Women & Environments
international magazine

Identities and Knowledges of Care

Land Speaking: Syilx Climate Justice
Presentation by Jeanette Armstrong

World's Best Lover
Natasha Sanders-Kay

"We are Remade by Each Other"
A conversation with Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu
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Mother Hawk
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A Journey of Care and Entanglements
Janna Lichter

South Feminist Futures Teach-in Webinar on Gender, Music and Social Change Bridget Buglioni

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Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge and thank the many Indigenous peoples on whose lands we live, work, study, and write.

Mission Statement

Women & Environments International examines women's multiple relations to environments – natural, built and social – from intersectional feminist and anti-racist perspectives. It has provided a forum for academic research and theory, professional practice and community experience since 1976. It is published by a volunteer editorial board and contributes to feminist social change. The magazine is associated with the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change at York University, and has previously been associated with the Women and Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto.

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Canada

ON THE COVER

"Unpaid Carework" by Shlomit Segal

Shlomit is a graphic designer and visual artist with a love of printmaking and mixed media. She's also been active in the labour movement and on various social justice and environmental issues. Her secret talents include writing sketch comedy and cooking soup.

THANK YOU

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WE Speak

"From Caring Comes Courage"

- Lao Tzu (6th century BC)

Peri Dworatzek: Every day we make choices of who and what to care for, and how to care. Whether or not these choices of care are thoughtful, they are made by choosing what to prioritize and what to send to the periphery. Yet sometimes choices to stop caring for certain beings, places, and things are intentional.

Bridget Buglioni: Reflecting on this issue and on the call for submissions, I found myself thinking about care and how I understood it. Care is an affect of mind, it's an oppression on our thoughts or conscience – and a burden it can be, to care deeply. But through this heavy responsibility or duty, comes action. And just as care describes an affect, it also describes practice. Care denotes a sort of stewardship, to care for the land, to care for a sick relative. It can also be an act of maintenance, a way of prolonging, making something last – maybe out of respect, out of necessity, or out of survival. It can evoke a special attention, to handle with care. It can be a synonym for love or kindness, but also evokes fear, vigilance, or concern. As the opening quote from Lao Tzu reminds us, through care comes courage, and that allows us all to move forward. This issue of Women & Environments International Magazine explores care's different shapes, forms, and meanings. Even if sometimes care can be hard to find, hard to uncover, lost in translation perhaps, lost in bureaucracy even … it is always present, like a gift.

PD: Care can be hard to find because it is often made invisible in our capitalist colonial societies. Caring for others is devalued and ignored, or conversely it is given a price point. Capitalist societies require care and care work to be invisible because it is a mechanism to maintain unequal racial, patriarchal, and colonialist power structures.

Sayeh Dastgheib-Beheshti: Indeed! A friend once told me that they viewed caring for the unhoused to be anti-capitalist, since caring highlights human compassion and giving to others without expecting anything back, which goes against the rational 'homo economicus' model imposed in so many economic systems.

Christine Beaudoin: We can think of care normatively, as an ideal to achieve in order to build a more ethical world. But I believe we should remain critical of such a notion. While "caring" for others is noble, important, and essential to our survival… we must also remember that care is not a neutral practice. It takes time and energy to care for others. History has shown us that discourse and imaginaries around care are often gendered and racialized. Care as a practice performs immaterial assumptions about who should carry the burden of care in a given context. As such, practicing care may at times (re)produce flows of injustice. For example, why are women more often tasked with caring for the household? Why are caring jobs, such as teaching, healthcare, and environmental stewardship, not paid as much as other types of jobs? We must remain attentive to such injustices and challenge the narratives that support them.

Reena Shadaan: Yes, care is not neutral. It's a type of labour that is often not acknowledged until there is a felt absence. Even then, we see a normalization of violence towards paid care workers, like personal support workers, nurses, and others - often women of colour. Care is made invisible; it's seen as "natural" and therefore unskilled. This drives exploitation, especially in unorganized sectors. So there's a violence in terms of the exploitation of this labour, but also, there's physical, verbal, sexual, and other types of violence that care workers are subject to in their day-to-day work lives. Care work can be hazardous work.

PD: Yet when acts and feelings of care become visible, they can be places of inspiration that help care to spread further. In this way, the act of caring is like a stone skipped onto a body of water. If it is not seen and forgotten, it slowly becomes invisible as it sinks to the bottom. While if it is seen, one can watch the ripples and currents spread forth. As such, choosing to bring acts of care and feelings of care to the forefront is vital as we move through a world that continues to ostracize and harm human and nonhuman beings. This issue of the magazine highlights many stories of caring for, caring with, and being taken care of, which bring hope and inspiration in a time of need. In this and many other ways, care is a necessary part of resistance that requires courage.

RS: One question becomes, how do we all value care? Bringing care as work, as skilled work, to the forefront is a step towards erasing the invisibility of this labour that is feminized, often racialized, and individualized. But beyond visibility, I think centering care is also about acknowledging that care work is or should be collective labour – we take care of one another to shape our worlds and futures. This ethic or politic of care is true in many contexts and pockets of our worlds, but does not align with the logics of capitalism and settler colonialism. So practising this form of collective care also becomes a type of resistance work. I think about it in terms of childrearing as well as in relation to collective organizing towards better working and living conditions. It's all care labour, but a collective orientation or responsibility creates space for caring to be given and felt more mutually and extensively.

SDB: In formulating the call for submissions for this issue of the magazine, we wondered, how could we bring diverse knowledges and identities of care into conversation?

BB: We wanted to create a shared space that recognises how essential care is, and also recognises its diverse forms.

We wanted to bring into 'conversation' diverse expressions of the meaning of care (for and with the land, other humans, more-than-human beings, rivers, forests, oceans, ecosystems, etc.), gendered dimensions of care, and how care is practiced in various places, over time, and at various scales. We recognize the essential nature of care for others and the Earth, as practiced worldwide, and this issue explores the diversity and richness of environmental care practices and knowledge systems from around the world, highlighting the varied experiences and profound wisdom of individuals and communities who are actively committed to the preservation and safeguarding of our planet. We focus specifically on questions of care to emphasize practices that connect humans with the land.

SDB: The polarization of society reminds us of the constant need for respectful dialogue.

BB: …especially as this issue's emergence coincides with a time of deep political and cultural disagreement, hate, and violence. Without dialogue, important voices disappear, their stories lost, and we lose sight of the valuable ideas and work of others.

CB: In this issue, we wanted to make space for a diversity of voices, including linguistic diversity. Linguistic diversity refers to the wide range of ways in which people communicate with each other, both in terms of different languages but also in the different ways that each language and dialect may be spoken across time and space. Le langage n'est pas qu'un outil de communication transactionnel; le langage construit des mondes et des visions du monde. Pour rendre ces divers mondes visibles, nous vous invitons à réfléchir aux enjeux de traduction[1]. How can we overcome barriers of language to relate and care for each other? As care and caring practices are deeply material and embody our worldviews, language becomes a key tool to better understand care, and to show that we care about diversity. This is why you will find bits and pieces of French and other languages throughout this issue.

Ellie Perkins: Languages often embody care relationships in untranslatable ways. Place-names, names of trees and food plants, rivers and landscapes sometimes evoke origin myths or relationships that define cultures and hold societies together. These words are so fundamental that they often persist and evoke respect far beyond the cultures that created them, becoming part of an unrecognized long-shared heritage. The connotations and stories embodied in such words require 'deep translation' to be shared in other languages – not just word-for-word translation, but also many recursive footnotes referring to explanations and implications. For example, Uluru, the huge sandstone monolith in central Australia, embodies 50,000 years of Anangu stories linking the natural environment in that place to laws, philosophy and governance teachings for people, other beings, and the land. One 5-letter word cannot possibly convey all that. Hasty translation leaves care hidden[2].

[1]Language is not just a transactional communication tool; languages build worlds (and worldviews). To make these various worlds visible, we invite you to think about the challenges of translation.

[2]https://www.yarn.com.au/blogs/yarn-in-the-community/the-iconic-history-of-uluru-s-traditional-land-and-place-name-repatriation?_pos=1&_sid=3c5d142fc&_ss=r

BB: This issue combines stories and reflections, conversations, thought pieces, poetry and research on how people and other beings care, what care means and does, and maybe how we ought to care. Many themes are woven throughout, such as discussions on the ethics of care; why care is practiced, by whom and where; relationality and reciprocity; alternatives to Anthropocentrism and human-centred thinking; invisible care work and invisible harms.... also, stories of how care emerges in response to toxic or damaged environments.

PD: Caring as requiring intention is a theme that comes through in many pieces in this issue. People can foster care by deliberately creating spaces and places for care to flourish, which allows care to thrive in unexpected places.

CB: Feminist theory and practice teaches us that we can and should think of alternative realities and futures, different from those that now exist. With this issue of WEI, we explore Identities and Knowledges of Care precisely to challenge and unsettle the status quo, and explore the wide range of what it can mean to care, including the opportunities but also the tensions and irritations that this brings. We prioritize and maintain the relatively safe space of these pages to discuss care in all its diversity and to learn from each other, as a respite from the current divisive political climate.

SDB: Authors and artists responded to the invitation of our Call in wilder, richer, and more diverse ways than we ever envisioned.The stories and practices of care collected in this issue affirm the courage of those who see the possibility of kinder, caring worlds that foster relationships which allow life to flourish.

The Editorial Team for this issue includes:

Christine Beaudoin, PhD, is an assistant professor in Urban Environments at the Université de l'Ontario français. She often crosses disciplinary boundaries to study human-environment relationships and biodiversity conservation. She is currently Co-president of the Environmental Studies Association of Canada.

Bridget Buglioni is a recent graduate of the School of Urban Planning Master's program at McGill University. She also holds a bachelor's degree in Geography from the University of British Columbia. Her research interests and passions include issues of housing affordability, urban commons, and spaces of belonging in cities.

Sayeh Dastgheib-Beheshti is a gardener, artist, industrial designer and PhD student at the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change at York University in Toronto, Canada. Her research explores the ways in which a communal industrial design practice based on degrowth could lead to solidarity economy practices.

Peri Dworatzek is a PhD student at York University in the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change. She is an interdisciplinary researcher, studying economics, politics, political ecology, and has an interest in studying more philosophy.

Patricia E. Perkins, PhD, teaches ecological economics and community economic development at the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University, Toronto.

Reena Shadaan, PhD, is a Staff Research Scholar in STS and Sustainability at the Technoscience Research Unit (University of Toronto). Shadaan's work intersects environmental and occupational health and justice, with a core focus on nail salons.

Land Speaking: Syilx Climate Justice

Presentation by Dr. Jeanette Armstrong

Introduction by Bridget Buglioni

Introduction

In March of 2024, Dr. Jeannette Armstrong participated in a dialogue held by the University of British Columbia's Centre for Climate Justice. The talk brought together Drs. Jeannette Armstrong and Christine Winter to discuss how Indigenous Knowledge can shape climate justice. Moderated by UBC Professor and Director of Public Engagement at the Centre, Naomi Klein, the event featured a presentation from each guest as well as a discussion. Armstrong's presentation highlights the severe effects of climate change on Indigenous communities as well as frontline communities. She speaks to the challenges these already vulnerable Indigenous communities face in the wake of ever increasing climate events, as well as reminds us of the root causes such as capitalism, colonialism, and extractivism, which have been affecting Indigenous communities for decades. She calls for full engagement with Indigenous communities in how we address the climate crisis, to work with Indigenous peoples "in their communities, on their lands, on their terms." Thank you to Dr. Armstrong for allowing us to share your presentation in this issue.

Presentation

Armstrong: I am going to give you greetings in my Salish language, my nsyilxcn language. And give my acknowledgement to the people from this territory, the Musqueam people.

I also want to make sure that my greetings are for all of you that are here today, and all of those that are listening in the viewing rooms at the Okanagan – my home territory. I want to thank the Centre for Climate Justice for the work that they are doing to voice these concerns that we have as Indigenous peoples. And I am thankful to Katie, in bringing me here and getting me organised. I am honoured to be having a dialogue with Naomi and Christine today–real women of power doing work that is so needed today. I also want to acknowledge and thank our two campuses for continuing to bring people together, in person. And I want to thank the viewing rooms, for bringing people there in person as well. To be together rather than online. I think the one at UBC Okanagan campus and the one at the Unitarian Church are going to be filled just as much as this room is filled here–so that tells you about the things that people are interested in.

Today I am going to be speaking about shaping justice through Indigenous Knowledge. My focus of the last talk at UBC Okanagan was about the Syilx people and climate justice, but I want to broaden that today. I'll start with some facts and information. A study caught my eye in the Canadian Journal of Forest Research, which found that roughly 4.1 million people in Canada, that is 12.3% of the Canadian population, are in dangerous forest interface areas. That is huge. And more than 2.7 million hectares of land in Canada has already been affected by wildfires – that is just mind boggling. As an extreme example, here in BC, the Donnie Creek fire last year in Northeastern BC, broke a Provincial record as the single largest fire on record. And where I live, in the South Central and Southern part of BC, the unprecedented atmospheric river events of 2021 led to the major flooding and landslides that impacted many, many British Columbians.

However, my focus is on Indigenous communities. The percentage for Indigenous people is nearly three times higher, as 32.1% of the entire population of Indigenous peoples in Canada are in forest interface areas, and right in the middle of forests in many cases (compared to 12.3% of all Canadians). If we think on that for a minute, it gives us some idea of the dangers ahead and the work that must be done, in terms of mitigation.

ILLUSTRATION: PERI DWORATZEK

Map showing the location of Treaty 8 Territory and Okanagan region and river in British Columbia, Canada

In an Indigenous news report, Tammy Webber and Noah Berger said in July of 2023, 106 wildfires had affected 93 First Nation communities [that year]. With 64 full evacuations from communities involving 25,000 people. When we think about that, it's not just about the removal of the people from those communities, people who have very little, but also the losses that they had to return to. There was a CBC report during that time, that the land and environment manager for Prophet River First Nation, which is up in Northern Treaty 8 territory in BC, described the Donnie Creek fire as *catastrophic*. That's a word, but let's see how he describes it:

> He describes it in that the flames destroyed all their trapper cabins, their trap lines, the hunting and fishing areas that they continually use, their burial grounds, many archaeological sites where special kinds of burials are done above ground, all their traditional trails, a rare diamond willow used for ceremonial purposes, all the berry stocks, and countless, countless animals – beavers, wolves, moose, deer, and elk, are gone. They were lost to the flames there.

In the Shuswap, which is just North of where I live, our sister community, the Bush Creek East Fire forced the evacuation of 11,000 people – that's everybody from that area. Members of the Adams Lake Indian band lost 31 homes, and many right now are still living away from home because they don't have places to go home to, they're in cabins and motels and wherever they can, as they're unable to return home. This is all just in the last couple of years. And the fires have been growing bigger, faster, and more frequent every year.

In 2021 both fires, and landslides and flooding severely impacted more than 100 First Nations in BC. They've been facing flooding over many years, so this is nothing new, but this was much, much worse than anything that they had faced before. In the Fraser River, a rockslide in 2019 as well as last year, 2023, record low river water levels blocked salmon from moving upstream to their spawning grounds. **People from Lillooet were out there by hand, working day and night, lifting the fish over to where they could go further on up the river.**

These are all effects that will be felt for many years to come for our people. It's not just a matter of losing a home and belongings in the home, it's losing all those things that I just mentioned – as they won't come back for years, as those forests are gone. And it's going to get worse. As grand Chief Stewart Phillip from UBCIC (Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs), who is my first cousin by the way, stated, **"the land is speaking to us, we need to listen."** And as Eriel Deranger, the Executive Director of Indigenous Climate Action stated, "the climate crisis can't be addressed in any meaningful way without addressing its root causes: capitalism, colonialism and extractivism."

The injustices I just talked about are just examples. They didn't just start when the climate crisis became noticeable to people, they've been going on for years for us. Those root causes have been going on as a colonial process. I have seen so many changes in my territory over my own lifetime, as has every person who's my age and older. Its effects on us as Indigenous peoples are now getting worse. Much more rapidly than ever.

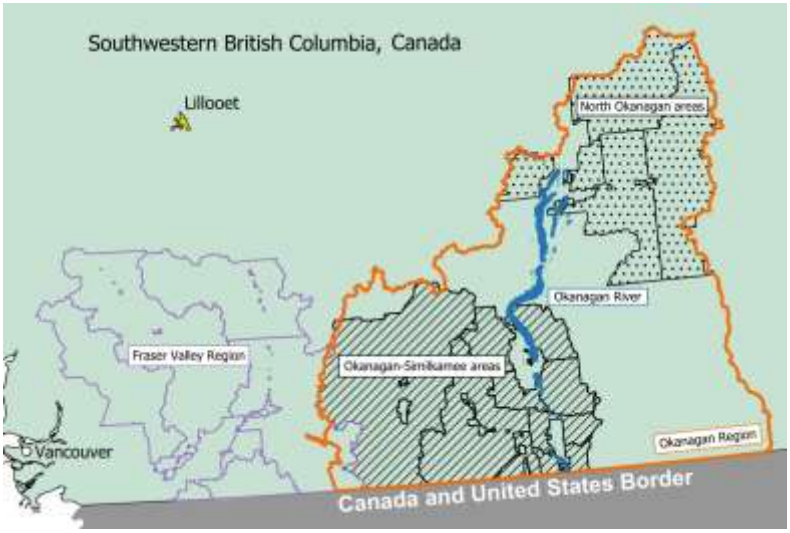
There's helplessness and hopelessness in our community. That's something that we have to work against, our leaders have to work against, to try to find ways to provide change and hope in our Indigenous communities. These [examples] have severe impacts on already vulnerable people. People that have been traumatized by the unjust taking of our lands, by the residential schooling, by the public schooling, and the continual obstructing of access to our foods and our sovereignty on our lands.

In terms of looking at climate justice work, going back to Eriel's words on those root causes, capitalism, colonialism and extractivism, there are many areas of work that need to be done in these three areas. These are things that can be addressed by the government, we know that; but how can we hold governments and corporate actors accountable when their actions are controlled from within the comfortable and protected lives that they are expected to keep. An example is the recent dropping of proposed amendments to the BC Land Act, to bring it in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples that would have allowed shared decision making with First Nations over land use here in British Columbia. It was dropped because so much pressure was being put on this government, this NDP government. Where do you think that pressure came from, and what do you think that pressure was about? It wasn't about climate change, it wasn't about Indigenous peoples or Indigenous rights, or about those three things Eriel mentioned.

Climate justice demands that frontline communities, not just Indigenous but all communities that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, have to be fully engaged in solutions about mitigating those harms, and about reducing those harms, and about cleaning up after the effects of those harms. However difficult that shift may be in policy and action making, it is we, the people that have to make those actions happen, because we will be seeing more frequent climate related disasters

with increasing social inequalities and crippling social injustices related to shelter, to food, and to livelihood. There will be more and more people suffering, not just Indigenous people, but my focus is on Indigenous people. We will continue to see the lives being lost of all of our living things out there.

All our living relatives, we as Syilx people, as many of the Salish people who are my relatives, including the Musqueam here – we give personhood to every living thing, not just animals, not just birds, but everything that lives. **Every little flea and every little thing that lives is recognized as having its own right to live in our laws.** That's how our people think – and it's mistaken for something else, mistaken for religion and other things like that. Yes, we have ceremonies to make sure everybody feels that, knows that, understands that, and practices that in their everyday lives, so that all living things have the right to *be*, and not to go extinct and be extricated and dislodged from their areas. Of course, there are legal and political implications in change making, there always will be, but it's doable. We know that it's doable.



Map showing the location of several locations mentioned in Dr. Armstrong's talk. Illustration by Peri Dworatzek-2025

The biggest thing that I see related to Indigenous peoples and shaping climate solutions is this ugly beast in the room that has to be talked about: **the fear of empowering Indigenous-led climate action.** It's a huge barrier. You can call it whatever you want, but it's that. Fear of us maybe having a little bit of power, having a little bit of say, so that we can make changes happen.

The solutions that are being worked out, where people are forced to work with us, with Indigenous people – they're seeing benefits, they're seeing success, they're seeing things that work in different ways than they ever thought about. Governments and agencies *can* and *do* use their expertise to make change when they are guided. And by guided, I mean guided by Indigenous peoples' knowledge, Indigenous structures, and Indigenous laws, working with Indigenous knowledge keepers and peoples – when there are resources that are provided to work that way, and when there are incentives provided to work that way.

I think about some of the work that is going on, and there are more and more good examples, especially from these institutions of knowledgeable people, because this is where it has to start: people with knowledge, people with tools, people with resources, people that can leverage things that can work in collaboration with Indigenous people. I know because I'm part of that movement, and I know it works. There are many skills that have to be represented and included in our community. Indigenous governments have to be involved, however difficult that may seem. **The shift that seems to be difficult, can happen with good heart, good will, and understanding that we have to take a chance to do things in a different way, and we have to have the courage to do things in different ways than we have before.**

Solutions and sharing the burden of climate effects have to find ways to be actualized and led by the people with Indigenous lands and with unceded territories here in this BC. What does unceded territory mean if not that? There's no fear in us going and grabbing the land and doing all of the things that have been done to it. We have to think about how we can be advocates in different ways, together.

I feel and I know the deep despair and the emptiness when I see beautiful places damaged and changed forever. But I also have hope, we here in these institutions can move this agenda in every possible way that we can, with providing voice as has been done today, we can actualize good research collaborations with on-the-ground field study opportunities that foster Indigenous led climate actions right on the land.

We must widen the scope of Indigenous student support in such projects, because they have the gifts of knowledge from their homelands and will apply them in many good ways. And I have seen that happening, there are really good examples, like the work that we're doing in the Okanagan on 'putting the river back,' putting the Okanagan River back, because we're restoring the salmon. It's a success story. [Another example] I think about [is] the Buffalo Treaty that Leroy Little Bear in Alberta and his colleagues are working on. That's a success story that spans borders and States and Provinces that is Indigenous led.

We can actualize these things. We have to widen our scope. We have to reach out. **We have to step forward to work in good collaborative ways, by ad-**

vancing these theories and practices of environmental justice through engaging with Indigenous peoples in their communities, on their lands, on their terms.

I wish you and wish my words go well in terms of moving forward on this action. Thank you for listening.

***

In the discussion portion of the event, the speakers were asked about the 'Land Back' movement. Here are some remarks from Dr. Armstrong on understanding the movement.

Armstrong: One of my mentors, John Mohawk, from Seneca, talked about "re-Indigenizing" the planet. That everyone must find a way to Indigenize themselves, to all the living things around them, and then they can't help but change their economics, their government systems, and so on. And I think we are on the very edge of that because it is happening with the work that En'owkin is doing in relationship with UBC Okanagan, and some of the research clusters that I'm involved in that support Land Back that way.

When you say 'Land Back' it sounds ominous and political and scary, and puts the fear into people. And that is what others use to fuel the resistance to it. We have to stop that; we have to find ways to quiet that voice down and say what is truthful.

There's a lot of important work being done. There are some good programs Canada is putting forward, like the Priority Places Program. So, take advantage of that and work with others to collaborate with Indigenous, and non-Indigenous people. **Make good relationships on the land, and restore the land in all the ways that it needs to be restored.** Some of the work I do in the Okanagan is related to that. Just look at what grows on our campuses. You can't just re-Indigenize the classroom or the curriculum. Look outside, there's living things out there, our birds, our butterflies, our bees are disappearing – all these things that matter are disappearing. There's places for beautiful things that are Indigenous to our land. So, there is [this] kind of Land Back, not just the political, about ownership, and property, and so on.

Speakers were later asked about the process and practice in forming good relationships and constructive partnerships with Indigenous people. In this discussion Dr. Armstrong recounts a story of collaboration and success between Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors.

Armstrong: In the Okanagan Nation, one of the Chiefs (who is also my cousin), Albert Saddleman, was talking about the decline of Sockeye in the Okanagan River system because of the fourteen dams across the border and one dam on this side of the border. The Chiefs were talking about it, and they were really concerned. And Albert, he's passed away now, got up and he said, "Well, we have to put them back, we have to figure out what we need to do, who we need to be friends with, and how we need to do things. And it's not going to be our communities that can do that, there's a lot of power out there."

That was one of the things that really helped that process, [of trying to find out] how to bring people into the way we think. And we went to talk to two of the old knowledge keepers and asked them, "How do we do that?"

And they said, **"Do it the way we do it, call up your enemies and tell them, 'Come, we're going to feed you, we're going to have a feast and we want you to sit with us. And we want to tell you what is happening, and ask, what can you do, and how can you help us – because you're in places of power.'"**

So, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Public Utilities district of the Grand Coulee Dam, were all invited by the Chiefs to the river. And our Chief said, "Let's do the water ceremonies and invite them to participate, and help them to feel what we feel about the river and the Salmon."

That was over 25 years ago, and some of the biggest runs of Sockeye Salmon are now back. Because you can do that, you can make that happen. **It's hard, but it's doable.**

Jeannette Armstrong, PhD, is Syilx Okanagan, a fluent speaker and teacher of the Nsyilxcn Okanagan language and a traditional knowledge keeper of the Okanagan Nation. She is a founder of En'owkin, the Okanagan Nsyilxcn language and knowledge institution of higher learning of the Syilx Okanagan Nation. She currently is Professor in Indigenous Studies at UBC Okanagan and Coordinator of the Interior Salishan Languages Program. She has a Ph.D. in Environmental Ethics and Syilx Indigenous Literatures. She is an Officer of the Order of Canada and a Member of the Royal Society of Canada. She is the recipient of the Eco Trust Buffett Award for Indigenous Leadership and in 2016 the BC George Woodcock Lifetime Achievement Award. She is an author whose published works include poetry, prose and children's literary titles and academic writing on a wide variety of Indigenous issues. She currently serves on Canada's Traditional Knowledge Subcommittee of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada.

Still Mothering

Holding you.

Smelling you.

Talking to you.

Dressing you.

Planning your funeral.

Writing your eulogy.

Attending your cremation.

Scattering your ashes.

Packing your clothes.

Framing your photos.

Making your memory box.

Ordering your statement of stillbirth.

Thinking about you.

Thinking about you.

Thinking about you.

Thinking about you.

Remembering you.

Imagining you.

Loving you.

Mothering you.

This poem is about the author's experience of stillbirth at 34 weeks. It names their carework in the aftermath of pregnancy loss. We still parent, even when our babies die.

Anonymous

Getting Emotional for Planetary Care

By Lauren Smith

Women are often viewed or penalized for being 'too emotional' (Frasca et al., 2022). In the 'serious business' of climate decision-making and policy development, emotions are said to be pushed aside (Lerner et al., 2015). But if we look deeply at these decisions and policy processes, emotions persist – sometimes obviously, especially if we consider a certain newly elected American president. Despite this, emotions are regularly seen as too irrational – and as a negatively-viewed feminine trait – to be considered in serious decision-making spaces, spaces in which women are largely absent (Boss et al., 2023; Gay-Antaki, 2020; United Nations, 2019).

Climate change can feel like an omnipotent threat to life on earth, and disproportionately harms women, girls, and marginalized groups (MacGregor et al., 2022; UN Women, 2023). Climate threats are almost impossible to ignore as temperature records are broken monthly and disastrous floods, droughts, and storms are reported at a near constant pace (IPCC, 2023). As we've searched for solutions and ways to increase climate action, we've fallen for the misplaced belief that more information will lead to greater action. '*If people only understood the problem more fully, then they would change their ways!*' However, we are not purely rational decision-makers (Rowan et al., 2021). Information alone is not enough to create the changes we need but those in power frequently succumb to *homo economicus*[1] and human rationality myths (Kennedy et al., 2009; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Whitmarsh et al., 2021). Moreover, emotions play an important, unavoidable role in our decision-making, yet they are often ignored or avoided in sustainable transition discourse and decisions.

In this article, I lay out how emotions in climate communication influence climate behaviour and beliefs, in both negative and positive ways for planetary care. I then explain why it is important to consider *who* is engaging with planetary care work, *where*, and what role emotions have in this work.

Emotions: The bad?

When discussing and thinking about climate change, emotions cannot be evaded. Social psychologists have found that merely reminding someone of climate change can evoke paradoxical psychosocial defenses to assuage the existential anxieties that simmer within (Akil et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2022). As a species, humans are uniquely aware of our mortality, but it doesn't serve us to dwell on this fact as it brings intense existential worries (Rosenblatt et al., 1989). So, we have developed 'defense strategies' to set these anxieties at ease. These defenses include denial, rationalization, and distraction, but also self-esteem bolstering and reinforcement of our beliefs, values, and norms (Kosloff et al., 2019; Pyszczynski et al., 1999). To surpass our impermanence, we strive for symbolic immortality. These defenses are problematic for climate solutions when they reinforce non-environmental behaviours, such as increased resource consumption (Kasser & Sheldon, 2000) or strengthened salience of non-environmental values (e.g., individualism, capitalistic values) (Gailliot et al., 2008). Further, when these defenses increase intergroup biases, climate outcomes are minimized. Research shows that the most effective, sustainable, lasting climate solutions require diverse decision-making groups (Cook et al., 2019; Galia et al., 2015; Nadeem et al., 2020; Nielsen et al., 2017). Yet, existential anxiety defence responses can cause us to prefer those who are most similar to us – and avoid those who are different (Frischlich et al., 2014; Harmon-Jones et al., 1996). This clearly harms efforts to build diverse and globally representative teams, as those less common in these spaces – whether women, people of colour, or other marginalized groups – may be viewed negatively by the dominant group (Elsass & Graves, 1997; Hewstone et al., 2002).

Emotions: The good?

From the way we respond to fear messages in climate communication and our responses to existential threats, it might seem that the emotions in climate messaging are the problem. However, there is room for hope. First, these same threatening, anxiety-inducing climate change reminders *can* encourage climate action from those who already value environmental protection (Fritsche & Häfner, 2012; Rahimah et al., 2018; Smith & Wolfe, 2025). But using fear in climate communications may not be the most ethical or desired approach and won't result in greater climate action for those who don't prioritize environmental protection. As a potential antidote, recent work has found promise in positive, self-transcendent emotions (e.g., awe, hope, compassion) and their ability to encourage climate action, prosociality, and collective identity (Barth et al., 2021; Masson &

[1] *Homo economicus* refers to the economic concept that humans are rational and self-interested subjects.

Fritsche, 2021; Yang et al., 2018). For example, various psychology research teams have found that awe experiences – often most strongly induced by nature – can lead to an increase in pro-environmental intentions, consumer choices, policy support, and pride and passion for pro-environmental behaviour (Chirico et al., 2023; Kaplan et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2018). My colleagues and I completed a systematic review of the awe and pro-environmental behaviour literature – the connection is clear, although further real-world studies are needed (Jones et al., under review).

To further our understanding of emotions' role in climate action and the characteristics of these behaviours, I centre my current research on emotions in climate action, rather than ignoring them. I am framing climate action as *planetary care work*. In typical care work roles – home-, elder-, child- and death-care – women remain foremost, often under- or unpaid, caregivers (Camilletti & Nesbitt-ahmed, 2022; Cousins, 2021; Elson, 2017). These roles are often seen to involve prosocial, communal traits and emotions that are frequently interpreted as inherently feminine (Akesson et al., 2021; Beasley & Papadelos, 2024; Khunou et al., 2012). Even environmentalism as a trait has been found to be coded as feminine (Swim et al., 2020). To determine if typical care work patterns persist at the level of planetary care, I am exploring gender dynamics of paid (e.g., resource managers, policy-makers, analysts) and unpaid (e.g., climate activists, volunteers, doulas) planetary care workers. I am also investigating what emotions motivate these care workers to act. It is essential for an inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable society that these planetary care workers be adequately recognized and compensated. As such, my research will determine *which* emotions influence engagement in planetary care work for *whom*.

Emotions and care at home

Climate-care study and efforts have typically focussed on the Global South, where negative climate consequences are felt most strongly, especially for women and girls (Macgregor et al., 2022; UN Women, 2023). I focus on the Global North and Canada specifically with intention. Just as it is important to recognize that we cannot justly place responsibility for planetary care on women or individuals alone, predominant care workers or not, we cannot solely place gender and climate work in the Global South. Canada and other Global North countries are responsible for the bulk of climate change (Moos & Arndt, 2023). Given our positions of power, we must work to repair the world for a resilient future. There is opportunity here for significant climate impact, for example, through carbon policy and corporate regulations. This is not to say those in the South or elsewhere do not have meaningful, important contributions; these perspectives are invaluable and necessary to ensure equitable, lasting, sustainable futures. However, we cannot sit complacent. There are significant inequities in our own political borders that demand attention – consider Indigenous communities under decades-long boil water advisories and disproportionate arrests – and deaths – of Indigenous women. Climate justice requires addressing social issues in tandem with more explicit climate policy; the time for self-reflection is now.

Emotional recognition

A final piece to the emotional 'puzzle' of planetary care brings us back to our existential fears. Climate anxiety and eco-grief might be unavoidable. Climate crises are only predicted to increase; we may reasonably expect that our mortality fears may likely increase as well. So how can we counteract the undesired responses (e.g., polarization from greater intergroup biases, strengthened environmentally harmful values) to such existential dread? If all this anxiety stems from mortality fears, perhaps this holds an opportunity.

Relationships with and thoughts about death and dying in the Global North have been increasingly medicalized, sanitized, and evaded (Clark, 2002; Hannig, 2024). Having these conversations are difficult – we do not want to think about it and, as noted, have developed techniques to keep it out of mind. It may be that our avoidance of these existentially threatening topics – whether actual mortality or climate change itself – is exacerbating our climate problems. By avoiding the issue, we're also avoiding solutions.

Death avoidance wasn't always the case – and isn't in all places. Death practices used to be much more 'hands on' and the responsibility of the family and loved ones of the deceased – and still are for certain religions and non-Western societies (Hannig, 2024). There is growing Western interest in what makes death 'good' in socially and ecologically meaningful ways (Meier et al., 2016; *The Order of the Good Death*, 2024). In what ways can we meaningfully celebrate our loved one's life, allow for grief to be felt, and, important for growing numbers, put them to rest in environmentally responsible ways? Not only are in-ground burials expensive, but embalming chemicals are carcinogenic, putting funerary workers at risk, and emissions from lined burial plots, cremation, and cemetery maintenance are significant (Franco et al., 2022; Richardson et al., 2024; Shelvock et al., 2021). People are seeking alternatives (and they exist!) but need help from outside the neoliberal, profit-driven funeral corporations. In response, death doulas – another women-dominant field – and green burial options are becoming easier to find and obtain.

It must also be acknowledged that these practices are not new – many Indigenous groups practiced sustainable burial techniques for millennia, allowing ancestors to return to nature and emphasizing interconnectedness with the world and one another (Mcgrath, 2007; McGrath & Phillips, 2008; Sharp et al., 2015). Perhaps returning to these practices that centre our values and those of our loved ones, that put the power back into our own hands, that emphasize interconnectivities, and that recognize the negative emotions we've been ignoring can help us manage our grief and develop the climate action we so desperately need.

What climate scholars and practitioners discern we need now to identify and implement climate solutions is greater diversity, collaboration, compassion, and care. Plausibly, by accepting and recognizing eco-grief and existential anxieties – rather than denying their existence – we can learn to foster ability-to- and communities-of-care. If we can welcome emotions in ourselves and others, good and bad, perhaps we can remember that we are all in community and can flourish together. This broader connectivity and interconnectedness align with feminist and non-Western ideologies and approaches to sustainability (Whyte & Cuomo, 2016), perhaps aiding the entrenchment of Tronto's (2017) *homines curans* – caring people – to centre care in our lives. By accepting the emotions influencing climate decisions and by valuing planetary care work with the recognition it deserves, we can build a resilient, equitable, sustainable planet for generations to come.

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See the Resources section at the end of this issue for resources related to this article

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Natasha Sanders-Kay

Natasha's bio on page 60

WORLD'S BEST LOVER

Plus-sized, and then some. Gorgeous giant. Busty, and damn gutsy. Got all this big green hair that changes colours in different light. Turquoise, aquamarine. Golden greys and blues. Often a matter of weather. Same with her moods. Mighty popular she is, more and more drawn to her each day, many of them rich. They stalk her at all hours, so many suitors. She enjoys spilling her secrets, always new jewels slipped out from hidden dresser drawers. She is utterly polyamorous and that will never change. If I can't accept that, I'd better start running. Her lovers span the globe. Hella romantic she is, blushes at sunset each time. Those moods, though. A raging storm when anyone crosses her, she screams a gargantuan roar, throws things, all the things. But she can be calm, too. And so fucking caring. Calm yet always moving. Always rolling. Rolling leads to rumble and all her best moves. Slurs her words. World's Best Drunk Dancer. Great singer, too, even when she's wasted. Sometimes she shuts down. So opaque, I can't get to her. But sometimes she blooms open, becomes talkative in that whispery way, words flowing from a wet mouth. She puts up with a lot of shit. Is often used up. Forever hostess, godmother to millions, serving drinks. People keep being assholes, but she's got nursing skills, and someday when they're dying, she'll be the one to save them. I don't get her logic, but she assures me there's a reason for everything she does, and I believe her. I don't need to 'get' her. After all, she doesn't get me. Nags me whenever I eat fish or use plastic. Wishes I would spend more time with her. Can ignore her all you want, but sooner or later she shakes you, screams for attention and gets it. She can hold a grudge like no one can. Sometimes she's downright dangerous. Can't take her anywhere, so I come to her every time, it's still never enough. So smart, so sexy. Loves it on top. Undulates for hours, stronger than she looks. How could I stand to leave her? That infinity heartbeat, the stars in her eyes, salt in her breath.

Creating Knowledge through Practices of Care: a modest thought piece

By Peri Dworatzek

Introduction

Caring for other humans, caring for non-human beings, and caring for oneself can all be valuable ways to generate and validate knowledge. Practices of care and knowledge are deeply intertwined, although it might not always be clear how that is possible. In this article, I present some examples of the interrelationships between care and knowledge, and ways that caring for can be a way of learning. Before presenting some examples, I will deconstruct some theories of knowledge.

Generating knowledge

How people learn, what they learn, and who they learn from, are all shaped by situations, spaces, times, and societal structures. The situation and position of a person in society and how they identify has an impact on their understandings and ideas (Haraway, 1988). Depending on who someone is, how they identify, and what positions they hold in society, impacts the creation and validation of what they understand as knowledge[1]. This is what Donna Haraway calls "situated knowledge" (1988, p. 587)[2]. Knowledge can also be formed in places where there is an absence of something. Patricia Collins wrote that "subjugated knowledge" is formed when people are forced to create knowledge because they are denied protections in society (1990, p. 320)[3].

The dominant elite, white, patriarchal, and capitalist ideologies determine and control how knowledge is created, how it is validated, and who is learning. The political, social, and economic contexts in societies determine how knowledge is validated and who is in control of the "knowledge validation process" (Collins, 1990, p. 321). These dominant ideologies affect knowledge creation for different people depending on their personal identities and situations. Therefore, knowledge and the creation of knowledge are complex, highly subjective, and relational practices.

The dominant ways of learning, in Canada and many countries around the world, rely on colonial and Eurocentric scientific practices that demand measurement and observation. Often these mechanisms to establish scientific rigor are believed to be objective, without much concern for the subjective understandings that influence knowledge creation. Additionally, objective approaches and generalizations are harmful to marginalized people because these approaches discourage the promotion of knowledge about marginalized people (Collins, 1990, p. 324). The lack of space for emotions and subjectivity in objective knowledge approaches also diminish the ability for care to be a practice of knowledge creation. Understanding knowledge as a subjective and relational practice is necessary to understand how practices and relations of care can become a way of learning and knowing.

Knowledge systems shape understandings of care

Capitalist and colonial systems in many countries rely on ignoring and devaluing care work. Unpaid care labour such as doing laundry, cooking meals, childcare, etc., is not monetarily valued in the formal economy. Paid labour relies on the ability for there to be someone doing unpaid labour. This influences how care is understood as a practice of learning and knowing. Caring for others, for oneself, and for non-human beings becomes unimportant and overlooked. The prevailing ways of generating knowledge are inherently connected to the societal institutions and systems; however, there has been courageous work of academics, authors, and activists to resist and bring forward other ways of generating and validating knowledge through practices of care.

[1]How I learned and what I learned is shaped by my identity and position in society. I am a white settler woman from an upper-middle class family in the settler colonial, capitalist society that is known as Southern Ontario, Canada. I was brought up being taught that knowledge is objective and must fit within dominant scientific standards. I am now unlearning and coming to understand other ways of knowing and being in the world. To practice learning through care and relation, I am following a footnote practice done by Max Liboiron in Pollution is Colonialism (2021). I explain later in this article how this citational practice is a form of knowledge generation through an act of care. Thank you for taking the time to read this footnote.

[2]Thank you, Donna Haraway, for this foundational work that inspired so many other writers, activists, and academics.

[3]Thank you, Patricia Collins, for your courage and dedication in writing about race, gender, and social inequalities in this piece and your many other works.

Caring as generating knowledge

Although the foundations of colonial and capitalist societies rest on devaluing care, there are spaces where care not only flourishes but is important for generating and validating knowledge. Indigenous education emphasizes the importance of community and family, through relational practices such as storytelling that are passed down many generations (Simpson, 2017, p. 151). Putting community and family at the center of knowledge generation requires spaces for care to be part of learning. Cooperative and intimate relationships are not only valued but essential to deriving knowledge (Simpson, 2017, pp. 154-157)[4]. Intimacy and cooperation with other beings requires mutual agreements of trust and care, placing care at the centre of deriving knowledge.

Zoe Todd, Indigenous activist and academic, writes about a practice of knowledge generation used to understand the environment, called attunement. It is through listening, attunement, and learning from the land and place that a kin-based understanding can be generated (Kanngieser & Todd, 2020, p. 390)[5]. To practice attunement is to practice "a close and generous attention", it is an inward-looking process that can be difficult and tiring (Kanngieser & Todd, 2020, p. 390). When attunement is practiced in kin studies, the voices and practices of Indigenous Peoples are at the center (Kanngieser & Todd, 2020, p. 392). Although not stated explicitly by Kanngieser and Todd, this practice of attunement and deep listening arguably is a way of learning through caring. Generosity and labour constitute an act of care work. This is a way of learning from other humans, non-human beings, land, and place by caring for the entity sharing the knowledge.

[4] Thank you, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, for your use of storytelling in this piece and sharing this knowledge.

[5] The use of dialogue in this piece is a beautiful way of sharing this knowledge while allowing the reader to feel more connected to the authors and understand their perspectives. Thank you, Zoe Todd, for your work and conceptualization of attunement.

[6] I was first introduced to this book in a second-year undergraduate feminism and philosophy course at Carleton University. As I returned to this book years later, I wondered why I highlighted so many lines that now make it harder to read. But I realized that is because this book made an important impression on me as I wanted to learn more about being a feminist and how to do that as a cis white woman. Thank you, Sara Ahmed, for your generosity and strength in sharing this knowledge.

[7] Thank you, Max Liboiron, for your effort, determination, and courage in writing a book using this writing and citation practice. This has opened my eyes to a practice of care in writing that I did not know before reading your work. As I continue on my journey in academia, I will practice unlearning certain ways of being and knowing that have created walls around me.

Caring through citation

Post-secondary institutions are societal systems that control, generate, and validate knowledge. These institutions can be difficult places to care for other humans and nonhuman beings. However, there are ways to care for others in these spaces that challenge the institutional structures. Caring through citational practices is a way to cherish and show gratitude for the work of knowledge producers.

In her book, *Living a Feminist Life*, Sara Ahmed employs a citational practice of not citing any white men, which she explains that white men are an institution. (Ahmed, 2017, p. 15)[6]. Ahmed uses this citational practice as an act of resistance and to acknowledge those who came before her (Ahmed, 2017, pp. 15-16). Citational practices include referencing done in writing, picking speakers for events and conferences, and picking reading lists for course syllabuses, to name a few possibilities.

Citation practices can become repetitive, it is easier to pick references that have already been chosen or use references that were suggested from previous courses and conferences. Yet, as Ahmed writes, this creates walls formed from the "citations as academic bricks" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 148). These walls are knowledge structures that validate certain ways of knowing more than others and validate certain knowledge producers (white men) more than others. Intentionally, citing or only citing, Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other People of Colour, is practicing to chip away at the wall. I view this form of citation as an act of care that validates knowledge. It is an act of care to acknowledge those who in their bravery have paved a different path of knowledge, and it is an act of care for future generations to pass on this knowledge. I have followed this citational practice for this essay to not cite the institutional structure that is white men.

Another way that citational practices can be a form of caring, is by using footnotes as a place to acknowledge relations and declare gratitude. On the very first page in the Introduction chapter of *Pollution is Colonialism,* Max Liboiron explains to the reader how footnotes are used in this book as more than citation, they are spaces of building and practicing relation through the text (2021, p. 1)[7]. Throughout the book Liboiron shows deep gratitude to many people who have influenced and contributed to their journey of learning. This method of citation is a more outright form of care that the reader is reminded of throughout their time in the material. Yet this is also much harder to achieve in academic settings, as it interrupts the text and does not conform to all publishing standards. As the reader continues through the text and the footnotes, there is another type of knowledge being generated that is inti-

mate and close to the writer. The reader sees inside the mind and relations of the writer on their journey in coming to write the text. As I have practiced this way of using footnotes, I have found it difficult to express myself because I normally do not think like this when I am writing something to share with others. In this way, I also feel as if it is a form of care to the self, as one can become more in tune with themselves on their path of learning and growing.

Conclusion

Some societal structures uphold ideas that limit and devalue care as a practice for forming knowledge. However, there are opportunities to practice care as a process of generating knowledge. Deep listening and attunement are ways of learning and practices that can be done in research. Taking care to cite Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other People of Colour is another way to express care through acknowledgement. Additionally, using footnotes to show gratitude and relation are another way that care can generate knowledge. It is important for care to be recognized as a way of generating knowledge because it does not dismiss emotions, and it validates knowledge generated from a diversity of people and places. Additionally, at a time of environmental crisis, caring for all beings is imperative.

Peri Dworatzek's bio is on page 7.

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Penn Kemp

Breast Stroke

The sun spoke in her ear
wheeling fire.

The sun smiled in her face
breaking
her cheekbones.

Taut skin gave.

The sun stroked her head
her yellowing hair.

Her cranium bleached all
summer long before
sprouting tiny
white fibres.

Fed by waterblue eyes
the roots matted, mapped
new links to earth.

Succulent, adapted to
the erratic impossible
union. Water and fire

pushing up
sun
flowers

Delighting in multimedia, poet and playwright **Penn Kemp** is active across the web. She is the author of 30 books, exploring environmental concerns and feminism since her first, 1972. Her latest collection, INCREMENTALLY, is up as e-book and album on https://www.hempressbooks.com/authors/penn-kemp.

Killing Joys with Balloons:

Storying everyday affective encounters through a lens of care

By Sarah El Halwany

This is an essay that involves (affective) encounters with balloons, more-than-human bodies including trees and imaginaries of natural environments. It tentatively/carefully borrows the term 'killjoy' from the work of feminist scholar Sara Ahmed (2023) to consider extents with which it might help to think with this notion in relation to humans' encounters with more-than-human bodies. A killjoy is someone who "disturbs the familiar" (Ahmed, 2010b, p. 588) and threatens the happiness with which racism, sexism, transphobia and homophobia function and breed in both public and intimate spaces. Ahmed (2023) seeks to reclaim the figure of the killjoy, by resisting the negativity often attached to the term and suggests to channel and redirect that negativity to uncover new worlding possibilities. While the stories shared here (and interpretations of them) may fall short from fully engaging with feminist issues, notions of 'killjoy' might help center affective, material-discursive relationality in resisting quotidian acts of nature romanticization.

The two anecdotes happened at different moments of time, involving Sarah (a cisgender Arab woman) and her husband, as parents/immigrants/settlers-visitors on Turtle Island, with their young kids (8 and 6 yrs old at that time). The first one tells a story of an unexpected and an affective exchange between Sarah's husband and a stranger. The second one retraces Sarah's reflections on an otherwise ordinary/joyful event. Both events took place in public settings, not too far from each other, on the streets of downtown Tkaronto/Toronto. Both anecdotes involve (serendipitously, one might note) balloons in connection with other bodies. Sharing those personal anecdotes help to prompt some broader reflections around pedagogies of and for social and environmental justice/care. The stories are narrated from Sarah's perspective.

Image 1: Girl looking up at a balloon stuck in a tree (Credit: Hannah K. Sarah's daughter)

Vignette 1: Balloon stuck in a tree

Here we were, enjoying an open street event in Toronto, closed to cars and open to pedestrian and cyclists. I was with my husband and with my 2 kids. My kids have been enjoying playing with a balloon they got at the event and were happily throwing it up in the air, when it got stuck in a tree on the side of the street. They wanted it back. My husband approached the tree and without much hesitation, started shaking it to bring the balloon down, under the eyes of two eager kids and eyes of a larger (less) sympathetic public audience. As much as I wanted my kids to get their balloon back, as much as I watched in embarrassment and trepidation 'the act' of (public) shaking. Those feelings of unease were immediately confirmed by a passer-by who looked at my husband, almost showering him with disgrace: "Stop shaking the tree, you are hurting it". A disturbing and public exchange followed. My husband, feeling offended responded, arguing his way: "I am barely shaking it, besides a strong wind can shake it even more", to that she replied: "That's different". The woman turned around, muttering words of disapproval and discontent, eyeing us and our kids, causing us to feel even more ashamed as parents (immigrants). My husband was equally affected by that encounter, resisting and downplaying any shameful act. I was torn. The woman's anger (perhaps meeting my sense of embarrassment) does not come 'from' her per se, as Ahmed (2013) argues, but such emotions circulate in 'affective economies' that align individuals with normative ways of being with nature (McLean, 2013). Such an encounter simultaneously coerced the tree into its nature brute state while equally fixating us in our otherness as (immigrant) parents setting a bad example for their kids about how NOT to act with nature.

This anecdote makes visible how caring for nature often come to overpower and supersede our care for one another, as part of nature. How might 'our' response-abilities (Bozaleck & Zembylas, 2023) rest *not* with the human *towards* the tree as a bounded other but rather in new connections forged by tree-balloon-humans' entanglements?

Vignette 2: Balloons twisting

At an outdoor public event, I found myself dragged by my kids to stand in line (for at least 45 minutes) at a station where balloons get twisted and shaped into customizable models. After some time, observing the general scene, I, too, started to be excited. It was beginning summer, families were out, and balloon artists were creating beautiful balloon models, always satisfying even exceeding imaginations and dreams of little kids and their parents, hardly disappointing. The context of this event is noteworthy. This was for an open-door event organized by the prestigious music institution: The Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) in the middle of Downtown Toronto. The surrounding landscape of the RCM added to the 'importance' of the balloons and the twisting. The waiting seemed worthwhile.

Parents were happy, (because) kids were happy. People smiling, with occasional 'ohs' and 'ahs' after each masterpiece. At times, balloons deflate or pop accidentally in the making. Balloons' artists/vendors, always ready to curb disappointments, crack a joke, throw a comment to kid/parent and start over, always ending with a beautiful balloon that tickles their imagination and surprises the audience. Parents start to ask if balloon artists can come for private birthday parties. Business cards start to be handed out, unsurprisingly so. Standing in a slow-moving line, I witness all of this, entertained. I even participate actively with my kids in this general scene, anticipating excitedly shapes, expressing excitement and awe. My kids do the same. Balloons, one might contemplate, have a 'happy history' (Ahmed, 2010b). A gendered joy, one might note, as my daughter asks for a unicorn and my son for a sword-shaped balloon. As their balloons were getting fashioned and twisted, I found myself equally twisting and turning so many thoughts that came flooding in, in that very moment. Wait, balloons? What are they made of? Where do they come from? Where do they end? How long before they pop? What makes this 'happiness' scene so transient, and indeed so ordinary (Stewart, 2007), almost like a déjà-vu? I was determined to 'kill' joys felt (Ahmed, 2010b) by my kids - *right* after they get their balloons, *right after* they play with them for a bit, *right after* we take a quick picture to be sent to eager grandparents overseas (see image 2 below) to make *them* happy. On our way back home, we talked about the pollution caused by latex balloons, how they are made, in which landscapes/bodies they might end, how they will probably pop before the end of the day, lose their beautiful shape, people making money out of this, etc. (the gendered associations, were at that time, left out from the ways I seemed to be mainly concerned by harms to the 'natural' environment). The more we talked *about* the various "concerns" (Latour, 2004), the more I sensed how heavy it was to carry those balloons around, waving them for everyone to see, connected to us in this way. Simultaneously, I felt like a bad mother who doesn't indulge happiness of her own kids, 'sabotaging' and killing their joy and their sense of wonder with balloons, to talk *about* environmental issues and concerns. Should environmental education be predicated on killing joys targeted towards our day-to-day preoccupations with (harmful) yet, at times, wonder-filled semiotic-material agents? If so, what new subject positions teachers/parents/educators need to negotiate in order to support their roles in killing quotidian joys for social and environmental justice, while maintaining students' sense of wonder, joy and beauty?

PHOTOGRAPH: S. EL HALWANI

Image 2: Taking a picture to grandparents overseas

Counting cares, care counts

"To engage properly with the becoming of a thing, we need to count all the concerns attached to it, all those who care for it" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011, p. 90)

In storying those two incidents, this essay maps objects and more-than-human bodies involved in caring relations to reveal the entangled and at times conflicting relationalities between parental/pedagogical care and environmental care within a broader landscape of nationalism/migration, capitalism and gender relations. The title of this section "*Counting cares, care counts*," inspired by Puig de la Bellacasa's opening quote, reflects a commitment to *neglected* experiences that "complicate the affects and responsibilities of everyday caring" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011, p. 98) about environmental issues.

In a recent work (El Halwany & Alsop, 2023), we reviewed three theoretical orientations to studies of care: care ethics (e.g. Gilligan, 1982), a political ethics of care (e.g. Tronto, 1993) and a political-process oriented view of care (e.g., Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). A feminist ethics of care complements a justice approach that privileges moral development and reasoning and centers the importance of care as a relational approach with implications for the field of education (e.g. Noddings, 2013); caring can make for a better world. A political ethics of care goes beyond the relational, to an

examination of how "care functions socially and politically" (Tronto, 1993, p. 103), looking at "care's darker side" (Martin et al., 2015) and how it participates in the sociocultural valorization of bodies and communities. A political-process oriented vision of care acknowledges care's non-innocence, complicity and partiality while maintaining a speculative commitment for how "things would be different if they generated care" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 96).

Balloons are often encountered as "matters of fact", having stabilized over time as neutral, harmless and "happy" objects (Ahmed, 2010a). Tracing the sociomaterial (Fenwick et al., 2015) through acts of storying allows to stage balloons as matters of concern and care (Latour, 2004; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) at the level of intense (vignette 1) and ordinary (vignette 2) encounters.

A care for bringing down a balloon stuck on a tree (vignette 1) and for indulging joys of creatively twisted balloons (vignette 2) as part of "liv(ing) sensually within capitalist cultures" (Berlant, 2007, p. 46) is an act of parental care for children, for enabling conditions for their happiness. Adults become happy when kids do/have 'happy' things. At the same time, caring for people abroad, for grandparents and their happiness by sending them a picture of their grandchildren holding on to balloons can be read as a scene of how immigrants persevere in the emotional landscape of migration. It reflects migrants' "everyday attempts to socially and emotionally bridge distance and reestablish proximity" (Reynolds & Zontini, 2013, p. 204). In those instances, ranking or hierarchizing modes of care might turn into a treacherous endeavor, inviting more nuanced interpretations of how migrant bodies care with environmental matters.

Both vignettes seek to question 'aboutism' approaches in environmental education which focus on telling students/migrant bodies 'about' environmental harms (Gilbert, 2016). Instead, the vignettes encourage deeper reflection on ways of *being* with semiotic objects, emphasizing our inevitable complicity in our engagements with these objects.

Furthermore, in both stories, human agents are affected by their proximity to harmful materials and actions (such as shaking a tree) which raises questions about autonomy and authority (Tronto, 1993) between 'who' gets to care (adults) and 'who' is cared for (youth, nature, the other). How might we read the act of shaking, in the first vignette, and acts of telling/teaching *about* environmental concerns, in both vignettes, as gendered enactments towards nature while challenging traditional binary scripts about men as caring less and women as caring more (Tronto, 1993)?

Situating this essay in the issue's theme 'Identities and knowledge of care', the anecdotes reveal close associations between (affective) orientations and identity position(ings). Ahmed (2010, p. 580) says: "When we feel pleasure from objects that are supposed to cause happiness, we are thus aligned: we are facing the right way" (see Ahmed, 2010b). Being aligned with nature ('good' care) makes you by extension a 'good' person/citizen. Studies of identities can continue to attend to affective associations and subject-object substitutions in relation to how bodies may orient (and stay away) from certain objects as an extension of their (nationalist) identities. In thinking about some implications for outdoor and environmental education, McPhie and Clarke (2021) urge educators to stay away from romanticizing and idealizing nature and to "remain aware of the fine line between promotion of environmental concerns and (white) nationalism" (p. 5). They discuss how terms such as "ecology, holism and ecosystems, promote a particular vision of human-nature relationships which can influence pedagogy and everyday human behavior via implicit bias" (p. 4-5). McLean (2013), similarly, urges educators and teachers in environmental outdoor education programs to care for their pedagogies and how they might participate in constructing "a false nationalist identity of innocence" by dissociating it from colonialism (p. 361).

Storying care through a context-sensitive approach may help to "unsettle" (Murphy, 2015) easy assumptions about nature-culture divide (McPhie & Clarke, 2021; Nxumalo, 2018). Megan Bang (2020) writes: "we must learn to remember, dream and story anew nature-culture relations" (p. 440). Murphy (2024) uses polyphonic storying, a collective multimatter/multispecies storying, to "keep the way open" (p. 323) for humans to continuously and creatively re-calibrate their relations with more-than-human worlds. The mattering of care, what we care about, who we care with and how we care, are all important considerations for how we story and encounter our more-than-human world.

Finally, I end with an invitation to read these stories with curiosity, open for re-interpretation and contestation, acknowledging the narrative 'I' as "always limited in its self-expression and reflection on experience" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008, p. 305), and noting how other stories and perspectives may have been silenced by the privileging of the narrator voice and her concerns. Thank you for being caring and careful with those stories.

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Wendy and Emma Claire

Interspecies Care

By Wendy Harcourt, Original illustrations by Emma Claire Sardoni

(excerpted from her forthcoming book Conundrums of Care to be published Open Access by Bloomsbury Academic in 2025).

In this article I explore interspecies justice in feminist writings and why we need to care about human entanglements with more-than-human beings. I reflect on caring responses to toxic environments in the approaches of feminist scholars, eco feminists and queer ecology. From their writing we learn about more-than-human relations in complex histories of racism, power differences, subversion and loss. Such feminist writing about ethics of care invites us to think differently about interspecies care; subverting dominant hierarchies which place humans above other species.

Three inspirational feminist scholars, Anna Tsing, Catriona Sandilands and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa provide ways to navigate the ethics of caring for more-than-human others in their work on care, ethics and politics. Their investigations into interspecies entanglements look at humans as one among other forms of life caught up in diverse relationships of knowing and living together. Their writing pushes us beyond anthropocentricism as they point to the lively ways the boundaries between humans and other life forms are porous and intertwined.

Anna Tsing in her multispecies ethnography on mushrooms describes how her research engages in 'passionate immersion in the lives of the nonhuman subjects being studied' (Tsing 2010: 201). She combines the 'learnedness in natural science' with humanities and the arts to encourage 'public imagination to make new ways of relating to nature possible' (ibid.). Her book *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (2015) critiques the global economy through her immersive study of the matsutake mushroom. Her journey follows the matsutake mushroom through the entangled relations of pines, forest, landscape, humans, foraging, gift cultures, trading paths and economic practices.

From Tsing's story of the matsutake we learn of ways to understand the complexity of human relations with more than-human species in our precarious and uncertain times. Guided by her sense of hope about how a mushroom can emerge from degraded landscapes, Tsing acknowledges that while we are facing 'trouble without end', we can survive if we exercise curiosity and hope (Tsing 2015: 2). Tsing's research on the matsutake shows

IMAGE COURTESY: EMMA CLAIRE SARDONI

'Group' is one of the three artwork by Emma Claire Sardoni featured in this essay which present her vision of interspecies care blending landscape, embodied embrace and connection of humans with plants and animals.

'possibilities of coexistence with environmental disturbance' (ibid., 4).

Catriona Sandilands brings together ecology, gender, and sexuality in her writings on biopolitics. She sees 'beauty in the wounds of the world' and inspires us to take 'responsibility to care for the world as it is' (Sandilands 2005: 24 quoted in Di Chiro 2010: 200). Sandilands sees plants as active agents in our life-worlds. In her research/relations/connections with Douglas-firs in the British Columbia Southern Gulf Islands where she lives half the year, Sandilands positions herself as a caretaker on the stolen land of the Gulf Islands which is 'a shadow of its former, botanically-rich self by a combination of dispossession, development, and deer' (Sandilands 2021: 777). In explaining why relations with plants matter to humans, Sandilands brings a sharp awareness of the problem of 'plant blindness' (Wandersee and Schussler 1999) in western, urbanized settings. She calls on us to redress that alienation and pay attention to plants by tending specific plant relationships. Following queer black feminist Alexis Pauline Gumbs, Sandilands

suggests we *identify* with plants and 'practice humanity with some of that world-making plantiness folded inside' which might help us as humans to be not so 'tangled in [the] separation and domination that it is consistently making our lives incompatible with the planet' (Gumbs 2020: 9). Sandilands shares her deeply felt intergenerational and interspecies connection with plants in a heart rendering story of her mother's love of plants even in the throes of dementia, and how Sandilands continues to care for her mother's beloved jade plants and aloes 'because it matters to be able to continue the care' (Sandilands 2021: 779).

Maria Puig de la Bellacasa in *Matters of Care* (2017) offers an expansive feminist text on care for thinking and living in more than human worlds. Her work investigates the 'meanings of care for knowing and thinking with more than human worlds in technoscience and naturecultures' (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017: 3). In the last chapter of the book, she analyses ecological practices that are 'rematterings soil from inert, usable substance and resource into a living world of which humans are also part' (ibid., 4). She presents the novel idea that if we are to survive climate catastrophe, we need to disrupt productivist future oriented technoscience by making time to take care of our ecological relations with soil. Puig de la Bellacasa warns that such global care should not be driven by the dominant productivist vision that treats soil only as a vehicle for commodifiable produce, where worn-out soils must be 'put back to work' through soil engineering technologies to increase soil's efficiency (ibid., 186). She points out that such a focus is at the expense of all other species relations.

Mirroring the insights of these three feminist theorists, the approaches of radical eco feminists, queer theorists and disability activists, black ecologists and feminist artists to interspecies care also help us to understand and act on our shared 'embodied ecologies' (Di Chiro 2010: 216). Their writing, visual and performance art and political demands push us to understand interspecies care in relation to toxicity and its impact on diverse bodies.

Mel Y. Chen's book *Animacies (*2012), reflects on her experience of illness due to mercury poisoning. She details how her experience of suffering changed her relations to her body and to others. She describes how she became acutely aware of a slowing down of time and a sense of porosity around life and death (ibid., 34). As a queer theorist she analyses how the sense of a 'normal' world order is 'lost when, for instance, things that can harm you permanently are not even visible to the naked eye' (ibid., 203). She invites us to consider how toxins are animating cultural life as she explores human anxieties around life and death in growing environmental devastation. Her point is that these toxic realities require us to practice 'an ethics of care and sensitivity that extends far from human's own borders' (ibid., 237) as we live with the effects of mercury and other toxics.

As Chen's provocations suggest queer and crip theory help us to see how our toxic world is breaking down notions of 'normal' bodies, making visible lives at the intersection of multiple oppressions: race, class, gender, disability and sexual orientation. In the face of environmental destruction, we need to embrace differences and otherness of subjects, human and non-human in ways that harbour mutual respect and care. As queer and crip activists argue all bodies are deserving of care, but that racialised, queer and disabled bodies are too often excluded from social and political and ecological thought.

Vanessa Raditz, a queer social media activist, envisages queer and disabled people as providing guidance to how to survive increasingly tenuous life-worlds. As she wrote together with Patty Berne:

> *We have to fight for the valuable lives of butterflies, and moss, and elders. Because our lives—and all life—depends on it ... Even in the moments when we're in pain, when we're uncomfortable, when the task ahead feels overwhelming, and we feel defeated by the sheer scope of everything that's wrong in the world, we don't have to give up on life or on humanity. Queer and trans disabled people know that, because that's how we live. At this moment of climate chaos, we're saying: Welcome to our world. We have some things to teach you if you'll listen, so that we can all survive.*
> *(Raditz and Berne 2019)*

Giovanna Di Chiro in her writing on toxicity and how it wreaks havoc on the health and reproductive possibilities of the living world (Di Chiro 2010: 210) speaks of how much she has learnt from black women activists in community-based organizations. In the fight against toxic facilities polluting their and Di Chiro's neighbourhoods they have 'challenged dominant, white male-stream constructions of environmentalism and human-nature relationships'. Di Chiro shows how interspecies care comes from places and people whose bodies and communities have been 'reviled, neglected, and polluted' (ibid., 200). She argues that all our lives are entangled with the environment even if we 'imagine our bodies as separate from, unaffect-

ed by, and unconnected to our environments' (ibid., 215). Di Chiro quotes biologist, environmentalist and feminist, Nancy Langston:

We're all in this together: the atrazine that gets sprayed on my neighbor's cornfields ends up in the river water, then in the fish, then in the herons and the raccoons that eat the fish—and it also ends up in my breasts, my belly, and my blood. What's out there in wildlife and wild places is also in our bodies.
(Nancy Langston quoted in Di Chiro 2010: 215)

These are difficult topics. How to acknowledge our complicity in the marginalizing of others, and the impact of global consumer lifestyles that relies on intoxications of all kinds? As well as reading scholarly and activist texts that speak about the toxic entanglement of human and other bodies in an increasing degraded and exploited environment, I have found political and experimental art helps me to grasp emotionally what is human complicity and responsibility for toxic harm in relation to environmental and interspecies care. Art helps us to move into 'speculative dimensions of multispecies worlds' (Pratt 2019: 438) that probe into the messy and damaging impacts of environmental change and the questions of who deserves to be considered worthy of care.

Emma Claire Sardoni, an Italian/Australian artist based in Amsterdam and Ghent has provided for this article three pictures which present her vision of interspecies care blending landscape, embodied embrace and connection of humans with plants and animals (see also https://www.spageclage.nl/).

Patrizia Piccinini is an Australian feminist artist who looks at ethical questions around human's responsibility with other species and the more-than-human world in a series of technoscience speculations. Piccinini's art blurs the animate and non-animate, flesh and technology with natural/technical monsters that are cuddly in weird and curious ways. The eerily life-like mannikins are hybrid human, animals, plants and cells creating speculative new worlds where nature and culture are tightly knotted (see https://www.patriciapiccinini.net/).

Jae Lee Rhim's art performances the Infinity Burial Suit looks at care for interspecies relations after death. She describes herself as 'an artist at the intersection of art, science and culture' (See Rhim's 2011 TEDGlobal Talk titled: My mushroom burial suit). Rhim Lee uses technoscience and art to reconfigure humanity's present and future engagements in permanently toxic worlds as an act of responsibility and care. She argues that we need to take responsibility for the environmental toxins that are stored in our bodies by considering what will happen to the 219 toxic pollutants in our bodies, including preservatives, pesticides and heavy metals like lead and mercury when we die, and our bodies return to the environment. Rhim Lee's burial suit is an art project that helps to counter slow violence of pollution as part of a politics of interspecies care.

'Red' is one of the three artwork by Emma Claire Sardoni featured in this essay which present her vision of interspecies care blending landscape, embodied embrace and connection of humans with plants and animals.

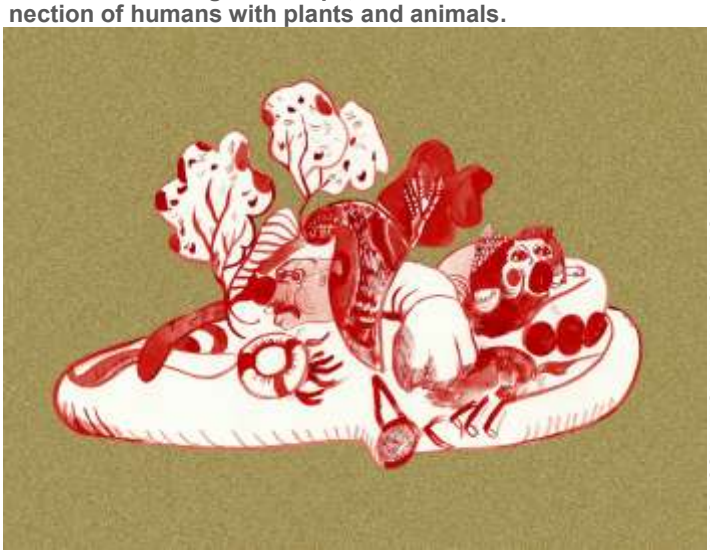

IMAGE COURTESY: EMMA CLAIRE SARDONI

These artists link a feminist politics of care and ethical relations in their visions that encourage us to take responsibility for our interspecies entanglements in life and after death. Following their inspiration, with feminist hope and curiosity, we can make visible the messy embodied entanglements of humans with other living beings and recognize what we are losing by failing to embrace an ethics of care for more-than-human others. As Donna Haraway states: 'To care is wet, emotional, messy, and demanding of the best thinking one has ever done' (Haraway 2011: 6).

In my book *Conundrums of Care* from which these excerpts are drawn, I indeed found it a demanding task to write about care. Care is one of the most debated topics in feminist theory. While I have been thinking about what it means to care as a feminist activist, mother, teacher, advocate and researcher for years, and it took a lot of courage to start writing about care. Throughout the process of writing there was this troubling voice in my head saying, 'who are you to be writing about care'? I suffered from the usual imposter syndrome of academe and as a white feminist living in the Global North I was acutely aware that there were many other points of view that deserved to be heard rather than mine.

'Women' is one of the three artwork by Emma Claire Sardoni featured in this essay which present her vision of interspecies care blending landscape, embodied embrace and connection of humans with plants and animals.

IMAGE COURTESY: EMMA CLAIRE SARDONI

In the book I see care broadly speaking as the life-making and life sustaining activities that maintain humans and more-than-humans in our life-worlds. My interest is in care for processes – social, political, ecological, corporeal – in the more expansive sense of the Latin word for care, *curatus* where the gendered nature of care work is historically contextualised (rather than essentialised) as female. I point to some of the lively and crucial debates on care together in an accessible way that will explicate how care is understood in feminist economic debates on social reproduction analysis; interspecies relations in posthumanism; environmental justice in feminist political ecology; and is at the core of ideas of reciprocity and accountability in degrowth, community economies, postdevelopment/decolonial approaches.

My aim with the book is to engage the reader in meanings of care as embodied, evolving and complex, and at times contradictory, hence the term conundrums. I take inspiration from Joan Tronto who sees care as interwoven in 'our bodies, ourselves, and our environment' in a 'complex, life-sustaining web' (Tronto 2017: 31). I am also following Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) who sees care as including everything and everybody, from the invisible care work of mothers, and those maintaining households, families, services and institutions. Understanding care means we embrace our multispecies relations with the Earthworm as well as our entanglement with the modern technologies that dominate our landscapes. Thinking about care speculatively allows us to counter the erasures, invisibility and lack of value given to care by dominant power interests.

The book discusses care in relation to more-than-human others with attention to the material and physical processes that sustain ecosystems and human and more-than-human lives which make up our life-worlds. As Neera Singh states all humans and more-than-human others are vulnerable and all are recipients and givers of care (Singh 2017). Understanding care requires us to address several layers of oppression such as the expropriation of women's bodies and social reproduction, racialised expropriation of peoples' and Earthothers' bodies and labours as well as colonial Indigenous and ecological dispossession. While acknowledging the huge scope of care as a factor in all our lives, it is important to see care in the context of various settings and from diverse perspectives in relation. I therefore give examples of care from both the Global South and Global North. I pace the flow of the book by interweaving stories, both personal and speculative, with theoretical and conceptual discussions along with the examples of the practice of care from around the world.

There are seven chapters in the book looking at different conundrums of care in feminist writing and practice. They are on: social reproduction; ecofeminism; feminist debates about population and scarcity; interspecies justice; environmental justice; degrowth and community economies and in the classroom. Given the richness of these debates, I decided to open each chapter with a story designed to lead the reader easily into each of the chapter's themes. I took the bold move to use storytelling as my main vehicle.

Calling attention to the meanings and practice of care is a political project in which all of us need to engage if we are to make our collective worlds better. As Zoe Todd states, 'reciprocity, love, accountability, and care are tools we will require to face uncertain futures and the end of worlds as we know them. Indeed, this ability to face the past, present, and future with care – tending to relationships between people, place, and stories – will be crucial as we face the challenges of these times' (Todd 2016: 383).

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MOTHER HAWK

Melissa Thorne

Melissa Thorne (she/her) lives in Cobourg, ON, on the traditional and treaty territory of the Michi Saagiig (Mississauga) and Chippewa Nations, with her husband, two sons, and Irish Wolfhound, Walter. She's an associate member of the League of Canadian Poets, with work published/ forthcoming in The South Shore Review, Poetry Pause, and ROOM. Mother Hawk was previously published in Sola Poēta (Silver Starling Press, 2025).

I hear the starlings outside my window.
They're talking about me—though I don't
speak their language. Virginia Woolf claimed
they speak Greek. I disagree. Their lyricism
suggests a romantic tongue, French, maybe Italian?
Their tweets call out, chirps echo back,
before devolving into manic laughter.

With beady eyes, they peek into my second-story
bedroom, mocking my apron belly, uneven breasts,
before retreating to the neighbor's hedges
to plan their next move in this game
of psychological warfare.

A mother dove perches in the robin's old nest
atop the downspout. She can stay.
She is quiet, a newcomer.

I burn the rice again, distracted by my thinking—
my own ambient noise. These days,
I ask too many questions with too many answers.
It's all too much, too much for a weeknight dinner,
too much for a Tuesday, too many days left in the week,
too many dinners left to make, too much for this poem.

The starlings probably love the smell of smoke—
proof their earlier missile stuck true.
I'm aflame with self-contempt.

I should cackle back one day
or hurl my children's diapers
at their nest, retaliate
for every shit grenade
they launch into our pool.

I used to talk to the birds
before I grew up,
before I became a mother—
before they mocked me from the hedges…

I stood barefoot where tame lawn met wild forest,
traced the edge of shadow.
I whistled high and low in answer
to a Chickadee's lonesome call,
hooted with the unseen Barred Owl,
kee-keed alongside the mother Cooper's Hawk.

She was a fierce matriarch. She taught her babies
to hunt, using my cat as a decoy. Each new clutch
practiced their art on him—a beating heart
for their predatory circle.

They never caught him, by her design—
most likely.

Once, that cat disappeared for six long months.
His prodigal return transformed him
into an indoor cat— for his own good.
He lived for 17 years, made sure I grew up.
The Cooper's Hawks left after that.

I guess that's motherhood.

We sling our children's shit from nest to pool,
diaper to garbage pail. Burn dinners, form
hunting circles, go to war with the birds.

Maybe I should learn Italian,
parley with the birds again,
get answers to my weeknight questions—
how to cook rice, keep up with inflation,
answer my son's questions about God,
shed this default-parent mental load.

Or maybe I'll get a cat and entice the hawks back.

Experiences with Biodiversity Conservation in Ontario

Text and Photographs by Christine Beaudoin

Positionality statement

I am writing this text as a woman, a daughter, a sister, a learner, a teacher. I am writing this as someone who has grown up in rural areas. I grew up in close proximity to dogs, fully integrated members of the family who became close friends and confidants. I grew up in close proximity to a diversity of plants and wildlife that lay roots and take strolls or a quick flight around us. I grew up spending time outdoors and listening to the more-than-human sounds of the forest change as the seasons change, and I am growing old listening to these sounds become quieter and quieter every year. ***J'écris aussi ce texte en tant que francophone en contexte minoritaire[1].***

I am writing this as a settler scholar. I am a transdisciplinary researcher with training in sociology, anthropology and environmental social sciences. I have conducted most of my research on environmental governance and science in Ontario. In my most recent work, I pay attention to the social and human dimensions of biodiversity conservation. I have taken two hats when participating in such research projects. First, I am an applied conservation social scientist who brings social science expertise (theories, concepts and methods) to collaborative projects to contribute to teamwork to improve biodiversity policy, practices and programs. I seek to support processes and outcomes tied to biodiversity. Second, I am immersing myself in the field of biodiversity conservation, taking an auto-ethnographic approach to learn about conservation as a social practice by doing and actively participating in the field. I build on these direct experiences to foster a perspective that is reflexive and critical, attending to the ontology (how do we conceive the world?), epistemology (how can we know this world?), and ethics (how should we engage with this world?) of conservation.

I am writing this to share my experiences with biodiversity conservation in Ontario. I truly believe that we need to question some of the philosophical assumptions that underpin biodiversity conservation, and more broadly the dominant economic system, if we want to truly slow biodiversity loss and reconnect in caring ways with all forms of living beings.

[1] I am also writing this text as a francophone in a minority setting.

White-tailed deer feasting, Carp, Ontario, Canada

What is biodiversity conservation?

Biodiversity – or biological diversity – generally refers to the diversity and variability of living organisms, including the diversity of species, the diversity of ecosystems and landscapes, and genetic diversity within species populations. Biodiversity conservation is generally understood as protection, restoration, and sustainable planning which aims to preserve biodiversity and habitats, recover species and ecosystems, reduce or mitigate harm from threats to biodiversity, and/or maintain ecosystem services for generations to come. There are still many debates around the specific best practices and approaches to protect, conserve, and preserve biodiversity.

Biodiversity conservation, as a science and a practice, is often anchored in the scientific method and evidence-based approaches. The biological sciences, and specifically ecology, studies interactions between living organisms and their habitats. Conservation social science has recently been growing as a field of research, with sociologists, anthropologists, economists, political scientists, historians, and artists among others studying the ways humans and societies engage with and represent biodiversity. Beyond researchers, there are also many practitioners in the field of biodiversity conservation in Ontario that hold a range of different expertise: wildlife technicians, water resource specialists, GIS experts, communications staff, education and stewardship coordinators, among others. They often work for government agencies or non-governmental organizations at various scales: in local communities,

in specific regions or ecosystems, in a province or territory, across Canada, and even internationally. Many volunteers also give their time, energy, and money to advance biodiversity conservation. I think of citizen scientists who collect data for biodiversity research, community members who volunteer with their lake associations, and private citizens who independently hire foresters to participate in Ontario's *Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program*.

Beyond those most actively involved in conservation, biodiversity touches everyone in different ways. As humans, we are part of the intricate web of living organisms that are co-building this world. The ways in which we all perceive and interact with biodiversity have an impact. Biodiversity can be seen as essential to maintain the functions of various ecosystems, and by extension the services they provide to human societies. Ecosystem services include contributions that support food systems (e.g., pollination of crops), sources of energy (e.g., biofuels), materials (e.g., fibers, building materials, medicines), and climate regulation (e.g., carbon storage). This is the instrumental value of biodiversity where biodiversity is reduced to its economic value, another piece to leverage in a capitalist system. In contrast, many (including environmentalists and conservationists) consider the intrinsic value of biodiversity: the idea that biodiversity has value in and of itself and that it must be respected and protected no matter what. While biodiversity can be seen as a means to meet human needs (instrumental value), it can also be seen as an end in itself (intrinsic value). Some also consider the relational value of biodiversity. This view emphasizes the relationships and bidirectional interconnections between people and biodiversity, and among people within ecosystems. A study analyzing research on relational values of nature by Daniel Partson and colleagues in 2023 has shown that relational values of nature contribute to social cohesion and community, knowledge and culture, identity and place attachment, health and recreation, sense of responsibility and stewardship, and relationships of caring and kinship.

Beaver pond, Bufflehead trail, Frontenac Provincial Park, Ontario, Canada

Rabbit in urban park, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

These various ways of valuing biodiversity bring into question the practices of biodiversity conservation and the diverse ways in which humans "take care" of the land and more-than-human beings. While biodiversity conservation can be seen as a caring act of protection, there are tensions and power dynamics that shape this caring. Such questions are especially poignant as, despite differing viewpoints, there is a bleak consensus: ongoing biodiversity loss is significant, severe, and accelerating. We are now in what many call the Sixth Extinction, a mass extinction caused by human activity. This brings the need to explore the ways in which conservation science and practice operate, especially given the fact that efforts have been ongoing for decades and have not yet managed to slow the loss of biodiversity. While broader social tensions tied to economic and political forces are at play, biodiversity conservation is fundamentally a question of care and of connection to the land and more-than-human beings with whom we share this world. How does care manifest in biodiversity conservation? What parts of the work are valuable and beneficial for other species, for more-than-human beings? Can we think of new methods and framings to enhance biodiversity conservation?

A paradox in conservation

I have been engaged in partnership research in Ontario to support conservation social science work. These experiences have made visible for me a key paradox

of conservation research. For my doctoral research, I studied interactions between human and non-humans in the context of a transdisciplinary research project on National Historic Waterways in Ontario involving natural scientists, social scientists, government agencies, community groups, and conservation practitioners.

I explored what brings people to do research and work on biodiversity conservation. Most people do this work because they care for the environment, because they want to spend their summers outdoors in direct contact with nature, because they want to preserve fragile ecosystems for generations to come… Yet, it was revealed that some researchers and decision-makers are disconnected from nature in their daily work. Furthermore, those who did data collection for conservation were often in conflictual relationships with other species. Such conflicts included capturing wildlife to tag them for telemetry research which tracks the movements of an animal, capturing wildlife to collect biological samples for genetic testing, testing different strategies to kill and remove invasive plants in lakes, and collecting water samples for lab analysis which led to the death of microorganisms found in the samples.

Pileated woodpecker, Carp, Ontario, Canada

There are inherent tensions around the well-recognized need to take care of nature and biodiversity, around the need to protect species and their habitats from destruction so that we can continue to share a home with them. The actual practices in conservation science and practice – including monitoring – can be harmful for individuals of the species and ecosystems that are meant to be protected. This shows a disconnect between humans and nature in conservation, with humans holding power and knowledge to "save" nature, and asserting domination over non-human beings. Despite the emotional connection to nature which was a major motivation to participate in conservation, the scientific method tends to obfuscate such emotions. This raises the need to rethink what it means to care for the environment and to be a steward of biodiversity.

Private land conservation

I have done work in private land conservation. Traditional conservation has often created protected areas that conserve biodiversity by limiting access. Yet, this approach has limitations: protected areas may not represent the full range of biological diversity, there can be a lack of connectivity between protected areas, and the areas can be small with surrounding land not being protected. Furthermore, it is not always feasible or realistic to create protected areas. In the context of Ontario, population density is centered around the Great Lakes – a fragile freshwater ecosystem whose biodiversity is significantly threatened. Studies such as the Living Planet Report demonstrate that freshwater systems are the most threatened ecosystems. The high population density in Ontario around the Great Lakes corresponds to high levels of private property ownership. This reality makes the traditional approach of creating protected areas difficult to achieve, especially with the ongoing housing crisis and extremely high property values.

It was in this context that I worked with ecologists and practitioners to study barriers and opportunities for private land conservation. This work has shown me that challenges in biodiversity conservation and the ongoing loss of biodiversity are tied to the problematic notion of private property. Such a notion puts the weight and responsibility of conservation on landowners, who may not have the resources, knowledge, or motivation to protect biodiversity. This is especially true in a context where initiatives to protect biodiversity – such as restoring wetlands or forests and entering in legal agreements with conservation organizations – may reduce property value.

This research has also shown me just how far removed from care the practice of biodiversity conservation can be. Like many other caregiving practices

(e.g., healthcare, education), funding for biodiversity conservation is lacking. The practice and work of conservation is undervalued. While landowners may wish to help protect species and ecosystems on their property, this can be costly and not everyone has money to spare. There are also not enough conservation practitioners available to provide knowledge and support landowners. In my experience, these barriers have led to a lack of diversity in biodiversity conservation: participants are generally older, well-educated, wealthy, white, and male dominated. There is a need to bring change to biodiversity conservation in Ontario. How can we bring a more diverse group of people to engage in biodiversity conservation (e.g., Indigenous peoples, youth, women, LGBTQ+ community, visible minorities, people living with a disability)? How can we diversify modes of participation in conservation and make care more visible? How can we properly fund conservation initiatives and adequately compensate those involved?

La conservation en français en Ontario

En tant que francophone qui travaille en conservation de la biodiversité en Ontario, je ne peux pas m'empêcher de remarquer que ce travail se fait en anglais. À travers les années, j'ai croisé le nom d'un seul organisme de conservation qui semble travailler en français. Ils opèrent dans l'Est ontarien, une région où on trouve une grande population franco-ontarienne à proximité du Québec, la seule province francophone du Canada. Cela m'a amené à me poser des questions sur la conservation de la biodiversité en Ontario. Que font les franco-ontariens et les francophiles qui veulent travailler sur les questions de biodiversité? Quel est le rôle de la langue dans nos relations à la nature et à la biodiversité? Comment faire pour créer des opportunités de conservation de la biodiversité en français en Ontario, alors que les financements manquent autant dans le domaine de la biodiversité que pour la francophonie ontarienne, qui est minoritaire? La langue n'est pas seulement un mode de communication, elle construit nos visions du monde et de l'environnement et influence nos relations avec la biodiversité[2] .

[2] As a francophone working in biodiversity conservation in Ontario, I can't help but notice that this work is done in English. Over the years, I've come across the name of only one conservation organization that seems to work in French. They operate in Eastern Ontario, where there's a large Franco-Ontarian population and in proximity to Quebec, Canada's only French-speaking province. This got me wondering about biodiversity conservation in Ontario. What are Franco-Ontarians and Francophiles doing when they want to work on biodiversity issues? What role does language play in our relationship with nature and biodiversity? How can we create opportunities for biodiversity conservation in French in Ontario, when funding is lacking both for biodiversity and for Ontario's minority francophone community? Language is not only a method to communicate, it builds our views of the world and the environment and influences our relationships with biodiversity.

Painted Turtle, Carp, Ontario, Canada

From conservation to conversations?

These experiences highlight the need to rethink and reconfigure human-environment relationships. The hegemony of capitalism, which focuses on profits and reduces biodiversity to ecosystem services, does not make space nor provide resources for the caregiving and reconnecting work that is necessary to slow biodiversity loss. Even within conservation science, there is a need to question different interactions with biodiversity that are part of fieldwork and the notion of private property. Private land conservation sheds light on intersectional challenges and the exclusion of a range of people who could contribute to different ways of knowing, relating, and caring for biodiversity and the environment. Finally, with language being not only a mode of communication but a process that builds worldviews, there is a need to explore how communities in linguistic minority settings experience opportunities (or lack thereof) in biodiversity conservation. Exploring these very human and social dimensions of conservation may help improve outcomes and slow the loss of biodiversity.

I strongly believe that rethinking the ontology, epistemology, and ethics of biodiversity conservation may help revalue biodiversity conservation and the practices of caregiving which are necessary to develop more respectful relationships with the diversity of living beings in nature. Such a rethinking should include not only the animals, plants, and insects but also the living forces of water, of the land, and of the skies which also co-build this world with us. Revaluing care doesn't only mean putting responsibility on humans to fix biodiversity loss, it means making space for authentic conversations with the more-than-human world.

Christine Beaudoin's bio is on page 7.

See the Resources section at the end of this issue for resources related to this article

Food Insecurity, Women and the Ethics of Care

By Enid Skyler, Laura Wyper and Kira Cooper


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Introduction

Around the world, women are an integral part of food systems (United Nations, 2021). Global factors, including climate change, armed conflict, and market systems, exacerbate food insecurity, placing a disproportionate burden on women and children (McMichael & Weber, 2022; Southard & Randell, 2022). Food insecurity is defined as the inability or uncertainty to acquire or consume an adequate diet, or have a sufficient quantity of food (The Government of Canada, 2020). In 2022, approximately 2.4 billion people (or 29.6 percent of the global population) faced moderate to severe food insecurity, with 27.8 percent of all women experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity (FAO & SOFI, 2023). Moreover, 22.3 percent of children under five have their growth stunted by lack of proper nutrition (FAO & SOFI, 2023). The adverse effects of food insecurity are extensive, ranging from negative effects on health, mental health, finances, job security, personal safety, and overall well-being (Hamad et al., 2018; Levkoe et al., 2019). The International Labour Organization (2024) found that by carrying a disproportionate share of care responsibilities, women are systematically prohibited from fully participating in society in ways that may empower them, such as education and employment. Consequently, food insecurity not only undermines present conditions, but also strengthens systemic factors that perpetuate poverty, inequality, violence, and unsustainability more broadly (Bellacasa, 2017, p.9; ILO, 2024; OACAS, n.d.).

As a counter narrative to mainstream approaches that devalue and marginalize certain populations, such as women and Indigenous people, some feminist framings encourage a relational approach to complex challenges (D'Olimpio, 2019). At the core of these more holistic models is a call to center the needs and contributions of often unseen and underrepresented populations, including women, who are at the forefront of nurturing communities of care in underserved areas (McMichael & Weber, 2022). This counter narrative of the ethics of care is demonstrated in community-based food systems where women lead regenerative programs that enhance community well-being. Examples of such programs can be seen both internationally such as the global nonviolent food movement (About La Via Campesina, n.d.), and more locally in Northern Ontario with initiatives like the Indigenous Food Circle (Levkoe, Ray & McLaughlin, 2019). Women's work in their communities can be seen through the lens of an ethics of care that centralizes relationality as they build counter-narratives to hegemonic systems that threaten the long-term viability of socio-biophysical systems such as biodiversity loss and food security.

Relationality and the Ethics of Care

Ethics of care, first created by Carol Gilligan (Bellacasa, 2017), is a theory or model of care in ethics which emphasizes the importance of relationships, empathy, and compassion for ethical decision making (Held, 2006). A similar model is proposed by Wijngaarden (2022) who discusses relationality from an Indigenous perspective, and how it refers to "connectedness, a view of the world that underlies how no person or thing exists in isolation, because existence means being in relationship" (Wijngaarden, 2022, para 1). Feminist notions of ethics of care often seek to dismantle ingrained mental models and paradigms that contribute to unsustainability (Johansson et al., 2021; Rummery 2011). As O'Riodan et al. (2023) explains, "the feminist ethics of care reframes our conception of humans as interdependent, reasserting relationality and reciprocity as central to human life and to real world caring" (p. 109).

PHOTOGRAPH: BRENT HAIG (2023)

Figure 1. Seedy Saturday, Sault Ste. Marie Ontario

PHOTOGRAPH: BRENT HAIG (2013)

Figure 2. Seedy Saturday, Sault Ste. Marie Ontario

Increasingly, scholars are recognizing the complementarity of Indigenous and feminist care ethics to orienting environmental decision making in service to collective well-being (Whyte and Cuomo, 2017). For example, many Indigenous worldviews speak of the relationality among living things, stressing that the well-being of one is linked to the well-being of all (Kimmerer, 2013). Such holistic worldviews and cosmologies align and are congruent with Gilligan's ethics of care, and together gesture towards a relational understanding of the world. As Whyte and Cuomo (2016) explain, there are "deep connections and moral commitments between nonhumans and humans to guide ethical forms of environmental decision making" (p.1).

Many Indigenous worldviews are reflected as relational webs. These webs are based on Natural Law and the active expressions of gratitude and reciprocity leading to abundance; "a 'reciprocal ethics of care'" (McDermott & Roth, 2021, para 2). As a model, ethics of care "resist all binaries that divide people into categories and separate them from others, and, indeed, from themselves" (Robinson, 2020, p.11). In both feminist notions of care, and Indigenous ethics, there is a common sense of care that encompasses all living beings beyond socially constructed hierarchies. This ties explicitly to Ecofeminist views shared by scholars such as Rummery (2011) and O'Riordan et al. (2023) who assert that feminist ethics of care changes our systems from one that prioritises independence, individuals, and competition, to one that sees humans and society as an interdependent collective, reasserting relationality and reciprocity as central to human life and to real world caring. This care can be seen in many contexts such as women leading labour and advocacy related to healthcare, familial support, and food security (ILO, 2024). However, due to the individualistic structure of our current societal systems, much of this care is unseen. According to the International Labour Organization (2024), approximately 708 million women worldwide are performing unpaid, unseen care responsibilities. This heavy care burden also happens within Indigenous communities and food security movements, and is evident when the women in communities try to address their needs for culturally appropriate healthy foods (Levkoe et al., 2019, p.15; Levkoe, Ray & McLaughlin, 2019, p.104; Working Group, 2010).

Global Food Initiatives, and the Ethics of Care

The role of women in agriculture, including their labour and knowledge is often invisible (Moyles, 2018, p.XV). As Shiva (2010) explains, "At one level nature is symbolised as the embodiment of the feminine principle, and at another, she is nurtured by the feminine to produce life and provide sustenance" (p. 38). Despite the fact that women make-up close to half of the agricultural labour of the developing world (Moyles, 2018, p.XXIV), they face many unique barriers in relation to buying, selling, or inheriting land, opening savings accounts, signing contracts or selling their produce, as agricultural rights may be written into the law, but are often dishonoured in practice (Buerkle, 2011). Giving women the same access as men to agricultural resources could increase production on women's farms in developing countries, which could largely impact global food security (Buerkle, 2011). It is therefore time for global leaders to recognize women's role in "providing global sustenance, caring for soil, water, forests, and building healthy, resilient communities" (Moyles, 2018, p. 258).

Women's farm work is often localized to the family, the neighborhood community, and caring for the land (Moyles, 2018, p.254). This can be seen in the women's group Lijjat Pappad, which has spread across India. This group started out as a small collective of seven women, and has now grown to 83 branches with 27 divisions and over 45,000 women (Khadi, 2018). Lijjat Pappad is a non-hierarchical group with no leader, that creates common Indian pappad snacks. The group holds beliefs of common ownership, non-discrimination, voluntarism, autonomy and independence, as well as ethical business standards, and commitment to quality over profits. The organization sees itself as a family and as a place of worship (pp. 69-70).

Another example of women using ethics of care can be seen in the global nonviolent food movement:

> *La Via Campesina, founded in 1993, is an international movement bringing together millions of peasants, landless workers, indigenous people, pastoralists, fishers, migrant farmworkers, small and medium-size farmers, rural women, and peasant youth from around the world. Built on a solid sense of unity and solidarity, it defends peasant agriculture for food sovereignty. (About La Via Campesina : Via Campesina, n.d. para1)*

In both the above examples, women are at the forefront, working to enhance food security and sovereignty in their communities. As others have noted, women are "dedicated to the tasks in their fields, on the land, inside and outside of their homes, and at markets, and organizing in the name of food, family, and community" (Moyles, 2018, p.253). Factors including capitalism and societal patriarchies threaten life on earth, yet women are actively working against this through nonviolence (Shiva, 2005, p. 138). As Shiva (2005) explains, "Patriarchies have modeled 'being human' on inhuman, violent, acquisitive, exploitative, and destructive traits. Women are redefining being human as a capacity to care and to share, to love and protect, to be guardians not owners of nature's gifts, and to find strength and security in diversity, not in oppressive monocultures" (p. 140).

Food Insecurity in Northern Ontario

Food insecurity is a significant global issue that affects hundreds of millions of people worldwide (United Nations, 2023). It is important to consider that some places and populations are more affected than others, such as rural, Northern Ontario communities, including but not limited to Indigenous reserves. Women, both from settler and Indigenous backgrounds, commonly experience higher levels of food insecurity than men (FAO & SOFI, 2023). When considering food security, it is important to think of the land beyond a producer of things to consume, and rather to recognize the many systems such as political, economic, social, cultural, spiritual, and their intersecting aspects (Levkoe et al., 2019). When examining food insecurity and women, researchers found key themes: food and financial hardship (food availability, accessibility, and quality; food prices alongside income and rent), motherhood (feeding children first), resourcefulness (skipping food or food stretching to make resources last) and health perception (both physical and mental) (Hamad et al., 2018). Geography was also seen to be critical for understanding the full range of women's experiences with food insecurity and how it influences their health (Hamad et al., 2018; Leblanc-Laurendeau, 2020). Northern Ontario has unique challenges to food security including limited or inadequate resources available, and long, harsh, cold winters which were seen to have a particularly negative impact on food availability and accessibility (Hamad et al., 2018). When contrasting the well-being of women from London, Ontario (Southern Ontario), versus women from Sudbury, Ontario (Northern Ontario), there was an increase in negative physical, mental, and emotional health impacts with women residing in Northern Ontario (Hamad et al., 2018). Food insecurity affects women in the North at increasing rates due to their intersecting identities, and the precarity of social isolation, housing, and unemployment (Leblanc-Laurendeau, 2020). In response, women from Northern Ontario are also taking part in agriculture in more central roles than ever before (Ontario Farmer, 2020). Further,

> *Indigenous women play an important role in transmitting cultural teachings and Traditional Knowledge to new generations, specifically on how to prepare traditional foods. Colonization impacted access to traditional food and knowledge. Inaccessibility to traditional food means Indigenous People must rely on Western food, which is not always affordable or accessible. (NWAC, n.d.)*

Many researchers have examined the effects of food insecurity on community well-being, and have found connections between food insecurity and the climate crisis, the health crisis, land, and colonization (Blay-Palmer et al., 2018; Burnett et al., 2019; Cheng, 2022; Dehghani et al., 2019). By shedding light on these intersections, we have a better understanding of not only how to resolve food insecurity, but the other associated and intersecting detrimental issues as well.

Food Insecurity Within Northern Ontario Indigenous Populations

Indigenous history in Canada is fraught with trauma associated with the residential schools and various forms of systemic abuse that are still present today (Burnett et al., 2015; Levkoe et al., 2019;

Turner et al., 2008). An abundance of Indigenous traditional knowledge and practices were lost due to the cultural genocide that took place in and around the residential school system, which included a loss of traditional knowledge surrounding their food systems, and hunting and gathering (Levkoe et al., 2019). These losses are often accumulative and cascading, while remaining hidden from the colonial settler systems (Turner et al., 2008). Beginning in the 1970s, many Indigenous communities had to start relying on the industrial import food systems which were put in place by colonizers (Spiegelaar & Tsuji, 2013). These systems forced Indigenous communities to use unsustainable, colonial food systems, which is why Indigenous food systems are now unsound, just like those of settlers and the colonizers of the past. However, Indigenous communities have additional barriers due to systemic oppression, racism, and isolation (Burnett et al., 2015). It is for these reasons, as well as the supply chain disruptions during the Covid-19 pandemic, that food products that are cheaper in urban areas, are very costly in rural northern communities and reserves (D'Souza et al., 2024).

Nieboer & Tsuji (1999) found that many people in Northern Ontario are under the impression that Indigenous communities and food systems are still sustainable like they were in the past because they are unaware or choose to be ignorant to the present day issues these communities face. “Sustainability is a set of behaviours, a way of thinking about how the present affects the future that leads simultaneously to environmentally, economically, and socially desirable outcomes” (Kleppel, 2014, p.29). Nieboer and Tsuji’s research found that when people learned of the struggles facing Canadian Indigenous communities, there was a very privileged argument within settler communities: that it is natural to evolve with the times, and if cultures do not change, they will not survive, with some arguing that culture “change” is different from culture “loss” (Nieboer & Tsuji, 1999). However, Indigenous people and communities still don't have sovereign rights over their cultural practices related to food because of colonialism and other systemic issues. Many Indigenous people are currently trying to reconnect with their roots by reclaiming traditional food systems, and settlers should not be trying to force Indigenous peoples to continue to conform to what are assimilative, colonial practices or structures.

Much of the literature on food security in Northern Ontario has overlapping themes because there are so many issues yet to be addressed. One of the most common issues discussed is the fact that many Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario have large access issues when it comes to acquiring fresh, nutritious food (Spiegelaar, 2013). When food is available, it is often unhealthy, processed and filling food that is much lower in nutritional quality (Spiegelaar, 2013). This adds to the health crisis in many Indigenous communities, contributing to the rising obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related disease statistics (Blay-Palmer et al., 2018; Barbeau et al., 2015). On top of this, although the nutritional quality is very poor, the cost of the products is very expensive in many communities (Cheng, 2022; Nelson, 2012). Studies show that some communities have prices so high that members end up spending up to 50% of their monthly income on a basic nutritious diet (Mehta, 2016). This is particularly devastating as families in the north, and women, often have higher rates of poverty than those in urban areas (OACAS, n.d.).

Action Being Taken Within Ontario

Seeing how large of an issue this is in Northern Ontario, it is understandable that many researchers and community members have looked for solutions. Women in Sault Ste. Marie Ontario, such as some of our authors, are engaged in programs such as seed saving groups, initiating community Seedy Saturday events for seed swapping (Figure 1 and 2), launching seed growing kits at local university campuses, holding community and campus gardening workshops (Figure 3), as well as community cooking/canning workshops to build capacity, or even developing fallen fruit projects to reclaim unused fruit in communities.

A study conducted by Barbeau et al. (2015) attempted to grow potatoes and bush beans in Fort Albany (a subarctic Ontario Indigenous community) over a period of two years and were successful. Although it is a very small step, this study, with two women researchers, shows us that it is possible to have sustainable, fresh produce all year round, even in harsh winter conditions. When education is provided by elders (or Indigenous people from other areas if the community is a subject to knowledge loss due to colonization), people could learn how to choose the right crops for the winter months, and how to care for them. All season gardening is a very realistic way to incorporate fresh produce into people’s lives.

Other researchers such as Dehghani et al. (2019) have suggested that bringing in renewable energy sources to grow food in controlled, indoor environments might mitigate some of the barriers to year-round affordable food access. However, this method would only be able to grow roughly 15% of the annual recommended servings of vegetables; varying slightly depending on location (Dehghani et al., 2019). Dehghani et al. (2019) examined three re-

mote locations including Resolute Bay in Nunavut, as well as Moosonee and Pagwa in Ontario. Although this is a large limitation, people growing at least a percentage of their own produce is progress towards creating healthier, sustainable food systems. That said, there are important limitations to consider when growing your own food, such as that it only supplies fresh fruits and vegetables so people would still be doing the majority of their shopping at expensive, non-local grocery stores. Furthermore, a common concern is that people are hesitant to grow their own food due to the labour and time required (Dehghani et al., 2019). Dehghani et al. (2019) found that many desired the advantages of sustainable food systems, but were often unwilling to put in extra effort or embrace a less convenient approach.

In order to minimize the issue of consumers being uninterested in certain methods, such as growing their own produce, researchers engaged community members from Kakisa in the Northwest Territories (a Northern Canadian boreal community), and asked for their input on possible threats to local food systems (Blay-Palmer et al., 2018). Women have collected community surveys and interviews on people's attitudes towards local food versus supermarket food, to learn about the wants and needs in Northern First Nations communities (Nelson & Stroink, 2012). Researchers have also used online crowdsourcing and crowdfunding to get support for local food security initiatives in Northern Ontario (Davis et al., 2017). These methods could be helpful to find a base interest level, and give locals a voice, however the results of Nelson & Stroink (2012) showed many people believe the solution to food insecurity comes down to more action being taken, and better policies around food security being put into place. That said, many participants in the study conducted by Nelson & Stroink (2012) discussed the fact that they do want change, but did not know what action to take, or how to implement it. The data collected by Davies et al. (2017) could help mitigate this phenomenon by collecting a large-scale amount of online consumer data, as well as providing funds to support new ideas and solutions. However, bringing technology into small northern (and potentially Indigenous) communities could be problematic and raise other roadblocks, as they may wish to stick to holistic, traditional approaches from their culture. Not only would bringing new settler technology stray from traditional approaches, it could also be expensive.

Some researchers highlight the importance of land in Indigenous cultures, in relation to food security and food sovereignty, stating that if Indigenous people had control over their land, food systems, production modes, markets, environments, and cultures, then the problem of food insecurity would resolve itself (Burnett et al., 2019; LeBlanc, 2014). Phillipps (2021) notes that "Indigenous women point to colonial policies which make it impossible for most people to harvest in a self-determined way; thus resistance is necessary" (p.1). This resistance can be seen through the lens of an ethics of care as the opposition comes from a deep place of reclamation and resilience. Traditional Indigenous practices and cultures demonstrate numerous sustainable food production practices that are significantly more healthy than modern diets (Milburn, 2004). By having a circular food system grounded in economic justice, reconciliation and decolonization, environmental sustainability, education, health, and systems thinking, health and other cultural issues would improve, as health (in this context, Indigenous health) is directly connected to the land, a fact that is often overlooked in policy making (Burnett, 2019).

Such interconnected systems of thinking between humans and ecosystems offer profound wisdom for correcting dominant unsustainable practices, especially when that relationality becomes an ethics of care (Kakegamic et al., 2018; Yunkaporta, 2021). Although this is a promising solution to global food insecurity if put into practice, it is difficult to imagine this relationality due to our current sociopolitical climate. Even though people living in Ontario reside on Indigenous land, it is often no longer recognized, and Indigenous people struggle for control over their autonomy even just in the boundaries of their reserves.

PHOTOGRAPH: ENID SKYLER (2023)

Figure 3. The Peoples Garden, Algoma University [Online Image]. AUSU's People's Garden https://www.instagram.com/peoplesgarden82/

When examining alternative food systems beyond models of self-sufficiency, or visiting a grocery store, there are several options, though they all have their benefits and limitations. Mennonite communities in Southwestern Ontario, for example, hold wholesale auctions where large quantities of food are sold in a competitive bidding process to local buyers (Fraser et al., 2016). This process is facilitating the transportation of a whole new range of products to Northern Ontario (Alamenciak, 2015). Unfortunately, when examining wholesale auctions, researchers discovered the same limitation was present with the option of consumers growing their own produce: people want the benefits of sustainable food systems, but do not want to have to do more work or participate in a less convenient system. This insight is valuable, as it shows us that many cultures struggle with the same limitations while trying to create sustainable food systems, and these issues do not simply apply to one population sample.

Chapagain (2017) conducted a study on Ontario farmland surrounding the communities of Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Sudbury, and North bay, and discussed many opportunities to create sustainable food systems by better utilizing these spaces. Currently, Northern Ontario is limited to less than 1% of the available, arable land (Chapagain, 2017), and while all of Ontario is a traditional territory of the Indigenous people, their reserves make up less than 1% of the province's total land area (Hele, 2019). By looking at the issue of food security from a larger agricultural scale, it gives us an idea of the potential we could unlock if we focused on small-scale, local, sustainable farming. Chapagain (2017) advocates that these farms could help feed our local areas which are struggling, and could also help the Canadian economy. Chapagain (2017) discussed how if both Indigenous farmers and settler farmers could access more farmable land in a sustainable fashion, without harming ecosystems or the environment, and if the produce stayed local, unlike much of the produce from large scale factory farms, this would be a great accomplishment in the direction of solving food insecurity.

The Northern Ontario project, Understanding Our Food Systems, looks at this relationality across fourteen First Nations communities in Northwestern Ontario related to food security initiatives (Levkoe et al., 2019). This project was largely about building relationships and finding common ground on food security issues and strategies, and included developing a social network map. The key seven areas that were focused on were: self-sufficiency; access; sovereignty & traditional knowledge; funding and infrastructure; planning and coordination; educational skills; and capacity building (Levkoe et al., 2019, p.15). Although the gathering was attended across genders (Levkoe et al., 2019, Figure1), the participants were largely female, showing again how women are advancing food security strategies through relationship building as an ethics of care. Themes found within this project to improve capacities for food security were common to many First Nations communities and included: sustainable funding, community freezers and harvesting kitchens, greenhouses, community gardening, and community harvesting, as some examples (Levkoe et al., 2019, p. 16).

Another similar and connected example is the Indigenous Food Circle which focuses on Indigenous Food sovereignty in the Thunder Bay area (Levkoe, Ray & McLaughlin, 2019). “Its goal is to promote regional food self-reliance, healthy environments, and thriving economies through the implementation of research, planning, policy and program development” (Levkoe, Ray & McLaughlin, 2019, p.104). They were one of the many groups involved in the Understanding Our Food Systems work as well (Levkoe, Ray & McLaughlin, 2019, p.109). It is clear that there are many collective efforts being done by researchers, community members, and Indigenous groups to help combat food insecurity in Northern Ontario. Women are seen to be at the forefront of many of these initiatives, highlighting how they are not only addressing food insecurity but also nurturing a culture of resilience and care within their communities, built on relationality and an ethics of care. Their work emphasizes the powerful role that women play in advancing food security, while offering hope for a more sustainable future. While challenges remain, these initiatives offer promising pathways forward.

Conclusions

It is clear women play a critical role in maintaining and nurturing food systems globally, while simultaneously bearing the brunt of food insecurity, especially in vulnerable communities where food insecurity is exacerbated by environmental, geopolitical, and socioeconomic pressures. While various strategies to enhance access to affordable nutritious foods, such as year-round gardening and utilizing renewable energy show promise, they also face limitations, including the need for broader education and community engagement to overcome barriers to participation. They also faced challenges such as the time and labor required for growing food, as well as the complexity of integrating modern technology in small, northern communities. These challenges highlight the ongoing tensions between traditional and contemporary approaches to food production. For Indigenous populations, who are heavily affected by food insecurity because of the enduring impacts of colonialism and systemic oppression, clear policies that support food sovereignty and self-determined food harvesting methods are critical for resolving food insecurity especially within remote communities.

A feminist ethics of care approach highlights the need for more relational and community-centered models of food systems that recognize the interconnectedness of gender, and culture in relation to food insecurity. Both Indigenous and settler women around the world are taking action to help minimize food insecurity with locally-led efforts such as seed-saving programs, community gardening workshops, and food sovereignty projects, all of which reflect a deeply rooted, community-driven approach to building sustainable food systems. The work of these women is grounded in ethics of care, and reflects a vision of sustainable food systems that not only address food security, but also promote broader goals of economic justice, decolonization, and environmental sustainability, offering vital solutions to growing food-related crises. Ultimately, while there are significant obstacles to overcome, the collective efforts of women both globally and in Northern Ontario offer a hopeful path forward. Supporting women's initiatives for food security is thus becoming increasingly critical for catalyzing broad sustainability transformations that centralize an ethical care model that encompasses [or values] all life.

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See the Resources section at the end of this issue for resources related to this article

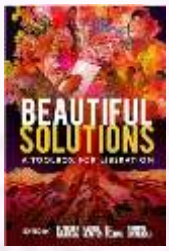
Read the full story on pages 65-68 of *Beautiful Solutions,* reviewed on page 110 of this issue

Landless Workers Movement

Location: Brazil

Years: 1984-Present

Sector: Land and Housing



This organization began in the early 1980s to resist against human rights violations from capitalist landowners in rural Brazil. Today this organization fights back towards more equitable education, health, and international relations. This group fights against the exploitation of rural and lower income communities in Brazil.

For more information visit: www.mstbrazil.org

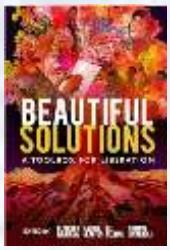
Read the full story on pages 297-300 of *Beautiful Solutions,* reviewed on page 110 of this issue

Self-Employed Women's Association

Location: India

Years: 1972-Present

Sector: Governance



This is the first trade union in India that legally recognizes self-employed women workers in the informal sector. This union has over 2 million women today, including women working in jobs as fish vendors, potters, and salt workers.

For more information visit: www.sewa.org

Building and Governing Housing with Care:

In conversation with John Boughton's *Municipal Dreams*

By Bridget Buglioni

It takes a war to recognise the virtues of the working class, for a state to recognise the virtues of its working class, argues John Boughton in his 2018 book, *Municipal Dreams: The Rise and Fall of Council Housing*. This was particularly evident after World War II when state-supported housing was built in Britain (and in many places, including Canada and the United States)–as those who fought were considered deserving of reward for their sacrifice. Boughton's book inspires a reflection on citizen value, on who matters and who is deemed deserving of adequate care; which is a valuable reflection not just in the field of Planning but across disciplines–especially as we navigate our climate crisis.

In *Municipal Dreams*, Boughton recounts the story of Council Housing[1] in Britain, from its early days of plentiful estates to their slow social and physical degradation and sell-off over the years. Boughton argues Council Housing has been wrongfully blamed and associated with problems in society, despite providing a decent and secure home for many. More than this, and why I highlight his work here, is that he tells the story of how the state once cared to provide safe and adequate shelter for all, and how this approach to housing was eventually rolled back, contributing to the lack of affordable housing today in Britain. By reflecting on the changing attitudes towards housing in Britain it is evident we can move forward from what has happened elsewhere and rethink how we build and govern our housing in Canada. In this article, I first provide a few key takeaways from Boughton's book *Municipal Dreams*, then discuss how we can build and govern our cities with care, by challenging categories of deservedness, calling for better approaches to design and governance, and by caring for each other.

Lessons from Britain's rise and fall of Council Housing

Boughton argues in Britain the effects of the first and second world wars led to a national consensus; a determination to learn from the failures of previous decades and to "win the peace" for ordinary people, which meant good quality housing for all (Boughton, 2018, p.60). What we must acknowledge, is that when the state takes responsibility for housing, it is in part doing so because of wider society, as a representative of popular societal norms and wishes; "wider society through the instrument of the state, assumed direct responsibility for housing its people decently" (Boughton, 2018, p.85).

However, this position of care didn't last forever. Over time, societal attitudes and government policies shifted. Council housing, once a symbol of care and equality, became marginalized and stigmatized as a "residual" option for the poorest, rather than for the working class which it was originally built to house. As the government deemed this housing of little value, subsidies to the construction and maintenance of council housing saw major cuts between the 1980's and 1990's (Boughton, 2018). At the same time the number of homeless in Britain more than doubled (Boughton, 2018). This change reflected a broader retreat from welfare-state principles in favour of market-based approaches, which Boughton critiques as ineffective and inequitable. Canada experienced a similar housing history, as by the 1970's the welfare-state retreated, and housing policy shifted in response (see Figure 1).

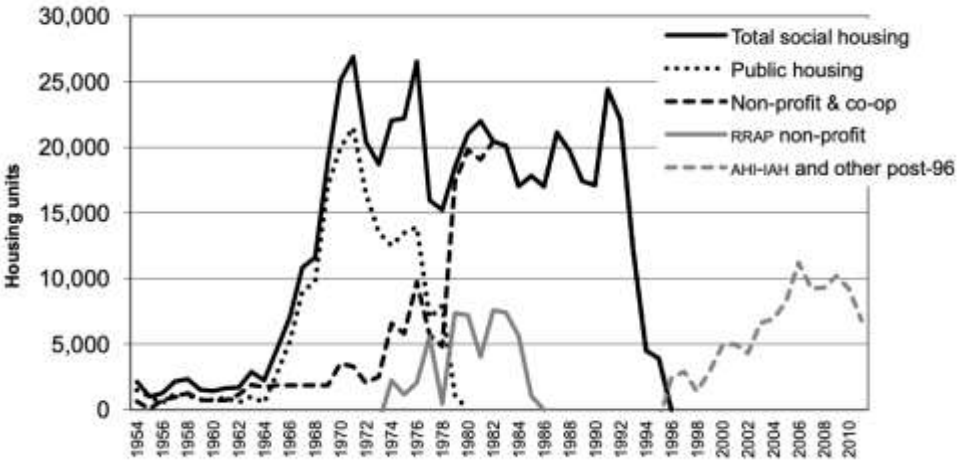


Figure 1. Annual Social Housing Commitments, Canada, 1954-2011. Source: Suttor, 2016, p. 4.

[1] Council Housing refers to housing in the UK and Ireland which is owned and rented out by local governments (Councils), and is most similar to Public or Social Housing in the US and Canada.

Boughton's work highlights how relying on the market has created as many problems as it has solved and "those problems have been disproportionately vested upon the poorest of our people" (Boughton, 2018, p.250). While it is true there are difficult economic conditions today in building affordable or social housing, we pay for the lack of this housing as a society, socially and fiscally. For example, Boughton describes how in Britain as the housing crisis only worsened, some councils bought back council homes previously sold under the Right to Buy[2] regime, buying them back from the public at significantly higher prices than they were sold for in previous years (2018, p.282) (such as Islington Council buying back 25 former council homes for 6.2 million pounds, which had been sold for a collective 1.2 million through the Right to Buy program).

Discussion: Winning the peace for ordinary people, again

A question that arises in reading *Municipal Dreams*, is how we urge our state and society in Canada to recognise the virtue of all classes of citizens without a need to meet an arbitrary and often discriminatory requirement of deserving. How do we 'win the peace' for ordinary people, to foster government accountability and societal care for all citizens, particularly through housing. Until we are all considered deserving, we will continue to take the free market approach, with the assumption that minimum regulation and therefore 'maximum consumer choice,' will somehow provide adequate housing for all, which of course is not working.

The answer to this question–of how we can make our cities into spaces where we are cared for, where our governments care for all our well-being and safety, not just those who are deemed deserving–is that we have to care. Even if you might not be directly affected, we need to recognise we all exist within the same housing system. To recognise our economic system and therefore our housing system, imposes hurt in women, in families and others, is crucial.

As Alva Gotby aptly states, "in capitalist society, care is scarce" (2025, p. 129). Yet there are great spaces that emerge (often filling a gap where needs are not met) that provide a sense of collective care, spaces that increase societal well-being. Our libraries are often seen as an example, but housing too can fulfill this role whether it be a non-profit housing development, an old apartment building which still provides affordable rent to its long-term tenants, or even a homeless encampment. However, these spaces are frequently under attack, their survival under threat, when we fail as a collective to recognise their value. And this livelihood struggle for spaces of care which do exist, have serious and unequal consequences. Vulnerable populations, such as those leaving the criminal justice system, LGBTQIA+ populations, refugees, and racialised groups are disproportionately affected by the absence of safe and affordable housing options, but also by a lack of safe and welcoming community spaces and public space.

Feminist scholars and researchers have long described the ills and suggested solutions to our housing forms and ways of living as well as housing governance and policy approaches (see for example, Fainstein, 2001; Hayden, 2002; Weisman, 1994; Matrix, 1984). On top of affordability issues, the built form itself is critiqued, as cities and suburbs can be exclusive and alienating and can have real barriers to accessibility and connectivity for the women and children they were designed to house. Many of the critiques from previous decades on public space and housing, still apply today, as capitalist and neoliberal enthusiasts and passive followers alike, have continued to dig their heels in–promoting neighbourhood forms and housing tenure and governance that continue to be exclusive, often through affordability and accessibility barriers.

On Deservedness

Another way in which we move forward, is to challenge categories of deservedness. In *Feeling at Home: Transforming the Politics of Housing,* Alva Gotby speaks to this question of deservedness within her chapter on how poor housing conditions create poor health outcomes (2025). She discusses the capitalist formation of "surplus populations," meaning those without secure employment who are vital to the system because they create the threat of replacement for the working class (Gotby, 2025). These surplus populations, who are underemployed or precariously employed, are regarded as "superfluous" to the workforce, and often live in poor housing conditions because they have little value to the capitalist class (Gotby, 2025). In other words, under capitalist categories of deservedness, we only really need good quality housing for the working population. This reinforces the categories of deserving and undeserving poor, in which being marked as surplus means the state is not overly concerned if your housing conditions produce negative health outputs. Instead, the state is more concerned with ensuring the 'deserving class' is housed in a way that allows for positive social reproduction and a healthy workforce. But, as productive workers we should all be afraid of falling into this 'invaluable' cat-

[2] The Right to Buy program was a UK housing policy introduced in 1980 under Conservative government which allowed tenants in council housing to purchase their homes at a discounted price, significantly reducing the country's social housing stock.

egory, for then we are no longer deemed deserving of care in regard to housing (Gotby, 2025).

Today, it is not only members of surplus populations who are living in poor housing conditions. We are seeing increasing amounts of working-class people, most notably renters, who are facing squalid housing conditions (Gotby, 2025). However, even as poor housing conditions touch the lives of many, we must remember there are certain groups who are continuously disproportionately affected by poor housing conditions, such as racialised groups, especially migrants, migrant workers, and refugees, who are an incredibly precarious and disposable workforce, but also Indigenous households, individual women and female-led households, and single parent households (Gotby, 2025; CMHC, n.d.). As the housing crisis impedes on the lives of the middle-class, there is a risk of our governments addressing the crisis with this middle-class working population in mind, ignoring the housing conditions of 'undeserving' groups, as they have long done so–reproducing a system of injustice. This lack of good housing for all, is what has been described as an "organised abandonment" of our surplus populations (Adler-Bolton and Vierkant, and Renwick and Shilliam in Gotby, 2025); it is purposeful negligence, and a lack of care. These categories of deservedness are something to challenge when working towards a future of better housing.

Conclusion

While I believe we need to fight for better environments across the city, the home is a place to start. Boughton offers the case of Geographer Doreen Massey[3] in his book, as she herself lived in council housing, and argued the ability to have an affordable home to stay in "offered precisely the security which enabled their lives to flourish" (Boughton, 2018. p. 256). We can begin our journeys to a better livelihood, to participate more in society, when we are housed safely and securely. But you have to want this security not only for yourself but also for your neighbour. Categorical classifications of deservedness must be questioned and fought against. In the final chapter of *Municipal Dreams*, Boughton looks to explore questions of social housing's past and present purpose, as well as to assess the form and nature of its future. What we can learn from Canada and Britain's shared history is that our states have found (most of) us deserving of housing, of good housing, in the past, because widespread society also shared this belief.

Perhaps it is time to rethink Canadian housing policy through the lens of care, advocating for feminist and inclusive approaches to urban design and governance. Otherwise, exclusion, alienation, and discrimination will continue to occur. Knowledge sharing is crucial here as a solution. The more we educate each other and teach our family and friends that alternatives exist the closer we can get to living in a city that is built for women, built for children, built for those with varying abilities, needs and vulnerabilities, and with our collective future in mind. Care can be thought about not only as a practice with one another but as a way to influence how we build and govern our cities and our housing. As historian and architect Dolores Hayden recounts women's marches and protests, she remarks on the "power that organised women can have" (2002, p. 244). If as a collective, we push for rethinking, and advocate for affordable and non-market housing, as well as for feminist and inclusive approaches to urban design, our government may be pushed to respond–as they have indeed done so in the past.

Bridget Buglioni's bio is on page 7.

[3] Doreen Massey was a British social scientist and geographer, specialising in Marxist, feminist, and cultural geography.

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Women in the City of Dreams

Steffie Dmello

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On the outskirts of Mumbai, by the coast so wide,
A tale of struggles, in my life's tide.
Fishing nets and fields of green,
Most of the people depended on this.

Through local trains, a journey so old,
A dance within chaos, a story untold.
My undergraduate dreams, raindrops fall,
I walked in morning's chaos, wondering dreams of all.

Entire life in crowded trains,
Twelve coaches packed with strains.
Three reserved for women and rest filled with men,
The social inequality still remains.

As urban shadows cast their gleam,
The train's embrace, a daily theme.
Women struggled to get in the train,
Pregnant ladies were unable to voice their pain.

My return journey, heat ablaze,
Suffocating in the crowded maze.
Polluted air, a toxic blend,
Busy in surviving, nobody cared.

Easy modes of transport for men,
On public transport women depend.
Palghar to Churchgate a journey so long,
No sanitation women could get along.

Education, a dream, a distant star,
Girls struggle to travel so far.
In heat and chaos, dreams confined,
Limited horizons, potentials compromised.

Women repurpose, quietly they strive,
Some say they have lost the fight.
A city neglected, a cash machine's might,
Gendered disasters, a silent fight.

Divided by classes, the richer survived
Marginalized communities still deprived.
Rich in cars, poor in strife,
A city's rhythm, a challenging life.

My eco-anxiety lies deep,
Class, gender, race, it sees.
Yet Mumbai is called the "City of Dreams".

“We are Remade by Each Other”

A conversation with Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu

By Reena Shadaan and Bridget Buglioni

Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu

Reena Shadaan

In 2024, Dr. Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu presented, “TCDD and the Drift of History: Chemicals as Memory” at the annual Technoscience Salon. Organized by the Technoscience Research Unit (University of Toronto), the Salon asks scholars to reconsider and reimagine conventional and prevailing scientific narratives with the prompt, “What is a chemical?” This interview builds upon themes in Tu’s Technoscience Salon talk as well as evokes Tu’s award-winning book, *Experiments in Skin: Race and Beauty in the Shadows of Vietnam* (2021). We discuss chemicals as memories and affecting presences, “heightened aesthetic sensibilities” that can facilitate connection, and the responsibilities of care in intellectual and ethnographic work. As Tu asserts, we are not just in relationship to one another; we are actively remade by each other.

Reena: In the 2024 TRU Salon, you shared, “TCDD and the Drift of History: Chemicals as Memory.” As part of the TRU Salon, we asked presenters to reflect on the core question, “What is a chemical?” Let’s start here: What is a chemical?

Thuy: I was presenting specifically on TCDD, better known as Agent Orange. At the end of the talk I said, a chemical is a memory. That was sort of the thesis of my talk, which I still think is true, although since then, that question has become more complex for me. And I want to thank everyone at the seminar for really prompting that thinking.

In that lecture, I was interested in the ways TCDD became a touchstone for people to talk about a myriad of social, political, and economic issues that they were confronting; and even in some ways, a means to displace their relationship to other chemicals that they were encountering in the present. A way to lean back into a history that continues to be present in their everyday life and allows them to articulate what it means to live in very uncertain, precarious times. Times in which part of what they have to do in Vietnam in order to rebuild after war is to engage in other forms of toxic labour. I was talking about how TCDD became one of the ways that people could invoke a memory of a toxic past to displace fears about their toxic present. In other words, they might not be in the predicament they are in now without that history, and yet they can also use this past to displace anxieties about the present–and to continue to do this work.

Dr. Tu’s talk , 2024 Technoscience Salon, Toronto, Canada

PHOTOGRAPH: S.D.BEHESHTI

Reena: Your work on chemical as memory is so multiscalar - temporally, of course, but also in relation to place. You’ve worked in Vietnam, you've written and spoken about your father's experience in coming to the United States, but you also look at the spa, the laboratory, and the skin or body. Working in this multiscalar way, there is a translation in language, culture, meaning. For instance, you’ve evoked the Vietnamese concept of ‘resting’ in relation to chemical exposure - that toxics can rest in the body and later emerge in more sensory ways. Can you reflect on the work of translating across scales of time and place?

Thuy: Yeah, I think that's one of the most difficult parts of the project I was working on in my last book. Thinking about how these different conceptions of say, the body, clashed and didn't work together, and how I confronted that clash in my own ethnographic work, when, for instance, I would insist on, “this could be fixed, or you need to see a doctor,” rather than being able to sit with this notion of resting. One of the things I talk about in the book is, in Vietnam, body and person are one word. In the U.S., body and person can be very separate. You have a body, and you have a person, and some persons can have bodies that are considered useless and thus not worth having, and some bodies are seen as not persons at all, right? Because a body has so many dimensions, not just physical, so many things can rest in a body. These range from things like chemicals, to spirits, to past ancestors–and the ways that they make themselves known to us can really vary. Sometimes, it appears as liver cancer, and sometimes it appears as an agitation that just kind of annoys you and keeps you awake. In the everyday of my research, I con-

fronted my inability to translate at first. My inability to sit there with a different way of understanding etiology, disease transmission, and understanding what a body means to a person.

To be able to do that translation in my research was difficult, and since then I've been trying to think about how I can bring those ideas into the contexts in which I live and work. To really think about how to sit with uncertainty, whether it's biomedical uncertainty, or any other kind of uncertainty, and how to live with the idea that you don't get to say when things emerge. You don't get to say when a spirit manifests or a condition becomes symptomatic.

By the end of my talk (at TRU), I was asking how we can learn from this idea of resting. One of the difficulties that we always have with chemicals is, how do we actually perceive them? Sometimes we can perceive them because we've gotten sick, but mostly we can't. Murphy's[1] work has been really instructional in this: so much about chemical effects has remained conjectural, since we are unsure about how to connect their presence to a tangle of symptoms that might not appear for some time, and at the same time, we have to fight against how technoscience constructs the realm of evidence–what counts, what matters, which produces a lot of uncertainty. How can we develop our own sensibilities, beyond the damage-centered paradigm?

I've been interested in thinking about aesthetics as one of the ways we can materialize our chemically saturated environment. I said that some of the women I met seemed to have a "heightened aesthetic sensibility." By this I meant that they had developed sensory capacities, through touch, through story-telling etc. that helped them to recognize that harm had been done without requiring incontrovertible scientific proof, or even admission of toxic presence. So, I was using the term "aesthetic" in one of its earliest meanings–perception by the senses–rather than its more recent definitions, as related to art or beauty.

To have a heightened aesthetic sensibility is to recognize, "Hey I'm probably in the same chemical pool as you, because I sense in you some of what I am going through." Maybe this gets us to the later part of the question that you posed, Reena, about translatability. Many scholars have used the concept of chemical kinship to help us to think about how we are connected, despite spatial, temporal, and many other kinds of divides[2]. I'm wondering if it is possible to think about a kind of connectivity that doesn't say "we are kin," or we are alike, but we are all a part of a chemical web that has remade each of us. To push our concept of entanglement even further.

PHOTOGRAPH: THUY LINH NGUYEN TU

Storefront in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Reena: Can you elaborate on this distinction you're drawing between being in chemical kinship versus being in this connected network.

Thuy: The idea of chemical kinship has been really important to me, because it suggests that we have a relationship, or we are connected, through conditions of exposure. This is contrary to the ways state and corporate entities think. They want to obfuscate these relationships, and in fact, remove us from each other's view, so that we can't recognize each other as allies. Can we build on those ideas? To think: what if we are not actually distinct subjects who exist in relation to each other, but my condition actually changes your condition, and we're all remade by each other. Once again, I've been spurred to think about this because of our dialogue, Reena. And I'm at the very beginning of trying to think about how we could map that. How do we trace the ways that we are remade by each other and what might that yield for us?

Reena: That is so powerful, this remaking of one another. I wonder, working across difference, across site, across scale, and being remade in these processes - is there a role of care, of care work, in that relation?

Thuy: Notions of care are difficult to translate. Because care can become coercive very quickly. And we know that from work like Lisa Stevenson's *Life Beside Itself*[3], how quickly an attempt at care can really become an attempt of coercion and vio-

[1]Murphy, M. (2017). Alterlife and decolonial chemical relations. *Cultural Anthropology*, *32*(4), 494-503.

[2]See Vanessa Agard-Jones' work on chemical kin as well as others who have reflected on these themes in *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience,* Special Section: Chemical Entanglements (Volume 6, No. 1).

[3]Stevenson, L. (2014). *Life Beside Itself: Imagining Care in the Canadian Arctic* (1st ed.). University of California Press.

Women at Work in Vietnam, 1970-1973. Mrs. An.

PHOTOGRAPH : ANNE SCAHILL COLLECTION-TTU

lence, if we're not careful. But I do think there is a place for care, in the sense that I watched these women care for each other [in the Calyx Spa]. The kind of research site I was working at was not an average spa. It was a lot of working women caring for other working women; women who made money in some other site of exploitation then came there for some kind of care. It really wasn't this place where working-class women are pampering elite women and giving them their 'me time.' It was a place in which working-class women were caring for other working-class women, and I rarely see those kinds of places up close like that.

One of the things that I noticed about care in that place is that it took many different forms. The thing that really struck me was that care didn't always come from diagnosis and treatment, care didn't come from this idea that there is a cure if you just could figure it out, care didn't come from this hope for transformation. Care came from ordinary acts of remediation, of making someone feel slightly better, from being in community with each other, at the end of the day.

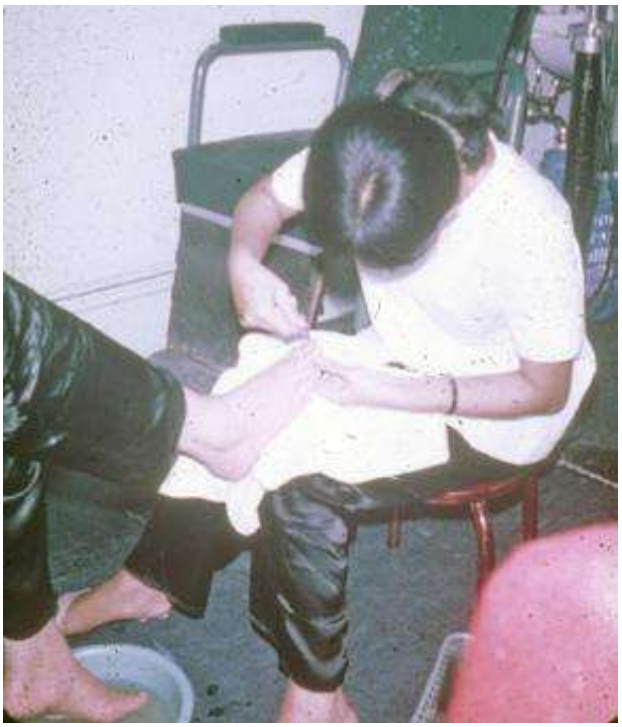
This was very much not the idea of cruel optimism. These people were not there to keep stoking hopes about a beautiful future, or the possibility for a completely clean body. They really weren't there for that. It was one of the very few places I've seen where cruel optimism wasn't the driving force. I'm not saying it was hopeless–of course women wanted to look better, feel better, and thought they could. But it wasn't really the driving ethic, and care really was about the ordinary, the everyday, the immediate relief, and the sense of being together that may not last beyond those moments. Though, I guess in the world we live in now–I'm talking about a post-second Trump world–maybe at some level any kind of hope feels cruel.

Reena: This makes me think about beauty work. As you discuss in *Experiments in Skin*, beauty can conceal a lot of violence. And, you know, I do a lot of work in nail salons, and so I have a sense of how beauty can be experienced as joyful, and can be a site of connection, care, but also can be a site of quite a lot of harm and violence. I wonder if you want to talk a bit about that role of beauty, what that means and what that reveals and conceals.

Thuy: Absolutely, historically beauty has often been an alibi for violence; like "let's tear down these blighted streets, this is going to be better." Or like the way Trump is always saying, "It's going to be beautiful." We're gonna have a beautiful budget, a beautiful economy, or we're gonna make a *beautiful* new Gaza. That's his little catchphrase, and that's exactly what I mean by beauty as an alibi for violence. And yet, at least in the place I was looking, [beauty] can also be an entrée for us to see and perceive that violence. I think that's what it was for me.

In the early part of the book, I talk about this photograph of this woman that leads me to thinking about beauty. It's a photograph that has been misplaced in the archives, and I don't know anything about this woman, but that she's beautiful. It's the only word I can use to describe her because her presence is so *affecting*. And that to me is what beauty is, it's an affecting presence. It is not individual transcendence; it's an affecting presence.

You know what else can be an affecting presence? Chemicals–to go back to our earlier discussion–a presence that is also difficult to describe and perceive. If we were forced to define what is beautiful, we'd all have a very hard time doing it and also very different definitions. To think about beauty not as a



PHOTOGRAPH : ANNE SCAHILL COLLECTION-TTU

Women at Work in Vietnam, 1970-1973. Pedicures

Women at Work in Vietnam, 1970-1973. Her staff.

PHOTOGRAPH : ANNE SCAHILL COLLECTION-TTU

thing or a characteristic one could have or not have, but as an affecting presence, allowed me to access all the other affecting presences sitting in the space of the salon–the histories of violence, the chemically saturated world, and so on..

Reena: Talking about beauty as this affecting presence, and then linking that to chemicals, as an affecting presence, again, is that translation work. But it's such a beautiful definition.

Reena: One of the things that really struck me in your TRU Salon talk was this idea of, it's OK to be OK with uncertain futures. It's OK to just sit in that uncertainty and there doesn't need to be this huge optimism. It's OK to sit with that uncertainty.

I think about myself as a new mom and what does care look like in my parenting relationship; it's making sure you're OK today, making sure you're OK tomorrow. There is that kind of, I don't want to say optimism, there's this kind of drive that's in that relationship. But we know that is not a reality. We can't always make sure they're OK in this world. So, I wonder if you can talk about the kind of uncertainty in relation to care work.

Thuy: I think what you're describing is so common for so many of us. Whether it's for children, or for partners, or for parents, or even for ourselves, right? I think the tension you are highlighting is a real one. On the one hand I do think it is important for all of us to sit and accept a certain level of uncertainty, because that is just facts. At the same time, I don't think I would advocate for a kind of hopelessness or a kind of resignation. So, where is that place between 'I can control the future' and 'I have to sit in uncertainty.'

[4]Petryna, A. (2022). *Horizon Work: At the Edges of Knowledge in an Age of Runaway Climate Change.* Princeton University Press.

I've been influenced by Adriana Petryna, [who wrote the] book *Horizon Work*[4]*.* Adriana Petryna is an anthropologist and she's studying firefighters. I don't know if you've been keeping up with the terrible fires in California. So the job of the firefighter is to predict and to manage fires, including burning out certain parts of forests to manage it. And yet, they can't predict it, they can't really control it, because a shift in wind, a different kind of dry condition, everything ends up in complete flames. And her idea about horizon work is that you can't see all the way to the distant future, but maybe there's a way that you create a horizon in which you *can* see. That you can prepare yourself for a certain kind of known quantity. Then you work towards that horizon while knowing that this horizon might change in relation to a longer horizon, and you build your capacities, build your knowledge to address it the best you can. I think of care work in that way as well. It's just a kind of horizon work. A certain kind of duration that is not about a complete vision of the future.

And I think we all know that, especially as parents. My children will become whatever they become, they will inherit whatever earth that they're going to inherit, but in this time frame, in this space, I can do this thing to give them a fighting chance – to let them know that they are cared for. I think that's the kind of work that I've been trying to think about how to do. To develop this kind of horizon work or kind of horizon vision that isn't about us securing a future, but it is about building our capacity to care for ourselves and each other.

Reena: That's so beautiful. When I hear you talk about care, it's a theme that comes across so clearly in your work; in what you write about, in the content, but it's in your process as well. You evoke care in this very multilayered and intricate way. It's in how you, for instance, talk about your interactions with folks at the Calyx Spa but also in how you present and narrate those interactions. I wonder if you can talk a bit about the role of care in the context of your ethnographic work.

Thuy: Yeah I do think so. A Vietnamese reader said to me once, after they read my book: "Oh you love us." And I thought that's so interesting because the work that we do as scholars is really critical. It's like 'we know we're smart' when we're offering critique. It's what we're trained to do, to offer these incisive critiques. And that doesn't read as care and it certainly doesn't read as love, usually. And it's not that I think I set out to do that–and I don't know that I love Vietnamese people, or the people in the spa, or I don't know if that's how I would describe it – but I do think that I have felt such a responsibility for other people's stories. I learned that from the best ethnographers, the people that I really admire doing this

work. It's so easy to extract people's lives for your own critical analysis, it's just so easy. It's much harder to think of yourself as caretakers of people's stories. When you approach it with that ethic, it will come out differently. It isn't to say that the scholarly critique isn't there, but it is about understanding yourself as interlocutors, as real interlocutors to people who you are learning from but also maybe teaching as well.

The other interesting thing is once I gave a talk, and this anthropologist came up to me after the talk and said, "What were you doing in the spa, in the everyday?" and I said I was mostly cleaning. After each session, I'd go clear off the tables and take out the garbage, and blah blah blah, so I was basically just a cleaner. And she said, "oh I can see that in your ethnography," because it isn't from a top-down perspective, meaning maybe a vision from someone at the front desk or someone managing from the side. It's a vision from the bottom up.

I'm saying this to suggest that I'm learning after-the-fact, from the readers' responses, about what it actually means to do care work in the ethnographic mode. Which is to say that I'm not sure that I was always intentional about it, and I was learning as I was going along based on my own positionality during the moment of research and the ways that I was able to build relationships – and to learn to take care of these people's stories.

Reena: On that theme of being a caretaker of stories, at the TRU Salon, you shared your father's story. Similarly, when you open *Experiments in Skin*[5]*,* in the acknowledgements, the first person you talk about is your father. In my understanding, there's a bit of the caretaking of your father's stories as well. I wonder if you can talk more about that, because it seems like there is, on one side, the guidance of your father, the example of your father, that care from parent to child, and then there's you as a caretaker of your father's stories.

Thuy: That is such a good question, and a complicated question for me, because to be completely honest I didn't really have a great relationship with my father. One of the effects of being in the war for him, at least in my reading, and I'm only really unwinding this now as an adult child, is that I think he suffered a lot of trauma, for lack of a better word. But that manifested in periods of depression, sometimes aggression towards others, including his own family. He could be very volatile. Growing up, I didn't experience him as the person who was my caregiver. It

[5] Tu, Thuy Linh Nguyen (2021). *Experiments in Skin: Race and Beauty in the Shadows of Vietnam.* Duke University Press.

PHOTOGRAPH : ANNE SCAHILL COLLECTION-TTU

Women at Work in Vietnam, 1970-1973.

was really my mom who was our caregiver and it was my mom who did all of that nourishing – physical nourishing, mental nourishing, emotional nourishing. And yet, he's the person that was an intellectual touchstone for me. He was the puzzle that I was always trying to unpack.

I feel like if I can't tell my father's story with care, as someone I had very strong and in some ways negative feelings towards, then I can't tell anyone else's story with care. Because I will always meet people who I have negative feelings about. How do I do the work of understanding, of enabling deep analysis?

What I have learned from my father was how to figure out those moments when he was really trying to convey something. Whether it was through the telling of ghost stories, or whatever else. He was this avid union activist, he worked in a factory, he was a real progressive. He learned something from that experience of war and migration that he was, at least in my reading, inchoately trying to transfer to us – and maybe that was his care. Or maybe I have to learn to see that, in some way, as his care, or as his horizon work for us. He was trying to teach us something about how to do progressive politics, about how to do collective work, in a way that my mom wasn't really doing. She was doing that other kind of care work, that is, you're my child and I have to take care of you. So that's a long and somewhat convoluted way of saying why my father's story is so important to me. I'm doing this now after he died, and I'm not sure I could have done this while he was alive, because I do think something happens after a parent leaves you. Now when my father pops up in my head, I never remember any of the bad stuff. I remember those moments like us playing cards or his funny way of saying something. If there's an allegory here it's an allegory also about the durational process of life and death, and what you learn in life and what you learn after death.

Reena: I hate the term self-care because it gets so co-opted, but is the untangling of your father's stories and trying to understand your father and his story, a kind of care work for yourself?

Thuy: Yeah. I love the way you just put that because I think self-care gets so co-opted, and that word makes you want to cringe. But it is impossible to care for others without taking care of ourselves, it's just impossible. Every activist I've ever known has said this, anyone who has cared for a lot of people has said, there's a time and a place where you have to care for yourself, otherwise you can't do that work. And I do think that my intellectual work is a way that I try to care for myself.

My intellectual work is about unravelling a lot of things that I have not understood growing up, whether it's in my own personal life, or in the field work that I've done, or in the communities that I've encountered. Whether it's thinking through the small personal problems or the bigger political problems, it's about learning, at its most basic level – and I think that's why I got into the profession I got into. Which is to learn, and to teach.

This kind of intellectual work requires you to sit quietly with your thoughts. There are few other times when you do that, except for maybe therapy, which I have also done. It is impossible to write–to write a lecture, a book, an essay, or anything else–without sitting quietly with your thoughts. Like I said, I've done therapy, and I feel like I get that part out of therapy, but something else is happening for me in that other moment when I'm writing. It is that space where I have my quiet thoughts, but it's also that space where I'm connected to everyone I've ever spoken to and everyone I've ever read. They all live right in there, in my head.

Reena: I love the way you put that. It's a space of solitude but also a space of very deep connections. This evokes scale again. Connecting the stories of your father to the stories of folks working in the Calyx Spa to the legacies of militarism and dermatological research to a lifetime of interactions and engagements with all kinds of scholarship. It's scale and translation between place, and site, and time, and people, and work, and language, and epistemology, and culture, and geography.

Thuy: I'm going to sit with this question of translation. Because it's such a deep and important question for all of us right now. We all, in the US, and maybe you too in Canada, have been experiencing whiplash about this new administration. It has led me to really have to sit and reflect on what it is I'm seeing and how we got here. How we got to this place of pretty radical and violent conservative politics. As the Democrats like to say, *mistakes were made*, but I think the question of translation is at the heart of it, at some level – at least for me. Why was it that we were not able to convince people, in a democratic nation? Why was it that we were not able to convince people that another vision of the future, another vision of the present, was a more compelling one? I think there's something about translation there. Because I still hang on to the belief that we all did want very similar things. But it seems we cannot speak to each other anymore. And this question you have around language, it's not about *language* language–what language we are speaking–it is about how we can speak in a way that we can actually hear each other. How do we translate our deepest needs and desires to each other and recognise these are actually shared?

Part of what I've been trying to think through in asking about aesthetics as sensory, or as organization of desire, rather than as beauty per se, is to think more about the work of sensing and perceiving rather than just communicating and speaking. Maybe that is part of the translation we haven't thought enough about. The part where we can perceive and hear and recognise and acknowledge. Maybe that needs a bit more work. Maybe we need to think about some new models, some way of framing, so we can push that conversation along.

Reena: Barriers in translation, for various reasons, and barriers in care. How do we express care across those barriers in a way that it is felt as care.

Thuy: And not a coercion, or not as abandonment, and not as "I know better than you." I think as per usual Reena you've hit on like the key issues right: *Care and Translation.* How do we translate practices of care towards each other in a way that we might recognize it as such?

Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu, PhD, is Professor in the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis at NYU. She is the author or editor of five books, most recently, *Experiments in Skin: Race, Beauty, in the Shadows of Vietnam*, and is currently working on a project about "The Shape of War."

The bios of **Reena Shadaan** and **Bridget Buglioni** are on page 7.

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Enid Skyler


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Retreating to Nurture Our True Nature:

How Academic Writing Retreats Can Foster Communities of Care for Human and Planetary Systems

By Enid Skyler, Kira Cooper and Jody-Lynn Rebek

Introduction

Find Flow in our Chaotic World

Have you ever sat down to write hoping to situation yourself in a writing flow or a creative breakthrough, only to find a mental block or clunky progress? In today's fast-paced, high-pressure academic landscape whether creatives or academics, many struggle to find the best mindset, environment or flow for productive writing and creative process (Benvenuti, 2017; Papen & Thériault, 2018; Tremblay -Wragg et al., 2021). Academics are challenged in this "publish or perish" environment, to find time to prioritize writing or knowledge dissemination, along with other scholarly responsibilities (Cunningham, 2022; Stevenson, 2021; Weibe et al. 2023). As universities explore innovative and fresh ways to support their communities and students, writing retreats stand out as a powerful method for promoting both academic and personal growth and wellbeing, whether online or in-person. For academics, students or researchers, writing retreats provide structured time and space to step away from distractions to immerse themselves in a supportive and comfortable environment to develop and enhance their writing skills and creative works, increase publication outputs, and meet performance expectations (Hamerton & Fraser, 2012; Kornhaber et al., 2016; Quynn & Stewart, 2021; Stewart et al., 2018).

This paper explores Algoma University's *Creative Scholars Lab*, a pilot academic writing retreat for faculty, graduate and undergraduates, held at a quiet, peaceful lodge surrounded by forests and rivers near Lake Superior. We share how this retreat aided participants in developing writing skills, attaining or sharpening writing goals, and deepened relationships with themselves, each other, and the world around them. Through personal stories and evidence-based insights, we illustrate the transformative power of writing retreats in enhancing creativity, productivity and holistic wellness.

The Benefits of Academic Writing Retreats

Effective communication is a critical skill for researchers and academics (Bell & Murray, 2021), and literature shows that mindful writing and proper intention setting have the potential to: (1) deepen understanding of the writing process, and foster identity within writers related to self-reflection, creativity, joy, and self-acceptance; (2) nurture present-moment awareness and acceptance in a non-judgmental environment which promotes wellbeing; and (3) develop a community which allows for vulnerability, creation of knowledge, and knowledge exchange that strengthens writing and creative outputs (Woloshyn et al., 2022). Kornhaber et al (2016) conducted an integrative review of existing studies examining academic writing retreats and found key elements conducive to increasing publication output including protected time and space, developing academic writing competence, and curating a community of practice. Alongside the many intrapersonal benefits, such as increased motivation and reduced writing-related anxiety, there is an organizational investment in mentorship and follow-up opportunities as a community of practice. This review illustrated consistency over the years with eight (8) to 15 participants in each retreat. Retreats varied in content and timing (ranging from two to seven days in length). The authors shared that further research must be conducted on the cost-effectiveness of these retreats.

Retreats can help academic writers recognize the importance of writing undisturbed without other conflicting responsibilities (Weibe et al., 2023). This pilot retreat was therefore structured as an interdisciplinary, flexible, and cost-effective program compared to conventional models that tend to be more discipline-specific (Kornhaber et al., 2016). Completing publications and furthering qualifications at retreats is shown to nurture confidence amongst participants while furthering their content knowledge, and sense of credibility (Hamerton & Fraser, 2012). Participants often report that the writing retreat provided them with tools to

further develop an awareness of language and writing styles, in their work and in guiding students through sharing learning experiences. Weibe et al. (2023) introduced a biannual writing retreat for faculty and staff across different disciplines and found the benefits aligned with those discussed in previous studies. The most significant reported benefit was associated with the supportive community that emerged from the shared experience that continued to be nurtured after everyone left the physical retreat space. Participants also discussed that this experience changed their approach to writing, and fostered collaboration with other retreat participants.

Current issues within higher education in Canada are numerous, including high dropout rates, prolonged study programs beyond the usual timeline (Tremblay-Wragg et al., 2021) and worsening mental health (Stevenson, 2021). Authors discuss that a lack of academic writing abilities and feelings of loneliness and isolation are prominent factors affecting student success (Baghoori et al., 2022; Fagan et al., 2023; Grégoire, 2022). Researchers developed writing retreats for graduate students that had three goals: 1) determine academic writing based on realistic individual goals; 2) identify optimal writing conditions; and 3) reduce isolation (Tremblay-Wragg et al., 2021). Consistent with other studies, positive results related to academic writing abilities through a community remained present afterwards. Graduate students often seek writing interventions to support them in completing theses or dissertations. Writing retreats aid graduate students and faculty in developing similar skills and productivity amplifiers. Writing retreats consisting of two days, two and a half days, or five days (depending on participant availability) were examined and the authors found increased productivity among 26 out of 30 participants. Participants hypothesized that this increase in productivity was because of having focused writing time without distractions, being a part of a group (which helped them remain accountable), setting goals, and following the retreat agenda that had writing sessions with breaks in between, instead of “binge” writing (Stewart et al., 2018). Participants alternated between writing and editing depending on their productive times of the day. Research strategies highlighted in this article curate an essential balance, construction, and participation needed within retreats to ensure personal success.

Writing retreats also positively affect relationships between participants and literacy (Papen & Thériault, 2018). Researchers showed that writing retreats can generate pleasure and joy in participants, which highlights the existence (and benefit) of emotions in academic writing, a phenomenon that is not discussed often in literature. The existing literature showcases the benefits of academic writing retreats on graduate

PHOTOGRAPHS : V. VACIRCA (2024)

Figure 1. Algoma University Creative Scholars Lab

students (Tremblay-Wragg et al., 2021; Stewart et al., 2018), as graduate students often experience challenges similar to seasoned scholars (Benvenuti, 2017; Hamerton & Fraser, 2012; Kornhaber et al., 2016; Quynn & Stewart, 2021; Stevenson, 2021; Woloshyn et al., 2022). To support scholars in various levels of development and career progression, research should continue to examine other populations who would benefit from the skill development and support writing retreats offer.

There is a foundation of faculty and graduate writing retreat research, but little examine undergraduates, who may face similar distractions, external pressures, or negative feelings towards academic writing. Researchers created a “mini” retreat, involving third-year undergraduate students, and found participants were challenged by finding the time and space to write within day-to-day activities, mimicking previous studies (Benvenuti, 2017; Hamerton & Fraser, 2012; Kornhaber et al., 2016; Papen & Thériault, 2018; Quynn & Stewart, 2021; Tremblay-Wragg et al., 2021; Stevenson, 2021; Stewart et al., 2018; Weibe et al. 2023; Woloshyn et al., 2022). Scholars concluded that writing retreats should be much more common, and accessible for undergraduate students in later stages of degree programs (Cunningham, 2022).

Sangster (2023) discussed that prospective graduates must be strong critical thinkers and have the capacity to make balanced judgements. One theoretical model for writing retreats implements active and blended learning with module assessment strategies (Rentzelas & Harrison, 2020). This retreat offers workshops on formative feedback, writing skills, and discussion chapters, and illustrates formulating a final product such as a dissertation or research proposal. In contrast, Sangster (2023) held a dissertation-specific writing retreat for undergraduate students and found

attitudinal changes such as increased motivation, confidence, and a more positive outlook on the final writing of dissertations. Both researchers discovered a positive trend between student benefit and academic writing retreats, and that more research is needed to further investigate this relationship.

Potential Issues

Although there are clear benefits of academic writing retreats, authors acknowledge there are possible tensions that could arise within retreat settings such as navigating different writing styles, interpreting feedback from others, and negotiating one's "writing voice" (Murray, 2023; Woloshyn et al., 2022). Another common challenge reported by participants is linked to translating the positive outcomes of writing retreats (which are often subjective and personal) into day-to-day routines in university life (Kornhaber et al., 2016; Stevenson, 2021). Sustaining the positive benefits of writing retreats for comprehensive well-being is difficult without broader integration into strategic initiatives that address the root causes of poor mental health and well-being within higher education. Quynn and Stewart (2021) found many have difficulty maintaining their writing habits once the retreat has come and gone. In addition, Benvenuti (2017) examined pressures and challenges associated with research and publication output. She found that although retreats could support novice scholars (such as graduate or postdoc students) to gain experience with core academic practices (including the peer review process), supporting a novice writer's progress trajectory is challenging due to factors such as competition within their scholarly field.

Possible Strategies

Retreats can be helpful for writers, but sustained benefits require greater contemplation and care by organizers to facilitate conditions for growth and long-term collaborations (Benvenuti, 2017). Careful attention to balancing the retreat design, co-creation of the relational community, and participant engagement, is critical for supporting scholarly writing development. Participants could also benefit from attending multiple retreats, to help build *and sustain* writing practices, skill development and personal satisfaction (Quynn & Stewart, 2021).

PHOTOGRAPHS : V. VACIRCA (2024)

Figure 2 : Writers writing

The Retreat - Reflect, Connect and "Just write"- The myth of the perfect moment

Three professors and the Centre of Teaching and Learning at Algoma University co-created and piloted an Inaugural Academic Writing Retreat in November of 2024. The retreat was designed with a significant focus on land connection to both promote wellbeing and learn how this would impact participants. The primary purpose of the Academic Writing Retreat or "Creative Scholars Lab" was to create a structured yet flexible and organic space where participants can concentrate on their writing while building a supportive academic community. The Academic Writing Retreat was designed as a two-day, in-person event at a local lodge in the wild forests near Lake Superior. The event was a pilot event that welcomed three faculty, a library staff, a postdoctoral fellow, five alumni Research Assistants and a current Anishinabe Studies student (11 total). This pilot retreat was limited to a small, committed group due to budget constraints and to ensure a sustainable, collaborative, and intimate setting (Figure 1). Invitations were shared with our university community members known to the faculty who organized the event (Drs. Rebek, Goodchild and Webber, and Julia Duncan) to have current and active writing projects.

The retreat opened with good intentions and participants were asked to share their connection to a favourite writer(s) and their "why" for attending the retreat. The common element of their reflection revolved around embracing the creative journey in writing, and the 'messy middle'. Participants reflected on stepping out of their comfort zones as some did not consider themselves to be writers. They discussed finding inspiration within their surroundings, (which were expressly chosen due to their natural beauty). Participants felt this would help them embrace the dynamic nature of writing. Writers highlighted the importance of authenticity, the value of imperfections, and the necessity of perseverance through challenges. The insights revealed a collective acknowledgment that the writing process is both personal and communal, requiring patience, exploration, and trust in one's own voice.

The retreat combined structured writing sessions, contemplative practices, and communal activities, at a venue that encouraged academic focus and connection with the land (Figure 2 and 3). Participants engaged in goal-setting, personal reflection, and supportive collaboration to make tangible progress on their writing goals. Invitees also engaged in rejuvenating outdoor activities and contemplative practices that promote well-being. The retreat was drawn to a close in a sharing circle to reflect on the weekend, to explore the question "who am I as a writer?", as well as share individual progress and achievements.

Feedback was collected during our closing circle, as well as after the retreat via a Google Form survey. By the end of the retreat, participants advanced their writing projects, gained valuable insights, and developed meaningful, deep connections with others. Three themes were generated from the closing discussion: empowerment through community; vulnerability in scholarship; and flexibility in creative processes (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.2-4).

Empowerment Through Community:

Participants highlighted the transformative power of a supportive academic community that fosters confidence and collaboration. Participants felt equal and valued, "There was no sense of academic hierarchy or faculty and student/attendee separation. Everyone was treated as equal, and all contributions were thoughtfully accepted and considered as valid" (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.4). This encouraged authentic expression and a shared sense of purpose. Another participant shared, "Working on writing projects concurrently heightened the sense of community during the retreat and made it feel like I was on a team, even though I was working independently." (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.4)

Vulnerability in Scholarship:

There was a strong focus on the importance of genuine interactions and the courage to face the truth. One participant said, "We have no other option than to face our truth and to share that with the people around us, this gives meaning to our work and purpose to our relationships…" (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.4). The retreat environment cultivated a community of care, where participants could share their vulnerabilities without fear of judgment, as well as their wins, "It was a motivator to be able to share my progress with others and celebrate each others' successes" (p.4).

Flexibility in Creative Processes:

The flexibility to shift writing plans encouraged a more organic approach to academic projects, allowing participants to engage deeply with their work and adapt to their creative needs. One participant commented, "I noticed an increase in confidence. I was nervous about being able to get into my writing head, but was able to influence the headspace I needed and could successfully write through all four sessions!" (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.4). Participants also discussed embracing spontaneity in the writing process. They were then able to navigate their writing journeys based on their mental states rather than rigid structures. This longer quote exemplifies the theme:

PHOTOGRAPHS : V. VACIRCA (2024)

Figure 3: Writers writing

> *I noticed that my writing plans veered from what I originally mapped. I completed all my goals, just in the order that I was in the mindset for, instead of what I had written down as my order. It was important for me to have plenty of chunks of writing time for this reason. So, I could afford the time to shuffle my writing projects. (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.4)*

Access to the Natural Environment

Algoma Universities' academic writing retreat integrated contemplative practices within a beautiful natural environment to nurture these connections, contributing to both personal and ecological well being within writing. 'Mother Nature' fosters a stronger sense of connection and pro-environmental behaviors (Liu et al., 2018). A few participants shared that pushing through comfort zones can unlock creative breakthroughs, and being centred within an inspiring, natural environment fostered motivation and innovation in writing (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.3). A common element of these insights revolved around embracing the creative journey in writing or the 'messy middle'.

Discussion:

PHOTOGRAPH: V. VACIRCA (2024)

Figure 4. View of Stokley

PHOTOGRAPH: ENID SKYLER (2024)

Figure 5. Retreat Bonfire

Algoma University's inaugural academic writing retreat revealed important findings surrounding the multifaceted benefits of engaging, experiential experiences within nature and the community. The results from this pilot retreat were overwhelmingly positive and illustrated the positive impact on writers and academics. Three core themes emerged: empowerment through community; vulnerability in scholarship; and flexibility in creative processes (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.2-4). Each highlighted important factors in formulating writing retreats offering experiential learning activities for academic writing. Participants felt a supportive community strengthened confidence in their writing abilities, creativity and motivation. They also valued genuineness and vulnerability within scholarship, and authenticity discourses, creative processes, and relationships. Lastly, flexibility in the creative process allowed participants to stay grounded in their mental states, and work along this schedule, instead of needing to abide by a rigid structure. Adaptability promoted a more fulfilling writing experience. All three themes resonate with existing scholarship on academic writing retreats and mindful writing practices, offering insights for structured opportunities for individual productivity and communal wellbeing.

The natural surroundings and environment were rated highly by participants (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.8). Many participants discussed as early as the opening circle that they found inspiration in this location - specifically chosen for its natural beauty - which helped them embrace a dynamic and fluid process of writing (Figures 4, 5, and 6). This aligns with previous literature on mindful learning and mindfulness, highlighting their relationships with connectedness to nature and reflection (Barbaro & Pickett, 2015; Wang et al., 2016). Further comments in the exit survey, one participant stated, "The availability of hiking trails, proximity to a beautiful waterfall, and access to sauna & bonfire was extremely helpful for relaxation after/in between long periods of intense thought …" (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.9), highlighting the importance of the natural environment, and how this helped them feel at peace and unwind. This longer quote helps emphasize the meaningfulness of the chosen environment:

> *I feel I achieved both my writing goals ..., but also a personal goal of being more grounded and in touch with myself. The environment really brought out the best of me, as did the people I was around, and that made this a really special and uplifting retreat for me to get done what I needed [to] and reconnect with my values. (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.8)*

These testaments from participants imply that not only can mindfulness and mindful learning foster a deeper connection to nature (Barbaro & Pickett, 2015; Wang et al., 2016), but that being surrounded by nature can help improve mindful learning and self -congruence.

While the results of this pilot retreat were overwhelmingly positive, several opportunities for future retreats remain. One notable limitation of writing retreats identified in the current literature is the difficulty of translating the positive outcomes of retreats into participants' everyday lives (Stevenson, 2021). Although participants reported increases in productivity and a stronger sense of community during our writing retreat, it remains to be seen how these effects will persist long term. With the pilot being small and intimate, a close-knit community of writers emerged. Yet, as research by Kornhaber et al. (2016) and Hamerton and Fraser (2012) suggest, retreats that attract larger, more diverse participants may offer even greater opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, community building, and knowledge exchange. Careful consideration must be given to maintaining the intimate and supportive

PHOTOGRAPH: V. VACIRCA (2024)

Figure 6. Stokley Waterfall

environment of retreats, while potentially broadening their scope. Lastly, some participants discussed that two (2) days was too short for a retreat, and shared that they were not ready to leave, acknowledging it takes time to settle into a headspace that supports academic writing and become comfortable with support from a community of care.

Future directions - Build on success:

Research by Quynn & Stewart (2021) suggests that repeated attendance at writing retreats may support participant writing habits and sustain the sense of community developed during these experiential experiences. Moving forward, future retreats might benefit from being part of a series, helping to build long-term connections and supporting participants continued academic growth. One example is forming a biannual writing event in a natural location. The space must be conducive to writing, so people can spread out and have as much space or company as they'd prefer during their process. Depending on the number of participants, consideration should be given to having multiple working groups to foster deeper connections and sharing. The participants of the Creative Scholars Lab felt the optimal group size is 8-12 people to build communities of care within the timeline of a retreat. However individual preferences may differ, and many retreats are successful with larger numbers as well (Kornhaber, 2016; Weibe, 2023). If there are multiple groups, participants could come together for meals and activities to encourage community.

Separate writing retreats for mentorship and support should be provided at different levels of scholarship (i.e., undergrad, graduate, faculty, etc.). Having participants form small groups with a mentor is recommended. Consider an application process for selecting participants and cohorts, focused on setting writing intentions, and mindset goals, and illustrating a completed draft or rough outline. Retreats could then welcome all levels of experience, from novice scholars to experienced researchers (Kornhaber et al., 2016). When discussing the length of future retreats, three-day retreats would ensure writers have more time in this immersive experience. Organizers could set a "writing day" (i.e. 9 am to 5 pm), and schedule group team building before and after. Future retreats could further examine the effects of having a retreat in a natural environment, and its impact on participants' work habits, productivity, and emotional wellbeing compared to an urban environment. The influence of place in nature-connectedness and pro-environmental behaviours could be further examined.

Future studies could also consider how writing retreats might also contribute to sustainability progress. Questions in such contexts might include *how working in a natural environment affects learning and/or mindfulness? How would it affect individuals' connection with nature and pro-environmental attitudes/ behaviours, or would their focus be on productivity and progress while learning? Would the natural environment relax or distract them too much to be productive?* Future research could also consider the role of writing retreats and how blending faculty, graduate or undergraduate interactions may foster positive benefits for social and ecological systems more broadly.

Conclusion - Writing as a path to wellbeing

The *Creative Scholars Lab* demonstrated the powerful potential academic writing retreats have in nurturing goal attainment and clarity, creativity, building community and fostering ongoing relationships between people and a sense of place. Retreats remind us of our values, where wellbeing is a priority over productivity. The time taken in retreat allows participants to stop, reflect and centre more consciously on who we are, where we are and where we are going. Retreating reminds us to centre ourselves in slower, more thoughtful approaches to reflect and care for ourselves and the world around us (Berg, & Seeber, 2016).

The retreat created a structured yet flexible and organic space where participants could concentrate on their writing while building a supportive, academic community of care (Academic Writing Retreat Report, 2024, p.1). Participants gained valuable insights into

their writing processes, advanced their projects, and formed deep, meaningful connections that had potential to extend beyond the retreat-and many have. The retreat's natural setting significantly contributed to participants' experiences, finding inspiration and relaxation. Participants appreciated the opportunity to connect with nature through the various offerings, which helped them unwind and deepen awareness, mindful learning, and connection to nature, supporting current literature which states that natural environments can enhance academic productivity and personal well-being (Barbaro & Pickett, 2015; Wang et al., 2016). These findings also contribute to the growing body of literature on the benefits of academic writing retreats, particularly in empowering writers, nurturing creativity, and fostering supportive scholarly communities (Woloshyn et al., 2022). As universities continue to address the challenges of productivity and well-being, writing retreats offer a promising model for cultivating individual and collective academic growth and wellbeing. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of writing retreats, especially those in a natural setting, investing impact on individual and collective wellbeing, pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours.

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The bios of **Enid Skyler** and **Kira Cooper** are on page 37.

See the Resources section at the end of this issue for resources related to this article.

TWO FAMILIES THROUGH A WINDOW

Peri Dworatzek

Peri's bio is on page 7.

Scratch, scratch, nibble, nibble...
What's that sound?
I slowly open my eyes.
Are my cats around?

Scratch, scratch, nibble, nibble...
There it is again!
Behind my head, the windows open.
Could that be my two furry little men?

There they are behind me,
bodies pressed against each other.
Peering out the window on hind legs,
two brothers.

What do they see?
Through the window that is moonlit.
I prop myself up and look outside,
a momma raccoon and her two kits!

Three beings enjoying the roof.
Two babies – tugging, rolling, and chasing.
One mom guiding their play.
A family and the night, all embracing.

Three beings watching through the window.
Two cats unsure of these masked creatures.
One human whispering and stroking reassurances.
A family more and more curious, the raccoons become our teachers.

Encasing the raccoons are the branches of a tree.
Creating a ceiling and walls,
the roof as the floor and even a window,
revealing six eyeballs.

The mom climbs head-first down the tree.
The babies look around for another way.
Sharing faces of fear and hesitation,
but not wanting to fall astray.
Their mom chitters to them, telling them it's safe.
One of them tries -
going up instead of down.
Jumping back to the roof, letting out some cries.

The patient mother claws halfway up,
purposely not going to the top.
They give each other one more look.
Then one by one onto the tree they hop.

All three raccoons shimmy face down the tree.
The mom lets out one more chitter call,
maybe she is saying goodbye as they leave us in the window.
Ever so small.

Glitter, Sweat, and Biodegradables:
River Conservation and British Columbia's EDM Festivals

By Sylvie Côté

As the sun warms the shower water bag, I wonder if my partner and I set up our campsite far away enough to prevent our hygiene products from seeping into the nearby musical festival's river. Bass Coast and Shambhala are globally recognized electronic dance music (EDM) festivals in British Columbia, Canada. Both events are 15-25 years old and host between 6000-20,000 attendees each year. For folks in the rave scene, the Bass Coast and Shambhala forests and rivers are celebrated aspects of the festival experience. And by their very nature, raves historically grew from a countercultural movement due to their drug use and the illegal spaces they took place in, like abandoned warehouses, forests, fields, and clubs. Internationally, PLUR is a well-known example of contemporary social justice in the rave scene stemming from the 1990s, meaning Peace, Love, Unity, and Respect. This philosophy is an ethical guideline that helps establish community connections, celebrate diversity, and build trust. On the other hand, large-scale rave organizers like to promote themselves as community-driven, inclusive, and respectful too, yet the reality is that EDM festivals are based on profits. In this article, I argue that while individual attendees can help make a difference, festival organizers hold the majority of accountability towards river sustainability. After all, like "Inuit leader Shelia Watt-Cloutier has stated, 'Water is life, and it's not just about the physical component of water. It's about the social, cultural, and spiritual aspects of water as well.'" Rivers are crucial ecosystems because they support the life of humans and other species and provide both recreational and awe-inspiring spaces.

While both festivals incorporate Indigenous knowledges and environmental care strategies on their websites, I would argue that the festivals' efforts are performative attempts at reconciliation and decolonization. For example, the Shambhala website's land acknowledgement reads, "We recognise that our Farmily comes together amongst the mountains, forests and rivers of the unceded, traditional lands of the Syilx, Sinixt and Ktunaxa Nations, and we honour that it is on this land that we are able to create the magic that is Shambhala Music Festival. We hope our guests will feel a connection and respect to the past and the future of the Syilx, Sinixt and Ktunaxa peoples when they set foot on the farm." That said, I have attended this festival four times over the last decade. I have never seen references to Indigenous communities on site. On the other hand, I did find a grant program on their website. Yet I would argue that Shambhala could do far better than the measly $10,000 awarded annually to Indigenous peoples across Canada. given that their 2020 budget shows over $200,000 USD awarded to communities affected by pandemic-related expenses.

Moreover, Shambhala ranks respecting the environment as number six out of eight on their list of values: "The Syilx, Sinixt and Ktunaxa nations have lived on, looked after and helped this land to thrive for thousands of years. It's important we do the same. Respect the land, river, facilities, farm, culture, and natural wildlife. Keep the Salmo River Ranch pristine by following the 'leave no trace' mindset." In contrast, many Shambhala-goers last year noted how the festival tore down dozens of old -growth cedar trees to create space for their pricey "Shambhalodging," which offers pre-set camping gear. Similarly, in the trails leading up to the river, one could easily walk past the small signs indicating that folks should avoid washing in the river with hygiene products. In fact, I would argue that in practice, Shambhala's environmental values are closer to greenwashing than an authentic commitment to river sustainability. As Bruce Watson writes in *The Guardian,* greenwashing takes into account "The combination of limited public access to information and seemingly unlimited advertising [enabling] companies to present themselves as caring environmental stewards, even as they were engaging in environmentally unsustainable practices."

Bass Coast takes environmental care strategies one small step further by educating attendees about the river itself from both an Indigenous perspective and through sobering statistical information. For example, Ruth Tolerton "from the Lower Nicola Indian Band," says, "For the fish and the creatures that live within it, for the land it nourishes, and for the people whose thirst it quenches. It is a precious resource, and our rivers are constantly threatened by temperature and human intervention. Please do your utmost to act with respect and responsibility toward our water." Indeed, recreational activities like swimming can negatively impact the river and its species: "The Coldwater River is a natural salmon

spawning site that is incredibly sensitive to human intervention" and "Spawning Chinook and Steelhead were at record lows in 2018 in the Nicola watershed and both populations have been recommended for listing as endangered under the Species at Risk Act." Unfortunately, Bass Coast similarly had a few small signs, about the size of a book, leading up to the river that explained how folks should avoid bathing in the river with any chemical products in order to protect the various fish species. Like Shambhala, these signs would be easy to miss for folks who are intoxicated, hungover, overheated, or exhausted.

Sitting in the river is a practice that helps connect folks with the land and water. Inadvertently or intentionally, folks also wash themselves here, contributing to contamination from soap, sunscreen, makeup, glitter, hair products, hair dye, litter, drugs, and more. And personal hygiene is essential because it prevents the spread of disease. Good hygiene at music festivals is especially important because with the gathering of thousands of people from across the globe in a limited outdoor space increases disease transmission. In addition, substance use can lead to increased sweating and an impaired immune system resulting in a higher likelihood of illness. Shambhala in particular is infamous amongst the rave community for its dust. In fact, "Shambhalung" is a common expression to describe festival and post-festival coughing and flu-like symptoms. Maintaining one's hygiene can be especially taxing on women and/or femme-presenting folks in this environment, as gender norms create pressure to look clean and smell good. Even more, people who are menstruating during the festival may need more access to private washing areas to avoid potential odours, rashes, and infections. Overall, the need for easy access to water and washing facilities is crucial.

While biodegradable soaps are a step in the right direction, when used in large quantities they are problematic for the river's ecosystem. In place of this, Bass Coast says, "Use Camp B showers when you need to wash yourself." However, at both Bass Coast and Shambhala there are limited showers, sinks, and drinking water facilities. Festivals often lack sufficient (or any) free shower access with short wait times and festival-goers often experience unreliable and/or distant water stations. While I was offered free showers as a Shambhala volunteer, there were only a handful of showers and the wait time was at least one hour, if not two, on any given day or time. Bass Coast, on the other hand, required a $5 payment for showers regardless of volunteer status and had about 20 showers total, several of which were out of order. From what I remember, there were no showers for people with disabilities at either festival. Of course, Bass Coast's website says, "Filtered drinking water fill stations are located throughout the festival site" but "Please don't use the fill up station as a shower." Shambhala's website, on the other hand, suggests folks enjoy the river, regardless of hygiene status: "If you need a break from dancing and exploring the farm…Take a dip and cool off, hang out in a floatie and make new friends on the shore of the river."

Like educator and writer Chloë Vigil says, "Though large corporations are ultimately culpable for the impacts of greenwashing and unsustainable modes of production, willing consumers can take small steps to transform their own habits and hold corporations and governments accountable." For instance, festival-goers have an important responsibility in choosing what they bring into the river. Activist D'Angelo Cameron says "single use materials can break down and release harmful toxins over time" and "Fast fashion accounts for 10% of global carbon emissions" (2024) ad. Even more, "Festival goers' who sneak into bushes [to urinate]...can cause damaging effects on wildlife through the excess ammonia released, especially to fish in nearby streams".

Still, the best solutions include free shower access, more showers available with shorter wait times, increasing the number of water stations throughout the festival grounds, creating bigger signs near the rivers to discourage river play before showering, and enhancing waste management to address the practical realities of festival culture. Furthermore, at the Winnipeg Folk Festival, there are outdoor rinse-off stations in the campground and at the nearby beach. Similar rinsing stations throughout these EDM festivals, particularly near the river trails, would be a crucial step in preventing human waste from damaging fragile river ecosystems. Additionally, specific stations for handwashing, dishwashing, and haircare and makeup removal would help. Overall, the practices of care that make the most difference are not with individual attendees, but at the scale of the organization itself to prioritize water access in ways that prevent harm to the river and its ecosystem.

Sylvie Côté is a second-year PhD researcher at York University in the Gender, Feminist, and Women's Studies program with a focus on critical disability studies. Her research examines how women with ADHD and autism navigate substance use, addiction, and harm reduction in Toronto's rave community.

See the Resources section at the end of this issue for resources related to this article

Caring for the Carers:

Climate Change Crisis and Gender Equity in Bangladesh

By Tia Nguyen

Discussion

Bangladesh is one of the world's most affected countries due to climate change. An analysis of the Climate Risk Index 2021, based on reported data from 2000 to 2021 about economic loss and human fatalities due to extreme weather events such as storms, floods, and heatwaves, has ranked Bangladesh at the seventh position (UN Women and ICUN, 2022). The coastal region of Bangladesh, particularly, has experienced a significant increase in the frequency and intensity of cyclones. The most recent cyclone struck in May 2023, Cyclone Mocha, causing significant damage to infrastructures and displacing many residents (UN Bangladesh, 2023).

The escalating climate risk in Bangladesh illustrates many different aspects of climate injustice, prominently including gender equality. Many studies have suggested that women are disproportionately vulnerable to climate change-induced natural hazards in Bangladesh. For example, during the 1991 cyclone, among 140,000 human fatalities recorded, 90% were women and children (Ikeda, 1995). A similar tendency was also recorded after cyclone Aila (in May 2009), in which across Bangladesh, the numbers of affected female residents were 87377 from 18 to 60 years old and 47219 from 5 to 18 years old, while the affected male residents from the same age groups were 80406 and 43766, respectively (Chowdhury et al., 2015). This disproportion in vulnerability is argued as arising from not only women's physical weakness in comparison to men but also to complex socio-cultural challenges, leading to their mobility limitations during the time of extreme weather events (Rahman, 2013).

This article aims to explore the unique socio-cultural challenges that impact women's mobility in coping with climate-induced natural hazards in coastal Bangladesh. By doing so, policy measures are examined that enhance women's resilience and adaptive capacity in the face of these increasing climate threats. Recognizing the connection between women and caregiving – where women have historically been the caregivers (UN Women, 2024), gender-inclusive climate adaptation approaches can be considered as a form of 'caring for the carers' or a means of preserving care. In this way, such measures protect not only women but potentially the entire human population, especially those affected by the climate crisis.

1. Social barriers to evacuation

Building upon the understanding of gendered-disproportionate climate-risk vulnerability in the coastal region of Bangladesh, studies have suggested the necessity of examining social barriers restricting women from evacuating during extreme natural disasters.

a. Health and safety concerns

A survey conducted by Ayeb-Karlsson from 2014 to 2015 reveals that health and safety concerns are the main reasons why women refused to seek refuge at shelters (Ayeb-Karlsson, 2020). Particularly, these concerns come from the poor management practices observed at most cyclone shelters in Bangladesh (Nur et al., 2021). This includes not only the general issues such as toilet accessibility, salinity, and water quality but also the inability to address women's special needs. For instance, there are no separate sleeping and toilet spaces for women in most shelters. Facilities and reproductive care for pregnant women are often absent. Consequently, women staying in these shelters are reported as suffering from a range of distinct feminine health issues, including skin diseases, infection and inflammation in reproductive organs, abnormal disruption of menstrual cycles, hypertension during pregnancy, miscarriage, and urinary tract infections (Ayeb-Karlsson, 2020). More seriously, several women have even lost their uterus because of prolonged bleeding, infection, or tumor.

At the same time, the fear of sexual harassment also appears to be the prominent reason why women opt to instead risk their lives by staying home rather than evacuating (Ayeb-Karlsson, 2020). This stems from the absence of women-only spaces, overcrowded conditions in the shelters, and distressing reports of sexual assault experienced by some womenat these facilities (Chowdhury et al., 2015; Karlsson, 2020). Moreover, concerns regarding violence, robbery, and theft at the shelters further exacerbate the feelings of insecurity (Nur et al., 2021). Feeling vulnerable to both social and health risks, women in coastal Bangladesh perceive shelters as accompanied by greater hazards than impeding the weather warnings and staying at home (Chowdhury et al., 2015; Karlsson, 2020).

b. Lack of decision-making power

In addition, the analysis of the social barriers to evacuation behind women's high disaster risk also underscores the limited power of decision-making afforded to them (Juran and Trivedi, 2015). As a consequence of the patriarchal social structure that has been long embedded in Bangladesh, women often have a secondary role in the family. One of the prevalent practices is the "korta" system, wherein the power of decision-making is exclusively vested in men, leaving women entirely dependent on the decisions made by the male members of the family (Juran and Trivedi, 2015). This persists even in life-or-death situations, where women are either not able or not permitted to independently make choices for their safety. A study by Begum (1993) reveals that during the 1991 cyclone, the fatality rate of women was higher than that of men; many women chose to remain at home with their children to wait for their husbands' return to decide whether they should evacuate, despite the looming and deadly risks. A similar pattern is also illustrated in the case of Cyclone Sidr (2007) and Aila (2009) (Juran and Trivedi, 2015).

2. Challenges to women's mobility in preventing future extreme weather events/ Social barriers to adaptation and precaution

Not only do the social barriers impede women's ability to evacuate in times of need, but they are also argued to contribute to women's immobility for adaptation and precautionary of future climate risks. As climate change continues unabated, flooding in coastal Bangladesh is predicted to increase in both frequency and intensity (UN Women and ICUN, 2022). In response, outmigration is favored by local people, specifically local male residents, as a way to secure better job opportunities and living conditions (Ahmad and Eklund, 2021). However, this trend raises a critical question of gender equity: If outmigration is the ultimate adaptive solution, why is it predominant among men? Why don't women wish to do the same? The social constraints appear to have left women "trapped," taking away their ability to move to protect themselves when they need to do so (Evertsen and van der Geest, K, 2020).

a. Caregiving duty

One of these constraints is women's caregiving duty. The male-dominant system plays an important role in defining the role of women and men in the family, positioning men as the breadwinners while women are the primary caregivers for the household (Ahmad and Eklund, 2021). Therefore, migration strategy (which is traditionally perceived as one of the masculine tasks) often involves men migrating first and then bringing their families along once they have found a more stable livelihood. Meanwhile, women, due to their caregiving obligations, have to take care of other family members who cannot leave for various reasons and are left behind (Ahmad and Eklund, 2021; Evertsen and van der Geest, K, 2020).

Further, with the men's absence from the family, the burden of care becomes even heavier. The responsibilities of women expand to include not only housework and caregiving but also farming activities to earn financial resources (Ahmad and Eklund, 2021). On the other hand, numerous religious restrictions, such as the inability to access markets and to communicate with others at the market, further exacerbate women's disadvantages in agriculture (Ahmad and Eklund, 2021). Farm production has decreased significantly in regions of outmigration, leading to widespread malnutrition in the coastal Bangladesh communities. This, in turn, serves as an additional challenge to the resilience of the local women, who are already vulnerable to other climate change-induced hazards.

b. Workplace marginalization and social stigma

Additionally, workplace marginalization and social stigma also impede women from migrating for safety despite the increasing climate risks in the coastal are as of Bangladesh. Stemming from the patriarchal social structure, Bangladesh's workforce is mostly dominated by males and restricted to women (Evertsen and van der Geest, K, 2020). Migrating women who would like to join the labor market, therefore, have limited job opportunities. They can only work either as 'helpers'or garment workers. As Teresa Auntora Gomes (2020) has pointed out in Displacement in the Era of Climate Change: A Gender-sensitive Approach to International Environmental Governance and Dis aster Management in Bangladesh, "The opportunity to work is "empowering" for women, but they are stripped from having the power to choose" (p. 29). This lack of choice forces women to accept poor working conditions and low wages.

Further, women's decision to migrate to adapt to climate change is also highly influenced by social stigma, particularly the concept of "purdah" (Evertsen and van der Geest, K, 2020). "Purdah" is a deeply entrenched Muslim belief system, defining a set of behavioral rules for a respected woman, in which there is a restriction in interaction between men and women. As the workforce has been traditionally male-dominant, women who work outside the home, look for employment, or migrate are stigmatized as "immoral" or "loose." More significantly, this affects the reputation of not only the women themselves but also their families. For unmarried women, this will result in their decreased "value" within the marriage market, while for married women, their husbands will

be criticized as failing in their traditional masculine role of providing for and protecting the family.

These factors of workplace discrimination and social stigma considerably hinder women's mobility in adapting to climate-induced natural hazards. The limited work opportunities, the poor living conditions, and the fear of wrong accusations together make them hesitate to achieve their independence and/or move for their own safety, thus impeding their resilience to environmental threats.

3. Policy implications

By analyzing the underlying socio-cultural challenges of women's immobility during climate change hazards in coastal Bangladesh, it is evident that gender equity is crucial in the discourse of environmental politics. Given the predicted escalation of flooding in Bangladesh in particular and the ongoing global climate change in general, there is a pressing need for gender-focused policy improvements to become widespread in both natural disaster management and climate adaptation.

a. Gender-focused disaster management strategy

Disaster management facilities should incorporate and prioritize women's accessibility. This necessitates the standardization of attention to women's special needs in cyclone shelter designs and operations, including not only an improvement in sanitation and reduced density, but also the installation of women-only living and sleeping spaces, as well as toilets. More importantly, facilities and services for pregnant women also need to be provided. Only when women find safety in the shelters, physically and socially, can they be expected to seek refuge there in times of need (Nur et al., 2021; Chowdhury et al., 2015).

A prominent example of the model of a women-friendly shelter are the mini shelters being introduced in Bangladesh by BRAC – the Bangladesh-based partner of the Global Center on Adaptation (Ali, 2022). Mini shelters are essentially regular houses occupied by one family on a daily basis, yet they are converted into local based shelters in a time of need for up to 50 people. Built of bricks, equipped with bathrooms, rainwater harvesting systems, energy-saving cooking facilities, and solar power panels, these shelters promise to provide refugees with access to sufficient energy and freshwater that ensures an adequate salinity level for their well-being. Most importantly, since they operate at a small and communal scale and offer gender- separated bedrooms on the top floor, mini shelters can foster a sense of safety and trust for women.

In addition, a study by Resheda Begum (1993), based on the insights during the 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh, also recommends the establishment of women volunteer teams and women-led medical groups. These, she argues, help women deal with their feminine health issues comfortably and alleviate material and social concerns during and after extreme weather events.

b. Gender-focused climate change adaptation strategy

Last but not least, a more gender-sensitive framework should also be applied in the discussion of long-term climate adaptation. This includes not only policies defining women as a crucial group for protection but also policies aiming to empower women and encourage women's voices in daily living as well as in climate governance (Gomes, 2020). The effectiveness of including women's perspectives and actions in driving an equitable and sustainable world has been recognized by many international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020), The World Bank (Brixi et al., 2022), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023). The participation of women brings invaluable insights to climate justice as well as unique knowledge from women's point of view.

At the same time, public educational campaigns about gender equality and equal sharing of care work are also essential to accompany women's empowerment movements (Evertsen, 2022). Women should be considered equal to men, and care work responsibilities should be fairly distributed in families and communities.

In this light, it is valuable to review the community model implemented by the Gender-responsive Coastal Adaptation (GCA) project (2019-2026), in the coastal area of Bangladesh (UNDP, n.d, Prakash, Anjal et al.,2022). Some of the key infrastructures and systems that the project has introduced in the region include Community-based Rainwater Harvesting Systems, Crab Farming, Crab Nursing, Aqua geoponics, Hydroponics, Homestead Gardening, Crab & Fish Feed Processing, Sesame Cultivation and a Plant Nursery (UNDP, 2023). These sub-projects have enhanced local communities' resilience in the aftermath of climate hazards by not only providing people with local-based food and freshwater resources, but also generating jobs for the residents, especially women. Women have been empowered and positioned as the leaders of the community's agriculture performance, building knowledge and fostering economic independence. Additionally, the community's awareness about the importance of unpaid care work and gender equality has been significantly raised through many en-

gagement efforts. Men were taught about the shortcomings for their families of traditional gender-assigned roles and were encouraged to share caregiving responsibilities with their wives. With all of these efforts, the Gender-responsive Coastal Adaptation (GCA) project models a way of advancing the pivotal role of women in inclusive climate adaptation approaches and resilient community development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, unveiling the social challenges behind the disproportion in vulnerability to climate change-related hazards in the coastal areas of Bangladesh between men and women, underscores the importance of gender equity in the climate mitigation discussion. Climate issues are undeniably social justice issues (Alook et al., 2023). Even though the social barriers hindering women's mobility -- including health and safety concerns at cyclone shelters, their limited decision-making power, heavy caregiving obligations, workplace marginalization, and social stigma about working women and female migrants – are complex, women's vulnerability in coastal Bangladesh can serve as a model for change in many regions that face similarly complex impacts of climate change.

Addressing gender equality and empowering women in climate change discourse is a direct investment in the care system and directly contributes to a truly sustainable future. This is aligned with the statement from UN Women in October 2024 calling for the transformation of the care system in recognizing its crucial role in economic growth. Such a transformation requires not only a fair redistribution of caregiving responsibilities but also attention to 'caring for the carers.' In the context of environmental change, and given women's distinct socio-vulnerabilities to natural hazards, this involves the integration of gender-inclusive policies and perspectives in climate solutions.

Tia Nguyen is a recent York University graduate specializing in Sustainable Environmental Management and Economics. Passionate about climate justice and community engagement, she thrives as a 'bridge-builder' - an engagement specialist fostering meaningful collaborations, empowering communities, and advocating for a more sustainable and just world.

See the Resources section at the end of this issue for resources related to this article

Natasha Sanders-Kay

USING SUBSTITUTES

Pick blackberries instead.

Notice things, like birds. Leaves changing colours.

My nails not breaking.

Replace cocaine with coffee, candy,

lines off a bucket list.

Exercise for ecstasy.

Smokes? The patch.

For alcohol, gallons of ice cream, talk therapy,

ink, ocean.

Relationships are addictive but there's no one like myself.

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Les enjeux de la communication interculturelle entre les Pirahã, le Brésil et l'Occident: Comprendre la culture comme la quintessence de la communication

The challenges of intercultural communication between the Pirahã, Brazil and the West:

Understanding Culture as the Quintessence of Communication

By Xaneva Elorriaga George

Introduction

Les peuples indigènes, en tant qu'habitants originels de leurs terres, conservent de riches traditions culturelles. Cependant, dans les sociétés postcoloniales, ils sont souvent marginalisés et déformés par un regard eurocentrique qui les considère comme appauvris ou non civilisés, avec un accès limité aux ressources essentielles telles que les services de santé. Cet article examine la relation complexe entre le gouvernement brésilien, la culture occidentale et le peuple Pirahã, une communauté autochtone isolée de la forêt amazonienne connue pour son unicité linguistique et culturelle. Leur vision du monde, enracinée dans des systèmes de croyance et d'organisation sociale distincts, a rendu les tentatives coloniales d'intégration et de conversion religieuse largement inefficaces. En examinant comment les contrastes marqués entre les Pirahã et la société occidentale influencent leur cognition et leur langage, cet article souligne la façon dont les différences culturelles profondes contribuent aux malentendus et aux défis continus de leur communication interculturelle.

Approche (Méthodologique et Conceptuelle)

Ce projet s'appuie sur les théories de la communication interculturelle d'Edward T. Hall pour analyser les dimensions uniques de la culture Pirahã qui affectent leurs interactions avec les étrangers. Le concept de *proximis* d'Edward T. Hall, tiré de *The Silent Language*, explique comment les perceptions du temps, de l'espace personnel et des rôles sociaux influencent la communication (AFS Intercultural Programs, Inc, 2011, 2). En outre, la distinction qu'il établit entre la communication à contexte élevé et la communication à contexte faible dans *Beyond Culture* met en lumière les facteurs culturels tacites qui façonnent les interactions. Alors que Hall s'est concentré sur la communication microsociale, cet article adopte une approche macrosociale pour examiner comment ils peuvent conduire à une tension communicative dans un contexte plus large. L'article se concentre sur *Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes* (2008) du linguiste Dan Everett, une analyse scientifique et anecdotique approfondie des Pirahã. Everett, qui était à

Intro

Indigenous peoples, as the original inhabitants of their lands, preserve rich cultural traditions. However, in post-colonial societies, they are often marginalized and misrepresented through a Eurocentric lens as impoverished or uncivilized, with limited access to essential resources like healthcare. This article examines the complex relationship between the Brazilian government, Western culture, and the Pirahã people—an isolated Indigenous community in the Amazon rainforest known for their linguistic and cultural uniqueness. Their worldview, rooted in distinct systems of belief and social organization, has rendered colonial attempts at integration and religious conversion largely ineffective. By examining how the Pirahã's stark contrasts with Western society influence their cognition and language, this article highlights how deep cultural differences contribute to ongoing misunderstandings and challenges in their intercultural communication.

Approach (Methodological and Conceptual)

This project draws on Edward T. Hall's theories of intercultural communication to analyze the unique dimensions of Pirahã culture that shape their interactions with outsiders. Hall's concept of *proximis* from *The Silent Language* explains how perceptions of time, personal space, and social roles influence communication (AFS Intercultural Programs Inc, 2011, 2). Additionally, his distinction between high- and low-context communication in *Beyond Culture* highlights how unspoken cultural factors shape interactions. While Hall focused on microsocial communication, this article takes a macrosocial approach to examine how they may lead to communicatory tension in a broader context. The article will focus on linguist Dan Everett's *Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes* (2008), an in-depth scientific and anecdotal analysis of the Pirahã. Everett, originally a missionary with the Summer Institute of Linguistics, lived

l'origine un missionnaire du Summer Institute of Linguistics, a vécu parmi les Pirahã pendant 40 ans, apprenant à parler couramment leur langue et à connaître intimement leur culture.

Histoire et organisation sociale des Pirahã

Pour comprendre le manque de communication interculturelle entre les Pirahã et le monde extérieur, il est essentiel d'examiner leur identité. En 2018, les Pirahã sont une tribu d'environ 800 personnes et sont considérés comme les successeurs de la nation Mura, résidant dans l'État amazonien de Humaitá, le long des rivières Marmelos et Maici (Profil, 2018). Ayant peu de contacts avec les commerçants brésiliens, hormis l'échange d'outils, ils ne s'intéressent guère aux cultures ou langues étrangères. Malgré l'exploitation historique de leur terre, ils ont maintenu une attitude généralement pacifique, ne se montrant agressifs qu'à l'égard des tribus indigènes rivales.

Le système de croyance des Pirahã, distinct de celui des Brésiliens catholiques, peut être désigné sous le terme de cosmologie. Les Pirahã se considèrent comme des êtres uniques sur une strate spécifique du cosmos, avec des noms attribués avant la naissance qui guident la formation du corps. Tout au long de la vie, les noms changent au fur et à mesure que l'on passe d'une couche cosmique à l'autre. Ils utilisent également des noms différents pour les demandes et les rituels où les morts possèdent des noms qui façonnent son destin et son âme (Gonçalves, 2018). Les Pirahã se considèrent comme la quintessence des êtres anthropomorphes (hiaitsiihi ou ibiisi), tandis que les non-Pirahã sont considérés comme une espèce humaine défectueuse et inférieure. Leurs liens de parenté profonds et leur croyance en la supériorité des Pirahãs contribuent aux tensions avec les étrangers, comme le montre l'expérience d'Everett ; accusé à tort de vol par un enfant, la tribu a cru inconditionnellement à l'accusation (Everett, 2008, 52). En l'absence d'un récit de la création ou d'une divinité suprême, les Pirahã ont résisté à l'évangélisation. Comme le dit Everett, « Les Pirahã m'ont montré qu'il y a une profonde dignité et satisfaction à affronter la vie sans le confort du paradis ou la peur de l'enfer et à naviguer dans le grand abîme avec le sourire » (Everett, 2008, 18, *traduction libre*).

Les Pirahã structurent leur organisation sociale autour de deux saisons - pluvieuse et sèche - dictées par la disponibilité de l'eau. Cela influence leurs conditions de vie, puisqu'ils construisent des huttes sur les plages ou sur les terres hautes, et se dispersent ou restent ensemble en conséquence (Gonçalves, 2018, 1). Les changements saisonniers déterminent également l'abondance ou la rareté des ressources, ce qui détermine si les Pirahã consacrent leur temps aux activités quotidiennes ou aux rituels. Le couple, en tant que seule unité reproductive, constitue la base de la

among the Pirahã for 40 years, becoming fluent in their language and intimately familiar with their culture.

Pirahã history and social organization

To understand the lack of intercultural communication between the Pirahã and the outside world, it is crucial to examine their identity. As of 2018, the Pirahã are a tribe of around 800 people, and are considered successors of the Mura nation, residing in the Amazonian state of Humaitá along the Marmelos and Maici rivers (Profil, 2018). With minimal contact with Brazilians beyond trading for tools, they show little interest in outside culture or language. Despite the historical exploitation of their land, they have maintained a generally peaceful stance, showing aggression only toward rival Indigenous tribes.

The Pirahã's belief system, distinct from Catholic Brazil, can be classified as cosmology. They view themselves as unique beings on a specific layer of the cosmos, with names assigned before birth that guide bodily formation. Throughout life, names change as they move between cosmic layers. They also use different names for requests, and rituals where the dead possess names that shape one's destiny and soul (Gonçalves, 2018). The Pirahã see themselves as the quintessential form of anthropomorphic beings (hiaitsiihi or ibiisi), while non-Pirahãs are viewed as a defective, inferior species. Their strong kinship bonds and belief in Pirahã superiority contribute to tensions with outsiders, as seen in Everett's experience; falsely accused of theft by a child, the tribe unconditionally believed the accusation (Everett, 2008, 52). Lacking a creation story or supreme deity, the Pirahã have resisted evangelization. As Everett put it, "The Pirahã have shown me that there is deep dignity and satisfaction in facing life without the comfort of heaven or the fear of hell and sailing into the great abyss with a smile" (Everett, 2008, 18).

The Pirahã structure their social organization around two seasons—rainy and dry—dictated by water availability. This influences their living arrangements, as they build huts on beaches or uplands, and either disperse or remain together accordingly (Gonçalves, 2018, 1). Seasonal shifts also determine resource abundance or scarcity, shaping whether the Pirahã spend their time on daily activities or rituals. The couple, as the sole reproductive unit, forms the tribe's foun-

tribu, mais la vie privée n'est pas valorisée. Ils se marient au sein de la tribu et héritent de la terre, ce qui garantit l'égalité de propriété (Gonçalves, 2018, 2).

Contrairement au Brésil et à l'Occident, où les gens s'attardent sur les échecs passés et les préoccupations futures—telles que les traumatismes, les finances ou la sécurité de l'emploi—les Pirahã valorisent l'immédiateté d'une expérience et ne perçoivent pas les événements passés comme affectant le présent (Everett 2008, 133). Leur « liminalité expérientielle » leur permet d'entrer et de sortir des expériences sans attachement émotionnel, ce qui limite l'empathie pour les luttes actuelles dans l'Ouest (Everett 2008, 129). En outre, les Pirahã rejettent la coercition, contrairement aux sociétés occidentales, où elle est ancrée dans la politique et les structures sociales (Everett 2008, 112). Par exemple, les Pirahã ont presque tué Everett après qu'il ait averti les commerçants brésiliens de ne pas les tromper en échangeant des articles bon marché (whisky, hameçons) pour du bois. Alors qu'Everett pensait protéger les Pirahã de l'exploitation, ils n'ont pas perçu l'échange comme injuste, car ils attribuent leur propre valeur aux biens, indépendamment de la valeur monétaire qu'ils ne peuvent pas concevoir numériquement (Everett 2008, 62). Dans l'ensemble, les incompatibilités idéologiques et culturelles entre les Pirahã et l'Occident ont été une source majeure de difficultés dans leur communication interculturelle.

Langue et Communication

La langue pirahã se distingue par l'absence de concepts compris dans les langues occidentales. Elle n'a que 13 phonèmes—le plus petit inventaire de sons de toutes les langues connues—alors que le portugais a 37 et l'anglais a 44. Elle est tonale et peut être sifflée pour communiquer sur de longues distances ou lorsque la parole risque de perturber la chasse (Everett 1983). Les Pirahã ont la particularité de ne pas avoir de système de comptage ou de concepts numériques, ce qui rend la quantification impossible et conduit à l'exploitation commerciale susmentionnée (Everett 2008, 117). Au lieu de chiffres, ils expriment la quantité par des termes de degré comme « un peu », « beaucoup » ou « trop », mais ils n'ont pas de quantificateurs comme « tout » et « chaque ». **Leurs verbes nécessitent des suffixes pour indiquer la manière dont l'information a été acquise (l'évidentialité), comme l'acquisition par déduction, de seconde main ou de première main.** Ils n'ont pas de mots pour les abstractions, les couleurs, les salutations et les excuses—considérant les formalités sociales comme non pertinentes pour le présent (Boyle, 2015, 251). Ce qui est plus controversé, le Pirahã apparemment manque de récursivité, car il ne peut pas intégrer des phrases à l'infini à l'intérieur des phrases—ce qui remet en question la croyance que la récursivité est une propriété fondamentale du langage humain.

dation, yet privacy is unvalued. They marry within the tribe and inherit land, ensuring equality of ownership (Gonçalves, 2018, 2).

Unlike Brazil and the West, where people dwell on past failures and future concerns—such as trauma, finances, or job security—the Pirahã value the immediacy of an experience and do not perceive past events as affecting the present (Everett, 2008, 133). Their “experiential liminality” allows them to move in and out of experiences without emotional attachment, limiting empathy for struggles common in the West (Everett, 2008, 129). Additionally, the Pirahã reject coercion, unlike Western societies, where it is embedded in politics and social structures (Everett, 2008, 112). For example, the Pirahã nearly killed Everett after he warned Brazilian traders not to fool them by trading cheap items (whiskey, fishing hooks) in exchange for wood. While Everett, felt he was protecting the Pirahã from exploitation, they did not perceive the trade as unfair, as they assign their own value to goods, independent of monetary worth which they cannot conceive numerically (Everett, 2008, 62). Overall, the incompatibilities in ideology and culture between the Pirahã and the West have been a main source of challenge in their intercultural communication.

Language and Communication

The Pirahã language is notable for its lack of concepts understood in Western languages. It has only 13 phonemes—the smallest sound inventory of any known language—compared to Portuguese’s 37 and English’s 44. It is tonal, and can be whistled for long-distance communication or when speaking can disrupt hunting (Everett, 1983). Uniquely, Pirahã lacks a counting system or numerical concepts, making quantification impossible, and leading to aforementioned trade exploitation (Everett, 2008, 117). Instead of numbers, they express quantity through degree terms like “a little”, “a lot” or “too much”, but lack quantifiers like “all”, “each” and “every”. **Their verbs require suffixes to indicate how information was acquired (evidentiality), such as inferred, second-hand or first-hand acquisition.** They lack words for abstractions, colors, greetings, and apologies—viewing social formalities as irrelevant to the present (Boyle, 2015, 251). Most controversially, Pirahã allegedly lacks recursion, as the language cannot embed phrases infinitely within sentences—challenging the belief that recursion is a fundamental property of human language.

Dans la théorie interculturelle, la culture brésilienne à contexte élevé repose sur l'implicite, facilité par l'ethnicité, une éducation, et une religion commune. Cependant, les Pirahã diffèrent sur tous ces aspects, ce qui signifie qu'ils auraient besoin d'un style de communication plus explicite pour réduire la confusion. Dans l'ensemble, les caractéristiques linguistiques du Pirahã, notamment l'absence de polychronicité (expression de plusieurs idées à la fois), façonnent leur vision du monde, ce qui rend la traduction difficile et constitue un obstacle majeur à la communication interculturelle. Sur le plan politique, le portugais est devenu la langue officielle du Brésil en 1758, alors que les langues indigènes comme le pirahã, parlées depuis au moins 11 000 ans, n'ont jamais été officiellement reconnues, même après l'indépendance du Brésil en 1822.

Avenir de la relation

Les relations entre le gouvernement brésilien et les Pirahã ont été marquées par un écart entre le droit écrit et la pratique. Tandis que la constitution protège le territoire indigène depuis 1988, les Pirahã sont toujours confrontés à des menaces telles que l'insuffisance du financement des services de santé, l'exposition aux maladies des étrangers, l'empiètement du développement des infrastructures et le changement climatique qui perturbe les écosystèmes dont ils dépendent pour leur survie (Everett 2008, 276). L'avenir des relations entre les Pirahã et le gouvernement brésilien risque d'être marqué par un impérialisme culturel sous couvert de charité. En 2011, le gouvernement a fourni de l'électricité aux Pirahã et a construit des installations telles que des toilettes, des cliniques de santés et des écoles enseignant le portugais et les mathématiques, bien que l'éducation ne soit pas une valeur fondamentale dans la société Pirahã.

Des critiques comme Everett et Nick Peim considèrent ces efforts pour imposer des structures occidentales comme une forme de néocolonialisme, menaçant la survie de la culture et de la langue Pirahã. Peim soutient que cette institution occidentale est bonne pour les personnes éduquées car elle a été essentialisée en tant que manifestation d'un désir inné d'apprendre, mais il est universaliste de croire que la reproduction des formes d'être dans cette société est autre chose qu'un « ethnocide » (éradication systémique d'une culture ou d'une ethnicité) (Peim, 2022, 18). Les principes étroitement liés à l'hégémonie mondiale de l'éducation déterminent ce qui qualifie de savoir, définissent le statut et impliquent un manque de civilité pour ceux qui ne le cherchent pas. Grâce à la documentation d'Everett, la culture Pirahã a commencé à être appréciée et considérée comme importante, une avancée considérable puisque le gouvernement brésilien a historiquement attaché plus d'importance à la vie de ses citoyens qu'à celle de sa population indigène.

In intercultural theory, Brazil's high-context culture relies on implicitness, facilitated by shared education, ethnicity, and religion. However, the Pirahã differ in all these aspects, meaning they would require a more explicit communication style to reduce confusion. Overall, Pirahã linguistic features, most notably the absence of polychronicity (expressing multiple ideas at once), shape their worldview, making translation difficult and posing a major barrier to intercultural communication. Politically, Portuguese became Brazil's official language in 1758, while Indigenous languages like Pirahã, spoken for at least 11,000 years, were never officially recognized, even after Brazil's independence in 1822.

Future of the Relationship

The relationship between the Brazilian government and the Pirahã has been marked by a gap between written law and practice. While the constitution has protected Indigenous territory since 1988, the Pirahã still face threats such as inadequate healthcare funding, disease exposure from outsiders, encroachment from infrastructure development and climate change disrupting the ecosystems they depend on for survival (Everett, 2008, 276). The future of the Pirahã's relationship with the Brazilian government risks cultural imperialism under the guise of charity. In 2011, the government provided the Pirahã with electricity and built facilities such as toilets, health clinics, and schools teaching Portuguese and math, despite education not being a core value in Pirahã society. Critics like Everett and Nick Peim view these efforts to impose Western structures as a form of neo-colonialism, threatening the survival of Pirahã culture and language. Peim argues that this Western institution is good for the educated as it has been essentialized as a manifestation of an innate desire to learn, but it is universalist to believe that reproducing forms of being in this society is anything other than an "ethnocide" (systemic eradication of a culture or ethnicity) (Peim, 2022, 18). The principles intrinsically linked to the global hegemony of education determine what qualifies as knowledge, define status and imply a lack of civility for those not seeking it. Thanks to Everett's documentation, Pirahã culture has begun to be viewed as inherently salient and valuable, a considerable step forward as the Brazilian government has historically attached more importance to the lives of its citizens than those of its Indigenous population.

Améliorer la communication interculturelle

Pour combler le fossé culturel entre les Pirahã et le gouvernement brésilien, il faut aborder les préjugés profondément ancrés et à l'exclusion historique. Bien que le gouvernement brésilien reconnaisse le droit des Pirahã à l'autonomie, il leur sapent fréquemment en leur offrant une protection juridique et de services de santé inadéquats, et en les exploitant économiquement. Pour promouvoir une véritable communication interculturelle, les efforts doivent se concentrer sur le respect plutôt que sur l'imposition de valeurs, ce qui peut entraîner une perte d'identité (Everett 2008, 174). Comme le souligne Everett, « L'une des choses les plus tristes que j'ai vu dans les cultures amazoniennes, c'est que des gens qui étaient autosuffisants et heureux se considèrent maintenant comme pauvres et deviennent insatisfaits de leur vie. Ce qui m'inquiète, ce sont les étrangers qui tentent d'imposer leurs valeurs et leur matérialisme aux Pirahã » (Barkham, 2008, *traduction libre*). L'approche de l'amélioration de la communication interculturelle qui doit être examinée de manière critique est celle qui tente d'éduquer institutionnellement les Pirahã à travers les lentilles de la société brésilienne. Cela crée un dilemme : même si l'éducation peut améliorer la communication entre les Pirahã et les Brésiliens, elle met leur culture en danger d'extinction. Pour que le gouvernement brésilien puisse rectifier sa biopolitique de l'éducation (le concept de Foucault selon lequel la vie humaine est déterminée par des institutions qui la régulent par la création d'une vie normative), il doit prendre en compte le contexte de ceux qui sont enseignés ou abandonner complètement ces efforts (Lemm, 2014, 8).

Une stratégie globale doit comprendre les éléments suivants :

● Des protections juridiques : Renforcer les droits de propriété foncière et appliquer des politiques qui empêchent l'exploitation des terres.

● Soutien des soins de santé : Financer des soins médicaux et dentaires à travers des programmes culturellement sensibles plutôt que par une aide financière directe.

● Éducation culturelle des étudiants brésiliens : Encourager la compréhension mutuelle en intégrant les langues et les histoires autochtones dans les programmes scolaires nationaux.

● Commerce réglementé : Prévenir les interactions d'exploitation en appliquant des politiques de commerce équitable et en surveillance à travers des organisations telles que le CIMI (Conselho Indigenista Missionário).

En fin de compte, une communication interculturelle significative exige de démanteler les préjugés, de respecter la souveraineté des Pirahã et de reconnaître que leur société n'est pas « moins développée », mais simplement différente. Ce n'est que par des efforts authentiques pour

Improving Intercultural Communication

Bridging the cultural divide between the Pirahã and the Brazilian government requires addressing deep-rooted biases and historical exclusion. Though the Brazilian government recognizes their right to self-governance, it frequently undermines them through inadequate legal protections, healthcare funding, and economic exploitation. To foster genuine intercultural communication, efforts must focus on respect rather than imposition of values, which can lead to identity loss (Everett, 2008, 174). As Everett notes, "One of the saddest things I've seen in Amazonian cultures is people who were self-sufficient and happy that now think of themselves as poor and become dissatisfied with their lives. What worries me is outsiders trying to impose their values and materialism on the Pirahã" (Barkham, 2008). The approach to improving intercultural communication that must be examined critically is that which attempts to institutionally educate the Pirahã through the lens of Brazilian society. This creates a dilemma: while education may enhance communication between the Pirahã and Brazilians, it puts their culture in danger of extinction. For the Brazilian government to rectify its education biopolitics (Foucault's concept of human life determined by institutions that regulate them through the creation of a normative life), they must consider the context of who is being taught or abandon these efforts altogether (Lemm, 2014, 8).

A comprehensive strategy should include:

● Legal Protections: Strengthening land ownership rights and enforcing policies that prevent land exploitation.

● Healthcare Support: Funding medical and dental care through culturally sensitive programs rather than direct financial aid.

● Cultural Education of Brazilian Students: Encouraging mutual understanding by incorporating Indigenous languages and histories into national curricula.

● Regulated Trade: Preventing exploitative interactions by enforcing fair trade policies and oversight through organizations like the CIMI (Conselho Indigenista Missionário)

Ultimately, meaningful intercultural communication requires dismantling prejudices, respecting the Pirahã's sovereignty, and acknowledging that their society is not "less developed" but simply different. Only through authentic efforts to

plement différente. Ce n'est que par des efforts authentiques pour respecter le mode de vie des Pirahã, tout en assurant leurs droits et leur protection, qu'une relation constructive pourra émerger.

respect the Pirahã's way of life, while ensuring their rights and protection, can a constructive relationship emerge.

Xaneva Elorriaga George termine actuellement son Master de Recherche (MRes) en biotechnologie et biodesign à Newcastle University, où elle étudie la biologie synthétique et le développement de biomatériaux. Elle est également titulaire d'un iBA trilingue en études internationales de l'université de York, centré sur la théorie féministe et le changement climatique.

Xaneva Elorriaga George is completing her Master of Research in Biotechnology and Biodesign at Newcastle University exploring synthetic biology and biomaterials development, and graduated with a trilingual iBA in International Studies from York University centering on feminist theory and climate change.

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CROW GIFTS

Melissa Thorne

Melissa's bio is on page 26

If Huginn and Muninn wander the world
at Odin's behest, then crows must surely
make mischief in the name of Loki. Rather
than observe the ways of man from a distance,
perhaps the crow is a mirror to humanity's
own selfish intelligence. The way they search
forest leaf litter with black hole eye, zero in
on a glint, absorb shards of light into mind's eye
when their own charred feathers refuse to reflect
the sun, caw mischief from raw throats upon the
wind, or pluck forgotten shrapnel from carrion and
marvel in its useless beauty. Don't we too hoard
beads and bobbles to barter for better scraps?
Strive to balance the scales in an uneven world?

How Men Talk about Women:
Feminist Linguistics from the 1990s

By Britton Williams

The focus of early language and gender studies on women's language would often specifically highlight phenomena to prove women's language as markedly different from men's language (and often deserving of moral panic[1]). Since the years following the inception of the field, feminist researchers entering the discipline have shifted theoretical frameworks, instead scrutinising men's language use. Though their methodologies and subjects have been varied, their findings are consistent: men's language is used as a tool to construct men's social dominance over women and other marginalised identities.

This essay will examine three papers analysing men's speech, and it's construction of masculine dominance: Bucholtz' (1999) *You da man: Narrating the racial other in the production of white masculinity*, which investigates a white highschool students recounting of a fight, and his construction of White and Black identity; Cameron's (1997) *Young men's talk and the construction of heterosexual masculinity*, an analysis of a group of young men's discussion about their classmates; and Cameron's (1998) *`Is there any Ketchup, Vera?': Gender, Power and Pragmatics*, which examines the pragmatics of dinnertime interactions between men and women.

In these three papers, the most direct example of men's language used to exert control over others comes from Cameron's 1997 piece. In it, Cameron examines data collected by a male student of hers, Danny, who submitted to her an audio recording of him and his friends having a casual conversation while collectively watching a sports broadcast. Throughout this conversation, Danny's friends repeatedly construct other women and men in their class as *gay*. The precipice of Cameron's 1997 analysis of this data stems from inconsistencies in Danny's friend's construction of their classmates' identities: exactly what acts performed by their classmates constitute them as being gay are confusing and often contradictory to what might be thought to comprise a 'gay act'. For example, one of Danny's friends makes the following comments in reference to their classmates: "[…] 'four homos' are continually 'hitting on' [making sexual overtures with] one of the women, described as 'the ugliest-ass bitch in the history of the world'" (Cameron, 1997 : 66). Earlier in the conversation, another one of Danny's friends says about their classmates: "[…] you have never seen more homos than we have in our class. Homos, dykes, homos, dykes, everyone is a homo or a dyke" (Cameron, 1997: 66). It is clear from Danny's friend group's description of their classmates' actions that they are likely not gay; as Cameron (1997: 66) puts it: "One might have thought that a defining feature of a 'homo' would be his lack of interest in 'hitting on' women". It would seem then that among these young men, 'homo', 'queer' and 'fag' are used as labels for men who do not fit into traditionally masculine gender roles, or are perceived as not amounting to the societal expectations of masculinity assumed by Danny's friend group rather than them actually being gay (Cameron, 1997: 66-69). These homophobic slurs are used to bolster the masculine identity of Danny's friend group by diminishing that of their classmates; as for their choice to use gay identity as the antithesis to masculine identity, gayness has been long purported being analogous to non-traditional or deviant masculinity (which in a patriarchy is inevitably seen as an absolute negative).

Cameron (1997) also deals with the most traditional and direct forms of misogyny in the three papers. Women are repeatedly labelled by Danny's friend group as 'dykes' and 'bitches' (Cameron, 1997: 66). In their lexicon, 'dyke' is equated with 'ugly'; and 'bitch', synonymous with 'woman'. Their utilisation of slurs directed towards queer women likely stems from Western stereotypes of queer women's appearances and actions (Jones, 2011: 723-724); essentially, Danny's friends are labelling the women in their class as 'dyke' or 'bitch' depending on their valuation of her appearance. Consistent with their rhetoric, Danny's friends exclusively refer to the women in their class with misogynistic and homophobic slurs, and in doing so *at best* construct them as being subordinate to the male-gaze[2], and at worst, inhuman or subhuman.

The construction of masculine dominance in men's language does not end at the disparity of sexuality,

1 Examples of moral panic around women's language include the "Valley Girl" accent (Bucholtz et al., 2007), vocal fry (Anderson et al., 2014), and TikTok tourettes (Frey et al., 2022)

2 The theoretical socio-cultural concept of 'gaze' is defined in the Merriam Webster online dictionary: "The collective preferences and expectations of a usually privileged social group especially when imposed as a standard or norm on other groups".

but also race. Bucholtz (1999) describes a White high school student's recounting of a fight with a Black student. Throughout his recollection of events, the White student linguistically constructs a distinct White and Black masculinity taking part in the altercation: White masculinity, as rational, calm and innocent; and Black masculinity as possessing a: "hyperphysicality that involves physical strength, hyper(hetero)sexuality and physical violence" (Bucholtz, 1999: 444). The construction of these masculinities is done through the student's use of CRAAVE (Cross-Racial African American Vernacular English), wherein he approximates the morphology, phonology, and lexicon of AAVE (African American Vernacular English) to fabricate an unreasonable, quick-to-anger character which closely aligns with racist stereotypes about who Black men are:

> *[...] the operative language ideology links AAVE both to blackness and to masculinity. The narrative concerns gender as well as race through the construction of a specifically white masculinity that is placed in opposition to an ideology of a unified black masculinity. The narrative is not merely racialized but racist insofar as it projects essential qualities onto racialized groups and evaluates the degree to which group members measure up to these projections (Bucholtz, 1999: 455).*

Finally, the following sections discuss men's subjugation of women manifesting pragmatically in Cameron's 1998 piece. This text continuously refers back to two main anecdotes to illustrate the different theoretical approaches to analysing the intersection of gender and pragmatics: one in which a woman asks her male coworker: 'where's your coat?', to which he responds: 'thanks, mom'; the other, in which a husband asks his wife 'Is there any ketchup, Vera?' during dinnertime discourse. Both of these anecdotes highlight the pragmatic strategies men use to maintain power over women.

When the husband character asks "Is there any ketchup, Vera?", Cameron notes that there is no need for clarification between the couple as to what is being implied with this question:

> *Every night when her mother served dinner, my friend's father would look up from his plate and say to his wife: 'is there any ketchup, Vera?'. Needless to say, this was intended and understood by all family members to mean not 'I don't know if we have any ketchup in the house, please enlighten me', but 'I want ketchup on my food, please fetch it for me [...] Vera understands it not merely as expressing a desire for ketchup but as a request that she, Vera, should get the ketchup (Cameron, 1998: 448-449).*

However, indirect questions such as 'Is there any ketchup?' are not met with the same response by Vera if asked by her children or others: "If the daughter used the same 'is there any ketchup?' strategy to her mother, there was every chance it would meet with a different response, like 'yes, it's in the kitchen cupboard'–a challenge to the idea that a daughter is entitled to expect the same service as a husband" (Cameron, 1998: 449).

The theory that Cameron concludes to account for these gendered asymmetries in meaning is not that there would be a misunderstanding between Vera and her husband if she were to ask for ketchup in the same indirect manner that he does, or even that her husband would purposely act as if he misunderstands her indirect request (1998: 451). Rather, there is a misalignment of gendered pragmatics that causes this discrepancy: as Vera's husband perceives her as subordinate to him, he expects Vera to interpret indirect requests as a subordinate would, that is to say, as a request. However, an identical indirect request uttered by Vera would likely be answered by her husband as someone in a dominant social position; that is to say, literally, just as Vera would respond to her children making the same request (Cameron, 1998: 449). The same can be said for the anecdote of the female coworker asking her male coworker where his coat is: rather than the male coworker misunderstanding the intentions of his female counterpart, he purposefully constructs her as attempting to exercise control over him, implicating that the indirect requests of *any* woman are of no value to him. It is exactly these gendered pragmatic dichotomies employed by men that result in the demeaning and subjugation of the women in both these anecdotes.

There is something more disturbing in Cameron's 1998 account of pragmatic misogyny than the other cases presented thus far. These unspoken presumptions as to how men and women *should* interact, and how women are expected to automatically take subordinate roles to men, are testaments to the integrality of patriarchy in Western society. The strategies these men use to categorise or control women, pragmati-

cally and semantically in these cases, are linguistic manifestations of their patriarchal conditioning. The same can be said for the demeaning caricatures of racialized people, and the labelling of men and women who do not perform traditionally masculine gender roles as 'gay'; it would be made to seem that nobody but straight, White, traditionally masculine men have any place in Western society.

Linguistic subordination naturally mirrors broader systemic oppression, including healthcare inequities, labor discrimination, and climate injustice. In the workplace, gendered expectations continue to confine women (and especially women of colour) to underpaid and undervalued roles, while men dominate fields deemed authoritative. Even in discussions of climate change and environmental justice, Indigenous and feminist perspectives, which often emphasize collective care and sustainability, are frequently cast aside in favor of profit-driven, patriarchal models of resource exploitation. However, since the turn of the information age, the experiences and perspectives of marginalised people have been amplified over the internet and social media, such as young women speaking out against the linguistic and pragmatic expectations enforced on them, the adoption of anti-racist terminology such as 'microaggression'[3], and the visibility of men and women refusing to conform to traditional gender roles. While the voices of oppressed people are more accessible than ever, only the future will tell whether their stories will be overlooked by their oppressors, and whether the deeply ingrained, yet entirely reversible, gendered expectations of women imposed upon them by men will be demolished.

3 *Microaggression* is defined as "a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group" (via Merriam-Webster dictionary)

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See the Resources section at the end of this issue for resources related to this article

Fostering a culture of sustainability in Higher Education:

Weaving a Special Mission of Cross-Cultural Learning in Business Education

By Jody-Lynn Rebek, Victoria MacKay-Coutu and Amber Mckay

Introduction

Restorative sustainability in education is more than a goal—it is an imperative. Restoration will bring well-being back to our systems nurturing life and health. Higher education must address systemic inequities, environmental challenges, and collective healing to build regenerative learning communities and humanized reconciliation in Canada. Rather than compartmentalize and reinforce silos, educators require a fresh, relational and holistic approach to reshaping meaningful and impactful higher education. The COVID-19 pandemic and the continuation of ineffective online courses led to monotonous teaching and disengaged students. We need fresh ways of engaging students in the curiosity of knowledge, the joy of discovery, and their meaningful development to lead them successfully to flourishing livelihoods and lives.

A unique all-female collaboration bridged Indigenous and Western knowledge systems to reimagine business in higher education. An Indigenous Organization and the professor worked to co-create the student experiences, learning and assessment that weaved Indigenous and Western knowledge systems and crafted a transformative education. This Indigenous Organization is guided by Anishinaabe values and a vision of ancestors to preserve Indigenous culture while fostering cross-cultural understanding. The student's role was to collaborate in teams on a service learning project. Service-learning combines community service with academic coursework, engaging students in critical thinking, theoretical applications, active reflection and reciprocal learning in real-world situations (Fruco, 1996). This method addresses genuine community needs, fostering personal growth and civic responsibility among students. Through a two-eyed seeing approach, we engaged staff, faculty and students in deeply understanding the roots and functions of the Indigenous organization. Two-Eyed Seeing offers a critical framework for bridging Western and Indigenous knowledge systems in business education, ensuring mutual respect and shared benefits through colonial and Indigenous approaches (Bartlett et al., 2012; Wright et al., 2019). This included engaging in creative problem-solving, conducting research and analysis, and recommending a communications strategy to support the organization's growth and sustainable success.

Collaborative pedagogy

An in-depth understanding of history (as told by Indigenous peoples), and engagement with Indigenous culture requires a humble openness, genuine intention and care, and active participation. Together, these processes are needed to nurture a respectful and reciprocal relationship (see Positionality on page 73-74). Gratefully, one of us (Rebek) had an existing relationship with the organization based on past freshwater research where we co-created a water circle and ceremony for this work together. Our work to frame the course, was an opportunity for students to: a - learn the history, b - understand Indigenous worldview and culture, c - participate in Indigenous activities, d - apply these teachings and reshape business applications as they participated in the service learning project, and e - build relationships with our Indigenous partners (offering gifts, monetary support for activities and feasts, sharing medicines and providing honorariums for elders and other knowledge keepers who are involved). Ethical allyship requires a commitment to Indigenous research principles, such as OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession), to ensure reciprocal and community-driven outcomes (Aveling, 2012; Wilson, 2008). As a result, we established the following offerings:

- Led by two Indigenous teachers, students explored Anishinaabe teachings, emphasizing relationality, respect, and reciprocity. They engaged in an understanding of the ceremony before participating in the ceremony.
- Led by an Indigenous Spiritual Advisor, the ceremony was facilitated outside in an outdoor arbour with firekeepers. The ceremony centred the learning experience with respect for the land and interconnectedness (the importance of land-based education). A sharing circle followed for students to voice their intentions about the project.

- Students were guided on an immersive tour at the Indigenous organization to learn the historical significance of Chief Shingwauk (including his vision and his role in the Robinson Huron Superior Treaties), the importance of Bawaating (Sault Ste. Marie) being at the heart of Turtle Island and the Great Lakes, and teachings on cultural resurgence.
- Kairos Blanket Exercise: A powerful exercise illustrating colonization's impact, fostered empathy and a deeper understanding of the Indigenous history and resilience among students. Settlers and Indigenous students gained an understanding of the impacts of this history on Canada.
- Participants reflected in a closing circle on their learning over the course, emphasizing inclusivity, community, and shared responsibility. They expressed the impact this experience had on their perspectives, future contributions as leaders, and depth of learning.

As part of the course, students developed a strategic plan for the organization's resurgence and growth, particularly with their communications strategy. Students worked to recommend approaches (evidence-based or via best practices), to strengthen their brand recognition and develop sustainable outreach strategies. This partnership enhanced the richness of programming to meet all students' needs and explored synergies between Indigenous teachings and Western business frameworks for sustainability. Student reflections highlight the following themes:

- Open Sharing: The course emphasized creating inclusive spaces where students could share openly and respectfully.
- Community and Labour Force Impact: Students identified how the organization could contribute to regional development by fostering entrepreneurship and bridging cultural divides.
- Ethical Challenges: Discussions on greenwashing and performative allyship highlighted the importance of genuine engagement with sustainability and Indigenous relationships.

Systematic Resilience – We all play a part!

Systematic challenges exist within our world. When working in relationship to engage higher education classrooms with meaningful Indigenous partnerships, we can explore differentiating worldviews and frameworks. This creates an awareness, and understanding of the true history, drawing attention to important and prevalent issues that exist. For example:

- Only 53% of Indigenous youth graduate from high school, underscoring the need for culturally responsive education.
- There is higher poverty rates amongst Indigenous, and in many First Nations communities a lack of necessities, such as clean water, persists.
- The impacts of colonization and industrialization continue to divide communities, exacerbate inequalities, and promote racism (Indigenous Services Canada, 2021; National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health, 2020).

Strengthening awareness of these issues by sharing them in our classrooms, we can engage students in meaningful and viable problem-framing, strengthen cross-cultural relationships, and enable students to consider their role in contemporary solutions, while promoting respect of Indigenous people. The incredible resilience of Indigenous peoples is evident as they continue to foster cultural practices and language and engage in self-determination and resurgence. These issues also highlight the systemic barriers that youth face in Canada and why there is a need for alternative teaching approaches that support the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada *(TRC) Calls to action* in practice. Inclusion (rather than decolonization) requires an intentional shift in power structures within education, moving beyond tokenistic gestures to meaningful engagement with Indigenous knowledge systems (Blodgett et al., 2011; Woods et al., 2022).

Redefining Equitable Education in this Course

By focusing on Indigenous perspectives, the course redefined business education, centralizing more humane practices and value systems, primarily, stewardship and respect for all life on our planet. By nurturing regenerative perspectives in course content and within this project, students moved or strengthened their perspectives regarding sustainability within business. Incorporating Indigenous worldviews in business education aligns with reconciliation efforts and the TRC's Calls to Action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015; Goodchild, 2021). Emphasis was placed on Interbeing (Hanh, 2020) and interconnectedness between people, land, and resources, rooted in Indigenous pedagogy and relational systems thinking (Goodchild, 2021). This course sought to foster ancestral wisdom, by sharing and upholding the commitment to the Seven Grandfather Teachings to guide decision-making. They include love, respect, humility, honesty, truth, bravery, and wisdom. All this, while meeting the demands of a modern business program - walking in two worlds.

With the recognition of collective healing and transformational approaches to leadership, students were led through contemplative practices to guide reflections and deepen core approaches and worldviews. Transformative learning in sustainability education emphasizes emotional and reflective engagement and aligns with Indigenous perspectives on holistic well-being (Pöllänen et al., 2023; Mezirow, 2008). During this pilot class, knowledge keepers emphasized the importance of gratitude and respect for all life forms, from the smallest organism to the largest ecosystem. Students felt welcomed by Indigenous knowledge keepers (despite the history) and recognized the universal connections to the land and waters we are all a part of. They exhibited the importance of reciprocity by offering a small gift to Knowledge Keepers as a symbol of appreciation for the teachings shared. At the end of the class, students reflected and shared about the privilege they felt with engaging in these relationships and with these knowledge systems. The success of this initiative offered actionable insights for other business educators and institutions seeking to support TRC in their pedagogy. These include:

A. building authentic relationships based on mutual respect, reciprocal relationships, clear intentions and shared goals with Indigenous partners;

B. creating circles or communities of care, (e.g., using the sacred circle) for reflection and shared learning to deepen empathy, understanding and better actions;

C. prioritizing community well-being and intergenerational responsibility to nurture stewardship in business students;

D. co-creating with flexibility to adjust or shift pedagogical approaches;

E. developing meaningful and impactful programs that weave Indigenous knowledge with Western methods to address our challenges - developing unique, more holistic solutions;

F. shifting traditional analysis tools to differentiate “stakeholders” from “rights holders”, urging appropriate consultation in projects that concern Indigenous people, their communities, and the land. Shifting this perspective in business, added by a student (Mackay-Coutu) enables us to uphold and respect land, culture, and self-government rights.

Conclusion

Higher education requires reformation in many ways to better engage and develop youth. Cross-cultural learning requires partners, professors and students to be vulnerable and to share openly and genuinely. By engaging in genuine relationships with partners and students, we co-created a deep and rich learning experience that transcended the class and time. Our perspectives were shaped and enhanced by these relationships and teachings. Reflecting on our personal Truth and Reconciliation action plan, through learning, understanding and acting can craft a better country for us all as we move forward. To do this, cross-cultural learning and the humans in it are at the heart of the classroom and pedagogical approaches. The course illustrates the transformative potential of cross-cultural collaboration in higher education, through a genuine interest in Indigenous resurgence, and an Indigenous partnership. These important cross-cultural relationships can teach us about ourselves, co-create inclusive learning communities, shift our perspectives and enhance socioeconomic, health and environmental restoration. As higher education struggles with engaging students (note: impacts on mental health and steamrolling through COVID-19 to continue business as usual) and struggling to develop impactful solutions to contemporary challenges, this case offered a path forward—rooted in respect, relationality, and shared responsibility. This article calls for higher education to embrace the diverse knowledge systems that sustain life and to reimagine learning as a collective journey toward a more equitable, conscious, circular and regenerative future. Our country and world depend on our relationships and wholesome holistic approaches to teaching, learning, living and thriving.

Positioniality - Jody-Lynn Rebek

I live as a visitor in Baawaating, the place of the rapids - at the heart of the Great Lakes and Turtle Island. This land, home to Anishinaabe, Métis, and Cree Peoples, is part of the 1850 Robinson-Huron Treaty. I work at Algoma University, on the site of the former Shingwauk Indian Residential School, which continues to deepen my awareness and responsibility. The land my university resides was entrusted by Anishinaabe Chief Shingwauk for cross-cultural teaching and learning. I acknowledge Anishinaabe Peoples as the original stewards. My name is Jody-Lynn Rebek. My familial roots trace to Europe, but I was born in Manitoba and raised in Ottawa before settling in Baawaating at age seven. My identity is shaped by relationships with the land, waters, and people here. As a professor and scholarpreneur, I recognize the power and privilege I hold in influencing education, leadership, and systemic change.

My worldview has been deeply shaped by land-based experiences, time spent along the shores of Lake Superior, and learning from Anishinaabe teachings. Engaging in ceremony at Batchewana First Nation and visiting former residential school sites have furthered my understanding of colonial impacts and the need for truth and reconciliation. As a Settler Canadian scholar, I am committed to fostering ethical leadership, cultural responsiveness, and transformational learning. My work is grounded in humility, reciprocity, and a responsibility to create spaces that support Indigenous self-determination. I embrace a holistic approach to well-being, guided by Mino-Bimaadziwin—the good life—centering self-awareness, accountability, and the interconnectedness of human and ecological flourishing.

Allyship is a practice of listening, learning, and accountability—it is earned, not claimed. As a mother, I am deeply moved by the ongoing impacts of colonialism and systemic racism on Indigenous families. I strive to act with compassion, recognizing my privilege while working toward collective healing and justice. My personal, professional, and community commitments are anchored in creating meaningful, ethical, holistic and inclusive and wholesome change.

Positioniality - Victoria MacKay-Coutu

As a non-Indigenous person of settler descent, my work in reshaping business education is guided by a commitment to reconciliation, decolonizing academic spaces, and integrating Indigenous perspectives and knowledge systems in our learning environments. I aim to encourage holistic, reciprocal approaches to business relationships, fostering a more inclusive and ethical framework for future business leaders.

I recognize that my perspectives are shaped by my position within a Western academic institution, and acknowledge the limitations of my lived experience. My engagement with Indigenous knowledge systems is guided by ongoing relationships, learning, and meaningful conversations with Indigenous communities. I hold deep respect for Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. I strive to center Indigenous voices in my work by actively engaging with and listening to Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous colleagues and students, allowing their insights to inform and shape my work.

Jody Rebek's bio is on page 54.

Victoria MacKay-Coutu holds an Honours Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Algoma University (Sault Ste. Marie, ON). As a passionate alumna of Algoma University and strong advocate for business innovation in the community of Sault Ste. Marie, Victoria has gained considerable interest in understanding how entrepreneurship can be used as a tool to address regional concerns. She strives to challenge conventional business paradigms and contribute to the development of a more just and regenerative economic landscape. This interest has afforded her the opportunity to work alongside Dr. Rebek, as a Research Assistant engaging in mixed methods community research. Through her work on these research studies, she strives to make a significant impact within the local business community and hopes to one day become a community leader herself.

Amber McKay is an Indigenous Liaison at Algoma University's Faculty of Business and Economics. As a Business Administration graduate, she specializes in community relations and is building her career. Beyond work, Amber enjoys hiking, photography, and attending powwows, celebrating her culture and connecting with nature.

See the Resources section at the end of this issue for resources related to this article

A Journey of Care and Entanglements:

My Great-Grandmother's Guesthouse as an Archive

Text and Images by Janna Lichter

As I navigate my great-grandmothers guesthouse, I explore historical photographs intertwined with white supremacy and imperial forces. Located in the rural, village-based region of the Eifel, the guesthouse contributes as a political space and a living archive, reflecting historical shifts through both World Wars and the U.S. Air Force. Crossing spaces, images and narratives, I follow how lived experiences unfold, overlap, and disrupt through artistic and archival research. I search for hidden and silenced stories through the lens of women across generations in my family. Drawing on critical theories of anti-imperialism, decolonization, and feminism, my research is grounded in the concepts of Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, Ann Laura Stoler and Elke Krasny. Their critical frameworks dismantle supremacist thoughts through archival practices and organize materials as alternative ways of knowledge production. Through this anti-imperial and feminist lens, I confront white privileges and fragility of identity and heritage – unfolding silenced intergenerational lived histories and experiences.

Apollonia my Great-Grandmother
(Year unknown)

Guesthouse as a Political Space:

At its core, I engage with Apollonia, my great-grandmother, and her guesthouse, which has mapped memory, identity, and resilience for more than a century. I understand the women-led guesthouse as a heritage space and living archive, shaped by destruction and reconstruction through patriarchy, imperialism, and violence. Since the late 19th century, it has witnessed infrastructural changes and historical ruptures: From the first postal and telephone hub in the region to its disruptions during both World Wars and the presence of the U.S. Air Force. Within patriarchal structures, women continued to lead the guesthouse, resisting historical erasure as active agents of continuity and change. Photographs serve as fragmented traces of these histories, capturing moments of everyday life and socio-political significance: residents sitting in the bar with its green and wooden furniture, portraits of brides and grooms, soldiers posing in front of the guesthouse door, and local and political events. Confronting the backdrop of my family's guesthouse, I ask: *What stories do these images tell us about the guesthouse within imperial histories? What narratives remain lost in the silences of this space? How can I take responsibility for acknowledging, caring for, and repairing collective histories?*

The Flood as Urgency:

In 2021, a devastating flood destroyed the guesthouse. Photographs, documents, and stories were erased. The destruction of the house, caused by rushing water, led to my grandmother's temporary loss of sanity. The flood and environmental catastrophe is entangled with structures of power, calling for an urgency to recover the hidden and lost voices. In the PhD seminar, *Practicing Feminist Methodology* in Madrid, organized by Elke Krasny, I met Elena Castro Córdoba. Córdoba's work focuses on contemporary aesthetics, archival practices, temporal politics, and feminisms. In her lecture, she emphasized embodied practice as a methodological tool, calling for more playful methods, experimental approaches, and detailed processes. In my case, the water left traces on walls, images, objects, documents, recalling memories, and bringing up what had been forgotten. Engaging with the remnants of the guesthouse, I disrupt patterns of disappearance through archival work of care and repair, reconstructing alternative narratives that overcome imposed silences. Through intergenerational reckoning with history, I explore how the guesthouse holds the transformative potential of a caring archive.

My Family Guesthouse (Year unknown)

Washing the Archive with Care and Repair:

Water becomes the connecting element between past and present, flowing as a symbol of memory, loss, and resilience. Together with Bahaa Abu Hussein, whose work focuses on imaginaries, archival materials, and analog photography, we restore photographs damaged by the flood. Through material exploration, care and repair, emerge as central to our embodied artistic approach. We begin reading the scratches, imprints, and stains embedded in the photographs, reflecting the holes and gaps within individual and collective history. These marks show stamps from the Nazi regime, handwritten thank-you notes from guests, and washed-away faces of soldiers. By washing the photographs, we draw attention to the fragility within my family. Care involves an emotional connection to the materials and the stories they hold. It is about honoring the women in my family, recognizing their experiences captured in the photographs, and treating these images with respect and attentiveness. Repair, on the other hand, is about addressing the wounds and injustices of the past, seeking to heal and restore what has been damaged. Historical images of the past unfold complex dynamics of complicities in a world shaped by domination and exploitation.

Archival Responsibilities within Imperialist Orders:

As I delve deeper into the archive, I am guided by Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's concept of *Unlearning the Archive (2019).* I begin to see nonimperial thinking as an active engagement. She argues that archival images are evidence of imperial violence and epistemic control, shaping how history is remembered and legitimized. Her perspective is crucial as I confront my family's history, seeing them as ongoing struggles of the present and potential reparations. Similarly, Ann Laura Stoler's concept, *Against the Grain* (2009), provides a framework for understanding how colonial archives can be read and interpreted critically. She exposes colonial archives as political discourses that amplify specific 'social facts' while dismissing or rejecting others. Building on both concepts, my great-grandmother's guesthouse calls for a critical engagement with my positionality in history. Through feminist anti-imperial practices, I approach the archive as a space of reflection, confrontation, and possibility where histories are renegotiated. The aim is to reorganize archival materials in a manner that extends beyond my family history to broader societal structures marked by privileges and domination within imperial dynamics.

Feminist Reorganizing of Archival Materials:

Through acts of care and repair, feminist thinking disrupts historical categorization and resists erasures, creating spaces for alternative readings, counter-histories, and collective reimaginaries. *On the Feminist Work of Organizing* (2023), as conceptualized by Elke Krasny, offers a way to understand organizing as an essential dimension that structures political, social, and cultural relations. In my context, organizing materials leads to the reconfiguration of the archive towards transformative processes, demanding a deep examination of identity, heritage, and collective meaning. My concern extends beyond what is present in the archive to what was never recorded in the first place, positioning nonimperial practices and feminist thought as methods of resistance. Photographs, documents, and oral histories are reorganized materials, carrying the past into the present and future, while also moving backwards. This journey unsettles linear conceptions of history, disturbing internalized narratives, and seeking out those that have been silenced. These reorganizing archival practices create new forms of knowledge within entangled histories, emerging through active modes of rereading, reframing, and recollecting.

Archival Conversation Practices as Multiplicity:

At times, my family benefitted from imperial power structures, whether through complicity in systems of domination or economic wealth. They existed within imperial structures not only as victims, but also as participants in mechanisms that reinforced privileges. The guesthouse as an archive carries stories that have been overshadowed over centuries. Engaging with archival photographs through conversational practices, I unfold these hidden histories embedded in the archive of my great-grandmother. Silence becomes a point of rupture in this artistic research. Through conversations with family, friends, neighbors, historians, and archivists, new meaning evolves, articulating the complex interplay of power, class, and gender. These conversations might be uncomfortable and conflicting, but they are urgent, leading to questioning our role in dominances and violences of histories. These conversations contribute to knowledge of care, making visible historical lines of imperial agencies within time and space.

In conclusion, the journey through my great-grandmother's guesthouse as an archive is a personal and political act. It is not only about unfolding history but also about how it continues to shape the present and future. Within imperial and patriarchal orders, women in my family led the guesthouse over generations – contesting history as active agents.

Washing the archive (2024)

Apollonia, the starting point of this artistic research, upheld the matriarchal line within the guesthouse. I understand heritage, memory, and identity as sites of ongoing struggles within broader structures of power and oppression. Through critical anti-imperial and feminist thought, I seek ongoing confrontation with silences and inherited narratives engaging in dismantling histories of violence. Archival practices and conversations disrupt, unsettle, and evoke discomfort, while reframing the entanglements of individual and collective histories. Circulating as multiplicity, these interventions open space for counter-histories against erasure. They generate stories of care and ways of knowledges, reshaping how history is remembered while expanding the archive's potential as a site of transformation. Within neoliberal capital systems, processes of care and repair emerge as radical gesture towards social solidarity and justice. It is a call to continuously and actively reimagine new ways of relating to history, moving towards feminist and anti-imperial futures.

Janna Lichter is a multimedia artist and researcher. With a focus on feminist and urban theories, she connects artistic practices and sociopolitical contexts by organizing transmedia spaces and conversations. She is a researcher at the University of Applied Art and Design in Düsseldorf, a Ph.D. candidate at the Bauhaus University Weimar and part of the Ph.D. seminar run by Prof. Dr. Elke Krasny at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

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Natasha Sanders-Kay

Natasha's bio is on page 60.

SELF-RESCUE

Note: "Self-Rescue" employs the term "self-ful," which is borrowed from the book *Selfish Women* by Lisa Downing.

I want to name this piece "Selfish At Last."

Self-ful, self-fish . . .

Truth is, I'm not there yet.

May this poem be a prayer, a daily practice.

I will make steps. Walk in woods.

Sit with trees, with water.

Throw words into waves
that toss
them back
to me.

Thumb yellow bells of forsythia.

Spot sun-bright seashells, edges rippling out
like little wedding cakes, or pages
in a book.

I'll bask in a billion baths. Play pop tunes. Praise Lilith.

Embrace black eyeliner. Know steam from smoke. Surround myself with dogs.

Stain my skin in sap and ink. Tongue my truest sentences.

Massage two-letter words, like
no
and
me.

If I am a shell
I must find my centre, get
to the meat of myself, for more than anything

She

is who I crave.

Form Follows Care:

Redefining the Design Process

By Ranee Lee and Katya Koroscil

Ranee Lee

Katya Koroscil

PHOTOGRAPH: KATYA KOROSCIL

DESIGNwith x TPP 'Form Follows Care' project showcases previous seasons' contemporary art marketing banners transformed into a one-of-a-kind product line.

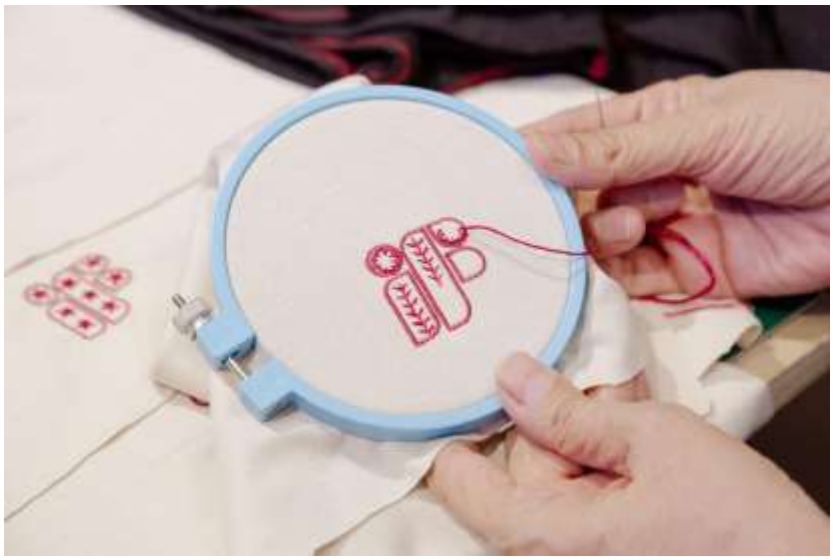
Circular design is no longer an option—it's a necessity. Toronto-based innovation lab DESIGNwith embeds social innovation and the circular economy into every stage of the design process. Through co-design and material reuse—especially in collaboration with The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery (TPP)—we show how a caring design practice can create locally relevant placemaking everyday products while also driving meaningful change for both people and the environment.

Innovative Collaborations

Partnering with OCAD University, Cadillac Fairview, and the Regent Park Sewing Studio (RPSS), DESIGNwith is leading in new ways of working across community, institutional, and academic sectors. Collaboration is more than connection—it's a design process shaped by care. From the ideas we generate and the voices we uplift to the waste materials we source and the circular methods we refine, valuing care drives innovation. This approach comes to life in projects such as Sinai Health Foundation transforming marketing banners into new products with RPSS; or co-designing an inclusive sneaker-making workshop with youth basketball group, Lay-Up, using deadstock upholstery. Through these initiatives, we create thoughtful, sustainable design opportunities that prioritize both people and the environment. Partnering with OCAD University, Cadillac Fairview, and the Regent Park Sewing Studio (RPSS), DESIGNwith cultivates new ways of working across community, institutional, and academic sectors. Collaboration is the theory of care-in-practice. Through these initiatives, we create thoughtful, sustainable design opportunities that prioritize both people and the environment.

Cultural and Gender Influences

Care practices are shaped by culture and gender, and the lab highlights the essential role of women in fostering sustainability. DESIGNwith's partnership with the Regent Park Sewing Studio (RPSS) creates space for newcomer women to share and sustain their cultural textile traditions while building economic independence. "When we support women, we support the community" – the tagline for our Sinai Health Foundation collaboration, commemorating its centennial and honouring the four immigrant women founders along with DESIGNwith's immigrant women sewists. Through employment, skill-building, and cre-



PHOTOGRAPH: KATYA KOROSCIL

ative exchange, these sewists bring regional techniques—from intricate embroidery used in our minimal-waste t-shirt pattern design to traditional tailoring—that enrich the co-design process. Their approach to making is deeply intentional, valuing every material by repurposing, mending, and minimizing waste. By engaging with local communities, and respecting their knowledge systems, they have agency in choosing work hours that best suit home and religious obligations, ensuring these care practices are sustainable and integrated into our design process, honouring diverse cultural narratives.

Left: (RPSS Regional Embroidery) DESIGNwith x Impakt Foundation t-shirt Collaboration.

"'Form Follows Care' illustrates the transformative power of a caring practice through one person's commitment to their values inspiring a broader communal change. My chance encounter with DESIGNwith sparked my passion for creating zero-waste products from banners. After presenting this idea to TPP, we decided to rethink our marketing waste and turn it into valuable products with a strong message. I hope this project encourages other organizations to turn challenges into opportunities, fostering a more sustainable and united community."

— Daria Sposobna, (Former) Assistant Manager, Marketing & Communications at TPP.

Earth Day Launch: "Form Follows Care"

On Earth Day, April 22, 2024, DESIGNwith launched "Form Follows Care," a collection of unique products commissioned by TPP. Made from the gallery's outdoor marketing banners, this collection repurposes past exhibition artwork into zero-waste daily essentials, including tote bags, pouches, and wallets. Each item was co-designed and produced locally in the lab, ensuring that every part of the banner was used to eliminate waste. Production and marketing often contribute to social and environmental issues, like community and resource exploitation. TPP is taking ownership by repurchasing its marketing waste from DESIGNwith in supporting an innovative approach to closing the waste cycle through design. This project underscores the key role that art and design can have in promoting community and environmental well-being and the importance of doing, encouraging, and funding such efforts.

PHOTOGRAPH: KATYA KOROSCIL

DESIGNwith x Mount Sinai collaboration featuring a clutch and tote bag, locally manufactured and sewn in-lab

"This collaboration not only promotes a circular economy but also proves that a local closed-loop system is achievable through design. By utilizing our waste streams and local skills, the 'Form Follows Care' collection exemplifies a commitment to inclusive design practices by co-designing with marginalized women for zero-waste outcomes. As a caring design lab, we have shifted to respond to our 21st-century climate crisis and social inequalities, moving away from 'form follows function' to 'Form Follows Care.'" — Ranee Lee, Founder of DESIGNwith

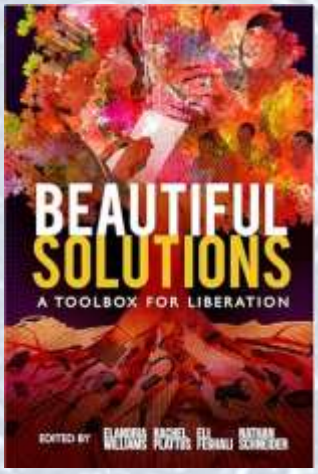
Looking Ahead

The "Form Follows Care" collection exemplifies a move toward a more equitable and sustainable future. At DESIGNwith, waste does not exist, and everyone is invited and heard at the design table. DESIGNwith and TPP invite you to celebrate this initiative and explore the collection online and in person at the Gallery's Shop. Together, this partnership seeks to lead and inspire others to embrace care in their practices and build a resilient, sustainable future.

Ranee Lee 郭恩琳 is an industrial designer and Associate Professor at OCADU. Founder of DESIGNwith, an innovation lab for circular economy and social innovation. She holds an MA in participatory design and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council project on alternative economies in marginalized communities. Currently focusing on care and culture projects to move towards Form Follows Care.

Katya Koroscil is a multidisciplinary industrial designer and visual storyteller specializing in life-centered design, spanning product and service design, creative direction, and still and motion pictures. Her approach to problem-solving is driven by a passion for redefining value—from amplifying unheard voices to transforming waste streams into meaningful resources.

You can watch a video by Brian Medina about DESIGNwith x TPP project:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcGzLB0svVA&t=9s



Southern Journeys Collective

Location: Southern States in the USA (Georgia and Alabama)

Years: 2010-Present

Sector: Manufacturing

Black Women in Southern USA created a craft cooperative seeking to provide income and an outlet for creative expression through sewing, quilting, and weaving. Honouring the cultural traditions of Western Africa and the Southern USA.

For more information visit: www.southernjourneyscollective.com

Read the full story on pages 217–218 of *Beautiful Solutions,* reviewed on page 110 of this issue.

Don’t Mess with the Don:

Building a Community of Care in Toronto’s Don Valley System

By Nancy Ward

While many people are familiar with the paved paths and picnic areas in Toronto’s Don Valley, they may not be as familiar with the many kilometers of single-track trails frequented by trail runners, hikers, dog walkers and mountain bikers.

One night in 2017, my husband Lawrence, came home from his daily trail run complaining about all the garbage he was seeing in the Don Valley. Plastic bottles, plastic bags, disposable coffee cups and many other small pieces of micro plastics littering the single-track trails especially behind the large apartment complexes, stores, industrial and commercial buildings that sat on the valley’s edge. These buildings created a garbage shadow that loomed large. Our first response was dismay, but then we began to talk about what solutions might look like.

At that time, Lawrence ran a trail running program and began to talk with some of the runners, who saw the problem too, and wanted to act. From these conversations, Don’t Mess with the Don (DMWTD) was born.

We began with small scale clean ups, appealing on social media to others in the trail running and mountain biking communities. In 2019, things expanded rapidly. In coordination with our local city councilors, local companies and other community groups, Don’t Mess with the Don organized a clean-up on Earth Day, arranging a permit to clean up garbage in the Thorncliffe Park area.

On that cold, rainy April day, over 700 people showed up to clean garbage out of their ravine. Thirty thousand pounds of garbage was picked up that day. What was most amazing, was how excited volunteers were to pick up garbage! The clean-up provided individuals and families a way to make a tangible difference in their communities, arriving at a garbage strewn ravine, working alongside others to clean it, and seeing it restored.

The clean-up helped to build community cohesiveness, with people from different backgrounds coming together to achieve a common goal. And why do people continue to return to clean up garbage? Because it’s tangible, because they can see their efforts making an actual difference over the course of a couple of hours, ***and because they don’t feel alone in their efforts to make a difference in their communities.***

(Left) Before and After (Above) pictures of Earth Day 2019. Pictures courtesy Irene Vandertop

While garbage continues to be a focus of Don't Mess with the Don, working with the City of Toronto, property management companies, and other NGOs, the organization realized that a larger issue of concern was present in the Don Valley and our local ravine systems, invasive plant species.

Plants with names like Dog Strangling Vine, Garlic Mustard, European Buckthorn, Burdock and Teasel are choking our ravine systems decreasing plant and animal biodiversity (Toronto City Planning and Parks, Forestry and Recreation et al. 2019). As we spent more time in the valley, we began to learn that all the green foliage we saw was not necessarily beneficial.

Working with local partners like the Toronto Nature Stewards, Project Swallowtail affiliated groups, Toronto Field Naturalists, The City of Toronto's Urban Forestry division and the City of Toronto's Stewardship program, we began to learn about the difference between native species plants and invasives and the profound impact that removing invasives in the Don Valley the area might have on the local ecosystem. These organizations and individuals we met in the community were incredibly generous, sharing their knowledge and resources, understanding that the more groups who became aware of the impacts of invasive species, the more positive impacts could result.

In the spring of 2020 with a small group of 10 -12 people we began a weekly stewardship group in Sun Valley, a 17-acre site, nestled between Bayview Avenue and the Don River. This circular site, the former Leaside Landfill, was used by the city until the late 1960s and then covered over with clean fill and topsoil cap. The City of Toronto and the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA) planted over 5000 trees, but it was

PHOTOGRAPH: RICA HANSEN

Above: TMX interns clean up the Don!

Below: DMWTD's free environmental and arts' summer camp, 2024

PHOTOGRAPH: NANCY WARD

essentially left alone and up until the mid 2000s, still used as a snow dump (Milesghearn, 2021). Now heavily treed, it is crisscrossed by trails used by dog walkers, hikers, birders, trail runners and mountain bikers. It's also home to deer, coyote, fox, racoon, many other small mammals and several species of birds.

In the middle of Sun Valley was a former meadow, completely overtaken by waist high Dog Strangling Vine (DSV), an invasive plant from Eastern Europe. The plant is noted for mimicking native Milkweed but proves fatal to the eggs that Monarch Butterflies lay on their leaves (*Dog-strangling Vine, n.d.).*

The group met every Wednesday to remove and mow the DSV and manage it through the stages of its lifecycle. With its removal we began to think about what to put in its place and started our first gardens, essentially bringing back the native plants that may have originally been in this space.

While we planted a wide array of native species with blooming times throughout the season, we also saw Canadian Goldenrod and New England Asters begin to return, now that more space was opened for them. With both the returning plants and the native species we've planted, we've seen increased mammal, bird, and insect activity in the area. One day last summer, as we left a newly planted area, we saw two deer coming to investigate our work!

The stewardship group was incredibly important to building community, as it began during the COVID 19 pandemic. This small group of volunteers who came out weekly, went from being acquaintances to becoming friends, being there for each other during a very isolating time when not everyone had a social bubble to go home to. Many of our core volunteers have been with the group since its early days, and they keep returning, heartened by the results of the work they have done and seeing Sun Valley transform.

Becoming a registered charity in 2020, Don't Mess with the Don continued to grow, offering all free programming, including youth trail running clinics, a summer mountain biking program providing equipment and instruction to first time riders, and arts and nature education programming every second Saturday at our container hub in the Loblaws parking lot at the edge of Crother's Woods.

In spring 2024, Don't Mess with the Don, launched its "paddle and protect" program at Cherry Beach, taking Torontonians out in kayaks to clean up the inner harbour and in and around Toronto Island. In September, Toronto's Mayor, Olivia Chow joined us on a paddle and helped to pick up garbage in the Toronto Island channels.

PHOTOGRAPH: IRENE VANDERTOP

Toronto mayor Olivia Chow on the water (2024)

Main garden Monarch

PHOTOGRAPH: CANDELA SANCHEZ DELGADO

Her participation in the paddle and the support the city council has provided to Don't Mess with the Don demonstrates the importance of the partnerships the organization has built with the city, many other environmental groups, schools, and both large and small corporations interested in volunteering to support sustainability and the environment. This web of organizations and the people that are introduced to the valley through these stewardship activities, always walk away amazed at discovering these incredible spaces in their own backyard.

While we have multiple program areas, the work that Don't Mess with the Don does, has a singular focus, connecting individuals and families with the ravines, trails and waterways of the Don Valley; places they may not be familiar with, wild spaces within the city. This connection promotes caring for this space and when people care and are connected, they will fight to protect that space and the community that is built around stewarding those spaces.

While the off the beaten track trails of the Don Valley are incredible spaces to experience and enjoy, they are not always accessible to women. Many of the women who come to clean ups or to stewardship tell me that they wouldn't think of coming to the valley alone to walk or run. It wouldn't cross their mind, as it doesn't feel like a safe space. With each of the different program areas that Don't Mess with the Don offers, it creates an opportunity for women

Toronto mayor Olivia Chow on the water (2024)

PHOTOGRAPH: IRENE VANDERTOP

to comfortably explore these natural spaces and help improve the space, together with other community members.

The other common story I hear repeatedly, from volunteers, is that they used to pick up garbage alone in their neighborhoods or pull Dog Strangling Vine (DSV) in their local ravines, or even kayak in Lake Ontario, picking up garbage on the shoreline. They are so excited to realize that so many others in their community are doing the same thing. They no longer feel like they are working in isolation and feel inspired to do more.

Susanne Simard, in her book *Finding the Mother Tree* (2022) talks about the communication that links trees through fungal connections underground, sharing resources, sending messages, and nurturing each other as a community.

Volunteering with Don't Mess with the Don's Stewardship program since its beginning, I recognize that it is one organization in a vast network in Toronto that shares knowledge, resources and friendship. As we steward these natural spaces together, it helps us as individuals, but more importantly brings us together as a community that nurtures and cares for one another.

Nancy Ward works promoting international trade with a small consulting firm. Since the early 2000s, she began studying horticulture at Humber College and hands on learning through volunteering at the Evergreen Brickworks and other local initiatives. In 2020 she completed a Farm School program taught by Cheyenne Sundance which provided a strong background in urban agriculture. She has volunteered at Withrow Park Farmers' market as a seed librarian, exchanging seeds and gardening knowledge with the local community. Nancy is currently studying Urban Agriculture at Toronto Metropolitan University. She continues to be a lead steward with Don't Mess with the Don, assisting to rehabilitate Sun Valley making it a caring community hub for all who are present.

STEWARDSHIP COLLAGE COURTESY: RICA HANSEN

A cleaner today, A cleaner tomorrow

Ghislaine Kerry

Tchoupou Kuete Ghislaine Kerry, is a 22-year-old student at Université de l'Ontario Français, studying Urban Environmental Studies. With a background in Biochemistry (Nutrition and Food Safety) from University of Dschang, Cameroon, she has also volunteered with River Clean Up, leading activities and helping combat pollution in Douala through weekly cleanups.

For years we've faced a growing plight,
Pollution's scourge, both day and night.
A threat as grave as climate change,
Water pollution—an issue we must arrange.

Lakes, rivers, streams, and seas,
All tainted by our carelessness and greed.
Oceans choke, groundwater fades,
As harmful waste in silence invades.

Plastic, pesticides, and waste abound,
A poison spreading all around.
But hope exists in every hand,
n acts of change, we take a stand.

River Cleanup, a global call,
Uniting people, large and small.
In Belgium born, but worldwide spread,
A mission to heal, to lift ahead.

I walked the shores of Douala's side,
A volunteer, with hope as my guide.
Students like me, eager to take part,
Restoring nature with all our heart.

Their plan is simple, yet profound—
To Clean, Educate, and Turn it around.
Youth, workers, companies unite,
In rivers' care, we find our light.

That day I felt I had a role, Not just a woman or a consumer,
but a part of the whole.
Aware of my hand in the rivers' plight,
I became a fixer, a beacon of light.

What if they stopped? What would we do?
These efforts, the change, all would undo.
But a spark, a shift, it starts with us,
Future generations, it's on us to discuss.

In classrooms, we talk, but do we act?
Words without deeds, that's the fact.
From kindergartens to high school halls,
We must ensure real change calls.

Teachers agree, learning's in action,
In the field, we find true satisfaction.
I've seen young hearts, so full of cheer,
Their passion for the planet is crystal clear.

When they return to their school, I know,
They'll never let a piece of paper go.
River Cleanup's impact is profound,
A legacy of change will spread all around.

Small steps now, with hands and hearts,
To teach the future, where change starts.
For in the end, the truth is plain,
Change requires action—and education's reign.

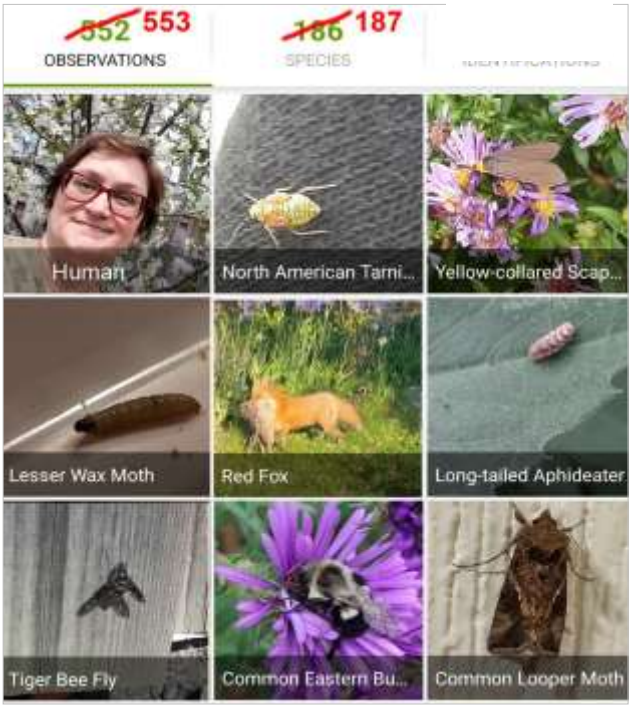
Let's restore our rivers, our earth, our sky,
With every effort, we'll reach up high.
For a cleaner tomorrow, we must take the lead,
Together, we can heal, together, we can succeed.

Creating Communities of Care
through Re-mystifying an Urban Toronto Garden

By Sayeh Dastgheib-Beheshti

While I have been an avid life-long gardener, my own journey to understanding the impact of my garden on local wildlife only began around ten years ago when, as a graduate student, I tended the HNES Native Plant Garden at York University's Keele campus in Toronto, Canada. I joined the North American Native Plant Society (NANPS) and slowly began to understand the ways in which over millennia, all creatures in a specific location, including humans, have developed reciprocal relationships that cannot be sustained without the plants native to that area. The more I understood these relationships, the more I began to care about the wildlife that shared my home's gardens with me, and in 2018, as part of the Bees In My Backyard (BIMBY) research project led by the University of Toronto, I began documenting the native bees I saw in my garden using iNaturalist.

iNaturalist is an app that helps identify and document plants and animals I see, and turns these observations into freely-shared data accessible to researchers. I was so amazed at the diversity I found during the BIMBY project, that even after it ended, I continued documenting the wildlife I encountered in my gardens: insects, birds, mammals….. So far, I have documented 186 different species and if you add me to it, that brings the total of species that frequent my gardens to 187. In the years that followed, my garden was selected for two other research projects and with each one, I learned more about the food web of life that began in my garden and the creatures that depended on it for their lifecycles, which furthered my care for creating a sustaining environment for them.



MODIFIED SCREENSHOT: SAYEH DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

Sayeh uses iNaturalist to track the wildlife she sees in the gardens. She realized that adding herself as an observation would give a clearer view of her rights in relation to the other inhabitants. The recorded observations have provided an opportunity to learn more about those who live on the Land and their needs and developing a caring relationship.

When I first read Richard Louv's *The Last Child in the Woods* (Louv 2009), I was deeply moved by his message that in order to protect something, we have to first sense it to know that it exists, and it's only through that awareness that we can begin to love it and go on to fight to protect it. While I had grown up with an intimate love of nature, I was keenly aware of how the industrial world, including my own profession of industrial design, views nature as something to subordinate and overcome, an arrogant belief that sees humans exempt from laws that govern the rest of the world (Orr 2004, 4). This artificial divide that separates nature from humans is perhaps the most pressing challenge of environmental education since it frames nature as something far away and separate from where humans work, live, farm or play (Tallamy 2020, 20) resulting in the belief that conservation is fine as long as we do it someplace else and in ways that do not constrain the human activities we call **"progress"**.

In *Nature's Best Hope* (2020) Douglas Tallamy provides a rationale on how urban gardens can provide an excellent opportunity to expand wildlife habitat and stop species loss by converting some urban garden spaces to native plant species habitat that nurture wildlife creating what he calls a "homegrown national park". Tallamy advocates for making conservation everyone's responsibility and replacing the "humans ***or*** nature" mentality with one based on "humans ***and*** nature". He believes that this change in mentality can only happen when people realize that we are all part of and dependant on nature for the food webs and coevolved associations that keep the natural world functioning. How could I convince fellow gardeners to see the potential each of their gardens held in enriching the food web of life in Toronto, and take action to become a part of it?

I approached this challenge as an environmental education opportunity framed as praxis defined by Paulo Freire as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire 2000, 51) which helped me realize that I needed to create opportunities for participants to use their embodied knowledge to reframe their personal relationships with nature. As a first step in 2020, I reached out to family, friends and neighbours to form a group that allowed each member to learn how to grow native plants from seed using a winter-sowing method. The seeds we used were gifts from my garden and the flower pots were from the recycling section of local nurseries. The only expense was potting soil. The resulting seedlings were potted up in communal events, shared amongst group members and used for community gardening projects. While this group did not start with a clear anti-colonial mandate, as members met and discussed hegemonic social relations we encountered in outreach projects, it soon became clear that a transformative paradigm shift to a ***“humans and nature”*** mindset could only happen as political action and organized with the explicit goal of working outside capitalist framing of value extraction and profit. In our meetings we shared knowledge and resources, examined power structures, and directed our efforts to social well-being within our communities.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SAYEH DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

Top: Communal potting up of seedlings to grow into plants we gift to community plantings. Above: discussing the political aspect of gardening, July 2023.

PHOTO: SAYEH DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI—2020

Above: One of the creatures I look forward to seeing each year since I first saw them in 2020 are Wide-footed Treehoppers *(Enchenopa latipes),* which are only about 5 mm in length and mimic thorns on a stem. They appear on one aster plant in late June, grow, mature and turn darker for a few weeks and then disappear until the following year.

I held my first garden tour in 2022 to meet a requirement for my pollinator steward certification. In the years that followed, I held additional informal and formal tours in my garden, becoming keenly aware of the power of storytelling in creating a sense of awe and sparking curiosity. When I agreed to host a garden tour for NANPS, I drew inspiration from Haluza-DeLay’s (1997) essay about the power of re-mystifying urban nature by rendering familiar settings unfamiliar and reawakening a sense of wonder towards our surroundings, so I decided to structure the garden tour as an interactive scavenger hunt that allowed for each visitor to explore and discover new things that tied into their own embodied knowledge. I knew that by making visible the creatures that lived with me on the Land, I could create an opportunity for others to sense, get to know and love them, and maybe one day fight for their survival. I couldn’t help but wonder how many of the visitors would discover the ultimate goal of the garden tour and realize that their own gardens also held the same magic and all that was needed was the willingness to see it.

I identified 8 over-arching themes that provided critical learning opportunities around the garden. Whether it was showing pictures of insects that have evolved to eat a particular plant to complete their life cycles, or showcasing the evolving deepening relationship with the Land when humans are no longer the sole consideration in garden spaces, each of the stations explored the reciprocity of care that become visible when we acknowledge the relationships that surround us.

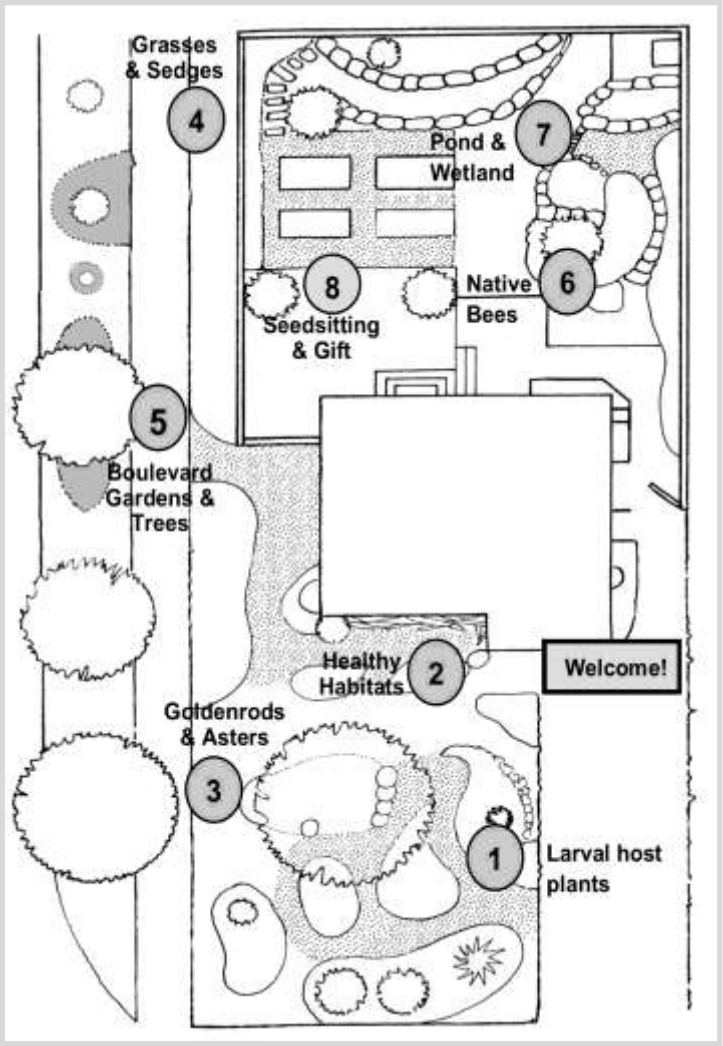
I then drew a map of my gardens, locating the 8 stations and ensuring that each location had suitable examples and observations for learning. This drawing became the cover page for the scavenger hunt “passport”, a printed letter sized paper that was folded in half and featured questions relating to each station.

Each visitor received a passport at the welcome station and were encouraged to visit at least 3 stations before proceeding to the final station to choose a gift plant. While I had not expected everyone to visit all 8 stations, the tour was so successful that all 54 visitors that attended ended up visiting all stations. Once they completed the tour, visitors could return to the welcome desk to pick up a complimentary biodiversity booklet printed by the City of Toronto.

I used universal design for learning principles to create a custom booklet for each station. The booklets had talking points, pictures, and illustrations that could be used to support all learners. While many of the plants in the garden had labels, I created additional ones that identified which larva a plant hosted, or the benefits they had.

On September 7, 2024, I enlisted the help of eight fellow gardeners and in the following pages, they will share some of their experiences with you.

Sayeh Dastgheib-Beheshti’s bio is on page 7.



Above: Passport cover with the garden layout locating tour stations. Illustration by Sayeh Dastgheib-Beheshti.

PHOTOGRAPH: MINA SUN

(L-R) Group picture of tour volunteers: Maia, Trixie, Sayeh, Pat, Karen, Karanne, Sanam and Anthony, with Alice from NANPS.

Welcoming Everyone!

By Mina Sun

I had the pleasure of being stationed at the garden tour's welcome table, and although I may be biased, I truly believe this was the best location. I not only had the privilege of seeing the visitors before they embarked on the tour, but I also had the opportunity to see them again after they had finished. I loved seeing the looks on the faces of the tour-goers when I told them about the interactive elements of the tour - many had never had this experience before! While talking to each person, I would often first learn about their enthusiasm for the tour and then later see their excitement at having learned more about the importance of various elements of the garden (i.e., caterpillar host plants, boulevard gardens, and wetland habitats).

In one instance, a daughter entered the tour with her father. The older gentleman was definitely interested at first, but he was absolutely beaming with joy when he finished the tour and proudly carried his complimentary plant around. Both he and his daughter raved to me about what an amazing time they had.

Another memory that comes to mind was when two kids were excitedly running around the garden and eager to have their 'passport' stamped. When they noticed that the next station was the pond and bog garden, they literally shrieked and raced to the backyard! When I saw them at the end, they were so excited and were recounting all of the facts that they had learned, asking me if I knew that there were TONS of different bee species that were native to Toronto or that native grasses can have roots that are longer than the grass itself!

Having grown up with this garden and seen its evolution over the past 18 years, it is really nice to see other people also appreciating and learning from it, as I do every day. What a truly amazing garden tour - I cannot wait for the next one!

PHOTOGRAPHS : S. DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

Top and middle: Visitors began the tour at the Welcome desk, set at the top of the driveway. Bottom: The Welcome desk also had a great selection of books and booklets, including a series of biodiversity booklets published by the City of Toronto. Visitors could choose a printed copy of the booklets to take home but the entire series is available as a free digital download at Toronto.ca

Mina Sun is a student at the University of Toronto, currently in her third year studying a double major of Political Science and Ethics, Society, & Law. Although she doesn't have as good of a green thumb as her mother, Sayeh, she enjoys learning more about nature and biodiversity through the garden.

Larval Host Plants and their Relationships

By Karanne Atkinson

I met Sayeh a couple of years ago when I joined her group of volunteers to grow native plants from seed for community projects. As part of the group, I had enjoyed taking part in several outreach projects promoting native plants to the public, so when I received her email asking for volunteers to help with her upcoming scavenger hunt garden tour, I was thrilled that I was available and quickly told her “I’m in”.

Looking through the outline of the day for my larval host plant station, I was both excited and nervous, but as soon as the event started and the visitors started to arrive, my nervousness disappeared. It’s such a wonderful feeling talking to people with similar interests in gardening and experience the willingness to share knowledge and eagerness to learn at the same time.

I was at the first station which focused on larval host plants and would tell each visitor about how insects and native plants have co-evolved together for thousands of years and give them clues about answers to the three questions about my topic in their passport. It was so much fun to mix in the clues for the answers they were seeking while talking about native plants and their pollinators.

The energy at the event was amazing and being at the first station near the welcome desk, I was lucky to see all of the visitors leave at the end of their visit with big smiles on their faces, and a free native plant of their choice from ones our group had collectively grown. I’m very thankful for being a part of this event, and thinking back it still puts a big smile on my face.

Above: Karanne speaks with visitors and give clues about the questions relating to larval host plants.

Left: Labels like this serve to normalize the idea that plants are meant to be eaten by insects.

Below: labels are placed next to many plants, giving visitors a chance to explore and get to know the native insects that visitors might see.

Karanne Atkinson has always been interested in gardening but it’s only in the last 5 years as a member of the Rouge Butterflyway group that she’s really focused on native plants, and restoration of native habitat to backyards. With a Bee-Friendly and National Wildlife certified garden, she’s working towards becoming a certified Pollinator Steward.

Creating Healthy Habitats

By Sanam Bahavar

I joined Sayeh's volunteer winter-sowing group a few years ago, and I am so grateful for it. I had led this same section for Sayeh's 2022 garden tour so I was excited to see the revamped information sheets, which included a headcount of all the different wildlife present in Sayeh's garden—an impressive figure for visitors as well.

My goal was to point out the many examples of practical strategies for providing wildlife with food, water and shelter throughout their life cycle. Maybe the most unusual practices were the examples of "messy gardening", which involves leaving fallen branches, stems and leaves as shelter for wildlife. Visitors were surprised to learn that in Toronto, many insects such as the Mourning Cloak butterfly, overwinter as adults, hiding beneath leaves and in other protected areas.

These tours have taught me to respect different approaches and learn from others. What might work for one gardener might not work for another, but we all share the same passion for having a healthier environment. For instance, the most divisive topic in my section has been the stack of neatly arranged branches placed underneath the front bay window. While some visitors found it added an artistic touch to the house I have encountered at least one concerned gardener who believes this practice would attract rats. I have learned to encourage the group to share strategies that have worked for them. Some like to leave the branches and stems where they are, while others prefer to gather them into a pile away from the house.

Another highlight of the tour was the reassurance that healthy ecosystems have methods to take care of

Above: garden beds are lined with thick branches which, as they decompose, provide nesting opportunities for insects and add organic matter to the gardens.

PHOTOGRAPHS : S. DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

Top: Sanam shows visitors examples of strategies that they can use in their own gardens to create, balanced and healthy habitats without the use of chemicals or pesticides.

Middle: This Mourning Cloak Butterfly *(Nymphalis antiopa)* was spotted on April 7, 2021 in Sayeh's garden and she was surprised to learn that it hibernated through Toronto winters as an adult, sheltering in fallen plant debris.

Lower: Messy gardening method is about leaving plant debris to naturally decompose as well as creating dedicated areas that will not be disturbed to offer wildlife shelters.

problems. This garden has been chemical and pesticide-free since 2006 and attracts diverse wildlife. My station booklet had pictures of swamp milkweed seedlings that in 2023 were covered with oleander aphids. Within a few days of the outbreak, beneficial insects like Green Lacewings, ladybugs and hoverflies laid their eggs near what is a food source for their larvae, with the resulting larvae eating the aphids to naturally control the population. As a novice gardener, I have already noticed similar things since embarking on a chemical-free practice.

PHOTOS: S. DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

What had been a busy Yellow jacket wasp nest was mysteriously destroyed one night. It turns out that skunks like to snack on them. Could this be the work of a local skunk?

Perhaps the most inspiring story that tied everything together was about the log with the wasp nest. A couple of weeks prior to the tour, Sayeh discovered a yellow jacket wasp nest under a small log. Concerned about how this might affect the tour, she debated sectioning off that part of the front yard to keep visitors safe. A few days later, she noticed the log had been turned over, and the wasp nest was gone! A nature-loving friend suggested that this was the work of a skunk, as they feed on wasps and their larvae. We could clearly see holes where the nest used to be. One visitor speculated that perhaps this little helper was a regular visitor, stopping for a drink at the water bowl nearby.

To me, this story exemplifies one of the many gifts that nature provides if we support it. Gardening for wildlife is a social responsibility, but it also comes with many rewards such as connecting with nature and community, and experiencing moments of awe only made possible by a healthy ecosystem.

Sanam Bahavar is an English language instructor with a new-found love for gardening and community projects. She is currently enrolled in the Garden Design program at George Brown College, hoping to design a more sustainable garden that would protect wildlife from her two curious terriers.

Expanding Care to Boulevard Gardens

By Trixie Reichardt

While it's perfectly legal to create boulevard gardens as per Toronto municipal bylaws, there are increasingly stories of how native plant gardens are classified as noxious weeds and cut down. I welcomed visitors to the boulevard garden, that narrow strip of lawn between the sidewalk and the street, sometimes referred to as the "hellstrip". This space can often be overlooked by homeowners and understood to be a place where only city-owned trees and grass reside. However, it's a space with immense potential -- it's an extension of the garden, a buffer between the yard proper and the concrete network of streets. It's a space where we can foster communities of plants and insects and, by doing so, expand the areas where they can thrive and be protected. Contrary to popular belief, City of Toronto municipal codes are quite inclusive of boulevard gardens, provided they meet basic requirements for height and sightline clearance.

PHOTOGRAPH: SAYEH DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

Trixie is the ideal person to advocate for boulevard gardens as she understands the bylaws and has created several in front of her home. The new gardens around the 60-year old Silver Maple tree are the perfect location to showcase the possibilities offered by boulevard gardens.

The boulevard garden highlighted the importance of supporting insect and bird populations through the presence of trees (many native), which support the larval (caterpillar) stages of many species of butterflies and moths since the gardens around city trees provide soft landings for caterpillars that fall out of trees, improving their chances of survival. Caterpillars are critical for the survival of baby birds who rely on caterpillars as their primary source of nutrition.

During the tour, I had an opportunity to speak with many like-minded individuals who were keen to learn about the role of boulevard gardens. While there were many adults who were already familiar with the importance of native plant communities, I would have liked to see more younger visitors and those who might be new to the overall concept of ecological gardening and this garden is an excellent example of using native plants in the landscape to create beauty as well as a healthy functioning ecosystem.

I met the local city councillor, who took time out of his busy schedule to meet the team of volunteers. Engaging the broader public can often be a challenge, but having the involvement of a member of city council and having this important initiative featured on social media channels and e-blasts can go a long way to reach a larger audience. Perhaps this will carry momentum to another event (or events!) this coming summer.

Trixie Reichardt is a Registered Dietitian with a Master's of Health Science in Community Nutrition. She currently works in clinical research at the University Health Network. Her long-standing passion for gardening and native plants began at a young age, and ultimately led her to become a Toronto Master Gardener.

Clockwise from Top Left: Friends tell other friends when they get a large free chip drop of mulch!

Middle: Mulch is a great way to cover a layer of uncoated cardboard to suppress turf grass and create a new no-dig garden bed.

Lower: Another garden bed was created by gently digging up the shallow-rooted turf grass.

Left: Within a few weeks the newly planted gardens create additional habitat for insects and wildlife.

Keystone Species to Include in a Garden

By Pat Concessi

Often at garden tours, many of the participants are new to gardening, and even newer to gardening with native plants. This tour was different, with lots of attendees already growing native plants leading to lots of reciprocal knowledge sharing between the participants and hosts.

This garden tour provided the perfect opportunity to build connections and grow community with fellow native plant gardeners, as visitors belonged to different plant societies and clubs. It was wonderful to connect with people that I've met at different events, and introduce them to one another. Seeing people becoming aware of the possibilities for their own gardens, especially boulevard strips, was really rewarding.

My focus was on two genera – goldenrod and aster, keystone species that are critical late summer food sources for insects. They are called Keystone species because they are critical to the local food web and help other species coexist (Tallamy, 2020. 139). Goldenrods are often demonized as a source of allergens, so one of my goals was to dispel that myth, point out ragweed as the real culprit, and showcase the real value goldenrods. This garden has a terrific selection of both goldenrods and asters, so it was easy to show people the variety of forms and colours that are available, and to identify species that grow in shade and others that need sun. It was interesting to hear about people's experience growing those plants in their gardens – how the plant forms can differ with local conditions, and hearing about other species of goldenrod and aster that they have had success with. It was an opportunity to have conversations about how horticulturalists create cultivars from native species, and the pros and cons of growing cultivars. Sayeh's zig-zag goldenrod was a showstopper!

A few attendees came as family groups. In these cases, the information was geared to the age of children in the group. A few minutes of conversation was all it took to gauge the child's level of knowledge. Some of them already understood the interactions between plants and insects, so being in the garden provided the opportunity to validate what they may have read or seen on television, and to see nature in real life. Hopefully this will encourage those children to make observing nature part of their day-to-day activities.

As a Master Gardener I've had lots of experience doing presentations about gardening, but seeing the outcome of this tour has convinced me that a garden is the right place to explain the importance of plants and that seeing bees foraging in real life is more compelling than seeing photos on a screen! A garden provides the opportunity to interact with small groups, each at their own level of understanding.

Retired for more than 10 years, **Pat Concessi** is an avid home gardener. She is committed to increasing the number of native plants in her home garden and to improving the habitat for insects, birds and other species. She is a Master Gardener and a lead steward with Toronto Nature Stewards.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SAYEH DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

Top: Pat speaking with visitors about different varieties of asters and goldenrods that were suitable for their own growing conditions. Lower: Zigzag goldenrod *(Solidago flexicaulis)* is an important source of late summer food for insects and grows in full shade under a silver maple.

The Importance of Grasses and Sedges

Maia Norman

I led the section on native grasses and sedges and to my delight, as they learned about their characteristics and benefits, many participants became intrigued by native grasses and sedges and wanted to learn more about how to introduce such plants into their own gardens.

Many of our native grasses are unable to compete with the rigorous and crowding growth patterns of ornamental non-native turf grasses and this leads to loss of resiliency in our cities. Lengths of twine offered a simple visual comparison of the root length of several native grasses and introduced turf grass to talk about recent severe flooding in the Toronto area. The longer root systems of native grasses mitigate flooding by creating channels for water to seep into the ground during severe rainfall which is happening more frequently in the face of climate change and escalating weather events.

When I spoke about their roles in supporting biodiversity in our ecosystems and how these plants play a critical role in the life cycle of native insects, birds, and other fauna, many participants echoed that they had overlooked the value (and appeal) of our native grasses and sedges, with many underestimating the dependence of wildlife upon these plants. Several visitors also reflected on the loss of biodiversity caused by our reliance upon introduced turf grasses for landscaping and their escape into “wild” or wooded areas.

Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum)* is one of the native grasses growing along the fence.

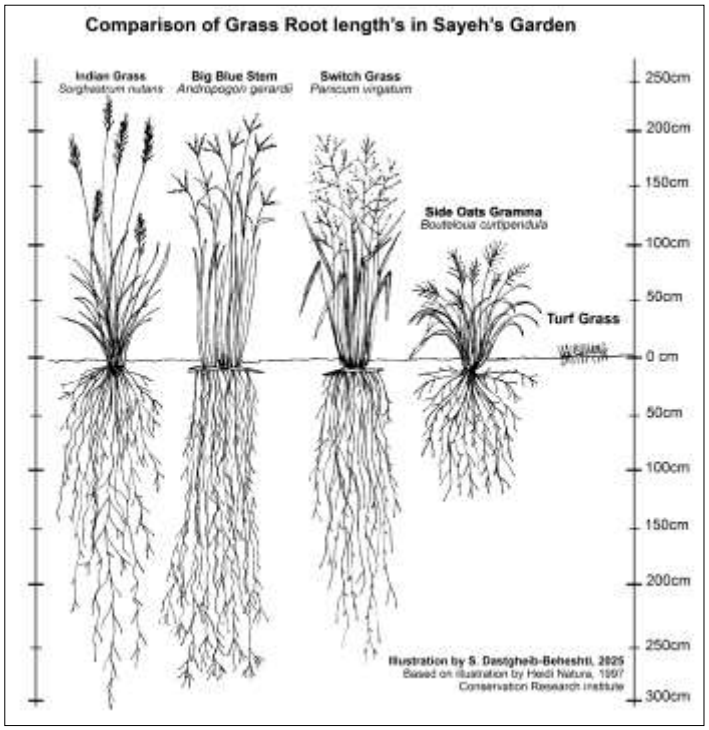


ILLUSTRATION: SAYEH DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI-2025

Above: This comparative illustration is a great way to illustrate how the native grasses along this fence help channel rainwater into the ground to avoid flooding. Below: Maia points out the different grasses to visitors.

PHOTOGRAPHS: SAYEH DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

Maia Norman is a Master of Public Health student with a keen interest in the benefits of native plants upon the health of our ecosystems. When she’s not gardening, baking, or spending time with her dog, she works at the intersection of healthcare and artificial intelligence at the Vector Institute.

Caring for our Native Bees

By Anthony Ayers

Sayeh had entrusted me with leading the development of the native bee station of the garden tour. Most of the public's understanding of bees is largely derived from a single species, the non-native European honey bee – *Apis mellifera,* so my goal was to introduce native bees to visitors through means that were both accessible and impactful. In particular, I sought to emphasize diversity as well as the mutualistic, and often underappreciated, relationships between wild bees and native plants.

In preparation I curated a box of roughly fifty bee species collected over three years from various Toronto green spaces (including Sayeh's garden) as part of my PhD work. The box, exemplifying the variation of sizes and colours in which bees can be found locally, was the focal piece of the station as it provided adults and children alike with the opportunity to closely examine these overlooked insects and ask questions of intrigue. Initial reactions to the box consisted of exclamations of "Those are bees?!" upon seeing the red, waspy-looking cuckoo bees (*Nomada*) and "Those are adults?!" as some leaned towards the open box to inspect the miniscule sweat bees (*Lasioglossum*).

The bees ultimately facilitated casual dialogue where visitors could reconstruct their understanding of bees and abandon much of their pre-existing misconceptions. Often, I would make call-backs to previous stations to reinforce the relationship between bees and their floral hosts, especially between the various bee species that almost exclusively visited the goldenrods and fall asters (*Solidago* and *Symphyotrichum*) that were blooming at the time. I wanted visitors to know that, despite little recognition or acknowledgement, these bees are crucial to ecosystems functioning as they pollinate our native flora (and urban crops), often more efficiently than the honey bee.

The sample of specimens I brought with me was in truth only a fraction of the species that one could observe in Sayeh's garden throughout the year. In fact, when surveying the garden in 2023 I had recorded *seventy-one* (out of Toronto's 350+) species. Out of the forty green spaces monitored, including places such as High Park, Sayeh's garden had the most observed bees (1,084 individuals) and the second highest number of species. Most of these

PHOTOGRAPH: ANTHONY AYERS

PHOTOGRAPH: ANCA BARBUC

PHOTOGRAPHS: SAYEH DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

Above: Female solitary sweat bee (*Augochlora*) is a stunning metallic green colour as it gather nectar from a New England aster bloom. Middle: Surrounded by blooming Brown-eyed Susans and Canada goldenrods, a young visitor is captivated by Anthony's bee collection. Bottom: A family asks Anthony about his bee collection.

species were multi-floral generalists (83%), native (82%), solitary, ie no hive or queen (59%), and/or ground nesting (58%). Goldenrods (*Solidago),* American asters (*Symphyotrichum*), and anise hyssop (*Agastache*) made up 42% of all interactions recorded between bees and flowers.

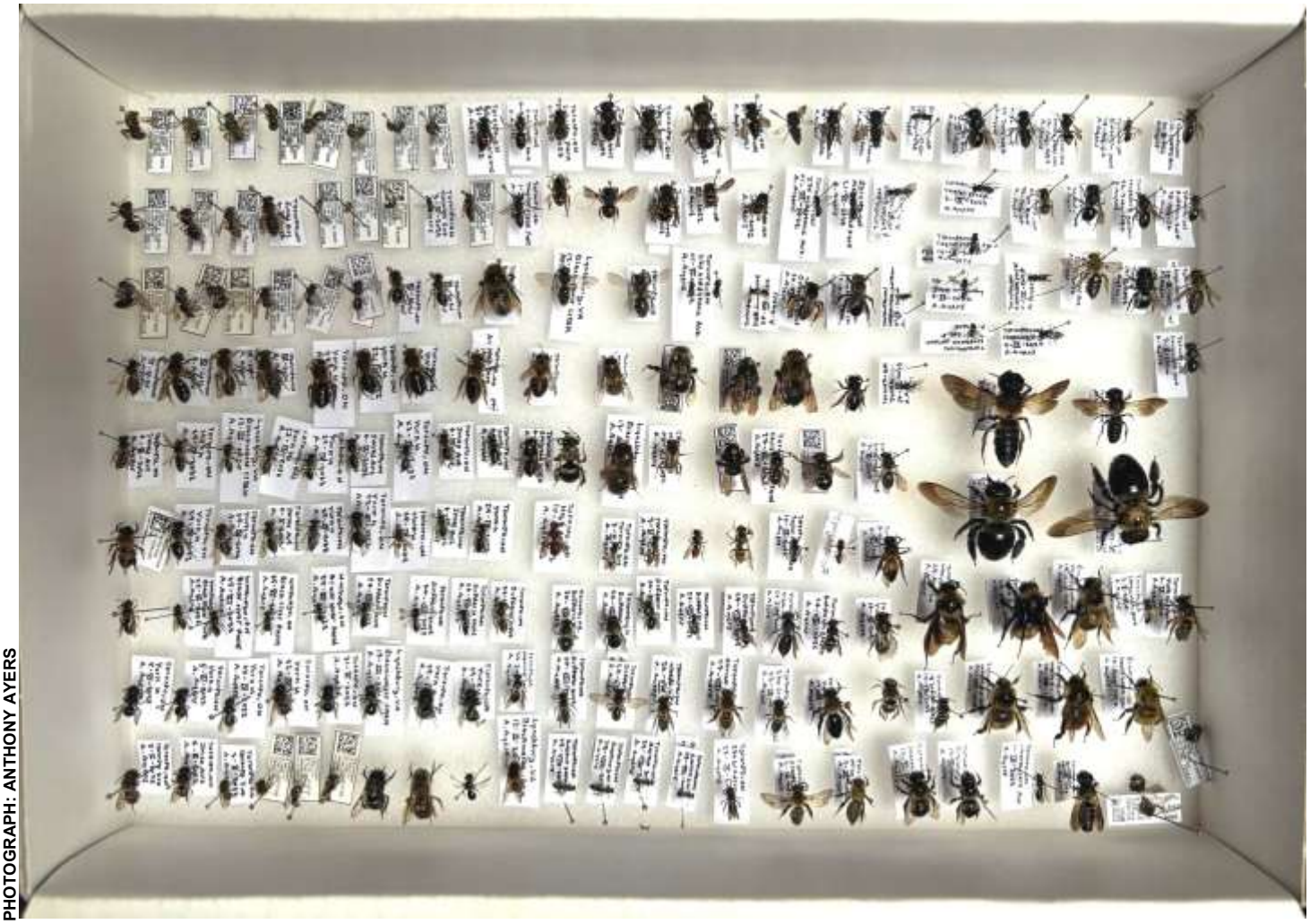
This garden is a testament to an individual's ability to make positive contributions to the landscape and how care for the land, demonstrated through seemingly simple actions such as planting wildflowers, can have profound impacts on local wildlife whether that be birds, chipmunks, fish, bees, or other insects. During this moment of the Anthropocene where many species are threatened with extinction, green spaces such as this garden offer a green glimmer of hope for the bees and other beings we share this world with, while also establishing a place for like-minded individuals to build community.

Anthony Ayers is a third-year PhD candidate in the Rehan Lab at York University. His dissertation broadly investigates how the urban landscape is affecting wild bees, their plant interactions, and their relationship with the public. Through this work, he aims to help make cities places supportive for people and wildlife alike.

PHOTOGRAPH: ANCA BARBUC

Above: Anthony shows visitors a green sweat bee.

Below: Anthony's bee collection contains specimens of over 50 native bees and was a fantastic opportunity for visitors to get a close up view of native bees and overcome any fears they may have.



PHOTOGRAPH: ANTHONY AYERS

Water Sources for Wildlife

By Karen Sun

I had the opportunity to talk to people about the pond and wetland habitat. The pond was built in 2015 to create a source of fresh water for wildlife, and the bog filter was added in 2019. People were very interested in the construction of the pond and the solar powered pump that filtered water from the pond through a planted gravel bed and back. The idea that wetland plants could help clean nutrients out of the water to keep the pond clean and functioning using a closed circuit water filter definitely piqued people's interest and made them curious about the wetland species used in the pond.

I like the way that native and non-native species grow together in this garden since sometimes people feel bad for not being purists when transitioning a garden to native plants. It's nice to know that if there's a plant you really like and it's working for you, it's OK to have some non-native plants in the garden. You just need to decide how to make room for new plants, and there are so many great native plants to choose from.

We talked about the goldfish that need to be removed from the pond every winter and released in the spring because the pond is not deep enough that it might freeze solid in the winter. We also discussed how creating backyard habitat can attract wanted and unwanted wildlife, such as raccoons that try to catch

PHOTOGRAPHS: S. DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

1. Karen spoke to visitors about the evolution of the pond over the last decade and pointed out different varieties of plants growing in the area.

2. The pond was hand-dug in 2015 after Sayeh heard Mark Cullen say that having a clean water source for wildlife was the single most important feature of a garden. While goldfish kept the pond mosquito-free, the excess organic matter in the water wasn't absorbed by the plants growing in the pond. This picture shows the creation of the bog filter garden in 2019 which not only cleans the pond water, it also provided a habitat for wetland native plants.

3. This illustration shows the water filtration system. The solar powered water pump is stored away in the winter and set up as the weather warms up. Now entering its 6th year of operation, it's still another example of caring for wildlife in sustainable ways.

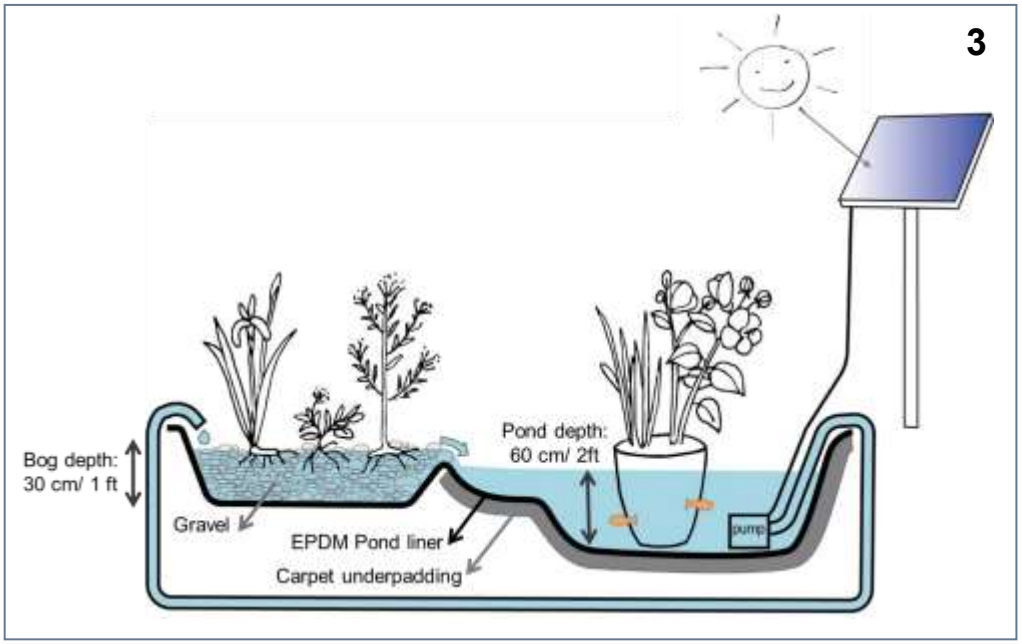


ILLUSTRATION: S. DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

the fish. A plastic tube has been placed in the pond for the fish to hide in when predators come to visit. A few people shared their experiences with backyard ponds and the predation of fish in those ponds.

A garden bed near the pond added an unexpected learning opportunity as it was underneath a large black walnut tree that grows in the neighbour's backyard. There is a common complaint that you can't grow a garden under a walnut tree because it releases a natural herbicide that reduces competition from other plants, which was quickly dispelled by the wide diversity of plants that are thriving under this tree.

Karen Sun is an avid gardener who has volunteered and worked for a number of environmental organizations and a non-profit in Toronto's Chinese community with a focus on anti-racism, equity and civic engagement. She currently works in Urban Forestry at the City of Toronto where her roles have ranged from field work and community engagement to policy and communications.

PHOTOGRAPH: S. DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

Under a Black Walnut tree, this garden thrives with Juglone -tolerant plant varieties like Red Osier dogwood, Canada germander, Black Cohosh, Giant yellow hyssop, Culver's root and Brown-eyed Susans.

Building Relationships of Care by Growing Native Plants

Sayeh Dastgheib-Beheshti

I think one of the most effective ways of establishing a relationship of care with plants is the first-hand experience of growing them from seed, so at the final station in the garden tour my goal was to encourage each visitor to grow their own plants. I explained how the seeds of most plants native to Toronto have a built-in dormancy that stops them from growing before they go through a period of cold; a protective strategy which delays germination until winter has passed. In the winter-sowing method, seeds are planted in the fall, protected from foraging wildlife, and exposed to winter resulting in pots of germinated seedlings in the spring.

Visitors then had the opportunity to browse and pick a gift plant grown by our volunteer group. There were over 3000 pots of native plants of over 80 different varieties that had been grown using this same method and I helped them find a suitable variety that matched specific growing conditions in their garden. As they read the labels describing growing conditions and wildlife relationships, it offered each visitor a chance to examine their relationship with the web of life in their own garden.

PHOTOGRAPH: MINA SUN

Sayeh helps visitors choose the perfect native plant to take home. Plants are grouped around labels that list their needs and benefits.

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WE Sing

South Feminist Futures teach-in webinar on Gender, Music, and Social Change

By Bridget Buglioni

In this issue we saw an opportunity to share music which speaks to the theme of Identities and Knowledges of Care. In February of this year, one of our editors attended a webinar from South Feminist Futures on Gender, Music, and Social Change; taught by Sumangala Damodaran, an economist and music studies scholar (as well as artist herself). The teach-in webinar focussed on exploring the relationship between music and society and to uncover gender in and through various kinds of music. After attending, our editor was inspired to share some of the songs from the webinar–which we have compiled together here. These are songs of social justice and social change, telling stories of oppression and resistance within their beautiful melodies. This music not only draws attention to social and political movements or events but also brings people together, fostering solidarity.

A reading list from the webinar can be found here: https://southfeministfutures.org/reading-list-teach-in-20-gender-music-and-social-change-unravelling-the-interconnections-and-implication/

Artist: ALA.NI
Song: Lament for Emmett Till

65 years after the murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till, a case that brought attention to racial violence against Black Americans, ALA.NI released “Lament for Emmett Till.” Inspired by Jones’ work, this song is a rendition of activist and journalist Claudia Jones’ 1955 poem by the same name. The song not only commemorates what would have been Emmett Till’s 79th birthday, but also reminds us of the injustice of his death. Here is the YouTube link to the song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdliG5boGwQ

Artist: Vivir Quintana
Song: Canción Sin Miedo

“Canción Sin Miedo” is by the Mexican artist Vivir Quintana. It is seen as a feminist revolutionary anthem, often sung at protests, that speaks to our ongoing femicide–to the disappeared and murdered women and girls. This song has notably been played in the protests and funeral for murdered María Belén Bernal (a high profile femicide case), and was used in a Netflix Documentary about the assassination of activist Marisela Escobedo Ortiz (who pursued justice for the killing of her daughter and other victims of violence). Here is the YouTube link to the song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLLyzqkH6cs

“Que retumbe fuerte: ¡Nos queremos vivas!”
(“Let it rumble loudly: We want each other alive!)

Artist: The Daughters of Jerusalem (Banat al-Quds)
Song: Gaza

Banat al-Quds (Daughters of Jerusalem in English) are a female Palestinian ensemble at the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music in Palestine. Their lyrics speak to stories of Palestinian people and for freedom and justice for Palestine. They are a unique group, singing with joy and resistance under the oppression they face. This song “Gaza” is on the album “Henna,” which features various female artists from Palestine.

Here is the YouTube link to the song: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-w7S5XsT0c

Bridget Buglioni’s bio is on page 7.

I am the Magpie River

Directed by Susan Fleming.
Released Date: February 1st, 2024, 44 minutes
Available for free on CBC Gem
[as an episode of The Nature of Things]
Reviewed by Bridget Buglioni

I am the Magpie River is a documentary by Susan Fleming exploring the strength and importance of the Magpie River (the *Muteshekau shipu* in the Innu language) in Quebec, Canada which was granted Legal Personhood in 2021. The filmmakers show the river from a number of perspectives, and invite you to challenge dominant views of human-nature relationships, to think of an ecosystem as more than a commodity to use and consume.

For those unfamiliar with this environmental movement of granting personhood to nature, Legal Persons are understood as "beings that hold rights and/or duties" in Western Law (Kurki, 2023); therefore, granting Legal Personhood to a non-human is an act that gives it rights and recognition in law. As conflicts over water, or the use of water, are often rooted in ontological differences, granting personhood is an action which aims to protect an ecosystem and to recognise its right to exist.

The film uses close-up and aerial shots to introduce us to the Magpie's expansive landscape, from its headwaters in the North, weaving us South through boreal forests and out into the gulf of the St. Lawrence River. Its geography is unique, with stretches of white-water rapids which never freeze over. The power of the Magpie River and of water itself, is focussed on, with the river's strength and movement coming alive in a number of scenes. The life of the animals who inhabit and depend on the Magpie is stressed to the viewer, as well as how large rivers are disappearing across the world–as less than one third of large rivers still remain free flowing from source to sea[1].

ILLUSTRATION: BRIDGET BUGLIONI-2025

Magpie River, Quebec, Canada

So, who is the Magpie River? Fleming shows us that for the Innu, the Indigenous People of the region, the river is the beating heart of the territory. The river itself is an ancestor, and protecting the river is a way of protecting the Innu identity. To Hydro-Quebec[2] the Magpie is a site of opportunity, a target for this corporation to harness "her" power. To National Geographic and those who raft, the Magpie is one of the best rivers to white-water raft in the world. And to the plants and animals, the river's ecosystem is and has been their home and livelihood for generations.

This film warns what could happen to the Magpie, by contrasting it against the nearby Romaine River, a river which Hydro-Quebec has built four dams on. We are shown how lifeless the Romaine River seems, its ecosystem heavily disturbed and waters still–rather than free flowing and alive like the Magpie. The difference is stark.

It is not until towards the end of the film that there is discussion of the Magpie's 'personhood.' The river was granted the Right of Personhood both by the Innu Council of Ekuanitshit *and* the Minganie Re-

[1] Disrupting a river's connectivity impacts the entire ecosystem: as sediment delivery is impacted increasing flood risk, nutrient flow in the water is affected, fish migration is blocked reducing fish population, water quality can be reduced because of stagnant water behind dams, and overall biodiversity is altered.

[2] The Province of Quebec's government-owned electricity utility corporation. A major producer of Hydropower which services neighbouring Canadian Provinces as well as New York State and New England.

gional Municipality, a sister declaration, and ally ship between the two forms of government. This recognition is significant as it is an example of legal pluralism between the Municipality and the Innu Council of Ekuanitshit, representing collaboration and alliance in the guardianship and stewardship of nature. While extending rights to nature has grown as a tool for protection, there are critiques of this action, such as how it plays out in practice, or that it involves fitting Indigenous knowledges within colonial legal structures and beliefs. The political pluralism in this case with the Magpie is portrayed in the film as an example which does not absorb Indigenous rights within colonial systems, but rather they exist together, which is highlighted as a noteworthy legal case, and I had hoped the film might have revealed more on this process.

PHOTO: Cephas, 2012, CC ASA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Magpie dam on Magpie River, Quebec, Canada

Overall, this film showcases the importance of large free flowing rivers, and sheds light on the immeasurable value of fresh water sources. While it does not necessarily offer a detailed exploration into the Legal Personhood movement, it instead gives a good introduction into questioning human-nature relationships, and exploring varying expressions of caring for the earth. We are presented with various perspectives to take away from, such as that the Magpie's personhood status means its ecosystem has the right to exist irregardless of its relationship to us, or that by saving nature we save ourselves. Whether your takeaway might be to move away from human-centric perspectives, or to make the case for conservation within human-centric reasoning, or even some combination of the two, Fleming draws worthy attention to the powerful Magpie River though her visually striking film, and pushes us to think further about how we understand our relationship to nature.

Bridget Buglioni's bio is on page 7.

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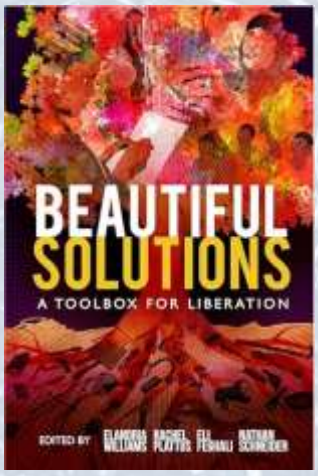

Mutual Aid Finance in Montreal

Location: Canada

Years: 1990-Present

Sector: Finance

Inspired by the 1977 Community Reinvestment Act, the organization, Micro-Credit Montreal was created to advance investment into multi-unit housing. This organization does not allow for discriminatory lending practices such as redlining to low-income communities. Today they now offer loans for immigrants that recognize foreign creditenals and have a business-loan for new entrepreneurs. Additionally, this organization prioritizes lending to women.

For more information visit: www.microcreditmontreal.ca

Read the full story on pages 241 –244 of *Beautiful Solutions,* reviewed on page 110 of this issue.

In Print

The End of This World:

Climate Justice in So-Called Canada

Edited by Angele Alook, Emily Eaton, David Gray-Donald, Joël Laforest, Crystal Lameman and Bronwen Tucker

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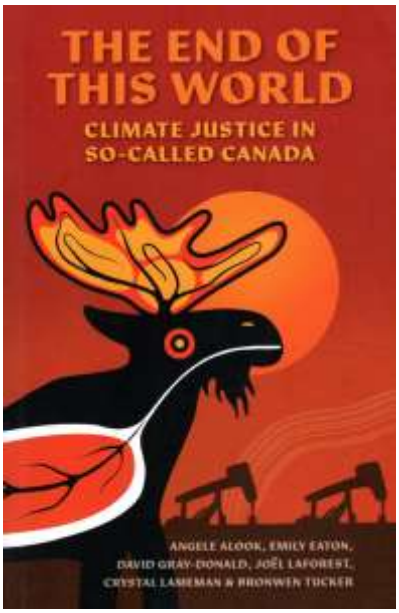
Reviewed by Shahreen Shehwar



Angèle Alook, alongside her co-authors Emily Eaton, David Gray-Donald, Joël Laforest, Crystal Lameman, and Bronwen Tucker, wrote The End of This World: Climate Justice in So-Called Canada to address the urgent need for a true just transition. Their diverse backgrounds in Indigenous activism, environmental justice, labor movements, youth climate campaigns, community-engaged scholarship, and independent journalism allow them to expose the intricate links between colonialism and the climate crisis. Their book is meant to advocate moving beyond status quo and symbolic reforms towards decolonization, Indigenous sovereignty, and grassroots resistance in order to promote a truly sustainable and just future.

Angele Alook and her co-authors deliver a critical and timely analysis of Canada's environmental and colonial injustices in *The End of This World: Climate Justice in So-Called Canada.* Throughout the book, Alook and her co-authors envision alternative futures where Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities live balanced lives with the land through critiquing the extractive capitalist structures that prioritize profit over sustainability and justice.

The book opens with a reference to Tom Flanagan's 2009 study, *Resource Industries and Security Issues in Northern Alberta*, which framed Indigenous and environmental collaboration as an "apocalyptic scenario" that would threaten Canada's resource extraction industry. The authors interrogate the implications of such a perspective, where justice and environmental stewardship are framed as existential threats to the extraction industry. This sets the stage for the book's broader argument: rather than being obstacles to economic prosperity, Indigenous sovereignty and climate justice are essential for ensuring long-term ecological and social wellbeing.

A central theme of the book is the relationship between land and wellness, which serves as an overall critique against a status quo that exploits the land for the short-term profit of a wealthy few. On page 16, wellness is described not as an abstract state but as something deeply tied to land-based learning, cultural practices, and intergenerational healing. In a later chapter, on page 109, Alook and her co-authors describes Canada's economy as a "Wiindigo economy"—a system driven by insatiable greed that ultimately consumes itself. She contrasts this with Indigenous understandings of care, where economic and social systems prioritize community well-being over profit. One of the most thought-provoking aspects of this chapter is the focus on intergenerational care. Indigenous social structures center children, elders, and collective well-being.

The book also critiques the Canadian government's failures in climate policy and its deep ties to the fossil fuel industry. The inclusion of Beaver Lake Cree First Nation's 2008 lawsuit against the Crown for treaty violations due to industrial overdevelopment, after over 88% of their land was taken for industry, highlight how legal battles like these are rarely straightforward victories but rather prolonged fights against a system designed to wear down Indigenous communities before they can achieve justice.

In many cases, the authors expose how many so-called "climate actions"—carbon taxes, corporate pledges—are distractions from truly dismantling extractive systems. The concept of a just transition and what it truly entails expands on this point further, as the current implementation of a "just transition" is far from just. For example, on page 73, the authors discuss how renewable energy initiatives, despite their

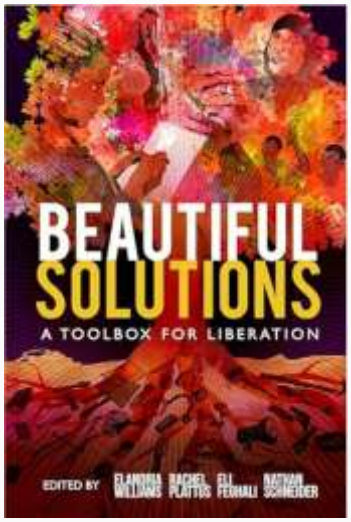
promise, often replicate colonial structures by sidelining Indigenous governance. The case of Montana First Nation's solar energy project exemplifies this pattern—despite provincial and federal green energy incentives, Indigenous nations still face systemic roadblocks preventing them from benefiting from clean energy on their own terms. What I appreciated is how Alook and her co-authors propose an alternative imaginary – on page 109, for instance, the authors propose a model where energy infrastructure is governed democratically, with Indigenous nations having full control over projects on their lands.

The book challenges the idea of a surface-level just transition, calling instead for real solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to resist extractive industries. It argues that grassroots organizing and direct action, like the Wet'suwet'en blockades of 2020, can disrupt infrastructure and force public recognition of Indigenous land rights. I found the discussion on "non-reformist reforms" compelling—too often, movements are co-opted into symbolic victories rather than structural change.

In its concluding chapter, the book envisions what a decolonial, sustainable future could look like in practice. The authors' vision of the future emphasizes care, solidarity, and grassroots pressure over reliance on party politics. I appreciated the chapter's critique of the two-party system, which argued that real change comes from sustained bottom-up movements rather than expecting liberals or conservatives to act on their own. The chapter references the birth of the NDP as an example of shifting political landscapes but stresses that systemic pressure is key. It reinforced some points in the Introduction on solidarity; stating that solidarity, rather than changing electoral cycles, is what truly drives transformative change toward a just transition.

In summary, *The End of This World* is not just a critique but a call to move beyond passive awareness into meaningful action. The book details how Canadian governments have long suppressed Indigenous resistance through legislative maneuvering, underfunding essential services, and maintaining systems of colonial control. Even when political rhetoric shifts to sound more progressive, systemic injustices remain. Reading these chapters only makes it evident that climate justice is inseparable from Indigenous sovereignty.

Shahreen Shehwar is a PhD student at York University's Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change. Their research focuses on climate change planning and urban Indigenous populations, with a particular emphasis on municipal-level planning. Shahreen has previously published work on Indigenous land protection initiatives, climate change planning, community-level adaptations, and gender mainstreaming in climate adaptation strategies.



Comprehensive Sexuality Education in the Philippines

Location: Philippines

Years: 2014-2019

Sector: Health

This began as a series of sexuality workshops designed to inform Filipino youth about sexual health as this was not being provided by the Catholic schools. This program applied popular education methods, was designed to be culturally relevant, and was translated into Tagalog and Visayan

For more information visit: www.uua.org/re/owl

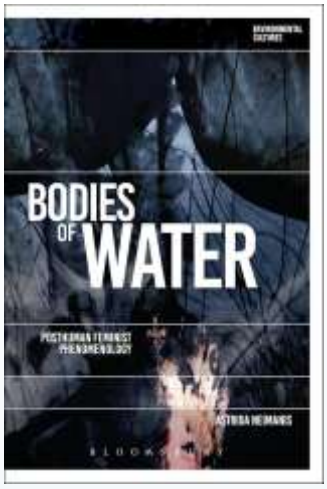
Read the story on pages 150 – 153 of *Beautiful Solutions,* reviewed on page 110 of this issue.

Bodies of Water

Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology

By Astrida Neimanis
Publisher: Bloomsbury Publishing. May 30, 2017
230 Pages 0$ CAD; open access ISBN: 978-1-4742-7541-5 (online)

Reviewed by Christine Beaudoin



Astrida Neimanis is a Canadian scholar and thinker who is Associate Professor in the University of British Columbia's Department of Community, Culture and Global Studies. She serves as Canada Research Chair in Feminist Environmental Humanities since 2021. In *Bodies of Water* published in 2017, Astrida Neimanis develops a new figuration: a feminist concept that is lived and embodied. This figuration is *Bodies of water*, a figuration which invites us to attune our attention to our experiences not only with, but **'as'** water. This leads Neimanis to suggest that we are composing a more-than-human hydrocommons, positioning herself not only ontologically but also ethically to consider a more inclusive, expansive, wet, and more-than-human **'we'**.

> *"the problem was we did not know who we meant when we said we" (Adrienne Rich 1986, p. 217 cited in Neimanis 2017, p. 14).*

In the Introduction and Chapter 1, Neimanis strongly positions herself in three theoretical lineages: feminist theory, posthumanism, and phenomenology. She draws from a diversity of feminist lineages, including ecofeminism, queer feminism, black and other women of color feminism, anticolonial feminism, and disability studies. She explicitly positions herself in feminist posthumanism and aligns with new materialism, following in the steps of Donna Harraway, Karen Barad, Rosi Braidotti, and Myra Hird, among others. Building on Adrienne Rich's politics of location, Neimanis offers a theorization of breast milk as bodies of water which transcend individuals yet are embodied in different situations with planetary flows sometimes amplifying and reproducing these politics (for example, toxins carried across large distances by rain, river flows and living bodies). There are two key lesson she brings into her thinking from feminist theory: (1) we must attend to, notice, and make space for embodied differences within the common stories, spaces and moments that build this world, and (2) paradoxes and power dynamics are experienced, lived, and embodied by female bodies, black bodies, gay bodies, disabled bodies, colonized bodies, animal bodies, wet bodies. And most importantly, such lived, embodied experiences matter.

Going beyond nature-culture research and multispecies ethnography, Neimanis builds on Merleau-Ponty's theoretical foundation of phenomenology and proposes an expanded feminist, posthuman phenomenology. This phenomenology recognizes the diversity of experiences that transcend immediate experience, with various tools blurring the boundaries of the space and time that we can access. Acknowledging her diversion from pure phenomenology, Neimanis effectively ties together phenomenological attunement with posthumanist thinking and feminist theory. By proposing to get back to the body, phenomenology provides the tools and methods to access, amplify and describe the various bodies of water Neimanis seeks to embody. She expands phenomenological methods to consider more-than-human embodiments, leveraging various sensory apparatus (including technological and scientific tools) to go beyond our immediate lived experiences. Ultimately, we are invited to think **'as'** bodies of water and to be attuned to the different embodiments of such water flows, including flows of injustice.

In Chapter 2, Neimanis dialogues with the works of Luce Irigaray to develop the idea of posthuman gestationality. This builds on a paradox of water: we are all bodies of water and we are all the same, yet we are all different. In this context, water is seen as both a body and a milieu where there is infinite differentiation ongoing through repetition and reproduction. Here, gestationality is expanded beyond female bodies and all water is seen has having gestional capacity or potential, where matter and meaning meet and entangle. Neimanis's phenomenological approach brings us back to more-than-human embodiment, shaping an onto-logic of amniotics where bodies of water are gestational, differentiating, and interconnecting. Posthuman gestationality challenges humanism and what we define as human, highlighting that caring for water means thinking '**with'** the water, not for it. In Chapter 3, Neimanis anchors herself in posthuman gestationality to explore our fishy begin-

nings. With life beginning in the sea, Neimanis skillfully engages with a range of scientists and philosophers – some more feminist than others – to unpack the origins of bodies of water and reflect on how we can know water. Neimanis highlights that the broad gestational capacity of water often has nothing to do with sexual reproduction, tying in the natural queerness displayed by other species. It becomes evident that the origins of water will remain unclear, yet Neimanis engages with Elaine Morgan's Aquatic Ape theory to question who knows what about our origins and evolution. This chapter exemplifies a posthuman feminist phenomenology, unpacking embodied knowledges of water and the shared aqueous kinship that connects us across time and space, both within and beyond the depths of the sea. What remains certain is that water exceeds us and, as it is always changing and differentiating, it is not completely knowable.

In her concluding chapter, Chapter 5, Neimanis asks 'What is water?' and explores a range of imaginaries about water. Neimanis explores geographer Jamie Linton's modern water, global water, and Anthropocene waters: waters that are objectified, disembodied, delocalized. She specifically highlights the need to tell a different story, to explore and make visible different imaginaries of water. Given that the immaterial is always experienced, lived, and embodied, imaging different hydrocommons may lead to material engagement and new embodiments. New imaginaries make a difference and Neimanis's figuration bodies of water presents an alternative imaginary. While her book builds on feminism, phenomenology, and posthumanism, she makes visible in her concluding chapter the work of indigenous artist Rebecca Belmore and scholar Deborah McGregor who also provide alternative imaginaries of water. This was the ultimate goal of the book: to present a figuration (bodies of water) that may be transformative and that offers an alternative from dominant views of modern water so that we may imagine and do things differently. The book ends, as it started, on a question: "what is water?" (Neimanis 2017: 185).

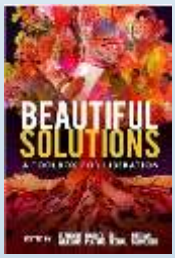
This is a book about water, but it is also a book about becoming and embodying different bodies, it is a book about (in)justice, and it is a book that wants to change how we relate to each other through and as water. Neimanis presents a position where the water crisis is not only what is happening materially to water and the various human and more-than-human communities that depend on it, but rather it is an immaterial crisis tied to our imaginaries of what water is, could be, or should be. While this book offers in depth philosophical engagement that is not always easy to approach, conceptual and theoretical discussions are supported by material stories, fleshy encounters, and embodied narratives that exemplify the posthuman phenomenological method. The demonstration is quite effective. The book seems to reach its objective: it presents an alternative narrative and theory about water, making space for change and alternative futures for humans and the more-than-human.

This book is particularly relevant for this issue of WEI, given the theoretical linkages to other pieces and the relevance for identities of care. Firstly, Neimanis refers to the poetic works of Jeanette Armstrong, who is also featured in this issue (see page 8). Secondly, while not directly focusing on the concept of care, *Bodies of Water* presents a deeply material and affective account of embodiment building on feminist theories. Such theories have often engaged with the notion of care, both in the sense of networks of care and care as a practice. This includes developing a practice of **'care'**ful attunement to and consideration of stories, differences, and stories of differentiation that make up the wet, embodied hydrocommons we all inhabit.

In conclusion, this book seizes the intuition that feminist theory can help us see things differently and make space for being otherwise. It opens up the reader to a diversity of *Bodies of water* and invites us to pay attention to the ways in which we not only embody water… but also to the ways in which we, too, **'are'** water.

Christine Beaudoin's bio is on page 7.

Radical Grandma Collective (RADGRAM)



Location: Thailand

Years: 2006-Present

Sector: Manufacturing

This organization works with communities in Northern Thailand to restore environments and balances of power between communities and extractivist industries. The group began as a social enterprise to pushback against mining operations, today they host educational programming, direct financial and other resources to local communities, and guide environment, health, and social restoration practices.

For more information visit:
www.radicalgrandmacollective.com

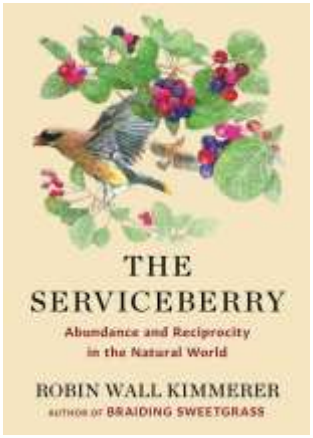
Read the story on pages 221–224 of *Beautiful Solutions,* reviewed on page 109 of this issue.

The Serviceberry:

Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World

By Robin Wall Kimmerer; Illustrations by John Burgoyne
Publisher: Scribner, New York. November 19, 2024.
128 Pages $25.00 CAD ISBN: 9781668072257

Reviewed by Bridget Buglioni



"I've spent a lifetime asking the plants for their guidance..." (67)

The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World, opens with the author's memory of picking berries on her neighbour's farm. This nostalgic and familiar experience leads us into Kimmerer's world, one which calls for gift giving and mutual thriving. In understanding the ways of Serviceberries[1], the interconnected reciprocity between plants and animals, Kimmerer offers a way of thinking about our relationship with the earth, as well as to one another. She suggests observing the living world and embracing the reality that there are intelligences other than our own.

Originally an essay in Emergence Magazine, *The Serviceberry* was expanded and published into this book in 2024, following her New York Times bestselling essay collection *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. As a scientist and professor, and a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation from the Great Lakes Region, Kimmerer weaves Indigenous and botanist knowledge throughout her writing.

The name for Serviceberries[2], comes not from their "service," but rather their Rose Family name, "Sorbus," which then became "sarvis," and therefore, "service." A pail of these berries represents hundreds of gift exchanges; "the Maples who gave their leaves to the soil, the countless invertebrates and microbes who exchanged nutrients and energy to build the humus in which a Serviceberry seed could take root, the Cedar Waxwing who dropped the seed, the sun, the rain, the early spring flies who pollinated the flowers, the farmer who wielded the shovel to tenderly settle the seedlings" (11).

To Kimmerer, if we reflect on these gift exchanges, enumerate all the gifts we receive from nature or from each other, we will feel a sense of abundance. And in today's economy which constantly urges consumption, recognizing "enoughness" is a radical act (12). Conceiving something as a gift, she says, changes our relationship to it, and changes how we may behave.

Throughout the book, we are reminded that in the 'gift economy,' all flourishing is mutual, and it is regulated through a collective sense of well-being. Prosperity grows through relationships, not by accumulation of wealth. She points out, gift economies are not new; they are common in a number of traditional Indigenous societies, and that they are all around us once you start to pay attention. Take for example, the way the gift economy surges in times of crisis, the flood of mutual aid and resource sharing we see following a hurricane, or forest fire. The challenge Kimmerer points to, is how we cultivate capacity for gift economies "without the catalyst of catastrophe" (44). Another challenge she discusses is how we scale-up gift economies, from the neighbour-to-neighbour acts of reciprocity and gratitude, to the gift economy existing in larger forms, at the community level, or "how we might encourage elements of gift economies within the matrix of capitalism" (57).

Despite its short length, *The Serviceberry* teaches a model of interdependence and co-evolution, of collective well-being, and of non-monetary exchanges. A model, she reminds us, that goes back to our time in the womb, when our mothers shared resources with us, expecting nothing in return, and for that we expressed gratitude through love.

A strength of this book is in its call for action in ways which are familiar and accessible for the reader. We are drawn in and connected by nostalgia, by shared memory, by a berry-stained hand which is reaching out and saying "thriving is possible." In its gentle style we are given inspiration, not left with a feeling of impending doom. Best of all, the first thing I wanted to do when finishing the book was share it with friends.

Bridget Buglioni's bio is on page 7.

[1] *Amelanchier arborea, also known as Saskatoon, Juneberry, Shadbush, Shadblow, Sugarplum, and Sarvis berry.*
[2] In Potawatomi these berries are called *Bozakmin, "a superlative: the best of the berries" (Kimmerer, p.6).*

Fungal: Foraging in the Urban Forest

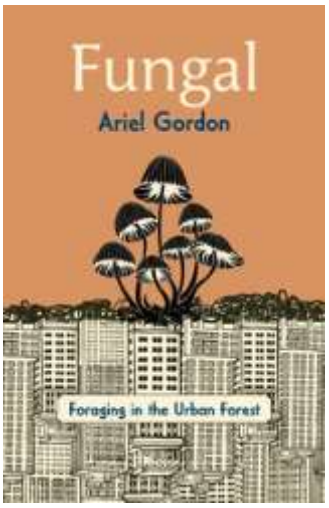
Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World

By Ariel Gordon

Publisher: Wolsak & Wynn. June 11, 2024.

232 Pages $22.00 CAD ISBN: 978-1-989496-92-3

Reviewed by Peri Dworatzek



In her latest book *Fungal*, Ariel Gordan, takes readers along her journeys through Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, where she searches for any and all kinds of mushrooms. She finds them along the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, on hikes in the Manitoba bush, and near neighbourhood streets. Ariel takes photos of the mushrooms she finds, documents their species, and sometimes picks them for spore printing and frying them up to eat. She shares her mushroom encounters in Facebook mushroom groups and with her non-mushroom loving friends and family on Instagram. Ariel's search for all things mushroom leads her to explore her relationships with friends, family, herself, and society. She writes openly about her relationship with her daughter and admits to the sometimes-challenging aspects of being a mother. Ariel unpacks what it means to be doing things that are considered worthwhile and challenges class structures in our late-stage capitalist society. She analyzes how mushrooms have been symbolized in some Western media and identifies how this can hinder people's relationships with them and the natural world.

I enjoyed Ariel's raw and personal writing about her relationships, naming people throughout her life, describing the good and bad experiences, and explaining her own mistakes. Ariel was not afraid to be vulnerable, sharing honest experiences as a strong and tall middle-aged woman, a mother and a partner, a middle class Winnipegger, and as someone who strays from conformity. I valued Ariel's use of common names and scientific names for all the mushrooms she found. I caught myself searching up types of mushrooms and if they're edible while reading her book! Ariel is also humble, and acknowledges she is not an expert even though she has collected this knowledge through experience over decades. This humility and honesty that Ariel presents in her writing makes the book relatable and comforting to read. It was beautiful to follow Ariel's deep connection to place, in Winnipeg, because she doesn't ignore the flaws of the city. She discusses her encounters with people experiencing homelessness, her hobby as a 'mudlarker' and what relationship that has to the colonial state, and the many mosquitos and ticks she removed from her body.

Ariel's book is as much about mushrooms as it is about her deep personal exploration through her life and relationships to other beings. This is what makes *Fungal* a phenomenal book to read. *Fungal* was published on June 11, 2024, by Wolsak & Wynn publishers, it can be purchased for $22.00 CAD.

After bringing "Fungal" home, I left it on my kitchen counter one night and woke up to find that my cats had knocked over a vase of flowers filled with water. The back of the book was soaking wet although it wasn't ruined in any way. I was quickly patting it down and cursing to my cats. After a few hours the book dried with no more than some crinkly pages at the back. Yet I was still caught up that it wasn't perfect like when it arrived. After reading "Fungal" I now enjoy that this book is not perfect. It means more to me than it did before because now I will remember when my cats knocked over the flowers. Imperfections tell a story. This now water-stained book is a "number two mushroom" (Gordon, 2024, p. 64), it's flawed but still perfectly good. I also know that Ariel probably would have liked to hear about cats making their marks on her book, as I imagine her cats did.

Peri Dworatzek's bio is on page 7.

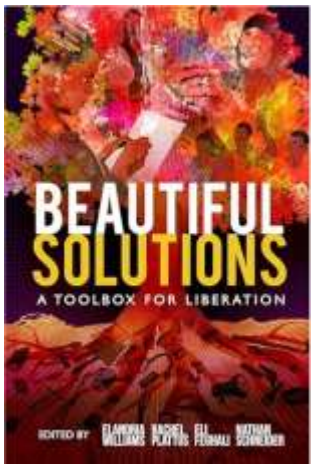
PHOTO: S. DASTGHEIB-BEHESHTI

The Fairy Inkcap mushroom, *Coprinellus disseminatus* , growing next to sidewalk in Toronto, Canada. 2022

Beautiful Solutions: A Toolbox for Liberation

Edited by Elandra Williams, Rachel Plattus, Eli Feghali, and Nathan Schneider
Publisher: OR Books. Nov. 22, 2024
368 Pages $38.50 CAD. ISBN: 9781682193372

Reviewed by Peri Dworatzek



> *A society that doesn't honor and value care is not a society worth building. As the world changes around us, we must be willing to do what it takes to keep taking care of each other even as things get harder and new needs emerge. This is both the basis of the world we're trying to create – and an essential part of how we get there. (Williams et al., 2024, p. 162).*

Exactly as it says in the title, this book is a toolbox. *Beautiful Solutions: A Toolbox for Liberation* is a collection of thoughtful resources that illustrate ways for societal transformations. The editors of the book, Elandria Williams, Rachel Plattus, Eli Feghali, and Nathan Schneider pull together stories and solutions from around the world showcasing how changes towards a more socially equitable and just society are possible.

The examples are thoughtfully curated into various chapters that highlight different sectors in society, for instance education (chapter three) and manufacturing (chapter eight) (Williams, et al., 2024). Each chapter is filled with a few 'stories' and a few 'solutions'. The stories present real-world examples of communities and people that have rallied together to create change. For example, in chapter eight on manufacturing one story details the experiences about Black women in the Southern United States, who were looking for a way to create their own businesses while staying connected to their cultural and heritage traditions (Williams, et al., 2024, p. 217). These women created Southern Journeys Collective, a cooperative focused on creating sewing, quilting, and weaving creations that preserve West African and Southern culture (Williams, et al., 2024, p. 218). Each story in this book includes who it was written by, which often is someone from the organization, and resources for readers to learn more.

The solutions in each chapter present ways that change can be achieved while not prescribing a standard approach. For example, in chapter three on education, one solution is to create more popular education and folk schools (Williams, et al., 2024, p. 108). First there are definitions and descriptions of the solution, then analysis of benefits and limitations, and real-world examples are sprinkled throughout. Additionally, the solutions have information on other resources available for the reader to explore if they are interested. Each chapter ends with a guiding principle that is meant to be a strategy for implementing these solutions. For example, "putting care first" is the guiding principle for the chapter on health (chapter five), where the editors describe how this is not often the case in current capitalist societies (Williams, et al., 2024, pp. 161-162).

A memorable aspect of this book is that there are examples from all around the world. From low-income and high-income countries, from the Global North and South, and from all continents. It did not feel like any area of the world was overemphasized or left out. The expansiveness of the stories and solutions also highlight the importance of recognizing that changes will look different everywhere and no solution has a standardized process. An important theme and takeaway from this book is the importance of community and community-based organizations and governance. Throughout the book there are examples of cooperatives and other ways that communities are coming together to create change when other societal structures are failing them. Additionally, I enjoy how this book presents itself as a starting place. The editors provide countless resources for people to continue learning about community work for liberation. They provide a curriculum for hosting a workshop and reflection questions for people to apply this knowledge in their own communities.

This book presents solutions for the future to transition towards a more just and equitable society. For many people and communities not knowing where to begin or feeling hopeless, this collection of stories and solutions provides a way to move forward to a better future.

Peri Dworatzek's bio is on page 7.

Look for vignettes of beautiful solutions from this book on pages: 37,81,103,105, and107 of this issue.

WE Resources

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM OUR AUTHORS

Getting Emotional for Planetary Care (pp. 13–15)

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