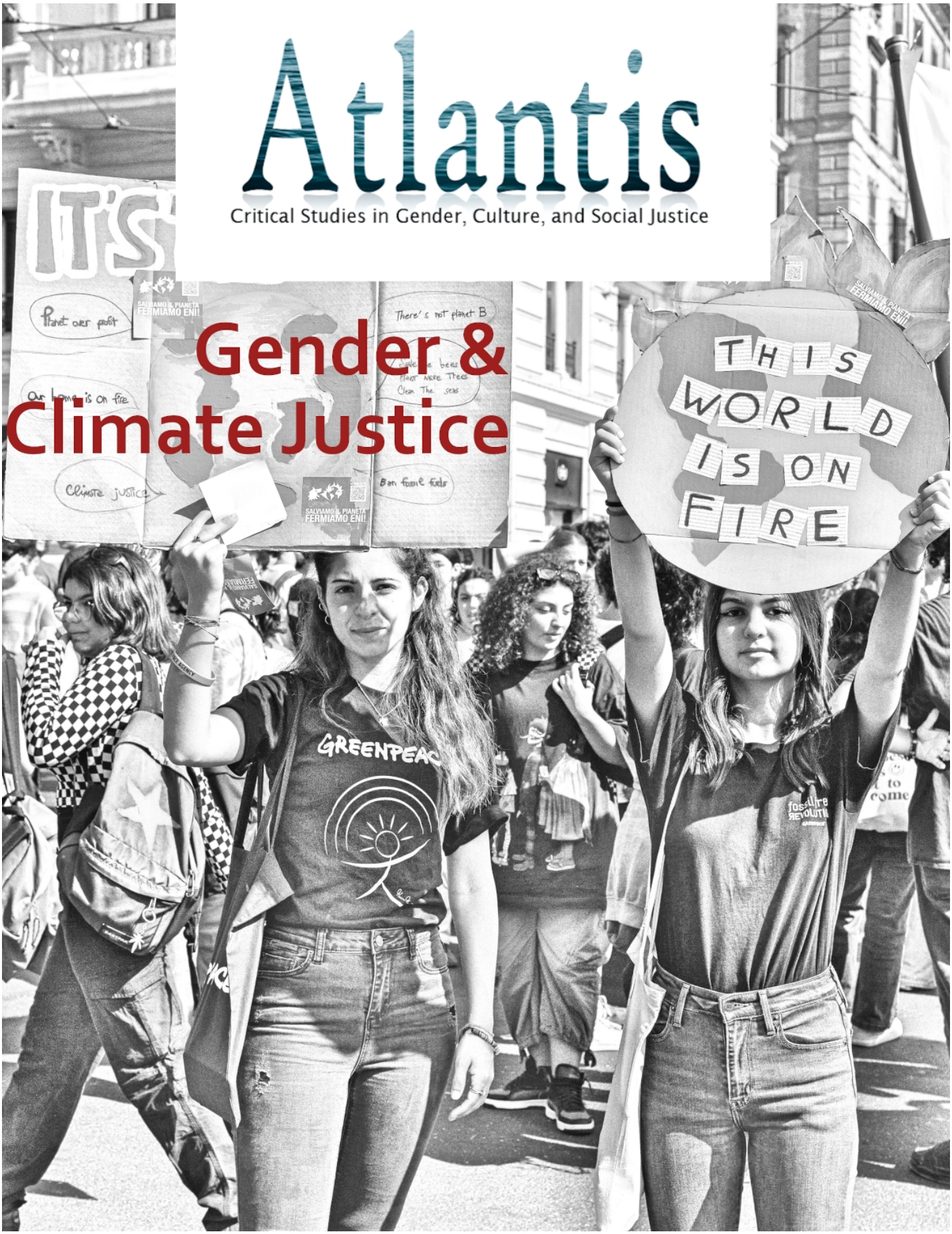
Atlantis
Critical Studies in Gender, Culture, and Social Justice
Gender & Climate Justice
THIS WORLD IS ON FIRE
Planet over profit
There's not planet B
Our home is on fire
Climate justice
Ban fossil fuels
SALVIAMO IL PIANETA FERMIAMO ENI!
GREENPEACE

Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice
Issue 46.2 (2025)
Special Issue: Gender and Climate Justice
Introduction

Gender and Climate Justice

by Lori Lee Oates and Sritama Chatterjee

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Sritama Chatterjee is a literary and cultural theorist of the Indian Ocean World. She works at the intersections of Postcolonial Studies, Indian Ocean Studies, Environmental Humanities, and Feminist Studies. Her dissertation project titled "Ordinary Environments and Aesthetics in Contemporary Indian Ocean Archipelagic Writing" has been awarded an Andrew Mellon Pre-Doctoral Fellowship from the graduate school for outstanding research and scholarly excellence.

There can be no climate justice without gender justice.

Hanna Soldal, COP 28 Press Statement

The global-level threat that is climate change is now impossible to ignore. The Oxford English Dictionary (2025) defines climate change as "an alteration in the regional or global climate; esp. the change in global climate patterns increasingly apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards, and linked largely with increased emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases caused by human activity." *The 2024 State of the Climate Report* maintains that "we are on the brink of an irreversible climate disaster. This is a global emergency beyond any doubt. Much of the very fabric of life on Earth is imperiled" (Ripple et al. 2024).

For some years now it has also become increasingly clear that the impacts of the climate crisis are not shared equally. Women and marginalized populations are disproportionately experiencing the worst impacts of climate change. This is exacerbated by the fact that in many regions of the world, women and girls bear most of the responsibility for securing food, water, and fuel (United Nations 2022). In 2022, *Al Jazeera* reported that households in Bangladesh that are headed by women allocate up to 30 percent of their income to protect themselves from climate change. The same article also discusses a study from the International Institute for Environment and Development which found that this figure was double the average of 15 percent, largely because women have lower incomes (*Al Jazeera* 2022). According to the Government of Canada's own climate plan, Canada is heating at twice the global average—three times as fast in Canada's North. Furthermore, Indigenous and Northern women are much more likely to be impacted by climate change (Native Women's Association of Canada 2025; Environment and Climate Change Canada 2022).

One of the important books reviewed in this special issue of *Atlantis*, *The End of This World* (2023), addresses the need for Indigenous sovereignty if the contemporary world is ever to achieve true climate justice. The book effectively makes the case that ending settler colonial capitalism is necessary for a just transition away from fossil fuels. Indigenous poets such as Jacinta Kerketta and Indigenous book publishing agencies such as Adivaani, based in India, are breaking new ground in environmental pedagogy. In a country that is disproportionately impacted by climate change, environmental pedagogy is, in and of itself an act of rebellion.

This special issue builds on decades of work by ecofeminists who have long paralleled oppression of nature with the oppression of women. This great body of work has included such scholars as Rachel Carson, Vandana Shiva, and Wangarî Maathai. Today, the links between masculinity and planetary destruction are ever more obvious as the climate emergency picks up speed. The simultaneous challenges of the expanding far right and climate change are, in part, rooted in a patriarchal desire to continue the white male supremacy that was foundational to the colonial project. Wheatherill (2024, 673) has effectively argued that "much of the reason for the lack of action on climate change is because vulnerability is discursively constructed as a racialized and feminized characteristic.… It is the feminized, racialized Other who is vulnerable, not the masculine, rational white male subject." The masculine interests that control our global commerce and governance seem to prefer that the planet remain under threat, rather than admitting that everyone is at risk, including the white men who control many institutions. Similarly, Daggett (2018) has made the case that there are links between climate denialism, racism, and misogyny. Developing the concept of "petro-masculinity," she considers how oil, gas, and coal are intertwined with masculine identity:

> Fossil fuels matter to new authoritarian movements in the West because of profits and consumer lifestyles, but also because privileged subjectivities are oil-soaked and coal-dusted. It is no coincidence that white, conservative American men—regardless of class—appear to be among the most vociferous climate deniers, as well as leading fossil fuel proponents in the West (27).

Political scientist Michael L. Ross gained a great deal of academic attention in 2008 when he argued that the lack of progress in gender equality in the Middle East was caused by oil, not Islam. Ross noted that fewer women worked outside the home and held positions in government in the petro-states he had studied. Ross attributed this to labour patterns which made it less likely that women would join the non-agricultural workforce in oil-producing jurisdictions. He followed this research with *The Oil Curse* (2012) in which he further explained the concept of "petroleum patriarchy." Ross's views were challenged by Pippa Norris in *Politics and Gender* (2009) on the basis that there are petroleum-patriarchy outliers such as Canada and Norway. However, scholars such as R.W. Connell (2020) increasingly argue that we must look more closely at context to truly understand how hegemonic masculinity manifests within specific jurisdictions and situations. This argument was brought home in the Canadian petro-province of Alberta in 2020 when a cartoon surfaced of then-teen climate activist Greta Thunberg being sexually assaulted. The design was printed on a sticker with an oil company logo and quickly went round the world in global media. While the oil sands may be often associated with petroleum patriarchy, Canada is generally seen as a global leader in gender equality. However, much more work remains to be done on petroleum patriarchy, including in oil states that are not ordinarily associated with gender inequality.

Situating racial and colonialist logics of reproduction is crucial for our conversation on climate justice and gender today. While discourses of over-population are anchored in eco-fascist movements that aim at controlling black and brown bodies, as well as trans bodies, globally, the work of gender studies and environmental humanities scholars now is to critique the eugenics and whiteness that permeates the over-population discourses. In 2019, scientists across the planet collaborated on an editorial in the journal *Bioscience* to warn of the "climate emergency" (Ripple et al. 2020). The authors clearly prescribed the policy directions needed to avoid the worst outcomes of global warming. Their most important recommendation for women and girls was that they should have access to education and family planning to curb population growth. Ironically, as the United States, a major global superpower, experiences more climate disasters, it has also shifted away from reproductive freedom. Donald Trump's simultaneous plans to "drill baby drill" and impose a national abortion ban suggest that climate deniers were never seriously interested in curbing populations as a climate solution.

There is a growing body of scholarship on global south and black feminist conceptions of reproductive justice. It includes scholars such as Jennifer C. Nash, Asha Nadkarni, and Sara Matthiesen who have investigated both the historical and cultural contexts in which eugenic and overpopulation discourses have thrived, disproportionately impacting black and brown women, and trans people of color. In the words of Margaret Atwood, author of the fictional story *The Handmaid's Tale*, "Who controls the women and babies has long been a keystone of every repressive regime on the planet" (Atwood 1985, 2). The same privileged nations that create most of the emissions per capita frequently point to the higher populations of India and China as the problem. To these climate denialists, North Americans have a right to drive cars, fly frequently, and own yachts, while families in India and China do not deserve coal-powered electricity (Oates 2021). As reported by Oxfam (2023): "In 2019, the super-rich 1% were responsible for 16% of global carbon emissions, which is the same as the emissions of the poorest 66% of humanity (5 billion people)" (viii). We also recognize the work of Farhana Sultana who discusses "the unbearable heaviness of climate coloniality," which argues for the need to address ongoing colonial violence that continues to be part of global governance, policy making, and research.

The articles, interviews, and book reviews in this special issue of *Atlantis* reveal what climate change can tell us about both the feminine and the masculine in the contemporary world. What these pieces have in common is a focus on what a *just* transition, rather than merely green transition, must look like. The authors included here ask us to look beyond ongoing corporatist solutions that are an extension of the colonial project. This scholarship also goes well beyond the usual Western media analysis of climate change to consider the need for decolonization.

Olstead and Burnett consider the "land ontology" of the Mi'kmaq First Nation. While acknowledging their role as settler scholars, they consider how "the coloniality of gender" (Lugones 2010, 742) underpins violence against the land. They effectively make the case that the normalization of violence against Indigenous women can help us understand the practices that underpin the destruction of earth.

An article from Hurlbert, Kairy, and Datta argues for "a shift away from top-down approaches to more participatory, community-led solutions." They argue for adopting the practice of listening to and collecting women's stories as a feminist decolonial methodology. The article makes two key contributions to envisioning global climate justice: (1) participatory methods are crucial to climate justice work in the academy and; (2) while the marine ecologies and vulnerability to sea-level rise are at the heart of dominant environmental scholarship on Bangladesh, it is crucial to center narratives on different kinds of water bodies.

MacDonald explores how feminist-queer environmental pedagogies, in different classroom spaces, could be a form of resistance. The article argues that reflections on the politics of place through personal histories can be a queer-feminist invitation to think about histories of land, labour, Indigenous dispossession, and gender dynamics. Furthermore, the author argues that a classroom that centers creative-writing practices and personal experiences can radically interrupt the corporate university.

As co-editors we were especially pleased that we were able to interview Camilia Dewan, author of *Misreading the Bengal Delta: Climate Change, Development & Livelihoods in Coastal Bangladesh* (2021). She effectively makes the case that we need to reconsider the concept of vulnerability in relation to the women of Bangladesh, who often have strong kinship with family members and extended families on which they depended. These contributions are then rounded out with book reviews of *The Intersectional Environmentalist*, *The End of this World*, and *Queer Ecofeminism*.

On a more personal note, we as co-editors, would like to thank all the contributors and reviewers for exposing these important issues of gender and climate justice. It is our desire that this work can help to take us, as scholars and activists, a few steps closer to developing climate solutions that are anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, anti-racist, and anti-patriarchal. We hope we have helped to demonstrate that these issues are at the very heart of the ongoing destruction of the Earth. We also want to take a moment to acknowledge our positionalities while editing this issue. Sritama is an international graduate student of colour and based in Pittsburgh while completing her PhD. This is also the ancestral lands of the Osage people. The special issue was largely completed at a time when the Trump government was com

ing down hard on immigrants of colour with ICE raids. Lori Lee, as a white settler, respectfully acknowledges that she works on a campus that is situated on the traditional territories of Indigenous groups, including the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq, Innu, and Inuit.

Onwards to achieving a just climate future.

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Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice
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Research

M'sɨt No'kmaq: Learning about Settler Relations and Responsibility in Trauma, Climate Change and Gender

by Riley Olstead and Kim Burnett

Abstract: This is a paper about the structural violence of settler colonialism in relation to the limits of the planet. As settler academics, we are involved in this violence. Here, we humbly seek guidance from the land ontology of the Mi'kmaq, reflected in the concept of m'sɨt No'kmaq (All our relations) to understand differently, ourselves, our responsibilities, and our place in 'a world on fire' (Rupa and Patel, 2021). Guided by m'sɨt No'kmaq we seek to learn how some of the concepts that we employ in our teaching and research—specifically "trauma" and "climate change" reproduce the core of settler colonialism—the disconnection and elimination of Indigenous peoples from the land (Wildcat et al., 2014, 1). Beyond a conceptual analysis, we also consider "the coloniality of gender" (Lugones 2010, 742) in how the materiality of epistemological violence manifests on the land through state violence directed at Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit peoples. Our learning throughout the paper shows us how colonial concepts obfuscate settlers' own relationship to land, which simultaneously undermines the possibility of a generative ethics of settler relationality with Indigenous peoples, and the earth.

Keywords: climate change; gender; Indigenous; settler; two-eyed seeing; trauma

Résumé : Cet article traite de la violence structurelle du colonialisme relativement aux limites de la planète. En tant qu'universitaires issus du colonialisme, nous sommes complices de cette violence. Dans ce contexte, nous nous appuyons humblement sur l'ontologie territoriale des Micmacs, incarnée par le concept de *m'sɨt No'kmaq* (toutes nos relations), pour repenser notre identité, nos responsabilités et notre place dans un « monde en feu » (Rupa et Patel 2021). Guidés par le concept de *m'sɨt No'kmaq*, nous cherchons à comprendre comment certains des concepts que nous employons dans notre enseignement et nos recherches – en particulier les « traumatismes » et les « changements climatiques » – perpétuent une des bases du colonialisme : l'éloignement des peuples autochtones de leur lien avec la terre et l'effacement de celui-ci (Wildcat et coll. 2014, 1). En plus d'une analyse conceptuelle, nous tenons compte de la notion de « colonialité du genre » (Lugones 2010, 742) pour comprendre comment la violence épistémologique prend forme concrètement sur le territoire, par la violence de l'État contre les femmes, les filles et les personnes bispirituelles autochtones. L'apprentissage que nous tirons tout au long de cet article montre comment les concepts coloniaux obscurcissent le rapport des colons à la terre, ce qui mine simultanément la possibilité d'une éthique relationnelle constructive entre colons et peuples autochtones, ainsi qu'avec la terre.

Mots clés : Autochtone; changements climatiques; genre; traumatisme; colon; approche à double perspective

Authors:

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Kim Burnett holds a PhD in Global Governance, with a specialization in Global Political Economy from the Uni

versity of Waterloo's Faculty of Environment, through the Balsillie School of International Affairs. Her research interests include social movement and civil society strategies toward ecological sustainability and social equity.

Introduction

This is a paper about the historic, structural, and ongoing violence of settler colonial systems in relation to the limits of the planet. As settler academics, we are involved in the machinery of this violence. Rather than look to our own western ontological and epistemic views, we humbly seek guidance here from the land ontology of the Mi'kmaq, reflected in the concept of m'sɨt No'kmaq (All our relations) in an effort to understand ourselves, our responsibilities, and our place in the world differently. With m'sɨt No'kmaq as our lens, we learn how some of the colonial concepts that we ordinarily employ in our teaching and research—specifically "trauma" and "climate change"—enact the core aim of settler colonialism: the disconnection and elimination of Indigenous peoples from their sources of knowledge and strength, which is the land (Wildcat et al. 2014, 1). We also come to see how such concepts obfuscate settlers' own relationship to land—naturalizing our presence by obscuring how settler lives have and continue to be made possible through a structure of violence, extraction and genocide. With m'sɨt No'kmaq as our framework, we then look to "the coloniality of gender" (Lugones 2010, 742) to acknowledge the materiality of epistemological violence as it manifests on the land, specifically through state violence directed at Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA (two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual) peoples. As we come to see, colonial concepts obscure understanding of the biopolitical entanglement of all of life, which undermines the possibility of settlers engaging in a generative ethics of relationality both with Indigenous peoples and the land. In other words, we come to learn how settler colonial erasures of land, enacted through our western concepts and normalized in our practices, underpin the destruction of earth.

As settler educators, we are newly learning about Indigenous knowledge, which guides us here in growing our understanding of the entanglements of trauma, climate change, and gendered violence. This work builds upon previous efforts of one of the authors (see Olstead and Chattopadhyay 2024) in order to continue to deepen our understanding about Mi'kmaw ontologies in support of decolonial teaching and learning about climate change. For us, this paper is part of an ongoing pedagogic commitment prompted in part by the release of The Truth and Reconciliation Report, which found that, in part with the residential school system, Canada has enacted a "race-based genocide of indigenous peoples" (TRC 2015a). The Report outlined 94 Calls to Action (TRC 2015b), which include pushing Canadian post-secondary institutions to ethically engage Indigenous communities and knowledge systems (TRC 2015a) to undertake efforts toward reconciliation, with the aim of correcting the historical use of education in Canadian colonial endeavours (Gaudry and Lorenz 2018, 221). Our motivations in this paper stem from the TRC but also beyond it: We also understand the necessity of undermining a settler future (Tuck and Yang 2012, 3), to be differently in the world should we ever wish to imagine a place for ourselves within generative networks of relational accountability to all of life. We have come to recognise and continue to learn about the necessity of unmaking the colonial world because even while it makes our lives, it does so by setting the earth on fire (Rupa and Patel 2021, 5).

Accordingly, this paper is about our learning to struggle with the deep and irresolvable contradictions of our own situatedness as settler academics. We feel ethically compelled to engage in a growing scholarship actively seeking to disrupt both the coloniality of the university and normative academic practices, yet our efforts continue to centre our settler expertise and worldviews in knowledge production. Informed by this irresolvable contradiction, we have written this paper not to decolonise our western concepts but, rather to pedagogically animate our own limited learning about the wisdom of an Indigenous worldview.

We are guided here by multiple voices and bodies of knowing—primarily Indigenous Elders, academics, land protectors, knowledge keepers, and through extensive listening of testimony at the TRC's (2015a) accounts of survivors. We make our lives on the territories of the Mi'kmaq Nation—a land that stretches from Unama'ki (Cape Breton Island)

down through the colonial border of what is currently called the United States and into Boston and, as such, we have been drawn to listen and learn specifically from Mi'kmaq peoples who have been in relationship with this land for time immemorial. We would like to especially express our deep gratitude for the teachings of local Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall who shared his guidance throughout the writing of this paper. Elder Marshall's teachings, as we are best able to understand them, are existentially profound and deeply significant knowledge at this time of polycrisis. Specifically, we centre the Mi'kmaw concept of m'sɨt No'kmaq (All our relations) throughout this paper, which offers us a glimpse of the world from a perspective of Mi'kmaw laws of mutual relationships, interconnectivity, sharing, harmony, and respect. As Elder Marshall explains, the concept reflects a Mi'kmaw worldview informed by the land—a knowing and a practice of relationality with all of life (Marshall et al. 2021) which helps us to remain "aware of where you are, of what your responsibilities are" (Marshall, Marshall and Iwama 2010, 176). As settlers, the core aims of our paper are "to become aware of ourselves, of what we are, and our responsibilities."

Despite the fact that we are focussing our learning on m'sɨt No'kmaq, we are aware of the heterogeneity of Indigenous voices and worldviews around the world. Indigenous concepts are not generalizable and cannot be fully understood outside of their own relational context (Hunt 2014, 29). Thus, it is important not only to acknowledge the particularity of m'sɨt No'kmaq as a specifically Mi'kmaw understanding, but also to signal that our own settler interpretation of this concept is partial at best, given we are not part of the relational context in which this concept "lives." What we have come to learn, however, is that m'sɨt No'kmaq is one instance of a more generally held Indigenous collectivist ethos expressing a vitally interconnected relational epistemology and ontology. The ontological principle of connectivity with all of life is pervasive among Indigenous worldviews on Turtle Island (North America). The Nuu-Chah-Nulth (Central and Northern Coastal BC) say Hishuk ish ts'awalk, "Everything is one and all are connected"; the Haida (Haida Gwaii) say Gina 'waadluxan gud ad kwaagid, "Everything depends on everything"; the Secwepmc (Shuswap, South-Central Interior) say Kweseltnews, "We are all family." Each of these concepts reflect specific land-based ontologies and knowledge systems of the interwoven and relational interconnectedness of all of life (Muir and Bohr 2014, 68).

Throughout this paper, the Mi'kmaw land ontology of m'sɨt No'kmaq helps us see from a structural and relational view that allows us to "notice ourselves"—that is, to see how settler life and futurity is normatively and invisibly reproduced through dominant conceptions of trauma and climate change, as well as the "coloniality of gender" (Lugones 2010, 742). Our learnings here bring us to greater awareness of the necessity for settler academics like us to take up the Calls to Action of the TRC (2015b) to ethically engage with Indigenous communities and knowledge systems (TRC 2015a). This engagement is to develop a critical awareness and responsibility for how we--even as we may claim to be doing the important work of reconciliation, climate, and gender justice—are instrumental to the reproduction of these crises.

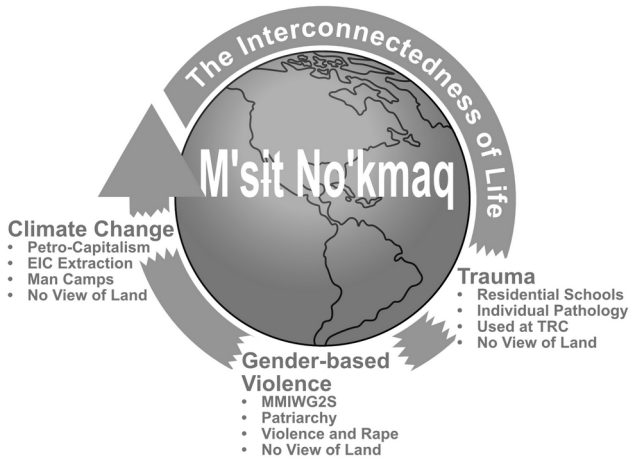

Figure 1. Created by Riley Olstead

Trauma

The TRC was mandated to "guide and inspire a process of truth and healing, leading toward reconciliation within Aboriginal families and between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal communities, churches, governments, and Canadians generally" (TRC 2015a, 23), focusing primarily on Residential Schools. Between 2010 and 2015, the TRC collected and witnessed testimony from over 6750 survivors of Canada's residential schools and hosted seven national events and 17 regional hearings where survivors and their families were invited to communicate the truth of their experiences (TRC 2015a, 1).

Employed as centers of internment, as many as 150,000 Indigenous children were sent to Canadian residential schools with most being taken by state agents from their families and communities and subsequently submitted to deep physical, emotional, psychological, and corporeal/sexual torture and terror (Nagy 2020, 219). Despite operating until 1997, it has only been recently—with the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Report of Canada (2015a)—that Residential Schools, along with the systemic murder and disappearance of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples (MMIWG), have been acknowledged as part of the specific eliminative machinery utilised by Canada to produce a "race-based genocide of Indigenous peoples" (TRC 2015a).

However, the founding apparatus of the TRC was widely criticized, with one of the most significantly voiced concerns being that the Commission was organised from the start around a western therapeutic framework, which isolated specific acts of abuse rather than locating these within the broader structures of settler colonial violence (Kirmayer, Simpson and Cargo 2003, S19). The TRC was thus seen not as forum for healing but as establishing "certain expectations of performing victimry for a settler public" (Robinson and Martin 2016, 44). Shaped by a colonial-therapeutic view of trauma, the TRC foreclosed understanding of the structural roots of intergenerational injury and loss of self-determination, which traced to the colonial rupture of Indigenous relationships with land.

The core of settler colonialism and the source of Indigenous trauma is the "specific, irreducible element" of "territoriality" (Wolfe, 2006, 388). Yet instead of highlighting how settler colonial violence is fundamentally about land, the TRC portrayed survivor trauma as a specifically "Indigenous pathology" (Million, 2014,103). Given this framing, settlers could look upon "narrations of horror" (Niezen 2017, 922) without ever having to make the connection between how their/our own bodies, lives, and futures were and continue to be made possible through Indigenous trauma. Unhinged from Indigenous relationships to land, the trauma concept deployed at the TRC was instead made useful to the settler colonial project, which could position Indigenous "healing" as a prerequisite to reconciliatory political action (Million 2014, 150). In such an equation, settlers can say "sorry" for historic abuses and loss but are not held responsible for ongoing colonialism (Whitlock 2015), nor for the return of what continues to be stolen/destroyed. Settlers' relationship to historic and ongoing trauma—that our lives are predicated on the disconnection of Indigenous bodies from the land we now occupy—was erased.

Indigenous scholars readily identified the strategic use of therapeutic conceptions of trauma at the TRC, describing this as "a complex move, where healing encompasses Canada's dialogue with Indigenous peoples, moving the focus from one of political self-determination to one where self-determination becomes intertwined with state-determined biopolitical programs for emotional and psychological self-care informed by trauma" (Million 2014, 6). Even while survivors resisted this by using the official space of the TRC to speak what was true (James, 2012), they did so "assert[ing] their own agency and empowerment over [what was, for many, regarded as a colonial] process" (Angel 2012, 209).

We offer here one account shared by Wab Kinew (2014) who, like so many other survivors, insisted on identifying how it was the theft and disconnection from land which was and is the structural trauma enacted through Canadian Residential Schools:

> We ought to teach that, yes, residential schools happened 150 years—more than 150,000 children. But we also need to teach that the origins of that system, the motivations of it, were to open up our lands for settlement. It's that the residential school project was tied, part and parcel, with the project of creating this country. And that's a much more challenging thing to teach. Because immediately questions are going to follow—like, well, what is my role in that legacy, right? (Kinew 2014, Testimony ABNE204)

Kinew (2014) centers land and brings a structural awareness through which questions of settler ethics and accountability are brought into view. In such ways, survivors' statements about land directly challenged the official colonial narratives fixated on Indigenous trauma as an individual psychological event (James 2012, 18), one tied to Residential Schools rather than a structure of violence that characterizes the ongoing relationship between the Canadian state and Indigenous nations.

We are witnessing today shifting political cultures. The very existence of the TRC (2015a) suggests a move away from an explicit politics of elimination toward a "politics of recognition" (Coulthard 2014, 3). However, this political shift is rhetorical in nature and conceals the enduring state fixation on appropriating Indigenous land and territory, which is at the root of Indigenous trauma (Coulthard 2014, 3). A politics of recognition seeks to "ensure continued access to Indigenous peoples' land and resources by producing neocolonial subjectivities that co-opt Indigenous people into becoming instruments of their own dispossession" (Coulthard, 2014, 156). At the TRC, colonial conceptions of trauma were elemental in legitimising a politics of recognition. This, on one hand, accomplished what appeared to be state acknowledgement of harm done by Residential Schools yet, at the same time, survivor testimony was stolen "from collective articulations of Indigenous ontologies and polities and turned into subsumptive forms of neoliberal individualism" (Coulthard, in Martineau 2016). So, while the TRC may have provided some space for survivors to name the profound wounds inflicted through the residential school system, officially the TRC remained a "colonial artifact" (Brown 1995, 101) operationalising an individualist-therapeutic trauma concept that refused accountability for the core objective of settler colonialism, which, always traces back to the rupture of Indigenous people from land (Wolfe 2006, 388).

Intervening in myopic colonial theories of trauma, Indigenous scholars such as Duran et al. (1995, 342) have proposed the soul wound concept, while Brave Heart-Jordan and DeBruyn (1995, 62) have offered the concept of Indigenous historic trauma (IHT). These concepts centre Indigenous relational "world making"—oneness—with land. They make clear that the structure of Indigenous trauma is settler colonialism (Million 2020) and thereby re-establish Indigenous ontological understandings that land is relationship (Coulthard in Walia 2015). This is why

> within settler colonialism, the most important concern is land/water/air/subterranean earth…. Land is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence. (Tuck and Yang 2012, 5)

For our own part, working toward relational accountability is also about coming to understand, as best as we are able, how connections to land are elemental to Indigenous life and being—a reality reflected in the many land ontologies, epistemologies, and cosmologies of Indigenous peoples developed through land-based relationality over time immemorial (Tuck and Yang 2012, 6). Concepts such as m'si-t No'kmaq express the coherence of Indigenous values, beliefs, customs, and protocols in ways "meant to maintain the relationships that hold creation together" (Little Bear 2000, 81). For Indigenous peoples, it is through relationship of land and people that all are brought into being in particular ways.

M'si-t No'kmaq alerts us that, settlers we have yet to appreciate how our own relationship to land is organised through structural trauma which, brings us into a particular kind of 'being'. Unlike settlers, "Indigenous peoples are those who have creation stories, not colonization stories, about how they came to be in a particular place—indeed how they came to be a place" (Tuck and Yang 2012, 6). Ongoing cycles of trauma in Indigenous communities include disproportionately high rates of suicide, homicide, substance use, accidental death, community/domestic violence, child abuse/neglect, and poverty, as well as other complex social problems (Marsh et al. 2015; Brave Heart 2000; Linklater

2014; Duran et al. 1998; Million 2014; Gone 2021). As we are learning about land-based relational ontologies, we are called to recognise our place in this violence and these injuries "perpetuated by the loss of land and the consequent loss of the stories and ceremonies that once connected indigenous peoples to the land" (Methot 2019, 22-23).

Climate

M'sɨt No'kmaq teaches us that the unique relationship of Indigenous peoples with land, acknowledged for instance by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP 2007), is also the unique relationship of land with Indigenous peoples. European settlers encountered land that was "profoundly and intentionally altered and managed by Indigenous communities" (Cronon 2003, 88) reflecting a deeply intimate, living, and co-constitutive connection between Indigenous peoples and the land. The central goal of settler colonialism was to destroy that connection, including Indigenous land-based knowledge, materiality, and practice, and in doing so produced ecological degradation of both lands and peoples (Cruz 2018, 8). And this was intentional: it "was always about changing the land, transforming the earth itself, including the creatures, the plants, the soil composition and the atmosphere. It was about moving and unearthing rocks and minerals. All of these acts were intimately tied to the project of erasure that is the imperative of settler colonialism" (Davis and Todd 2017, 770). Leanne Betasamosake Simpson identifies how, unlike many settlers concerned with a "sustainable future," "Indigenous peoples have witnessed continual ecosystem and species collapse since the early days of colonial occupation…. We should be thinking of climate change as part of a much longer series of ecological catastrophes caused by colonialism and accumulation-based society" (in Harris 2019, np).

We, the authors, are learning that land-based ontological concepts such as m'sɨt No'kmaq understand "that everything in the natural world stems from one Mother; our Mother Earth" (Marshall 2023). For us settlers, this knowledge of interconnectivity importantly awakens us to witness our own situatedness in both Indigenous trauma and trauma of the earth, or what we call climate change. This understanding is significant, as it reinforces for us how the devastating contradictions of the colonial structures that make our lives are also "a campaign to break the vital loops that constitute life on earth" (Whyte 2017, 153).

As the authors of this paper, we are reflecting as well on how our settler education systems are integral to the colonial project; "noticing ourselves" in conceptions of trauma and climate change shows us how settler colonialism embeds and reproduces itself, and us, through our participation in naturalising colonial concepts and ontologies. Obscured in such concepts is the historic epistemic violence that "shift[ed] relations to land, from the conception of usufruct land use held by many Indigenous communities to the recasting of land as private property by settlers (Cronon 2003, 54). What we are being shown in our consideration here is how Indigenous trauma and climate destruction are co-constructed through our own use of concepts that reify divisions and disconnections in the web of life. Actively working toward relational accountability requires a hyper-reflexive practice in which settlers come to "see ourselves," and therefore our interests, as we recirculate normative concepts in our teaching and thinking.

Cherokee Elder Corntassel has said: "One of our biggest enemies is compartmentalization, as shape-shifting colonial entities attempt to sever our relationship to the natural world and define the terrain of struggle" (in Smith 2013, np). For instance, the colonial language of "climate change," or "the environmental crisis" is discursively compartmentalized, much like the use of "trauma" as it was deployed at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). The most common settler approach to climate change reflects this understanding: most settler environmentalists regard ecological restoration as for its own sake (even while in some cases "partnering" with Indigenous peoples), neither recognizing nor acting in ways attendant to the vital interbeing of Indigenous lands and bodies and the historic and ongoing assault on that relationality, occasioned by settler bodies. Through our learning, it is increasingly apparent to us that our western ontologies are functionally dissociative and work against our understanding of how settler colonial traumatization is at the root of climate destruction (Cruz 2018, 40). Because our worldview does not recognize land at the center of life, settlers like us do not generally understand that the violence of the residential school system is part of the same structure of elimination also producing biodiversity loss, greenhouse gas emissions, and sea-level rise.

Guided as we are here by m'sɨt No'kmaq, we have been offered the possibility to interrupt our epistemic habits, to see how climate change and the destruction of the land is "a colonial manifestation and a direct attack on Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous nationhood" (L. Simpson 2004, 377).

The Coloniality of Gender

So far, we have looked at how colonial concepts like "trauma" and "climate change" articulate a worldview in conflict with life and land. We have shown how colonial epistemologies are reductionist, siloed, individualising, and myopic, and therefore unable to recognise vital relational networks among humans and the more-than-human world. However, we are not only learning about the conceptual realm but also about how colonial concepts and views of the world are animated through a materiality of relations. It is that materiality to which we now turn as "by far the largest attack on Indigenous Knowledge systems right now is land dispossession, and the people that are actively protecting Nishnaabewin are not those at academic conferences advocating for its use in research and course work but those that are currently putting their bodies on the land" (L. Simpson 2014, 21).

Maria Lugones offers the concept of "the coloniality of gender" to describe how the modern/colonial gender system is one of the central axes of colonial oppression organising sexual access, authority, labour, control of knowledge, and intersubjectivity (2010, 744). Alongside m'sɨt No'kmaq, which reminds us of our interrelatedness and responsibilities to the rest of life, we find the "coloniality of gender" helpful for making sense of how Indigenous relationality is being attacked on the land--largely through confrontations between Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples and settler men who often act as agents of the state or industry. As we shall discuss more fully below, it is disproportionately Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples who are involved in generative resistance, resilience, and creative action, asserting continued Indigenous presence and vitality on the land (Vizenor 1999, 11). In doing so, they protect the land and water from petro-colonial theft and climate destruction. It is also the case that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples are most at risk of violence, criminalisation, harassment, disappearance, and death (Altamirano-Jiménez 2021, 215). As Pam Palmater, a Mi'kmaw lawyer and scholar explains, "The safety and health of women's bodies has always been tied to the land so closely. That's why the state has particularly targeted Indigenous women—to separate them from the land because it helps disintegrate their nations" (Palmater cited in Brake 2018, np).

Pre-invasion, the Mi'kmaq (like many Indigenous nations) were matriarchal and located women at the centre of m'sɨt No'kmaq—a circulating, relational, and cooperative social, political, and economic world. Unlike the patriarchal gender structures of the colonists, in Indigenous communities, respect and honour were afforded women and two-spirit peoples for their essential roles and contributions to Indigenous life and well-being (Lugones 2010, 744). Settler colonialism imported a binary gender system which was imposed on Indigenous peoples; Jesuit priests and settlers "steeped in patriarchy, complained about the lack of male control over women and set out to change that" (Fenton and Moore 1969, 182). Since invasion, the coloniality of gender (Lugones 2010, 422) has been a campaign of land theft accomplished specifically by attacking those bodies that "transmit the clan, and with that: family, responsibility, relatedness to territory" (A. Simpson 2016, 7). In other words, Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples are the most powerful confrontation to the structure of settler colonialism as they embody, practice, and reproduce sacred land-knowledge of relationality, responsibility, and connectivity such as conceptualised in the concept m'sɨt No'kmaq. Because of this, the state seeks the elimination of these bodies as they signify "land itself, of the dangerous possibility of reproducing Indian life and most dangerously, other political orders" (A. Simpson 2016,15). The historic reality is that it has always been the ambition of the Canadian state to "seek the death and so called 'disappearance' of Indigenous women in order to secure its sovereignty" (A. Simpson 2016, 1).

Most notably, we highlight the coloniality of gender (Lugones 2019, 422) as it occurs in relation to the Extraction Industrial Complex (EIC). The EIC is a network of international corporate and industrial entities cooperating in various significant ways with settler and colonial states in the diversion of public resources and other social, financial, and political interests, all to promote petro-colonial state institutions and activities. This includes such things as the police repression of Indigenous land protectors, the manufacture of pro-corporate media ideology, and the establish

ment of extraction infrastructure, most often on the unceded lands and territories of Indigenous nations. Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples are most impacted by the EIC in explicitly violent ways, particularly through the establishment of man camps (Martin et al. 2019, 3). Despite this, Indigenous peoples, and especially women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples have maintained the knowledge and practice reflected in such concepts as m'sɨt No'kmaq—knowledge and practice of their vital connections to their lands, languages, and cultures. This knowledge is critical to ongoing resistance to colonization, the patriarchy, and climate destruction.

As they embody and reproduce the knowledge/materiality of land, women play a key role its defense. Despite this absolutely vital work, there is a profound absence of studies reflecting on the gendered and racialized impacts of resource extraction. In the face of this "invisibilisation," Indigenous women from Canada, Latin America, and the Philippines have themselves gathered data showing an alarming increase in violence against Indigenous bodies when resource extraction projects are established (Kairos Executive Summary, 2014, 3). These data are reinforced by findings from a 2019 study (Martin et al. 2019) on the Bakken oil-producing region of Montana and North Dakota, where reports state that incidence of aggravated assault has increased 70% alongside the rapid rise of oil workers to the region. Tellingly, violent victimization in areas surrounding the Bakken counties fell by 8% during the same period (Martin et al. 2019, 5). Amnesty International has likewise confirmed that "the presence of a very large, young, mostly male transient workforce adds to [the] risk [faced by Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples], because young men are statistically more likely to be perpetrators of violent crime" (2016, 4).

In Wet'suwet'en territory, in what is currently called British Columbia, the Unist'ot'en clan matriarchs and land defenders explain that man camps are "temporary housing facilities for up to thousands of mostly non-Indigenous male workers brought into different Indigenous communities for industrial work" and that these "create the social conditions for an increase of violence against Indigenous women and children" (Unist'ot'en, n.d.). The Unist'ot'en (C'ihlts'ehkhyu / Big Frog Clan) are the original peoples distinct to the lands of the Wet'suwet'en. The Unist'ot'en have built a resistance camp, blocking seven proposed pipelines from a Tar Sands gigaproject and LNG fracturing projects. This extraordinary resistance to industry has been led by the matriarchs and women of the clan who have persistently made links between industrial extraction and violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples. In a blog post on the Unist'ot'en website, they magnify the relationship between climate change, industrial extraction, Indigenous sovereignty, and gender violence in their demand to "end the rape of our territories" (Unistot'en, n.d.). Through this statement, the Unist'ot'en help the authors of this paper, recognise how the coloniality of gender (Lugones 2010, 744) seeks to undermine Indigenous self-determination through the elimination of women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples from the land, which is directly tied to accelerating climate change (Million 2014).

In Canada, the intersection between destruction of the earth and colonial gender violence is evidenced further in data on missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA peoples. The MMIWG Inquiry Report found there is "substantial evidence" that natural resource projects increase violence against Indigenous women, children, and 2SLGBTQQIA individuals and that "work camps, or 'man camps,' associated with the resource extraction industry are implicated in higher rates of violence against Indigenous women at the camps and in the neighbouring communities" (Reclaiming Power 2019, 584). The Report explains further that "increased crime levels, including drug and alcohol-related offences, sexual offences, and domestic and 'gang' violence, is linked to 'boom town' and other resource development contexts" (Reclaiming Power 2019, 586). Citing Statistics Canada, Tasker (2019, np) reports that Indigenous women make up 25% of all national female homicide victims and are 16 times more likely to be slain or to disappear than white women.

While some data exposing the coloniality of gender (Lugones, 2010, 422) is being made available, the epistemic siloes of colonial thinking maintain the common perception that the activities and operation of the EIC—even when acknowledged as "bad for the environment"—are unrelated to the ongoing violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Indigenous women themselves have been left to draw attention to the impact of the EIC through such efforts as the REDress Project. The REDress Project is an installation art project launched by artist Jaime Black in response to the staggering number of murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls, and

2SLGBTQQIA peoples across what is currently called Canada and the United States (Black, n.d.). Despite the findings of the MMIWG Report (Reclaiming Power 2019) that clearly outline the systemic harassment, intimidation, and violence faced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, the Canadian state implicitly condones this violence through an informal policy of non-intervention (Martin et al. 2019; Amnesty 2016; Kairos Executive Summary 2014). As Coulthard reminds us, the liberal recognition paradigm in Canada has replaced the more overtly genocidal framework that preceded it; however, the eliminative aims of the state remain (2014, 3). In terms of Canada's non-intervention into the violence associated with the EIC, Audra Simpson argues that "states do not always have to kill, its citizens can do that for it" (2016, 5).

The coloniality of gender (Lugones, 2010) is visible in the rise of extractive populism—an inflammatory, rhetorical "strategy through which 'the people' and the petro-industrial complex are sutured together in symbolic nationalization" (Gunster 2019, 14). This "suturing" is supported by well-funded media campaigns through which the EIC is routinely constituted as a moral expression of white, working class, settler-patriarchal petro-nationhood. For instance, "Keep Canada Working" was an advertising campaign of the Alberta government, for which millions of dollars was spent over the past two decades to convince Albertans of their shared interests with the EIC (Gunster 2019, 14). Indeed, the EIC labour force is tasked with operating and maintaining, as well as guarding, promoting, and fortifying the petro-colonial infrastructure, which is "an unmarked center of whiteness, and definitely heteropatriarchal" (A. Simpson 2016, 3).

The growth and operation of the EIC is discursively organised to appeal to workers as their "lifeblood," particularly in ways that draw out historical connections to settler patriarchal masculinity—a particular version of colonial-manhood that has developed alongside global capitalist expansion, processes of colonization, policing, and frontier warfare. The EIC version of manhood is uniquely situated to extract from land and women on behalf of and with the armed protection of the state and funding from industry. We wonder whether other working class versions of masculinity receive this kind of direct/explicit government support or if it is exclusive to frontier masculinity?

Pointing out the role of settler men in the coloniality of gender (Lugones 2010) is not about ignoring or excusing women from involvement in settler colonialism, climate destruction, or even the patriarchal violence of MMIWG. Even without direct participation in the EIC, women's lives are structurally aligned with the extractive interests of colonial capitalism, even while the benefits of the patriarchy are in other ways withheld from them. Such is the understanding that m'sɨt No'kmaq offers, that reveals that all settlers-–regardless of the intersections of our identities or our ethical claims and efforts otherwise—have a relationality to the land and her people that is organised through a structure of elimination. We believe that for settlers like us, generating relational accountability with Indigenous peoples will not be possible unless we actively recognise our own investments as well as our direct involvement in reproducing colonial structures. By centring a Mi'kmaq land based ontological concept in our learning, we have sought to practice reflexivity, to ask questions about how colonial concepts like trauma and climate change—terms we and so many others like us use uncritically in the academic context—do the work of reproducing settler futurity. As we are coming to see, these concepts conceal the ways that our lives are made possible through harm done to Indigenous bodies and the land. It may be very challenging but m'sɨt No'kmaq has helped us disrupt, albeit only momentarily, our colonial ways of thinking to see how our settler interests are resourced through MMIWG and climate destruction.

Conclusion

Even though we are sure to have made mistakes in our novice understanding here, our learning about the wisdom of m'sɨt No'kmaq has been invaluable in helping us to glimpse beyond our limited settler categories and concepts, to begin to see our place in the world in a new and relational way. This is, for us, a starting place for the ongoing hyper-reflexivity necessary, should anything that comes close to looking like relational accountability to Indigenous peoples and lands be possible. Of many of the important lessons we have been offered through m'sɨt No'kmaq is that settler ontologies and epistemologies trouble our ability to recognise ourselves in relation to what has been done for, and to, the land and this undermines our own ability to ethically respond to the root of crisis. As we have sought to show, co

lonial concepts dangerously limit both settler self-recognition and accountability for our roles in the ongoing history of trauma and genocide of Indigenous peoples, which is at the same time the existential crisis of climate destruction. We have looked, for instance, at how colonial gender structures mobilize violence against the very bodies that seek to protect both the knowledge of and relationships with land, which are central to life on this planet. Uncritical reproduction of these seemingly innocuous concepts forecloses settler efforts around climate action, gender justice, and decolonisation. Indigenous worldviews that understand "we are all one" awaken us urgently to a need to displace the centrality of colonial registers and structures upholding our settler futurity (Tuck and Yang 2012), as all of life depends upon it.

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Feminist Community-led Perspectives on Disaster Adaptations: Stories from Wetland Local Women Communities in Bangladesh

by Margot Hurlbert, Barsha Kairy, Ranjan Datta

Abstract: This paper offers an in-depth exploration of the critical role played by women within vulnerable wetland communities in Bangladesh, particularly in the context of disaster adaptations. As climate change-induced disasters become increasingly prevalent, it is essential to recognize women's agency, knowledge, and resilience within these communities, and between minority Hindu and majority Muslim women. Employing a feminist framework, this research delves into the nuanced dynamics of gender, faith, and community-based disaster adaptation strategies. Through narratives and stories from local women, the paper unveils the innovative and adaptive approaches often overlooked in conventional disaster management practices, the heightened agency of majority Muslim women and their "witnessing" of the suffering of the minority Hindu women. It highlights the intersectionality of gender, faith, poverty, and environmental vulnerability, shedding light on the unique challenges faced by women in wetland areas, especially vulnerable Indigenous and Hindu minority women. The findings of this paper underscore the need for more inclusive, gender-responsive disaster policies and programs, and call for a shift away from top-down approaches to more participatory, community-led solutions. By amplifying the voices and experiences of local women in Bangladesh, this paper contributes to a broader discourse on sustainable disaster adaptation strategies, ultimately striving for greater equity and resilience in the face of climate-related challenges.

Keywords: conventional disaster management; resilience; sustainable disaster adaptation; women-led disaster adaptation

Résumé : Cet article explore l'importance du rôle des femmes dans les communautés vulnérables des zones humides du Bangladesh, surtout en ce qui concerne l'adaptation aux catastrophes. Alors que les catastrophes liées aux changements climatiques se multiplient, il est essentiel de valoriser le rôle, le savoir et la résilience des femmes dans ces communautés, y compris entre les femmes hindoues minoritaires et les femmes musulmanes majoritaires. En adoptant un cadre féministe, cette recherche étudie les dynamiques nuancées du genre, de la foi et des stratégies d'adaptation communautaire face aux catastrophes. Grâce aux récits et aux histoires de femmes locales, cet article révèle les approches novatrices et adaptatives qui sont souvent négligées dans les méthodes conventionnelles de gestion des catastrophes, le rôle prépondérant des femmes musulmanes majoritaires et leur « témoignage » de la souffrance des femmes hindoues minoritaires. Il souligne l'intersectionnalité du genre, de la foi, de la pauvreté et de la vulnérabilité environnementale, mettant en lumière les défis uniques que rencontrent les femmes vivant dans les zones humides. Les conclusions de cet article soulignent la nécessité de mettre en place des politiques et des programmes de gestion des catastrophes plus inclusifs et sexospécifiques. Elles appellent à l'abandon des approches descendantes au profit de solutions plus participatives et communautaires. En donnant la parole aux femmes locales au Bangladesh et en relatant leurs expériences, cet article enrichit le débat sur les stratégies d'adaptation durable aux catastrophes, qui ont pour objectif de renforcer l'équité et la résilience face aux enjeux climatiques.

Mots clés : gestion conventionnelle des catastrophes; résilience; adaptation durable aux catastrophes; adaptation aux catastrophes menée par les femmes

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Introduction

This article is part of a broader project aimed at developing practices and policies for Bangladesh's vulnerable and Indigenous populations in Bangladesh. Research on feminist community-led perspectives on disaster adaptations in South Asian Indigenous and local land-based communities reveals notable gaps that warrant critical attention (Khalil et al. 2020; Parekh 2023; Rodríguez et al. 2007). There is a deficiency in acknowledging and analyzing the intricate intersections of religions, gender, class, caste, and ethnicity within these communities. Studies have documented enduring colonial and patriarchal power structures that increase vulnerability, especially in times of disaster in Bangladesh (Dewan 2021; Dewan and Nustad 2023; Dewan 2023; Paprocki and Cons 2014). Existing studies often lack a nuanced understanding of how these intersecting identities shape the vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities of Indigenous women. Moreover, the limited representation of local knowledge systems in disaster literature remains a significant gap.

The power dynamics within local wetland communities in Bangladesh, particularly concerning western structures (i.e., mostly outsider-led), have been insufficiently examined in the context of disaster adaptations (Haque 2016; Newaz and Rahaman 2019). There is a need to investigate how power relations influence decision-making processes and thereby impact women's agency in shaping and implementing adaptive strategies. Additionally, the voices and experiences of local women are often marginalized or silenced in the discourse on disaster adaptations (Choudhury, Haque, and Habib 2018; Khan and Haque 2010). Research should strive to amplify these voices, shedding light on the nuanced perspectives of Indigenous women regarding vulnerabilities, adaptive capacities, and the complex interplay of their intersecting identities. Addressing these research gaps is crucial for fostering more inclusive and effective community-led strategies that account for the diverse experiences and needs of local wetland women in the face of disasters in South Asia.

The Oxford English Dictionary online (2025) defines Indigenous as "born or originating in a particular place; *spec.* (now often with capital initial) designating a people or group inhabiting a place before the arrival of (European) settlers or colonizers. Also, with *to* introducing the place in question." In our research, many participants emphasized

that Indigeneity is deeply rooted in land-based spirituality, cultural education, and everyday practices. For many, the land is not merely a physical space but is regarded as sacred understood as a living entity, a family member, or an extension of the body. Indigeneity, as expressed by participants of this research, is centered on responsible and reciprocal relationships with the land, shaped through spiritual, cultural, and embodied connections. In recognition of this diversity and relational understanding, we intentionally chose not to impose a rigid definition of Indigeneity. Instead, we approached it as a fluid and hybrid concept, shaped by localized meanings, practices, and histories.

Severe climate events such as floods, droughts, hurricanes, and coastal storm surges pose a worldwide danger to both human lives and livelihoods due to their significant impact on crops, businesses, and critical infrastructure, significantly affecting local women communities in wetland areas, in particular in Bangladesh (Bamforth 2017).Within marginalized[1] households in wetland areas, challenges such as malnutrition and gender discrimination arise due to limitations on women's employment and temporary migration of their husbands (Kamal et al. 2018; Sharmin and Islam 2013). This vulnerability is rooted in women's roles as primary resource users and their reliance on natural resources for livelihoods, making them particularly susceptible to hazardous situations (Enarson and Chakrabarti 2009; Sharmin and Islam 2013). Minority women and their children can be adversely affected by social and cultural norms that favour individualistic resilience strategies over communal ones (Datta, Kairy and Hurlbert 2024), hindering organizations' ability to alleviate the suffering caused by climate change-induced natural disasters (Crosweller and Tschakert 2020). Building a sustainable community necessitates diverse perspectives and local government support influenced by political orientation, mandates, and civic leaders. Digital tools, media, and networks enhance collaboration among community members, particularly during crises and emergencies (Wahid et al. 2017).

In the wetland areas of Bangladesh, we focus on feminist community-led approaches to mitigate the effects of climate change, with special attention to the women most affected. This project is part of a broader study aimed at developing practices and policies for Bangladesh's vulnerable and Indigenous populations. We draw upon the experiences and insights of women in wetlands, delving into their understanding of climate change, the challenges they face, and their adaptation strategies. Our research focused on Indigenous and land-based community perspectives on climate change and adaptation, with particular attention to flooding as a key impact. The community (described below) experienced a severe flood in August 2022, which significantly shaped their concerns and priorities. As a result, much of the community's adaptation efforts have centered on flood-related resilience.

The objectives of this paper are threefold: 1) to explore the distinct impacts of floods in Bangladesh's wetlands from the perspective of women, 2) to investigate women's participation during floods, and 3) to compile solutions proposed by the community's women. To accomplish these objectives, we describe our positionality and theoretical framework, followed by details about our methodology and theoretical framework. We then present the outcomes of our data analysis, organized into themes and sub-themes. Finally, we address the issues raised by the women storytellers and offer recommendations based on our findings. Ultimately, we reflect on lessons learned and discuss potential areas for improvement.

Researcher Positionality

The role of researcher positionality is of utmost importance in Indigenous research, as it significantly impacts the research process and raises ethical considerations (Datta 2018; Wilson 2008). It is essential to recognize that Indigenous research frequently delves into sensitive subjects and engages with marginalized communities. Researcher positionality encompasses their cultural background, personal experiences, and social identity, all of which can profoundly influence their interactions with Indigenous participants and their comprehension of the issues at hand. Acknowledging and understanding one's positionality is crucial for approaching research with humility and respect, reducing the risk of inadvertently perpetuating harmful stereotypes or colonial attitudes. It empowers researchers to establish trust within Indigenous communities, nurture meaningful collaborations, and formulate research questions that are culturally sensitive and aligned with Indigenous worldviews.

Margot Hurlbert: I am a climate change adaptation and governance researcher in Canada with experience working with Indigenous peoples and communities in Canada, South America, and South Asia. My goals are to build the adaptive capacity of people, especially women, and their community, address climate change, and advance climate justice.

Barsha Kairy: I am a member of an Indigenous community in Bangladesh and belong to one of the minority communities in the country. My involvement in this research stems from a desire to give voice to the unheard. With enthusiasm, I listen to the stories and aim to become a storyteller on behalf of vulnerable communities to the wider world. My affinity with other communities motivates me to collaborate with them.

Ranjan Datta: I am a land-based and decolonial community-based researcher with 17 years of experience in conducting research with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Canada and South Asia. As a minority scholar, I have developed a strong understanding of decolonial and anti-racist research frameworks, and my current research program is supported by a network of Indigenous, visible minority immigrants, refugees, and Black communities, scholars, students, practitioners, and professionals. Research is a lifelong commitment for me.

Our positionality is pivotal to addressing historical power imbalances in Indigenous research, where Indigenous communities have often been treated as subjects of research rather than active participants or collaborators. Through a critical examination of our positionality, we have redefined our research agenda to ensure that it aligns with the community's needs and benefits. Our positionality is fundamental for nurturing ethical, respectful, and empowering research relationships with Indigenous communities and advancing knowledge that genuinely serves their interests and well-being.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The decolonial feminist research framework holds a critical and transformative role in the context of disaster research within the wetlands of Bangladesh (Shefer and Bozalek 2022; Wijsman and Feagan 2019; Väyrynen et al. 2021). This region has rich cultural diversity and historical legacy and has experienced disproportionate impact of disasters, which often exacerbate pre-existing inequalities (Väyrynen et al., 2021). Decolonial feminist research acknowledges the interconnectedness of gender, power, and culture in the disaster discourse, recognizing that women, particularly in marginalized communities, bear a significant burden during disasters (Chapola 2022). By centering the experiences and voices of women in disaster-affected areas, this framework seeks to unveil the gendered vulnerabilities and resilience strategies that are often obscured in traditional research (Chapola 2022). Decolonial feminist research also highlights the critical importance of respecting and empowering local communities in the process, particularly those who have been historically marginalized and silenced. Decolonial feminist research thus provides a comprehensive framework that challenges existing power dynamics and colonial legacies, making it a valuable approach to understanding and addressing disasters in wetland Bangladesh.

We employ the methodology of qualitative research which is ideal for considering environmental justice for those who live at the margins. Furthermore, doing so through the decolonial feminist lens is indispensable for disaster research in the wetlands of Bangladesh because it recognizes the complex web of structural injustices and historical oppressions that shape the disaster landscape (Datta 2024; Wijsman and Feagan 2019). This methodology goes beyond traditional research paradigms by scrutinizing not only the immediate impacts of disasters but also their underlying causes, which are often rooted in social, economic, and political hierarchies (Datta 2024). It exposes the inadequacies of top-down, technocratic solutions and emphasizes the need for community-driven, context-specific strategies that account for the intersectionality of identities and experiences. By engaging in dialogue with local communities, particularly Indigenous and minority groups, and addressing their unique vulnerabilities and needs, decolonial feminist research fosters a more inclusive, ethical, and equitable approach to disaster management by embracing participation and giving voice to the women in the community. Ultimately, this methodology aims to redress historical injustices,

challenge hegemonic narratives, and promote resilience, not just in the face of disasters but in the ongoing struggle for justice and equity in wetland Bangladesh.

In line with the decolonial feminist research framework, we embraced deep listening and storytelling as our powerful and meaningful research approaches. Formally, Bangladesh does not acknowledge Indigenous people and has not adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples. This has prevented a wholesome Bangladesh practice for identifying as a member of an Indigenous group. In our research we interviewed four people of whom two self-identified as belonging to land-based minority Indigenous groups, and three of whom were living and engaging in Hindu land-based practices. In August 2023, we engaged in conversations with these women, exploring in semi-structured interviews their experience in relation to the most recent flood, and valuing their narratives. Approximately 1% of Bangladesh's population is Indigenous and 7.96% are Hindu (BBS 2022). Our article concerns mostly, but not exclusively, findings from three interviews conducted in the watershed described below and its emergency response to a 2022 flood. Other interviewees provided insight into disaster response in Bangladesh. Two interviewees identified as Muslim, another as engaging in Hindu land-based practices and identified as Hindu. We conducted a total of seven interviews.

Deep listening played a fundamental role in respecting and honouring the perspectives of the women from the wetlands. Given that Indigenous perspectives are intimately linked to the land, steeped in the language, and deeply rooted in the Nation of the people, storytelling served to reestablish a profound connection with land-based wisdom (Datta 2018) and our interviewees participation in crafting solutions. As the interviews were conducted with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members present, participants from land-based minority communities were unable to openly share their experiences of oppression and discrimination in front of members of the majority group. In separate interviews with land-based minority participants, they disclosed powerful and deeply personal stories of marginalization. However, out of concern for their safety and based on their explicit request, we have chosen not to include these accounts in our findings. This decision reflects our ethical commitment to protecting the confidentiality, well-being, and self-determination of research participants. Our commitment extended to following traditional Indigenous rituals and ceremonies alongside conventional research methodologies.

In addition to qualitative research, using deep listening and Indigenous storytelling, we embraced reflective writing to delve more profoundly into our research findings and experiences. This practice allowed us the autonomy and freedom to engage in thoughtful reflection. Ultimately, it enabled us to distill and value our discoveries more effectively, enhancing the depth and quality of our research. We upheld strict adherence to ethical protocols, prioritizing the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents while demonstrating our respect and gratitude. Given the vulnerable status of the participants as members of a minority community, preserving their privacy was paramount. Moreover, we ensured that their participation was informed and entirely voluntary, underscoring our commitment to ethical research practices.

In our research we talked to women in the Jagannathpur Upazilla at Sunamgonj District as depicted in Figure 1 below.

Findings: Learning Reflections from the Women of Wetlands of Bangladesh

Bangladesh boasts a diverse array of ever-evolving wetland ecosystems, encompassing mangrove forests, natural lakes, freshwater marshes, reservoirs, oxbow lakes, beels (permanent freshwater depressions), haors (deep depressions in the northeast forming a vast inland sea during the monsoon), fishponds, tanks, estuarine waters, and extensive floodplains that are periodically submerged (Bird Life International, 2004). The country is home to several wetland regions. We conducted our research in the Kolkolia union of Jagannathpur upazila, situated in the Sunamganj district within the Sylhet division of Bangladesh. In Sunamganj district the ratio of Muslim is 88.16 % and Hindu community is 11.67 % of the total population (BBS 2022, p-37). Therefore, the majority is part of the Muslim community.

In our research, we engaged in multiple listening sessions, each focusing on different aspects of the recorded stories from the women of the wetland. We included women from both communities in our research. Our objective was to unravel the central themes and related topics discerned by our female co-researchers. After sharing and re-listening to the stories, we individually took time to reflect on our newfound insights, fostering a deeper understanding through introspection. Our research journey involved the ongoing process of listening and reflective learning, resulting in the development of main themes and sub-themes (see Figure 2). The primary themes encompassed the women's knowledge and perspectives, the impact of floods from the women's viewpoint, the roles women played during floods, and, finally, the solutions proposed by the women of the wetland.

Feminist Community-led Perspective of Disaster and Adaptation			
Women's Perspective on Disaster	Impact of the flood-Women point of view	Women's Role	Solutions

• Nature in the past • Climate Change	• Damage to Housing • Health • Food crisis	• How they participate • Barriers and what needed to be done	• Growing awareness of society • Role of the government • Role of the researchers

Figure 2: Main Themes and Sub-themes

Women's Perspectives on Nature, Disaster, and Climate Change

Within the wetlands, the women possess a profound understanding of nature. When asked about their perspectives on nature, one woman from the Muslim community, expressed, "We exist because of nature; it sustains us. While we endure the consequences of human activities impacting nature, we believe God created us and nature for the animal kingdom." Their awareness extends to the significance and various aspects of the natural world. This same woman, a primary-school teacher, shared her thoughts on disasters, stating, "I perceive it as the unusual behaviour of nature. We experience droughts, heavy rainfall, floods, and crop destruction." While they may not provide a precise definition of disasters, they recognize that nature occasionally behaves erratically, leading to destructive changes.

The women residing in the wetlands have observed a transformation in Bangladesh's climate over the past 20 to 30 years. They have acknowledged climate change, with one woman from the minority Hindu community remarking,

"Bangladesh used to have six seasons, but now we only experience two. I gauge climate change based on this transformation. The weather in Bangladesh has become highly unpredictable." Consequently, these wetland inhabitants believe that climate change is underway, leading to a considerable alteration in the local weather patterns. When inquired about the disparities in weather compared to the past, another woman from the community noted, "I believe the weather has indeed changed. Rain patterns have shifted, with heavy rainfall occurring at unexpected times. Winters now resemble what used to be a typical summer season, and the monsoon arrives either too early or too late, adversely affecting our crops." The women in the wetlands, from all the communities, possess a commendable level of knowledge about nature, disasters, and climate change, an asset for their community.

Women's Perspectives on Flood Disaster Impacts

In the wetlands, the people suffered greatly because of the flood, losing their houses, animals, and belongings. Also, their health was impacted, and they faced a food crisis during the massive flood. This section discusses the impact of the 2022 flood from the viewpoint of the women of the wetland.

Damage to Housing

In this wetland area, the flood in 2022 was of such immense magnitude that it forced people to abandon their homes. One woman from the minority Hindu community recounted her experience, saying, "My house was destroyed. My elder son attempted to repair it during the flood, but the water washed away the roofing. We lacked the means to restore it." The residents in this region are facing significant economic hardship, making it exceedingly challenging for them to repair their homes after the flood. Their houses hold immense value and are, in many cases, the only possessions they have. These homes carry great sentimental importance. When asked how people coped with living through the flood, another woman from the minority Hindu community explained, "Those fortunate enough to have relatives with sturdier, elevated buildings moved in with them." Relatives with more secure accommodations played a pivotal role in supporting the flood-affected individuals during these trying times. However, for those without well-off relatives, the hardships during the flood were severe, as they had nowhere to seek refuge, and the

rising waters swept away their belongings. Another woman from the minority Hindu community further noted, "Livestock were perishing, and herders faced a difficult choice between saving themselves or their animals. Essential documents and valuable possessions were also lost to the floodwaters." The general populace in the wetlands already grapples with economic challenges, and the loss of everything in the flood exacerbated their hardships, making life even more distressing. Losing their identity documents was akin to losing their very identity.

Health Impacts

For the women living in the wetlands, the flood struck suddenly and lasted for a period of three to four days. Its consequences were profound. The flood brought about substantial suffering, particularly in terms of health. A woman from the minority Hindu community emphasized, "Pregnant women bore the brunt, and it had a detrimental effect on their unborn children." During the flood, the transportation system broke down, hindering people's ability to reach hospitals. This lack of access to medical care was particularly detrimental to children and expectant mothers. Another woman from the minority Hindu community further explained, "In case of emergencies, people were unable to reach hospitals. During the last flood, the water level rose to such an extreme that even boats could not navigate."

The adverse effects of the flood were not limited to physical health; the mental well-being of the community was also deeply impacted. A woman from the Muslim community observed, "I witnessed people becoming despondent. Concerns about the safety of family members and relatives weighed heavily on their minds, aggravated by the non-functional mobile network. People experienced anxiety as they had lost everything in the flood." It is evident that the adverse mental health conditions had repercussions on their physical well-being.

Food Crisis

As per the accounts of the women living in the wetlands, they faced significant challenges in maintaining proper nutrition during the extensive flood. Typically, they would gather some dry food supplies to prepare for disasters, but these reserves became inaccessible during the flood. A woman from the Muslim community explained the situation, stating, "Most of the food they had collected was washed away during the flood." Consequently, they struggled to obtain adequate nourishment for an extended period, leading to malnutrition. While some individuals may have had access to food, they were still unable to consume it. Another woman from the Muslim community shared her experience, saying, "The flood swept away my daughter's cooking utensils, and we endured considerable hardship, unable to prepare and eat food." Initially, many people attempted to endure the flood within their homes, but as conditions became increasingly unbearable, they sought refuge in shelters. The woman recounted, "We eventually sought refuge in a shelter where we had access to some food." The shelter provided a source of sustenance during this challenging time.

Our research demonstrates that women's perspectives on flood disaster impacts, especially concerning health and food crises, reveal the disproportionate burdens they bear during such calamities, highlighting their vulnerability to physical and mental health challenges as well as nutrition deficiencies among family members. These perspectives underscore the urgent need for inclusive disaster management strategies that prioritize the well-being of women in the affected communities.

Roles of Local Women During the Disaster

Participation of the Women

During the flood, the wetlands lacked adequate shelters for the affected population. However, a college principal took

it upon himself to transform his college into a shelter, where people from nearby villages sought refuge for over a month. The principal, supported by the youth and his wife, managed the shelter. The wife of the principal, shared their efforts, saying, "We endeavoured to assist the flood victims. My husband purchased puffed rice, candles, saline, and other essentials." The shelter became a dependable resource for the affected individuals, although there were some distressing incidents. She recounted one such occurrence, saying, "A younger brother of one of my students passed away. We were unable to provide a proper burial, so his relatives resorted to floating the deceased body." She expressed her sorrow over her inability to address the situation, as she would have gladly assisted if she had been able. She actively supported the women in the shelter by providing food, healthcare, engaging in discussions on various topics, and caring for the children. She mentioned, "We had individuals for maintaining the shelter's cleanliness and a generator for electricity to ensure the safety of the women. Generous individuals sent relief supplies, cooked meals, and medicines." The Muslim women visited the shelter twice daily to monitor its operations and ascertain if the people required any additional assistance. The schoolteacher who is also the wife of the principal acquired grew leadership abilities during the flood. Other women (Muslim teenage daughters) also helped her to manage the overall system of the temporary shelter in the college. The women in the shelter understood that they have the power to help one another.

Minority Hindu women expressed complete loss in relation to housing, cooking, and even their identity while the Muslim women described their roles watching the suffering. Though people from every community suffered, minorities suffered a great deal. One of our story tellers stated that ''the mainstream community is not willing to help the minority community as they used to do before. The people who help them, they will help them due to the politics of vote.'' Minority Hindu women did not directly state they were discriminated against but did point out they were more "disadvantaged" than Muslim women as they did not have access to the same resources during the flood and suffered more acutely than Muslim women after the flood. One of the Hindu women said, ''In the mainstream community, if one person was affected, his rich neighbors and relatives would help him. Hindu people could not build their house and they are still suffering. They have survived by their own initiatives, by their own efforts, by their own hard work.'' These findings evidence that investments in Bangladesh's water infrastructure (Barbour et al. 2022; Cohen et al. 2022) have not alleviated the vulnerability of women, especially minority Hindu women who are often landless (Paprocki and Cons 2014).

We found that Muslim women played active roles during the 2022 flood. They helped impacted people, despite major obstacles and even in patriarchal settings where women's contributions are frequently underestimated. These findings question conventional gender roles and emphasize women's ability to lead during emergencies. While some Muslim women found agency and an ability to engage in social work during the disaster (a marked change from their inability to do so pre- disaster), many minority women were not able to engage in social work activities in the shelter, confirming existing literature that shows that Bangladesh disaster assistance fails to benefit the poor (Dewan 2021).

The minority Indigenous and Hindu women could not find any hope in their situation and therefore could not find the courage to assist others. They do not have the ability or financial backup needed to exercise power. Moreover, the minority communities lost everything in the flood. The minority communities in the wetlands do not have resilient systems such as shelters, disaster tracking systems, access to relief, or any kind of community-based disaster service (Datta, Kairy and Hurlbert 2024).

Barriers and Solutions

In Bangladesh's major cities, women engage in various activities, including income-generating pursuits, social work, and cultural endeavours. However, the situation differs significantly in rural areas, particularly in the wetlands. The primary-school teacher cited above emphasized this, stating, "Women in rural areas often find it challenging to participate in social work." This highlights the relatively limited involvement and awareness of social responsibilities among women in the rural areas, a situation that they stated leaves them dissatisfied and in despair. Women in rural settings frequently adhere to the directives of their male counterparts, and patriarchal dynamics continue to influence

these regions, including the wetlands. Nonetheless, those women who have been involved in various activities find it deeply inspiring. A woman from the Muslim community expressed, "Sometimes, I feel disheartened that I cannot contribute to society as men do. During the flood, I made a sincere effort to serve, and I found it gratifying. We cannot bring about change while confined to our homes." She reiterated that women need to step outside their homes to make a difference. She also remarked, "These circumstances must change. If a man can serve society, why can't a woman? This flood altered my perspective, and I believe that women can also make valuable contributions during disasters." It is important to note that the permission for women to contribute during the major flood was granted due to the crisis. In the absence of such an extreme event, the men might not have readily allowed women to assist the affected people. We suggest that this deep-seated mindset needs to evolve for the betterment of society.

Suggested Community-based Women-led Solutions

In this section, we delve into the solutions for the issues described in this article, informed by the insights of the women in the wetlands. Three key themes emerged from our discussions with these women: growing awareness of women's role in society, the role of the government, and the role of researchers.

Growing Awareness and Women's Engagement

Growing awareness of women's role in the community is fundamental for addressing the climatic challenges in the wetlands. The women stressed the importance of early response and preparedness. A woman from the Muslim community highlighted the delayed response from the local authorities due to logistical challenges during the initial stages of the disaster. We suggest that, to enhance preparedness, people must be proactive and willing to evacuate, when necessary, rather than hesitating to leave their homes. A woman from the minority Hindu community noted that those who didn't relocate to shelters did not receive relief. To empower the community, particularly women, education and awareness about disaster response and the significance of collective support are imperative. Women in the wetlands face limitations to engaging in social and voluntary activities; this norm needs to change. Education on disaster response and fostering a mindset of mutual assistance can facilitate involvement of women outside the home.

Our research underscores the common scenario in the wetlands where immediate disaster response is lacking, hindering rescue, treatment, and relief distribution activities. It suggests that women-led perspectives may save a great deal of time and prevent mistakes if impacted women could connect with and learn from the experiences of other women who have dealt with disaster-related issues. This urge for women-led disaster management is supported by studies that show women are deeply connected to their ecosystem and possess valuable knowledge for effective disaster adaptation (Aziz et al. 2021; Sarker and Uddin 2011; Van et al. 2014). While augmenting their role in prevention and planning, a disaster may also provide a window of opportunity for women to advance their role in the community. Gokhale (2008) argues that opportunities to lessen women's marginalization emerge early after disasters because the chaos that follows momentarily upends and weakens male-dominated family structures and social control norms. Therefore, recognizing the central role of women in disaster management ensures a more comprehensive and inclusive approach, tapping into diverse perspectives and harnessing the strengths of local communities for sustainable adaptations in the vulnerable South Asian wetlands (Deb and Haque 2011; Shi 2011).

The women's perspectives on improving disaster resilience informed our recommendations to raise awareness and increase women's engagement in government and academia. These perspectives highlight the need for women-led community strategies. Best practices in disaster risk reduction must be aligned with their education and include proactive planning for disasters and enhanced infrastructure. Furthermore, the women's request that scholars concentrate on workable, regional solutions emphasizes how critical it is to close the gap between scholarly research and community needs. A more comprehensive and successful framework for disaster management may be created by integrating women's capacity for leadership and lived experiences into practice and policy.

Role of the Local Governments

Policymakers must increase public awareness regarding the value of wetlands and ensure stakeholder involvement in wetland management to safeguard human well-being and livelihoods. The schoolteacher emphasized the need for individual shelters during floods, controlled canal construction, and planned infrastructure development. Strengthening national legal and policy frameworks for wetland conservation, as part of Bangladesh's National Adaptation Plan (NAP), is a critical and urgent task. A woman from the Muslim community suggested that educational institutions such as schools and colleges can be used as shelters during floods. Furthermore, she highlighted the importance of constructing houses at safer elevations, effective canal management, and well-planned infrastructure development to mitigate flood risks.

The Role of Researchers

According to the women, researchers and experts play a pivotal role in transforming the lives of Indigenous communities. Women from both communities emphasized that it is important for researchers to focus on adaptation and awareness-building programs. Researchers can contribute by incorporating practical knowledge into curricula, moving beyond theoretical teachings. By conducting studies on the wetlands, researchers can identify practical solutions and disseminate this knowledge to the community. One of the women further emphasized the need for practical knowledge, including pre-, during-, and post-flood measures, as well as making homes flood-resistant. Developing life skills and practical know-how is essential for the community to effectively cope with disasters. In summary, addressing the challenges faced by the wetland communities requires a multifaceted approach that involves raising awareness in society, policy changes and increased government involvement, and active contributions from researchers and specialists to empower these communities to adapt and respond effectively to natural disasters such as floods.

Conclusion

The findings of our research shed light on the insights and life experiences of the women who live in the wetlands of Bangladesh, especially as they relate to overcoming the difficulties caused by natural catastrophes such as floods. In addition to emphasizing women's distinctive contributions to comprehending disaster resilience from a feminist community-led viewpoint, this discussion places the women's insights within the body of existing literature. Wetlands in Bangladesh are highly susceptible to a range of natural calamities, including frequent floods during the monsoon season, lightning strikes, and droughts. These environmental challenges, poverty, food and water shortages, and the destruction of homes, severely impact the inhabitants' health and well-being. These impacts are expected to worsen with climate change. In this article, we explore the knowledge of women in these wetlands regarding climate change, the effects of floods, and the roles of women during flooding. We also propose solutions that are informed by our conversations with these women. The women of wetlands in Bangladesh have a deep connection to nature and are aware of the impact of climate change and the changes in Bangladesh's seasons on their lives. Previous research has shown that all women, Muslim and minority Hindu, face significant challenges and lack of agency which is a result of colonial powers (Dewan and Nustad 2023). During flood disasters, women face multiple challenges including housing destruction, health crisis, and food insecurity and these impacts align with global studies on gendered disaster experiences and highlight women's vulnerability due to pre-existing inequalities (Dewan et al. 2014). We suggest that structural inequalities exacerbate the adverse effects of disasters. Patriarchal systems and cultural norms frequently restrict women's capacity to participate outside of dire circumstances. Promoting gender-inclusive disaster resilience requires addressing these obstacles.

Decolonial intervention involves reimagining power, knowledge, and relationships to honour the diverse experiences of colonized communities. A feminist community-led approach, rooted in equity, care, and intersectionality, shifts focus from institutional solutions to grassroot efforts, prioritizing the voices and agency of women, Indigenous communities, and marginalized groups. Our research emphasizes the importance of women's engagement and leadership for gender equality. There is a need for women-led community-building initiatives that include both men and women, as individuals often work cooperatively with family members in the wetlands. Previous studies also found the gender engagement crucial in disaster adaptations in South Asia, particularly in Bangladesh (Alam and Rahaman 2019; Yadav and Lal 2018). As found in previous studies (Resurrección et al. 2019; Van Koppen 2017), women are

primary caretakers and foster resilience and preparedness against environmental challenges like floods and cyclones. Recognizing and promoting women-led community building is essential in these regions.

Our research also suggests that women-led disaster management and leadership is important for decolonization. In the wetlands women use their traditional knowledge to devise adaptive strategies to face disasters. Their leadership is holistic, and it is important for timely disaster response. Similarly, previous literature found that women-led initiatives foster community solidarity and contribute to the resilience of vulnerable regions, recognizing and supporting their vital roles in resource management, agriculture, and community well-being (Choudhury, Haque, and Habib 2018; Karistie et al. 2023; Khan and Haque 2010). Crosweller and Tschakert (2020) recommend that governments incorporate strategies to address the socio-economic causes of vulnerability, inequality, and injustice directly into resilience policy frameworks. Augmenting the capacity and role of the minority Hindu community will be important.

Implementing women-led flood crisis response in the wetlands of Bangladesh through a decolonial framework could change the established power system. The future holds promising prospects for integrating feminist community-led perspectives in disaster adaptations in South Asia and globally. As awareness grows regarding the multifaceted impacts of disasters, there is a growing acknowledgment of the need for more inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches to resilience-building. We hope our feminist framework will become integral in shaping policies, interventions, and community-led initiatives, ensuring that the unique vulnerabilities and strengths of diverse populations, particularly women, are considered. By centering the voices and experiences of women, these perspectives aim to foster more equitable and sustainable adaptations that address the root causes of gender-based vulnerabilities.

Endnotes

1. Marginalized groups are generally considered to have limited self-representation. They are consistently ignored by powerful actors and are subject to neglect, bias, discrimination, and mistreatment even when they make a meaningful social contribution (Chowdhury 2021).

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Uncertainty and Other Forms of Hope: An Environmental Pedagogy

by Tanis MacDonald

Abstract: It's axiomatic to declare that an environmental pedagogy, especially for women, queer folks, BIPOC people, assault survivors, and anyone who identifies as disabled or vulnerable, is vital to making space for ourselves geographically and psychologically in our workplaces and neighbourhoods. It is equally necessary politically at this stage of late capitalism where the spiked club of use-value is wielded to commodify everything, including our experiences of nature. Trust, risk, and the precarious present have been drawn sharply into pedagogical focus in recent years, exacerbated in the classroom and elsewhere by students' anxieties about the future that manifest as a withdrawal from the uncertainties of the present moment, including—but not exclusive to—climate anxiety. This article's examination of living in that shifting "now," in classroom discussions and in writing assignments, considers the important entanglement of uncertainty and experience as they inform, or even form, hope.

Keywords: climate change; creative writing; environmental pedagogy; future; hope; nature writing; place; uncertainty

Résumé : Il va de soi qu'une pédagogie axée sur l'environnement, en particulier pour les femmes, les personnes queers, les personnes autochtones, noires et de couleur (PANDC), les victimes d'agressions, ainsi que toutes les personnes qui s'identifient comme handicapées ou vulnérables, est essentielle pour nous permettre de nous approprier l'espace physique et psychologique dans nos milieux de travail et quartiers. Elle est tout aussi nécessaire sur le plan politique, à ce stade du capitalisme tardif, où le gourdin à pointes de la valeur d'usage est brandi pour tout transformer en marchandise, y compris nos expériences de la nature. Ces dernières années, la confiance, le risque et l'instabilité du présent sont devenus des sujets pédagogiques centraux, exacerbés en classe et ailleurs par les inquiétudes des élèves face à l'avenir, les poussant à se replier sur eux-mêmes face aux incertitudes du moment présent, dont l'anxiété climatique. Cet article explore la façon de vivre dans ce « présent » changeant, que ce soit dans les discussions en classe ou dans les rédactions, en mettant en lumière l'importance du lien entre incertitudes et expérience, qui éclairent voire forgent l'espoir.

Mots clés : changements climatiques; écriture créative; pédagogie axée sur l'environnement; avenir; espoir; écrits sur la nature; lieu; incertitudeTBA

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How will it be
to lie in the sky
without roof or door
and wind for an eye

With cloud for shift
how will I hide?
May Swenson, "Question"

I love this poem by May Swenson, which begins with the line "Body my house" and ends with the lines above and such vulnerability. I still read it as a queer love poem and as a love poem for the self but, increasingly, I have been thinking about it as an unintentional environmental poem. How can a body—anybody's body—do the hot work of hope? What if we can't hide? Trust, risk, and the precarious present have been drawn sharply into pedagogical focus in recent years, exacerbated by students' anxieties about the future that manifest as a withdrawal from the uncertainties of the present moment, including—but not exclusive to—climate anxiety. This article's examination of living in that shifting "now," in classroom discussions and in writing assignments, can be thought of in the same breath as Swenson's question: "How will it be" to be here, and be here in hope? There are no easy answers and yet everything about teaching people from the ages of 18–25 depends on this fierce and delicate inquiry.

*

To begin in practice, come with me to a humid August day in 2023, when I led a writer's walk for the second annual Fertile Fest in Toronto, a poetry festival organized by the wonderful writer, performer, and bookseller Kirby. I titled the event "The Truth about Bodies in Motion" and in the late morning, Kirby and I test-walked the route together, passing through the verdant Alex Wilson Community Garden in downtown Toronto, then plotting a route along several blocks of Graffiti Alley and back to the Garden. My goal for the walk was to suggest to the assembled writers that presence and rest would be emphasized as much as observation with optional—very optional—writing prompts. I had just read Tricia Hersey's *Rest is Resistance* (2022) and on the strength of Hersey's discussion of the power of dreaming, I suggested to the group who assembled that it was great to get inspired on a walk, but it may be just as important *not* to write, to let the slow pace and the sensual stimuli assist them in resting their thoughts. Hersey notes that resting in public is radical—for women in particular, and for women of colour especially. It shows that we dare to *not* do, that we are resisting the push to constant productivity. I'll add my own observation to Hersey's: often women and gender-fluid folks busy ourselves in public because appearing to rest makes us vulnerable. If we are reading or scrolling or taking pictures or making notes, we are less likely to attract unwanted attention, to be targeted.

As I spoke about these ideas, a few of the younger writers were taking notes and a few of the older writers looked a bit tight-lipped. Where were the writing exercises?

The garden was lush and the alley's art was vibrant. On our return to the Community Garden, I caught myself leaning too much on sight, partly from habit and partly because of the temptation supplied by the spectacular oranges and blues of the alley art. In the Garden, I closed my eyes and reached into the filament-like leaves of an asparagus fern. This fern was abundant in one of the garden plots and, as it touched my fingers and the backs of my hands, I compared the sensation to—what? Falling water? Gecko feet? The longer I stood in downtown Toronto with my eyes closed, the more I was flouting safety concerns. Even as I tried to honour the feel of the plant's fine wisps on the skin of my hands and wrists, I remembered the men who had been drinking in the park but left (or had they?) when my group of women and queer folks drifted in. I stubbornly kept my eyes closed and let the fern tickle me. When I opened my eyes, a young queer person was standing next to me, looking at another plant. Wanting to share the tactile gift of the asparagus plant, I said to them, "Hey, close your eyes" and, when they did, I guided their hands to the

asparagus fern. The two of us stood quietly as they felt the fern's strange prickle, its green hairiness, and its almost reptilian texture. After a minute, they opened their eyes and said, "When you said *close your eyes*, I had no idea what you were going to do." I hadn't thought of that, even though their comment mirrored what I had been thinking just a few minutes before: was it safe to close our eyes in a place that could be dangerous? But they trusted me and I was grateful to be trusted, grateful that they made themselves vulnerable just because I asked and that I could share the asparagus fern with them.

It's axiomatic to declare that an environmental pedagogy, especially for women, queer folks, BIPOC people, assault survivors, and anyone who identifies as disabled or vulnerable, is vital to making space for ourselves geographically and psychologically in our workplaces and neighbourhoods. It is equally necessary politically at this stage of late capitalism where the spiked club of use-value is wielded to commodify everything, including our experiences of nature.

As with the Fertile Fest walk, my classrooms are full of young cis women and gender-fluid people, BIPOC students and disabled students, people for whom the occupation of space is always highly negotiated, wild and semi-wild spaces even more so. I can't help but think of what the poet and community worker Leanne Charette, who uses a wheelchair, said at the launch of the "Moving on Land" issue of *The Goose* during the conference for the Association of Literature for Environment and Culture in Canada in June 2024: "Even when I think I don't want nature, nature wants me." Charette articulated something I've been considering as I set writing assignments in both academic and creative writing courses, assignments in which I ask the students to enter into the nearly impossible act of being here.

Entangled Disengagement: The Work of Being Here

Being here is hard work. I try it every day and succeed only intermittently.

Additionally, consciousness in public is painful for a wide variety of historical and contemporary reasons. For example, Tricia Hersey is clear that her work in *Rest is Resistance* is rooted in Black liberation theology. If non-Black people wish to work with her ideas, they must first acknowledge and think deeply about the role of white supremacy in denying Black people life-sustaining rest and the space to dream. Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* offers another look at a resonant historical consciousness—and its societal erasure—that are everyday experiences for Black people:

> Living in the wake means living the history and present of terror, from slavery to the present, as the ground of our everyday Black existence; living the historically and geographically dis/continuous but always present and endlessly reinvigorated brutality in, and on, our bodies while even as that terror is visited on our bodies the realities of that terror are erased. (Sharpe 2016, 15)

Something similar, but different, could be said of Indigenous experience: the act of being fully conscious on stolen land in a country that has sanctioned violence against Indigenous bodies for centuries is no easy prospect and never free of biopolitical concerns.

These concerns, and many others, appear in the classroom as part of students' daily struggles. My students' faces show the effort it takes to engage with other people, to respond to the environment around them, to show up mentally and emotionally, to give attention to the books we are reading and the ideas we are discussing, and to lavish their attention on their own words on a page or words they speak in class. For many students, disengagement does not have the flavour of rebellion, that blend of defiance or refusal or judgement that is so familiar to me as a GenXer. They are disengaged not because a university class is irrelevant but because nothing at all seems real or important or graspable, concrete, malleable, achievable, real. They are disinclined to believe in the present. They are, in Scott Hamilton's terms, deeply involved with "ontological insecurity": uncertain in their ability or, indeed, the necessity to be here (Hamilton 2017, 279).

Hamilton parses the concept of entanglement in the Anthropocene—that is, that humans are inevitably entangled with beings and systems—to challenge the desired outcome of an entanglement that puts human beings at the forefront. Noting that human survival has long been thought to be the primary goal, Hamilton suggests something quite different. In his formulation, the human *refusal* to entangle is the true marker of the Anthropocene: "A profound separation or *dis*-entanglement of humanity from nature…replaces what was once the primary and objective concern of security—i.e., survival, or avoiding death—with *anthropos*, the human being, as a new geological and spatiotemporal force to be problematized and secured in both the present and the future" (Hamilton 2017, 579). Published in 2017, Hamilton's article seems prescient about the kinds of separations that were about to explode into public life: the division between right-wing and leftist politics globally; the rise in misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia; and the isolation of COVID-19 restrictions, including the schism between those who could afford to isolate and those who could not, minimum-wage and service workers and the underhoused, especially. Further, while Hamilton notes the movement from prioritizing survival as the primary concern of security to the need to secure a future, he gestures to something arresting: "With the catastrophic prognoses for the Anthropocene's future making humanity's temporal, ontological, and epistemological essence uncertain, a paradox forms: an existential discontinuity, in which humanity must secure itself in the future *from* itself in the present" (Hamilton 2017, 280). Instead of securing ourselves from nature and its un/controllable forces, Hamilton identifies the challenge of the Anthropocene as "securing ourselves *from* ourselves" (emphasis in original).

Bleak as this may seem, Hamilton's paradox describes—eerily—what I've been seeing in the classroom: students who act out their uncertainty by uncoupling acts from aims, presence from learning, and sometimes, most disturbingly, the present from the future. In securing a future for themselves, some students devalue their present. They are not here. They are in the future. "Here" is an inconvenience that will soon be over. I can practically hear them thinking, "Good riddance."

From my perspective, this is not about the erosion of ability. Ableness and willingness meet somewhere in every students' (and every prof's!) mish-mash of family obligations, anxieties, achievements, hopes, encounters with rules and regulations, encounters with other people, and the professor's sometimes-distracted eye on how and why performance in a course at a particular time works well for some students and less well for others. With the advent of remote teaching, "here" didn't always mean a designated physical space. With the return to in-person teaching and with the advent of Generative AI, students' disbelief in the necessity of being "here" has grown. They understand fully that completing the course means a credit, means part of a degree, and may eventually mean a job. They want to secure the future for themselves but they are unconvinced that this will be accomplished by investing in the present. Hamilton's paradox proves true; they are divesting from the present in order to secure the future.

For students and allies setting up anti-war, anti-genocide, and pro-peace occupation camps on campus, this makes perfect sense. They are refusing the present in which universities and other corporations invest in war-making machinery and so they demand divestment from those blood-soaked practices in order to secure the future. But what of the student who shows up to class regularly but is consistently disengaged, staring out the window, scrolling on their phone, and not taking in any ideas, and then submits very weak material and—here's the important part—is thoroughly mystified by their lacklustre grade? Uncertainty in the necessity of the present would seem to kneecap the future rather than secure it.

But there's hope. My reading of Hamilton's paradox suggests a way to unlock the Escher-like tiles of this rickety Mobius strip of existential discontinuity in which we preserve ourselves in the future by protecting ourselves from the present. Just as it's hard to be engaged and fully present all the time, it's equally hard to remain disengaged 24/7. That's the pain I see on student's faces: fear of being drawn in, to committing to something, to letting in the world, despite their dedication to the idea that nothing matters. They wonder if being here will be painful and if the pain will be worth it. These are good matters about which to wonder; I often wonder about them myself.

I appreciate Sarah Jaquette Ray's discussion of her "failed experiment" in imagining the future, as she describes early in *A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety*, in part because I had a similar experience in asking students to think about the

past. Ray asks her students to do an exercise in which they would have a chance to visualize their ultimate climate-changed future and then identify the changes that they could break down into doable steps. Ray thought the exercise would, like Hersey's dreaming, be "empowering…free[ing] them from the immobilization we all feel in the face of a problem as enormous and intractable as climate change. But it bombed…. When I asked them about their ideal future state, I heard crickets" (Ray 2020, 2). My experience was similar. Following Rebecca Solnit's example in her foreword to the 2016 edition of *Hope in The Dark*, I asked students to name, as Solnit did, recent historical examples of things that had changed for the better. Solnit listed, among other things, the Civil Rights movement, the defeat of a violent regime in East Timor, and marriage equality. Since few of Solnit's examples were Canadian, I asked my students to list some changes they had witnessed in Canada. Again, crickets.

This was in no way the students' fault but rather a beam in my own eye. Young people who were in high school and the first years of university during COVID restrictions, young people who had been children when President 45 began loudly spewing hate speech, were unpracticed in finding positive change. They were, some told me, protected from bad news by their parents who wished to allow them to be kids instead of small prematurely-worried adults. We think of hope as a youthful predisposition, but I'm not so sure that's true. Older people find hope in seeing the way constant flux can favour change for the better. Small wonder then that my students were attempting to negotiate themselves into the future without setting foot in the present. Ray is right when she notes that nothing would happen—climate-improvement wise or pedagogically—without concerted attempts on the behalf of instructors to introduce students to a "politics of desire" and ways of "politicizing your angst" (Ray 2020, 7). And to do this, we all need to practice being on our "own interior terrain" (Ray 2020, 14).

Here: Making Place, Making Hope?

The emphasis on knowing one's own interior terrain is an old idea made urgent in our times. The craving not to be present is as potent in its own way as the craving to be present. This is a problem older than Thoreau's injunction in *Walden* to "simplify, simplify" and to choose to "live deliberately" but let's begin there. Thoreau was in his late twenties during his years at Walden Pond; his beloved brother John had died when Thoreau himself was twenty-four. As a young and grieving man, he wanted to relearn presence and humanity through semi-isolation, and to remember his deceased brother in part by slowing down his daily existence via living in a hunter's hut by Walden Pond in the back of the Thoreaus' family property. Thoreau's youth makes him more like my students than myself but, just as his simplification meant more presence, their simplification manifests as less presence, even disembodiment: to be in their bodies less, to disbelieve in the significance of attention as learning, in time as a concentration of moments, and in place as a potential personal signifier. These are all constructs which the transcendentalist Thoreau manifestly pursued.

Students can get anxious or even angry at the notion of attachment. Many years ago, I taught a student who yelped, as though his back was against the wall, "You can't make me write about my feelings!" He was right: I could not. Nor did I particularly want him to. All I could do was assure him that writing about one's feelings was not the assignment, even in (or to be perfectly frank, especially in) a course in creative writing. That student, now long graduated with a doctorate, may also have been saying *You can't make me act like anything matters*. *You can't make me like things*. *You can't make me present*.

Like my reply to my "no-feelings" student, I have to acknowledge that I indeed can't make anyone do any of those things. But unlike my reply to that first student, I now say to students in more recent courses, "In this case, being present—or making a genuine attempt to be—is going to be part of the actual assignment."

In their textbook *Writing True: The Art and Craft of Creative Nonfiction*, editors Sondra Perl and Mimi Schwartz describe an "essay of place" that emphasizes landscape as a character and in which "the writer's presence is felt, showing readers what is special" (2014, 275). Perl and Schwartz have chosen their sample essays well, demonstrating that an essay of place could take a variety of perspectives: discovering a new place, asserting a cultural importance of a place,

or feeling alienated from a place. But even with the good examples, I knew my students would need assistance. This pedagogical task—the need to urge a thoughtful process between impulse and final product—is the hot ground on which I walk. I often employ textbooks in class to assure students that I am not "making things up," that this is a real pursuit about which others have written. And *then* I make things up. That is to say, I take an idea from the book and enhance it, specifying for my students' needs. In short, I am constantly MacGyvering assignments to assure the students that I see them, including their gender and class identities and their struggles to articulate their realities. Putting a twist on standard assignments keeps me on my toes, too. We think together through the terms of the assignment and discovery is very much the point for all parties. So it was as I designed an assignment for the students to practice the skill of "being here" in a way that is personal and specific but also has a connection to creating presence on the page.

The essay of place assigned in *Writing True* begins with the writer's admonition to notice, to put oneself in a place and unpack the importance of a place via the five senses. It's clear to me that Perl and Schwartz want the significance of the place to grow from detail and then to grow larger than that. For me, via Perl and Schwartz, a big part of the assignment is daring to let yourself describe not only a place but some definition of *your* place, and muse productively about beauty and meaning and history and belonging or lack thereof as they relate to that writer's definition of place. So far, so doable.

But damn it, for me, it was a little *too* doable, too easy for students to slip from beneath the assignment's good intentions and muse about how soothing "nature" was and so commit themselves to saying almost nothing: a classic "here-but-not-here" strategy. I can hardly blame them; corporatism, capitalism, and colonialism conspire to imply that all places look the same, or if they don't then they are not worth looking at, travelling to, or paying attention to their inhabitants. Intellectually, students know that isn't true but it's hard to swim upstream against a tide of assurances that their screens—and only their screens—will show them every place worth being in. As for me, teaching essays of place has become impossible without invoking habitat loss, the manic speed of urban development, human migrations, and climate ontology: that weather is a place. I couldn't tell students to write about place without invoking Rob Nixon's "slow violence" of displacement that "refers to the loss of the land and resources" that affects Indigenous students, migrant students who have left war and poverty in their home countries, and students from farming families (Nixon 2011, 4).

Returning to my students' concerns as filtered through Hamilton's concept of securing one's future self from one's present self, what did that mean when gender identity and ability identity were added to the mix? I think of Donna Haraway (1991) shuttling between the cyborg manifesto as feminist work and her more recent research on species intercommunication as rooted in, as shaking loose from, machine-human-animal triangulation. I wonder about Robin Wall Kimmerer's description of her student who "becomes one with her inner muskrat,"plunging into a marsh to gather cattails in the "Sitting in a Circle" chapter of *Braiding Sweetgrass* (2013, 287). I wonder about Cheryl Strayed's disquieting encounter with rapey trail walkers in *Wild* (2012) and the recent social media controversy over whether a woman in the woods felt more comfortable encountering a strange man or a bear. (And because I'm a Canadian literature specialist, I think of Marian Engel's 1976 novel *Bear*.) Thinking through and with all these women—scientists and hippies and feminists and Indigenous mothers—brings me to a conclusion that sometimes the most feminist thing I can do is go for a walk and honour everyone I see on the way who is vulnerable. Our uncertainty is our present and there is every reason to believe it will be our future.

Gendered Uncertainty and Other Forms of Hope

Back in the classroom, I saw a fight brewing about presence: presence as a value, as a methodology, and as something beyond toxic optimism of insisting the students "love nature." Some students were suspicious that I was trying to force appreciation on them, so I spoke with them about a climate change spin on Berlant's "cruel optimism" in which they would stand in the very space that they wanted to save with no hope of saving it or Berlant's further term "stupid optimism" (which I think they wanted to ascribe to me), a disbelief that the situation is dire, that all one needs to do is work within the system to find joy. That was not the goal, I assured them. They might feel those feelings—or

not—but I was more interested in the role of a sensation (part intellectual, part affective) that nearly all of them were experiencing: uncertainty. Far from being something that the future cannot abide, uncertainty is the substance of the future. As Timothy Morton puts it in "Beginning after the End," his introduction to *Dark Ecology*: "The future is unthinkable yet here we are, thinking it…. Art is thought from the future. Thought we cannot explicitly think at present. Thought we may not think or speak at all" (Morton 2016, 2).

To walk in semi-wild spaces, you have to be open to the element of surprise, to encounters with birds and animals and plant life that you haven't anticipated. To strangenesses and a lack of understanding. Those are encounters with beauty and sometimes death or woundedness, sometimes shock or fear, sometimes desperation. But all of that is connection. Risking engagement means both liking and not liking things: the drunk men and the asparagus fern. You also have to choose to like some things enough so that you will notice when they are no longer there because of the season, because of climate change, because of entropic decay and death. Violence towards our genders has long made us uncertain in both urban and wild spaces, and I am well aware of the irony inherent in asking students to engage with "thought we cannot explicitly think at present" á la Morton. Rebecca Solnit, in *Hope in the Dark*, suggests something similar, that "hope is not a door, but the sense that there might be a door at some point, some way out of the problems of the present moment even before that way is found and followed" (Solnit 2016, 22). As many wrinkled brows as there were in the classroom, others brightened at the notion of uncertainty as the cusp of knowledge.

What if our present-future paradox is our strength? "Security," forever a gendered issue, is at the core of these questions and its very definition – the feeling and provable reality that one is safe – has long been nigh unto impossible for historically oppressed members of the population. Who among us expects complete safety, a world wherein we are in charge all the time? This is different from craving or even working for such a thing. I well remember women's rights advocate and author Julie S. Lalonde noting in an online workshop on bystander intervention that she led in the spring of 2023 for the anti-harrassment organization Right to Be, "I know a world without sexual harassment is possible because my brother currently lives in it." Lalonde's point is hopeful in some of the ways that Solnit suggests but when I think about sending my students out to experience public space, I have to acknowledge that "security" in the Anthropocene has never been in the equation for the vulnerable and that security is something that only some people can afford. The rest of us have been figuring our way through the eminently dangerous world all along. Isn't the art of thinking the future in the grasp of every non-white, non-cis, or female person who reads of terrible times to come and thinks, "Hhmmmph, more of the same"?

On the Fertile Fest walk, I had delivered a blunt enough directive—"Hey, close your eyes"—but it still gave my walking companion some choice. They could ask why; they could say no and walk away; they could laugh and divert the comment; they could pretend I was talking to someone else. They and I were already engaged together in a dynamic of uncertainty, one in which I led them on a route, urged rest, did not demand productivity, and perhaps most importantly, demonstrated my own practice by doing all these things myself. They and I had solidarity as physically vulnerable people in a potentially hostile and dangerous atmosphere. They and I were in a comfort zone created by a group of like-minded people scattered around us. We were in a queer-positive feminist space, created by our host Kirby, the location and history of the Alex Wilson Community Garden as a space built to honour the legacy of a gay man who was a writer and a gardener, and the other walkers. All of that added up to some kind of temporary safety with the other walker's own trust and their generosity in extending that trust to me. How, then, could I support the students in being generous with themselves? In thinking towards the potential power of uncertainty?

With some of this in mind, I asked my students to choose a place, one that they are currently in or had been to recently, that they might think of a "homeplace" that could be well-researched, richly re-imagined, and rendered in a personal essay that unpacked the meanings, dimensions, pleasures, problems, and/or politics of "place." What is it to be here? I noted on the assignment sheet: "'Here' can be either the ground upon which you stand right now, or your homeplace as you define it, but it should be a definite geographical place, richly imagined and rendered. 'History' is your lived experience of a place with an emphasis on your (and possibly your family's) place in the political and cultural histories of the place you choose." Students could begin with a description of land: its shapes, flora and fauna, buildings, roads, parks, forests, suburbs, etc. In other words, they could include any information accessible via a walk

through the place and then enriched by research. If students wished to "re-visit" a past—or geographically distant—homeplace, they could get there virtually via films or videos, archival photos, cooking and eating cultural foods, etc. They could start with a family story (the older, the better) or begin with a locally famous event. They could work in opposition, correcting false assumptions about their homeplace or pinpointing discomforts brought on by the homeplace. I asked them to consolidate some of the affective aspects by digging into the ripples of history, especially the histories of people who shaped the place: Indigenous people; settler folks; waves of migrancy, industry, farming, urban planning, local fauna as impacts on a place.

My admittedly over-prepared worksheets notwithstanding, some students hesitated, asking questions that were thinly-veiled negotiations about the assignment. Could they write about a place they had never been? (Nope.) Could they write about Narnia or Hogwarts or Middle Earth, worlds that they argued they knew the best? (No, no, and no). With each question, it became clear that I had pressed my finger on a bruise that I didn't know existed. Everyone, including me, was taken aback by the pain.

The more they talked, the more I could see that their feelings of disconnection from place were not so much resistance as they were mystification. What did I really mean by "here"? What was the "right" here, the one I wanted them to experience? How could they do that? How could they protect themselves from the threat of being present? That's a good question: the act of detailed observation, of trying hard to be here, can be very painful, especially to those who have been told that they do not belong. But unlocking the ability to observe is a superpower. At the same time, I was asking them to do something that more than a few of them found offensive; I was asking for a sustained act of consciousness and uncertainty.

This has never been a perfect assignment; I still tinker with it. Some students wrote what they thought I wanted: a life-is-beautiful treatise. Others wrote about the history of a place without including themselves as inheritors of that history. While this very well could be a component of their relative youth, many struggled to define what was "allowed" to be space and story and what was not. What about places that are not considered places? Many students have been told by various authorities that their homeplaces are non-places, not important, not historical, not worth examining: a place that is not one.

But there have been some great moments too. One student wrote an essay about her hometown as shaped by a killing of a young woman ten years previously, and her own experience growing up female within the shifts and splits of living in that community. More than one Indigenous student wrote about the relief of returning to their communities after weeks of being at university. A student who had long thought he was of settler origin wrote about how the river he lived close to became a more complicated space for him once his father began discussing his Indigenous heritage. Another student wrote about growing up in a low-income housing complex in Markham and its unexpected pleasures.

As for whether or not we should be teaching hope in the classroom, we can only teach students to consider possibility and presence, and from there hope may emerge. As Ray notes, we must teach students (and ourselves) to be "good ancestors" to those who will follow us (Ray 2020, 14). She calls this developing the "muscle of radical imagination" (10), a phrase so apt I wish I wrote it myself. As Raymond Williams wrote decades ago in his far-seeing understanding of how working-class people resist dehumanization, "To be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing" (Williams 1989, 75). We have a chance to discover history and connection and to defy the grimness of late-stage capitalism that strives to keep us unbalanced, disengaged, separated from our histories, our prides, our abilities, and from tapping into the joy of uncertainty as opposed to the fear of uncertainty.

May Swenson, thanks for the question.

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Appendix

EN369: Creative Writing: Nonfiction
Essay 1: Personal Essay on Place
Dr. T. MacDonald

From the syllabus: For this assignment, students will write a personal essay (see Chapter 8, Perl and Schwartz) about a place they know well (workplace, present or past home, neighbourhood, etc.) using a research component to illuminate the meaning, dimensions, pleasures, problems, and/or politics of "place."

More:
Consider the models we've been reading in class in which the authors consider place as a vital component in the personal essay, as in the examples that you have read in Perl and Schwartz's *Writing True*, and in Ariel Gordon's *Treed*. Your goal is to produce an essay of place that explores the practice of being in that place. As in the examples, it must be a definite geographical place, well-researched, richly re-imagined, and rendered.

For one example, Jericho Parms' "On Touching Ground" uses her grandparent's Texas ranch as a counterpoint to her study of art and movement, and her racial identity. Another example: Ariel Gordon's essays in *Treed* work with her local place (Winnipeg's urban forest) and also places far from her home (forested places in Banff and elsewhere).

With these models, consider the ripples of history and other aspects of place you could research. These might include research your lived experience of a place with an emphasis on your/ your family's place in it, and also histories of people who shaped the place: Indigenous people, settler folks, waves of people from global cultures, people working in industry, farming, etc. Consider too research into urban planning, local plants and animals, and historical events as they impact a local place.

A few suggestions about how to start:

5) Start with a description of the place: its flora and fauna, buildings, roads, parks, forests, suburbs, etc. If you are physically in the place, take a walk through it and see what's there.
6) If you are not physically in the place, find a way to get there virtually: YouTube, family photos, music of a time and place, etc.
7) Start with a family story: the older, the better.
8) Start with a locally famous event.
9) Work in opposition: "correct" false assumptions about that place.

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Interview

Lori Lee Oates and Sritama Chatterjee Speak with Camelia Dewan

Camelia Dewan is an environmental anthropologist who focuses on the anthropology of development. She is currently an Associate Professor of Anthropology at Uppsala University in Sweden. Dr. Dewan is the author of *Misreading the Bengal Delta: Climate Change, Development, and Livelihoods in Coastal Bangladesh* (2021; University of Washington Press).

Lori Lee Oates: Thank you so much for agreeing to do this interview. Let's start with what brought you to researching environmental justice in Bangladesh.

Camelia Dewan: I started working on development in Bangladesh in 2008. I was born and raised in Sweden but my parents are from Bangladesh. My grandmother lived with us in Sweden and practically raised me but then returned to Bangladesh. As a university student I wanted to go back to Bangladesh to see her and applied for an unpaid summer internship at BRAC Development Institute. My next work experience in Bangladesh happened after graduating from the London School of Economics with a MSc in Development Studies in 2010–11 and after a role as a Programme Officer in Sweden. I was hired as a research consultant for a one-year project where I led the qualitative survey on water governance and infrastructure in the coastal zone of Bangladesh.

Before this work, I did not know what a polder or an embankment was. It took going to Bangladesh to understand what they really are. I got interested in the work of BELA (the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association) and their work regulating illegal and environmentally harmful practices conducted by tiger-prawn business actors in the southwest coastal zone of Bangladesh. The conflicts between shrimp farmers and rice farmers were a main theme from that qualitative survey and the second issue was how the canals and water bodies were dying due to the embankments.

For my PhD proposal, I wanted to look at land use conflicts, siltation of water bodies, and the maintenance of these embankments. At the time, the scale of climate change was quite small. It was not a big development priority, but it was emerging slowly. One of my Bangladeshi colleagues, who was internationally well connected, told me to add climate change to my proposal because that would get me funding. And he was right. It made me wonder what happened if everyone used climate change as a buzzword to get funding. I wanted to talk about siltation and political conflicts of land use. That's how I got into the terrain of environmental justice more broadly.

LLO: That's interesting because I did my PhD on 19th century British and Imperial history and the history of religion. It was hard for me to get funding to study it; I got a PhD funding, but I could never get any funding beyond that. As soon as I started looking into oil and the transition away from oil, I started getting funding.

CD: As academics, we sometimes must use masalas, I think. But it is one thing to do it for funding applications and another to reproduce that discourse in academic research. I try not to use climate as a spice in my academic writing, you know, because then I already have the funding. Why do we need to produce that discourse in academic research? I think that's something we need to push against.

Chatterjee Sritama: As a follow up to that, we tend to use climate change as a shorthand for a lot of serious environmental problems that are afflicting various regions. One of your essays that I personally appreciate is on women not being able to migrate from islands. I find this an important insight about not slotting women into either "climate victims" or "climate survivors."

You have spent so many years working in the developmental sectors. I'm curious if there are specific moments from your field work that were epiphanic in terms of bringing this shift in your thinking: from what constitutes climate change to what constitutes environmental change. How would you look at the positionality of women within that framework?

CD: That's a great question. The epiphany was the importance of matri-focal kinship relations. Because in these climate and development discourses it's always about [Bangladeshi Muslim] women being constrained by a religious, conservative, patriarchal society, and very little about their agency and ability to maintain emotional relations that sustain livelihoods. I was not trained in anthropology during my undergraduate or master's degrees and I came from a very development-studies mindset when I started my PhD. So, I thought that shrimp farming results in saltwater intrusion and that it destroys the land and people's livelihoods. I assumed there was a connection between the relationships between shrimp farming and the trafficking of women, particularly among female-headed households who are portrayed as the most vulnerable and poorest in rural Bangladesh. The privilege of doing a PhD in Anthropology is that you can change your entire research topic while doing fieldwork and reconsider what you find. I realized that these female-headed households are not so female headed, nor are they isolated entities. They are embedded in these wider kinship relations, and they have men around them.

Then when I started this research, I realized that one of the best approaches is to not assume everything is about climate change. The first translator with whom I had worked in the water governance project would ask how the environment had changed in Bangla. When you ask that broad question, the women talk about the siltation, when the embankments were constructed, and what happened afterwards in the waterlogging. They talk about the Green Revolution. In Bangladesh, this didn't happen in the '70s. In the '80s and '90s there were structural adjustment policies and the use of agrochemicals. The new seeds destroyed the soil and the earthworms.

I've not used the term environmental justice in my work but it's all about justice in a way, because it's all about these past economics and extractive modes of production. Those changed the environment in ways that negatively affected everyday rural livelihoods.

The biggest issue in terms of environmental justice is obviously the shrimp cultivation, the salinity, and the embodied and affective dimensions. It's not just that you get more money for selling shrimp. It's all the biodiversity you lose, the chores you can't do properly because there's no fresh water. I really appreciated that I could do anthropological PhD field work for a year and let my interlocutors frame their everyday livelihood problems themselves. That's how you find out various things—even a lot of things I didn't end up writing about.

The book would not have been complete without the last chapter on structural violence because it's not about a climate adaptation project. I really felt, after spending a year with these amazing people, that to not share their most pressing livelihood concerns would be unethical. So, that last chapter is for them because what do coastal vulnerabilities mean from a bottom-up perspective?

CS: I really appreciate hearing who the book was for and who you were writing about. You also mentioned that you came to your PhD in anthropological studies from a developmental studies background. What was this shift like for you? What was the training? What were the challenges? What was the potential that you saw in this work?

CD: Oh, that's such a tough one. I mean, anthropology is all about unpacking everything. One of my classmates or cohort members said, "What is development? What do you mean?" and then we went through the exercise of unpacking development. I think anthropology is a great tool for complexity and reflecting on your own positionality

and biases. It just makes you reflect critically on your own biases. I really value the fact that I did get anthropological training from one of the people in academia that I admire the most, David Mosse. His book *Cultivating Development* is what got me interested in anthropology.

CS: Yes, that's a nice segue into my next question. Who has been your inspiration? How would you locate your own work in relation to the scholars—and people outside academia—who have inspired you?

CD: There are so many people that I don't really know where to start. Working with all these Bangladeshi NGOs and researchers in Bangladesh, and seeing the importance of applied research, was extremely eye-opening to me because that's research done in the real world, rather than theoretical research. I had three supervisors in total during my PhD.

David Mosse was one supervisor. Sunil Amrith was the environmental historian who was my co-supervisor and Penny Vera Sanzo was from the field of gender and development. Sunil's work was so inspiring in terms of showing the importance of history.

With Birkbeck and SOAS [the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London] and being in the history department, I had to do two vivas because it was so complicated. I did my archival research in my first year of my PhD and looked at embankments through colonial history. That's when I saw the resonances and importance of understanding the past to understand the present.

So, without Sunil, I wouldn't have had that really rich historical context; he also helped me so much with the archival research. I was a Research Assistant for his project doing archival work in Bangladesh. He's the one who recommended Frederick Cooper's book for how it critically spoke about modernity. Because that's also a term we just take for granted, as something positive, right? So, my supervisors meant quite a lot. Then I was teaching at Stockholm Anthropology, and I was part of an Environmental Anthropology reading group. I was a postdoc in Oslo for five years and Environmental Anthropology is really strong there. My most recent article is on ship-breaking and is part of a special issue on re-figuring the future commons.

These conversations with colleagues about current publications and research have been really inspirational for me, as well as conferences. There are so many academics whose research I look up to. I don't think I do justice by mentioning just a few of them here.

CS: There will always be historians holding us accountable for our usage of terms, which I think is so important.

LLO: That leads nicely into our next question. I got interested in climate change when I started to see the colonial roots of climate change. A major theme of this special section on Gender and Climate Justice is the coloniality of climate change. Certainly, your work has gone a long way towards exposing this coloniality. Why do you think it took us so long to see the colonial, political, and economic patterns that have contributed to ongoing climate change?

CD: That is a good question and linked to the fact that, in academia, we have our disciplines, right? So, maybe environmental history has for a long time been its own niche rather than a resource and a methodology for other disciplines to contextualize their research. When I was an undergraduate exchange student at University of Pennsylvania, I chose to take a PhD course in historical sociology with Professor Rudra Sil. Even from that I realized how important history is.

I've always also had an easy time with the natural sciences and STEM subjects. For me, it is not that hard to grasp the main arguments in natural science publications. I think my book has not received any award in anthropology; it's quite interdisciplinary in that sense. You need to be interdisciplinary to understand time and also the material physical impacts on the political, social, and economic, and to have an understanding of power relations. We have been seeing for the past decade a lot of PhDs focusing more on these types of linkages.

SC: One of the primary arguments in your book is that there is often no causal relationship between sea-level rise and the local non-climatic factors. The fact that there are so many different kinds of floods in Bangladesh that are often overlooked leads to a series of misreadings regarding climate change in Bangladesh. There is often little focus on what people actually need.

This also extends to academics who universalize things. I'm curious how you arrived at that conclusion of misreading, especially at a time when we are trying to read many things in relation to climate change. Misreading itself emerges as a very key concept, not just in the book, but in some very implicit ways in what you have published since then.

CD: A great question. One of my biggest academic debts is to James Fairhead and Melissa Leach for writing the book Misreading the African Landscape. That's my inspiration and actually the title I wanted for my own book. It's reading climate change backwards. So, for instance, when you assume that Bangladeshi rural women are powerless victims of Islamic conservative patriarchy, you don't give them any scope for agency and their romantic choices. Bengali women are fierce. What they can do is mind-blowing. I'm so inspired by my interlocutors.

I guess my positionality also helped because the Bangladeshi context is very white supremacist in that you "should" be fair and not dark skinned. Now it's winter in Sweden and I don't have a tan but when I'm in Bangladesh I'm quite tan. I look like my interlocutors. So, when looking at images of me with my interlocutors, we look like sisters. But it bothered me when they thanked me at one point. I think some upper-middle class NGO workers that are Bangladeshi believe they're superior to these landless rural women. Also, it is a Muslim country. There are a lot of Brahminical Puritan things going on, you know, like not wanting to share food.

LLO: We want to talk about why you decided to publish your book as open access and if you have any advice for other scholars, particularly early career scholars who are also interested in publishing open access material.

CD: I must admit, it wasn't my idea. My publisher asked me if I had funding for open access and I said no. And then she looked around and found the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's program called the Sustainable Histories Monograph Pilot.

Because my book is about history and environment, it was selected for the pilot. There's a big but here: If you're selected for this pilot, you cannot choose your covers. You can get a really ugly cover or a good cover. Personally, I find the cover of my book quite ugly, but I thought it was worth it if the book was open access and my interlocutors in Bangladesh could read it. It has been so crazy to hear that colleagues are using my book for teaching and kind enough to give me feedback.

I also realize that undergraduates can read my book because I did write it in a way that wouldn't be too complex. I used my lectures as templates for the book. I don't know about the US but in Scandinavia, if you're at a university, everything you publish in journals ends up being open access. I should also share that I've been invited to hold the 2026 Lewis Henry Morgan lecture for my second book tentatively called Living With Toxic Development.

LLO: We're really interested in your work about the shipbreaking industry in Bangladesh and toxicity. I'm here in Newfoundland and Labrador, which is a coastal area as well and an area that has historically depended heavily on the fishery. Could you talk about what brought you to this work and what lies ahead for you?

CD: Shipping, the global industry, may result in the end of the life cycle of shipbreaking of ships, or not. Parts of the ship that are broken down are recycled. My project was supposed to be about maritime working worlds and especially labour. For me to make the project my own, it was important to also have the environmental aspect in the proposal so that, when I spoke to workers, it was the working conditions—toxic working conditions and pollution—that would come out.

Once I was at the research site, I found I didn't want to talk only to shipbreaking workers. I wanted to talk to the people in the entire area, including the fishermen and communities living in between the yards. So, it was a bit that life brought me to work in shipbreaking and now it's hard to stop working in the sector. Once you enter the maritime industry and have a lot of colleagues working on different aspects of ethnography in the maritime industry.

CS: We have almost reached the end of this conversation. One of the primary readers of Atlantis are early career scholars and graduate students. What advice do you have for navigating interdisciplinary spaces?

CD: I've become more and more disciplined over time. It's hard to be interdisciplinary. If you notice my publications, they all strategically target anthropology journals. I did that to qualify for an anthropology job. So, it depends on what kind of job you would like, what kind of workplace you're interested in. It really matters where you publish. I know that's kind of a buzzkill. When I think about it, all my collaborations have been with anthropologists. I don't know how interdisciplinary that is.

I also think you have to communicate in the right way to get funding. I got external funding and a medical researcher from another department did not. And this researcher told me that he does not understand what I am doing because my research is all subjective.

You have to teach the collaborators. In terms of water and Bangladesh, my interlocutors, for a long time, were water engineers and natural scientists. They really appreciated the environmental history and the development critique in my book. So, they've invited me to collaborate when they want that perspective. I'm talking to another colleague, who is a natural scientist, about sedimentation. He wants an anthropological perspective. I can only speak from that disciplinary perspective of, you know, ethnography, but maybe historians can say this is what I can contribute to an interdisciplinary collaboration. As a last point, I suggest writing grant applications with interdisciplinary colleagues.

LLO: Finally, why do you think is it important to study gender and climate justice right now?

CD: I'm wary about how gender and climate justice can also become development buzzwords. It is important to be specific about what we mean by climate justice versus environmental justice. What do we mean by gender? The contexts vary.

I think in developmental contexts, unfortunately, gender is still usually equated with women. However, in the face of backlash against LGBTQI+ communities right now, it is important to queer any environmental movement. It is really important to fight the status quo because the status quo is unequal, not only socioeconomically, but also in terms of people who can't be who they are. Can you feel safe being queer? Probably not.

There is still a lot to do to make sure people can be themselves everywhere. In terms of social structures, what does gender and climate justice even mean? In what context and whose rights are made visible? Those are the questions for the future.

Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice would like to thank Camilia Dewan for her insights. Views expressed by the interviewee and interviewers are exclusively their own.

Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice
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Book Review

Book Review: *The Intersectional Environmentalist*

Reviewed by Nicole Vankooten

Book under Review: Thomas, Leah (2022). *The Intersectional Environmentalist: How to Dismantle Systems of Oppression to Protect People + Planet*. New York: Voracious / Little, Brown and Company.

Reviewer: Nicole Vankooten completed her Bachelor of Arts and Science from the University of Guelph in 2023. She is currently writing a master's thesis on the loss of medieval English forestry practices through colonialism and its legacies for modern Canadian forest management. As a Northern Ontario tree planter herself, Nicole hopes to use this research to introduce historical perspectives to conversations around sustainable forestry and ecologically responsible logging. In her free time, Nicole loves to camp, hike, and travel. She finds nature, and the forest specifically, as a crucial tool for resiliency in her own mental health journey.

In a new era of our planet's history deemed the "Anthropocene" by many leading researchers, Leah Thomas's book *The Intersectional Environmentalist* reminds readers that humans and the environment coexist within myriad interconnecting cycles and systems. Social justice and environmentalism, the author argues, must come together to dismantle "the same systems of oppression that oppress people [and] also oppress and degrade the planet" (32). She names this movement "intersectional environmentalism," a name that builds on Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality (1991). Using her book as an educational starting point, Thomas expertly combines thorough investigative research with her lived experiences as a Black woman and social justice advocate to compel her audience to think critically about the natural and political ecosystems that surround them. She actively critiques the historical and ongoing exclusion of key voices in environmental justice efforts using global case studies to exemplify the demand for intersectionality within environmentalism. *The Intersectional Environmentalist*, the book, is a vital start to approaching the ambitious goals of intersectional environmentalism, the movement, as Thomas delivers an achievable how-to guide for her readers to integrate this school of thought into their own lives.

Furthermore, Thomas carves space for many other leaders of intersectional environmentalism within her book, further enhancing the diversity of perspectives for her broad readership. She skillfully weaves their voices within her narrative by including interview questions, primary source documents, and quotations from a range of global figures. Uplifting the voices of prominent intersectional figures, such as drag queen icon Pattie Gonia and the revolutionary Combahee River Collective, not only strengthens Thomas's key arguments but also distinguishes her movement's unique ability to unite different communities across the globe.

Chapter One "Intersectional Theory, Feminism + Intersectional Environmentalism" provides an informative historiography of the necessary background leading up to the intersectional environmentalist movement. Thomas opens her readers to an alternative narrative of predominantly white-led feminism movements categorized by three "waves" in recent North American history. The author, unfortunately, missed an opportunity to discuss recent and emerging research among gender studies scholars that critiques the use of "waves" when describing feminist history. Nancy Hewitt's influential book *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of US Feminism* (2010), for example, questions the validity of the wave metaphor when writing women's and social history.

While Thomas does touch on the exclusion of Black feminists from such history, a deeper analysis of the ongoing conversation regarding the harms of perpetuating the "wave" narrative would further educate her readers on intersectional theory. Kathleen A. Laughlin (2010) and her colleagues similarly challenged the wave model of feminism to achieve a more diverse narrative that includes the experiences of people of colour, working classes, and LGBTQIA+ individuals. Acknowledging this important discussion would strengthen Thomas's assertion of the need to adapt outdated notions of "environmentalism" using intersectional theory by similarly tracing the role of intersectionality in creating more inclusive narratives of women's studies, gender history, and social justice.

The Intersectional Environmentalist deserves abundant recognition for its creative and informative methods of conveying the author's message in an accessible way. The author excellently blends primary source analysis with her call to action using key excerpts from documents such as the *Principles of Environmental Justice from the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit* (1991). The tone shifts from Chapter Two onward as the author begins to move away from historiographical writing into a less formal and more personal approach to conveying the intersections that exist between social and environmental justice. Here, Thomas provides her readers with the how-to guide promised in the title of her book. She uses Intersectional Environmentalist Pledges to conclude each chapter and outline achievable ways to instigate change. These pledges represent *The Intersectional Environmentalist*'s incredible ability to encourage an audience to interact with the content of the book and actively situate it within their lived experiences. The author's approachable and personal methodology contrasts other intersectional scholars such as Ande A. Nesmith et al. in *The Intersection of Environmental Justice, Climate Change, Community, and the Ecology of Life* (2021), who address more academic audiences.

The "Tool Kit" at the end of the book is a brilliant method to give readers a stepping stone into their individual research and education on intersectional environmentalism. The author claims this section intends to "deepen your understanding of intersectional environmentalism, and continue on your environmental journey" (137). Through the inclusion of exclusive interview content and links to additional educational media, the "Tool Kit" delivers on its intentions by allowing a diverse audience to engage with intersectional environmentalism in a manner tailored to their unique life experiences. Thomas' continued dedication to providing resources and encouraging personal research throughout the book solidifies the author's confidence in intersectional environmentalism to instigate change through education.

Through this book, Thomas undoubtedly establishes herself as a leader in social justice and environmentalism. *The Intersectional Environmentalist* is a remarkable book for those seeking to gain new insights into climate justice and environmental advocacy. The author's accessible language and eye-catching format make this book enjoyable and educational while offering strong arguments for the need to include intersectional perspectives in the environmentalist movement. This guidebook-style narrative will certainly become an essential addition to personal bookshelves, classrooms, and syllabi around the globe.

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Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice
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Book Review

Book Review: *The End of this World*

Reviewed by Carole Therrien

Book under Review: Alook, Angele, Emily Eaton, David Gray-Donald, Joël Laforest, Crystal Lameman, Bronwen Tucker. 2023. *The End of This World: Climate Justice in So-Called Canada*. Between The Lines Publishing

Reviewer: Carole Therrien is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. Her research focusses on how women demonstrate cultural leadership in settings impacted by climate hazards.

In *The End of This World: Climate Justice in So-Called Canada*, six writers have co-authored a volume of essays that demonstrate the extent of climate injustice faced by Indigenous communities and what can be achieved by highlighting the structural oppression and evident racism experienced by Indigenous communities, when interacting with both state and non-state actors. Extensive, thorough, and passionately written, the text is exhaustive in its scope and referencing. A hybrid of interdisciplinary scholarly and literary work, *The End of this World* is a text that remains etched in one's memory.

After laying out six governing principles that would lead to substantive and decolonized climate justice, the book's objectives cannot be clearer: to bring to light "the violation of Indigenous peoples' inherent rights and sovereignty, and the fossil fuel economy that relies on this violation" (11). Further, the authors propose that a just transition allowing "everyone to meet their basic needs while remaining within global ecological limits" (89) will not occur unless settler capitalism in Canada is no longer the primary political economic structure. The authors argue that the recognition of Indigenous rights and sovereignty is central "to rescue a habitable planet" (6) and can no longer be considered an afterthought or add-on to the thinking among advocates of climate justice or state authorities. This is also a cornerstone for acknowledging past and current relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, and a path towards restoring a balance to a long-strained relationship.

The authors, who are academics, activists, and journalists, both settler and Indigenous, tackle five different ideas that define and propose to resolve the problem of climate injustice: the assertion of Indigenous sovereignty on Canadian soil and abroad; a commitment to maintaining the 1.5 degree Celsius threshold to stave the most destructive of potential climate damages; polluters and the wealthy paying their fair share; reliable and valuable work for women in a care-oriented economy; and a global equality.

The book's objectives and approaches are ambitious but consistent with the contemporary Canadian decolonization dialogue. All six authors claim that the dismantling of Western capitalism, which is based on fossil fuel extraction/production/transformation, is the only means to reach climate justice and bring attention to the many other injustices wrought by capitalist interests: violence, exploitation, land theft, inequality, greed, sexism, and racism. They argue that undoing the current way of operating is the only solution; by unweaving the complex interdisciplinary narrative, we find ourselves unwillingly complicit. At times, the book appears to be a manifesto, at others an ethnographic récit or academic treatise. From a literary perspective, this may appear contradictory but it is reflective of the non-linearity of the issues the book addresses.

The presented roadmap to short-term and long-term actions is very helpful for readers of this book who wish to inform themselves on the issue of Indigenous sovereignty and climate change; one cannot finish the book and not question the complexity of the issue nor dismiss any possible resolution. The call for an immediate end of everything that is familiar will intimidate settler readers reluctant to lean into discomfort. But it will motivate activists, proponents, and allies for greater Indigenous involvement in the climate debate.

While the use of extensive endnotes provides context or sources of information which contribute to the book's textual heft, it can disrupt reading at times. The absence of a formal bibliography of said references and sources made it challenging to find sources; some sources are inconsistently identified within the endnotes. In the spirit of decolonizing text, this is a metaphor for challenging or questioning the way one thinks of an essay compendium.

As a settler anthropological and political economy scholar who focuses on the impacts of change on women in structurally oppressed settings, I struggle to situate this compendium or call to action within any discipline-specific body of literature. Its interdisciplinary nature makes it difficult to pigeonhole and, as such, reminds me of popular activist texts such as *The Leap Manifesto* (2015) that bring together complex ideas and calls to action. The book does, however, sit well with other activist scholarship written by, for example, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Robin Maynard, and Deborah McGregor, whose collective works bring attention to the injustices by colonial institutional apparatuses to Canada's Indigenous and Black communities.

Published by Between the Lines, a self-proclaimed "social movement press," this is not a formal academic book. However, non-academic texts are also vital for contributing to the decolonization of the academy. Non-traditional academic texts can be particularly valuable for presenting Indigenous knowledge in a range of formats. This book's strength comes from its activist and interdisciplinary nature.

I would particularly recommend this book to readers who appreciate concrete examples and approaches that allow them to better understand a complex and historically charged modernity. Crystal Lameman makes a particularly strong contribution with her chapter on building a care economy where the expectation and delivery of care is based on human rights principles. Individual chapters would make interesting additions to academic syllabi in gender studies, Indigenous studies, Canadian studies, geography, or anthropology. The book in its entirety might also serve as a good think piece at the Canadian secondary-school level.

The End of the World is meant to question what many people ignore in Canada's contemporary political economy. It provides settler and non-settler strategies that can lead to climate justice. The book is written clearly and succinctly to unsettle, contend, explore, and instigate. As such, it presents a long-overdue and uncomfortable debate.

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Book Review

Book Review: *Queer Ecofeminism*

Reviewed by Sākihitowin Awāsis

Book under Review: Ourkiya, Asmae. 2023. *Queer Ecofeminism: From Binary Environmental Endeavours to Postgender Pursuits*. Lexington Books

Reviewer: Sākihitowin Awāsis is an Assistant Professor, jointly appointed to the Department of Geography and Environment, and the Indigenous Studies Program, at Western University.

Q*ueer Ecofeminism: From Binary Environmental Endeavours to Postgender Pursuits* contributes to an important and growing body of work that is moving ecofeminist analysis away from a colonial gender binary. The book does this by articulating the interrelations of gender and ecological justice. The enthralling, provocative, and timely work offers an ecocritical analysis of a wide range of media. This includes film, television shows, art installations, historical documents, and religious texts. The approach is designed to help move the field of ecofeminism towards a postgender future that is socially and environmentally just. The aim of the work is to fill the urgent need to address root causes of the climate crises by expanding research beyond the limitations of the gender binary.

Increasingly, scholars across a variety of disciplines are incorporating gender into ecological and climate research. Scholars such as Szilvia Csevar (2021), Baada, Baruah and Luginaah (2023), Goldsmith and Bell (2022), and Kivioja, Pongsiri, and Brody (2023) have effectively argued that climate change disproportionately impacts Indigenous women, women of colour, and gender and sexually diverse individuals. The origins of mainstream ecofeminism were grounded in a binary approach to gender. As such, research on the gendered impacts of climate change still largely rely on the colonial gender binary. However, the field is shifting towards a more inclusive, nonbinary approach that problematizes patriarchal, capitalist systems and intersecting forms of oppression. This new approach embraces gender diversity. Asmae Ourkiya, a nonbinary researcher of Amazigh descent, describes how this shift is in part motivated by the 2016 Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting and the current rise of far-right politics.

First-wave cultural ecofeminism emerged in the 1970s and is characterized by the essentialization of women, as well as a lack of intersectionality, inclusivity, engagement with queer theory, and politicization. Meanwhile, radical ecofeminism rejects the essentialist association of women with the earth and claims that this reinforces patriarchal domination and restricts the potency of ecofeminism. Following the lead of queer theory and radical ecofeminism, Ourkiya demonstrates the rich potential for ecofeminism to not only challenge the normalization of binary gender, intersex/transgender exclusion and erasure, and compulsory heterosexuality, but also to further develop its own distinct modes of analysis.

The book consists of five chapters that together provide readers with a framework for queer ecofeminism. The first chapter analyses the connections between the oppression of nature, women, and marginalized people through the lens of intersectionality and demonstrates that gender and climate justice are deeply intertwined with decolonization. The second chapter, "On De-essentializing Ecofeminism," develops ecofeminism as a movement and discourse that aims to promote nonhierarchical social organization by rejecting binary thinking. The chapter exposes essentialist entanglements in science and literature, calling for urgent de-essentialization. The third chapter details Ourkiya's interlinking of feminism and environmentalism as interdependent movements. The fourth chapter draws attention to the

post-gendered approach missing in gender and climate discourse, introduces postgenderism to ecofeminism, and challenges the heteronormativity of far-right politics. Artwork explored in this chapter includes the Amorous Couple painting from Iran's Qajar Dynasty and Alok Vaid-Menon's poetry. The fifth chapter reexamines and synthesizes the contributions that all chapters make to the development of a neo-ecofeminism.

Overall, this book carves a vibrant path forward for queer ecofeminist thought. Still, several oversights are apparent. First, the book contains a few formatting inconsistencies (most glaringly a reference to the "table below" that does not exist on page 30) that presumably are remnants from its prior form as thesis. Second, there is some replication of dualistic thinking, for example framing the Global North/Global South as colonizer/colonized. Considering the systemic oppression of the Uyghurs, can China be grouped with the Global South? Can Indigenous peoples of North America be characterized as part of the Global North? This dualistic framing risks essentializing geographic location and would benefit from more nuance.

Moreover, Ourkiya purports to challenge all forms of essentialism and I was left wondering how they would respond to Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2014) who problematizes the anti-essentialist approach, arguing it overestimates its emancipatory potential because although it could adequately address the breadth of interrelated power relations, it can also serve colonial power structures. Coulthard states that "both constructivist and essentialist articulations of identity can aid either the maintenance or subversion of oppressive configurations of power" (2014, 102). Ourkiya may have inadvertently created another dualism by demonizing essentialism and glorifying anti-essentialism.

Ourkiya successfully brings ecofeminism into constellation with nonbinary genders and non-heteronormative bodies and sexualities, but this falls short of how Michi Saagiig Nishinaabe scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) defines constellation as relationships that are informed by the radical resurgence of embodied Indigenous political orders. Although Ourkiya accounts for how early forms of ecofeminism "borrowed" from Indigenous communities and relationships with land, some Indigenous scholars consider this a form of appropriation (Nixon 2015; Kwaymullina 2018). The connections to Indigenous studies, and Indigenous feminisms in particular, could be strengthened.

Although Ourkiya aims to guide research on Indigenous peoples from the tenets borrowed by ecofeminism to a more expansive intersectional study of issues faced by Indigenous communities, a question arises and reflects a wider and long-standing gap in the field of ecofeminism: what does it mean for ecofeminism to center Indigenous knowledge systems? What does Indigenous ecofeminism look like? There was a missed opportunity here to animate ontological pluralism, further combat hierarchies of knowledge, and elevate the voices of queer Indigenous people. Despite these shortcomings, Queer Ecofeminism opens possibilities for new research methodologies and interdisciplinary synergies and has much to offer scholars, scientists, artists, and activists alike. Ourkiya implores us to bridge queer theory with critical ecofeminist scholarship because "natural spaces have always and will always be queer" (95).

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Literary Work

The Farmer and the Snake

It is my will to bite
when I come to and find myself
smothered against your chest.

My fangs ask no questions, simply
engage in a dance of stimulation
and response.

But you never were a very good dancer, were you Farmer?

I am a question, long and hot against the ground,
raveling and unravelling like a sailor's rope —
which font will I coil into today?

It is always a question
of what I choose or do not choose
to do.

Shoulderlessly, I shrug it off —
the skin you touched, the hewn stone
scales you picked at. I leave them behind in the dirt.

There is no me that was handled by you.

I bit off my own tail, made myself
a bleeding sock,

slunk into a hole in the ground.
I froze myself in a bucket, slept
in a curlicue of ice crystals.

But still you reach your short and
greedy fingers into my den.
I feel the earth falling over me, so I bite down
hard

and you yelp like a struck hound.
I expect dashed brains, so my middle contracts
and I make myself small.
How unsweet!
But you forgot what kind of thing I am —

Farmer, you and I were never friends.
No matter how familiar you make yourself
with the small red ribbon I keep
between the pages of my jaws,
you can never read
what I have written with my body.

Sophia Godsoe (she/her) is a writer, editor, and graduate of Mount Saint Vincent University in Kjipuktuk. Her poems have appeared in Toronto's *Lived* Magazine and she was shortlisted for the WFNS Rita Joe Poetry Prize in 2022. She will be attending UNB in the fall to earn her Master's of Creative Writing.