upon “traditional” ecofeminism

Appendix E: Mock Educational Workshop

Mock Education Workshop

Land, Body, Liberation: Dismantling Hierarchical Structures in our Education Systems

Workshop Objectives

This workshop is meant to open a discussion on how hierarchal oppressive structures have created power inequities between groups of people, non-human species, and the environment. These structures are upheld by historical and present racism, sexism, classism and ableism, empowered by patriarchal domination and philia for binaries.

In opening this dialogue, the goal is to combat existing binaries and broaden our understanding of how building empathetic relationships and connections between all groups of people, enables a more inclusive and equitable space.

This will be achieved by centering indigeneity and acknowledging the influence that settler colonialism has had in erasing groups of people from history, current conversations, and positions of power. As well as critiquing and evaluating how activism is employed effectively. Every attendee should leave having learned something new, developed further inquiries and equipped to make a positive change in their own actions.

Presenters will include a broad representation of identities and backgrounds in order to maximize the diversity in voices and experiences heard. Speakers will not be discriminated against due to race, age, class, ableism, or sexuality.

Workshop Format

Due to the changing educational climate from the persistent effects of COVID-19, this workshop will take place virtually. This not only enables a broader range of attendees but also eliminates the need for travel expenses and time that may not be available for many people.

Presentations and workshops will be organized into four overarching **themes**: (1) Education, (2) Environment, (3) Activism, and (4) Building Community. Within each of these themes there will be three different breakout sessions held simultaneously that attendees can access as they see fit, with the exception of Building Community. These sessions will host multiple speakers to provide a multidisciplinary context and experience for the attendees. The topics are open to interpretation and are flexible in structure for speakers. Within the theme of Building Community, all attendees will be asked to join simultaneously to engage in activities to curate a resource bank and connections outside the scope of the workshop.

<u>Themes</u>

(1) Education

- Anti-racist and anti-bias education
- Identity representation in the learning space
- Indigenous education: why it is necessary

(2) Environment

- Connecting to place through an ethic of care

- Women's health and how it relates to the environment
- Disproportionate environmental degradation in marginalized communities

(3) Activism

- Social media and its impacts on activism
- White saviorism
- Passive vs active activism (social media activism??)

(4) Building Community

- [Prior to workshop] Catalogue what type of representation you have in your classroom through textbooks, images, media, and engagement tools
    - Give space for resource recommendations and sharing
- Create a connected community beyond the scope of the workshop