

Canadian Woman Studies les cahiers de la femme



Volume 31, Number 1,2

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articles • poetry • art • book reviews • for the feminist reader

Women and Social and Environmental Justice



Inside:

- Transformative feminisms: expanding feminist strategies for living in troubled times
- The "Greening" of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Biotechnology and biopiracy: plant-based contraceptives in the Americas
- Geoengineering and planetary movement for Mother Earth
- Deconstructing necrophilia: an ecofeminist contribution to growth
- Building food sovereignty in Kenya
- Environmental justice and the contestation of knowledge claims in Old Bhopal, India
- Working through tensions within transnational feminist movements
- Women on the frontline of struggles against fossil capitalism and many more...
- also, artwork, poetry, and book reviews...



CANADIAN WOMAN STUDIES/LES CAHIERS DE LA FEMME

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 1,2



GUEST EDITED BY LEIGH BROWNHILL, ANA ISLA AND SUJATA THAPA-BHATTARAI

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CANADIAN WOMAN STUDIES is a feminist journal which was founded with the goal of making current writing and research on a wide variety of feminist topics accessible to the largest possible community of women. During our thirty-seven years of publication we have attempted to create a forum in which all of us—not only university women—can exchange our ideas, personal experiences, expertise and creativity. By demystifying our communications with one another we are actively working towards serving as a middle ground between the scholarly and the popular, between theory and activism.

We welcome experiential articles and essays; book, art and film reviews; and creative work. Our key criteria for accepting material for publication are clarity, interest to the various and diverse lives of our readership, and thematic relevance. While we do not restrict our always-expanding sense of what makes a contribution “feminist”—we strive for a presentation of different perspectives—we will not publish writing that is sexist, racist, homophobic or in any other way discriminatory.

We particularly welcome French-language contributions and manuscripts in both languages that deal with issues pertaining to the lives of women of colour, Aboriginal women, immigrant women, working class women, women with disabilities, lesbians, and other marginalized women.

LES CAHIERS DE LA FEMME est une publication dont le but est de rendre *les Études de la Femme* et des mouvements féministes, tant sur le plan de la recherche que de l'écriture, accessibles au plus grand nombre possible de femmes. Au cours des trente-sept années de notre existence, nous avons tenté de créer une tribune où nous pouvons toutes—non pas exclusivement les universitaires—échanger nos idées, nos expériences personnelles, notre compétence et notre créativité. En démystifiant les rapports entre nous, nous voulons servir de lien entre l'académique et le populaire, entre la théorie et le militantisme.

Nous encourageons la soumission d'articles et d'essais dans les domaines reliés aux arts, des critiques de livres, de cinéma ou d'exposition, ainsi que de courtes oeuvres de fiction et des poèmes. Les critères de publication portent principalement sur la clarté d'expression et l'intérêt que peut susciter le sujet choisi tout autant que la recherche et l'originalité des thèmes traités par l'auteure.

Bien que *CWS/cf* n'oeuvrent pas sur un terrain limité en qui concerne une publication dite féministe, nous visons à élaborer dans des sphères qui respectent les différentes perspectives des études de la femme. Il est entendu que nous ne publierons pas de textes sexistes, racistes, anti-gais, ou discriminatoires.

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Front Cover

Xochitl Rubio, "COP 20 protests, Lima, Peru, December 2014," photograph.

Back Cover

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Xochitl Rubio is a graduate of Fine Arts from the Ontario College of Art & Design. Xochitl's paintings and photography take a critical view of social, political, and cultural issues. Her work aims at documenting the human condition, altering landscapes, and social justice.

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The purpose of this issue is to discuss how the current state of global social and environmental crises came about, and how they are debated and acted upon, in academia and in social and environmental justice movements.

Climate change is a defining moment in the centuries-long clash between, on the one hand, a capitalist system exploiting nature for the endless economic growth of the increasingly few, and on the other hand, the diverse peoples who see the Earth's ecosystem as a source of livelihoods for all and as a site of cultural values. The scientific consensus is that the burning of fossil fuels during the last 180 years is the principal anthropocentric source of the rise of average global temperatures. As a result of persistently increasing emissions of greenhouse gases, changes to the Earth's physical, chemical and biological processes are evident everywhere. Climate change and extreme weather are exacerbating existing social inequalities and political conflicts globally. Environmental and social justice organizations increasingly recognize what ecofeminists have long argued, that social justice cannot exist without environmental justice, and vice versa. Climate justice is the starting point from which we can begin to build the kind of local and international solidarity that is needed to address climate change and transform the socio-economic hierarchies that caused it.

In this issue, the objectives are manifold: the exchange of ideas between and among women, feminists of all genders, and wider communities; the revitalization of local knowledge systems and the building up of local pride in and knowledge and networks supporting such systems. It features articles written from the experiences and perspectives of women. These are women from all walks of life, including farmers and peasants, researchers and academics, witnessing and confronting in their own skins how the social and ecological crises unfold. The articles address various forms of violence that the human species and non-human species are currently confronting, and the organizing that women do to stop this violence.

The issue is divided into four sections. Articles in the first section explore ecofeminism by showing how the exploitation of women and nature are interconnected. Authors examine the destructive tendencies of the patriarchal capitalist global politics of homogenization, fragmentation (necrophilia) and colonization. But the articles herein also offer the reconstruction of life-affirming paradigms and a politics of daily life, such as the subsistence perspective,

as forms of resistance and liberation within academia and within the limits of nature.

The second section considers climate change, health and environmental justice. Articles highlight the fallacies, contradictions and problems with payments for ecosystem services and carbon capture schemes designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The section analyses people's summits and street protests challenging United Nations (COP 20) power structures. Authors in this section centre their work around concepts including environmental justice, environmental racism, indigenous territorial rights, and biopiracy.

The third section addresses topics of transnational and intersectional feminisms, land rights, and food sovereignty. Articles emphasize the importance of intersectional framings and transnational feminist movements for the alliance-building processes that are central to land and food movements in Africa and globally. Authors here detail women's significance within struggles for human rights, land and food, in the face of growing political and environmental crisis. It includes a focus on the creative force of ecofeminist agroecology, which replaces hierarchical with horizontal gendered and generational relations, as a means of transforming the social relations and ecological results of food production, consumption and exchange.

The last section addresses geo-engineering as a false solution to climate change. Currently, geoengineering is threatening not only human life on earth, but the earth itself and all her "living systems." The section exposes and critiques capital's new technological ability to 'weaponize' and otherwise influence macro systems of the climate itself, including ocean currents, temperatures, humidity, droughts, the atmosphere, and more. It also reveals some of the destruction that has already taken place. Geo-engineering does nothing to change the causes of climate change, which is created in the capitalist mode of production, but is a convenient means of militarily maintaining "business as usual" and concentrating corporate profits.

In all, this special issue seeks in many different ways to respond to the negative effects of capitalism on our changing climate and global political economy. Authors engage with ideas and actors seeking locally-controlled solutions, where communities are not dependent on producing either for trade or for export, but for sustenance which must be the organizing priority of our social arrangements, now and evermore so for a future of social and climate justice.

LEIGH BROWNHILL, ANA ISLA, AND SUJATA THAPA-BHATTARAI

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Le but de ce numéro est de découvrir la genèse des crises sociales et environnementales actuelles, comment on les a débattues et comment les milieux scientifiques et les mouvements sociaux ont réagi.

Depuis des siècles les changements climatiques ont entretenu des conflits, d'une part entre un système capitaliste qui surexploite la croissance économique en favorisant les quelques rares élus et d'autre part, les différents pays qui voient dans l'écosystème sur Terre l'assurance de leur gagne-pain et de leurs valeurs culturelles. Le consensus scientifique dit que le fait d'avoir surexploité la combustion des fossiles depuis 180 ans a largement contribué à l'anthropocentrisme qui a haussé la moyenne de la température mondiale causant des gaz à effets de serre qui ont contribué aux changements physiques, climatiques et biologiques. Les changements climatiques et les températures extrêmes ont exacerbé les inégalités sociales existantes et les conflits politiques dans le monde. Les organismes préoccupés par la justice et l'environnement reconnaissent de plus en plus ce que les écoféministes ont toujours proclamé: la justice sociale ne peut exister sans la justice environnementale et vice versa. La justice climatique est le point de départ de l'élaboration d'une solidarité locale et internationale nécessaire aux changements climatiques et transformer les hiérarchies socio-économiques qui les ont causés.

Dans ce numéro les objectifs sont multiples : il s'agit d'un échange d'idées entre les féministes de toute catégorie et les autres communautés; la revitalisation des systèmes de connaissances locales vers une fierté née de ces connaissances sans oublier les réseaux qui supportent ces systèmes. Vous lirez dans ce numéro les expériences et les perspectives de ces femmes, des fermières, des paysannes, des chercheuses, des universitaires qui à chaque étape de leur vie ont vécu intimement l'évolution des crises sociales et écologiques. Certains articles abordent les différentes formes de violence que les humains et les non-humains ont subi et ce que les femmes ont organisé pour contrer cette violence.

Nous avons divisé ce numéro des Cahiers en quatre sections. Les textes de la première section explorent l'écoféminisme et démontre que l'exploitation des femmes et de la nature est interreliée. Les auteures examinent les tendances destructrices des politiques globales du capitalisme patriarcal, de l'homogénéisation, de la fragmentation, (nécrophilie) et de la colonisation. De plus, ces articles inspirés par des universitaires proposent des pistes et des politiques pour mieux vivre au quotidien, pour subsister et résister, pour parvenir à leur autonomie à l'intérieur des limites naturelles.

La deuxième section considère les changements clima-

tiques, la santé et la justice environnementale. Les textes dénoncent les faussetés, les contradictions et les problèmes de paiements dans les services des écosystèmes sensés réduire l'empreinte du carbone et les émissions de gaz à effets de serres. Cette section analyse les Sommets des peuples et les protestations venant de la rue qui défient les structures du pouvoir des NU (COP 20). Les auteures de cette section ont axé leur travail sur des concepts qui incluent une justice environnementale, le racisme environnemental, les droits environnementaux des autochtones et la "biopiracy"

La troisième section traite des féminismes transnationaux et intersectoriels, des droits territoriaux et de la souveraineté de l'alimentation. Les textes appuient l'importance d'encadrer les mouvements féministes transnationaux et intersectoriels qui favorisent la construction d'alliances indispensables aux mouvements de la terre et à l'alimentation en Afrique et dans le monde.

Les auteures attestent de la présence des femmes dans les luttes pour les droits humains, du territoire et de la nourriture face à la prolifération des crises politiques et environnementales. Elles mettent l'accent sur la force créatrice de l'agroécologie féministe qui remplace la hiérarchie par des relations horizontales genrées et générationnelles qui transforment les relations sociales et les résultats écologiques de la production alimentaire, de la consommation et de l'échange.

La dernière section dénonce la géo-ingénierie comme une fausse solutions aux changements climatiques. Actuellement la géo-ingénierie est néfaste non seulement à la vie sur terre mais à la terre elle-même et à tous les organismes vivants. Cette section expose et critique l'habileté des nouvelles technologies qui outillent ou qui influencent les macro-systèmes du climat lui-même, tels les courants marins, la température, les pluies, la sécheresse, l'atmosphère et tant d'autres, en plus de révéler des aspects destructeurs déjà installés. La géo-ingénierie ne fait rien pour agir sur les changements climatiques créés sur le mode capitaliste, mais c'est un bon moyen pour maintenir militairement le statu quo et concentrer les profits corporatifs.

Pour résumer, ce numéro spécial des Cahiers cherche des façons différentes de réagir aux effets négatifs du capitalisme sur les changements climatiques et sur l'économie politique mondiale. Les auteures ont réfléchi, et les agents cherchent des solutions locales, où les communautés ne seront pas dépendantes du commerce ou de l'exportation mais auront priorisé leur production en fonction de leurs besoins actuels ainsi que pour l'avenir d'un climat social plus juste.

LEIGH BROWNHILL, ANA ISLA, AND SUJATA THAPA-BHATTARAI



COP 20 protests, Lima, Peru, December 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.

Deconstructing Necrophilia

An Ecofeminist Contribution to Growth

IRENE FRIESEN WOLFSTONE

Critiquer la déconstruction du paradigme de la dominance et de la nécrophilie de l'Occident est un a priori de l'affirmation de la vie. Cette étude écoféministe expose sept cas de nécrophilie qui ont dénaturé le pouvoir sur les femmes, sur la nature et colonisé les autres. Cela dit, cette analyse suggère des implications pour un nouveau paradigme égocentrique dès la naissance.

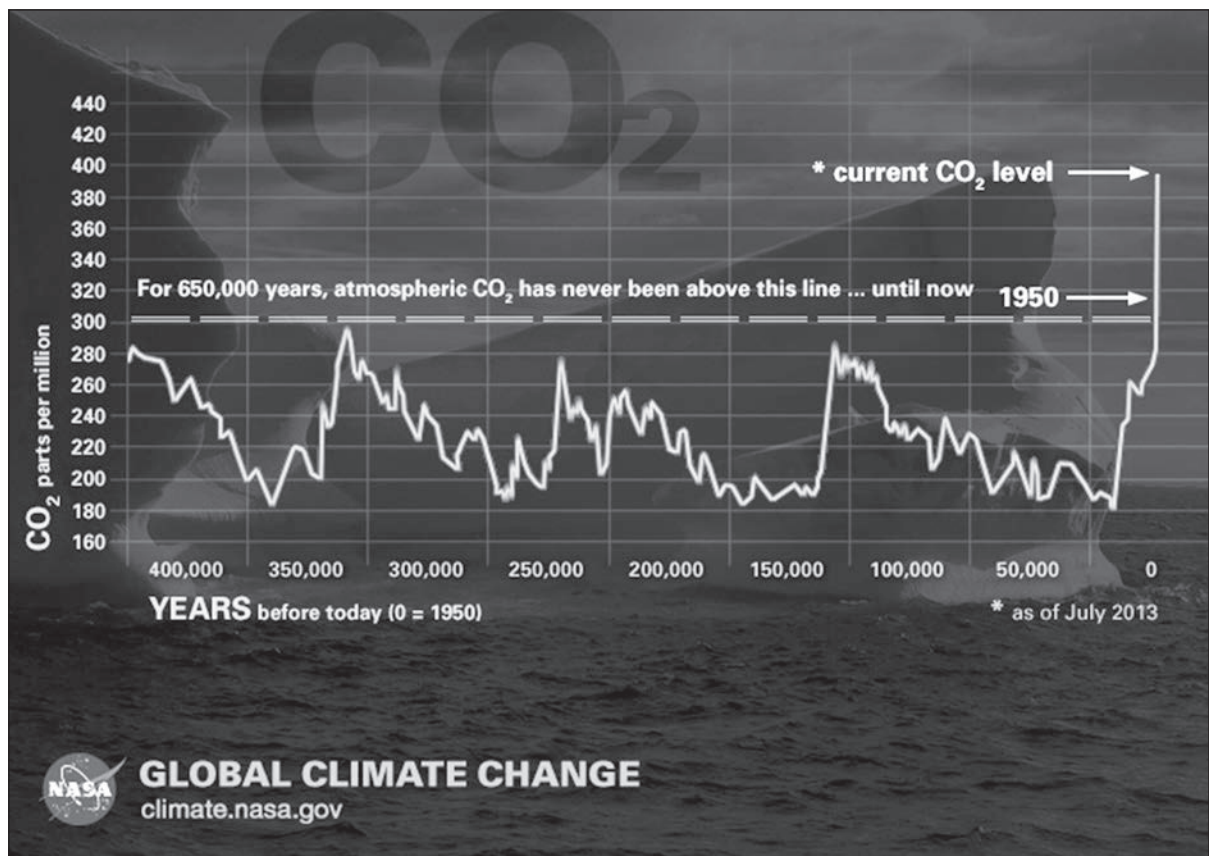
Hannah Arendt's philosophy of natality asserts that we are born to live, to create, and to begin. Before we can begin to imagine a paradigm of natality, we must first understand how necrophilia pervades the dominant Western paradigm. With a clear understanding of necrophilia, we can join Grace M. Jantzen and Adriana Cavarero in the emancipatory project of envisioning a paradigm of natality that builds on two assumptions: all humans are born of a mother and we live an embodied existence within a living landscape.

If anthropogenic climate change represents the apex of the Western culture of death, then we must accept that Western civilization is catapulting toward mass extinction. However, if you, like me, hang on to shreds of hope that there is life after the collapse of Western values, then you join me in the search for ecocentric philosophies. I am convinced that the 'way out' of the climate crisis must be different than the 'way in'; therefore, a framework for climate change adaptation involves a radical change in how we think and how we are in this world that we call home. A philosophy of natality may be a radical 'way out'—a new way to think and be.

Natality is under-theorized, yet offers potential for an emancipatory politic. Natality (n. from Latin *natalis*; adj.

natal) means "pertaining to one's birth" or "native" in reference to a place (Barber). Arendt's philosophy of natality focuses on the distinctly human capacity to bring forth the new, the radical, and the unprecedented into the world (Arendt 178). She insists that, despite the fact of death, humans do not live in order to die, but to begin. Arendt offers three definitions of natality. First, natality refers to the fact of birth. The activity of birth is linked with nature and organic matter, which is governed by cyclical time of life, death and regeneration (96). Every human enters the world as a baby, born of a mother. Secondly, natality refers to belonging to a world characterized by plurality, where each ensouled and embodied natal is different from anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live (8). The acceptance of difference is necessary for harmonious communities. Our second birth occurs in the public realm where natalis differentiate and take responsibility for their own creative initiatives. Thirdly, natality is a political philosophy in that each revolution is a new beginning enacted through collective agency (9). Initiative is the greatest political activity; thus, natality, not mortality, is the central category of Arendt's political thought.

Necrophilia is a word with many layers of meaning. Necrophilia (n. from Greek *nekro* meaning corpse; *-philia* meaning love) means morbid and erotic attraction to death or corpses (Barber). Necrophilia implies sexual assault on an inert female body, illustrated by the classical narrative of the battle of Troy in which Achilles kills Penthesilea, queen of the Amazon warriors, and then violently rapes her corpse. Mary Daly defines necrophilia, "not in the sense of love for actual corpses, but of love for those victimized into a state of living death" (Daly, Caputi, and Rakusin



Carbon emissions: The relentless rise of Carbon Dioxide.

59). Following Grace M. Jantzen, I interpret necrophilia as obsession with death, where obsession means a state of disordered thinking in which death is confused as love—the perversion of *eros* and *thanatos*—a perversion that robs death of dignity (Jantzen 135). The use of the date-rape drug is necrophilic in that it silences the victim and perverted in that it robs the victim and the sexual act of dignity, and indicates how necrophilia makes perversion normative by silencing resistance and outrage. In the following compressed overview, I identify only seven of the many ways in which death is valorized and perverted in the dominant Western paradigm.

Death of Nature

Western science favours mechanism and reductionism—two theories that separate humans from nature and support a worldview, which holds that nature is inert and mindless compilation of parts that have no inherent meaning. Francis Bacon, the so-called father of modern science, turned science into a gendered activity in which men exercise hegemony over nature and “others” (Sardar 2). Bacon was Attorney General for King James VI who reigned during the worst of England’s witch-hunts, and this fact provides context for his misogynist language in which

nature is no longer a wise, venerated Mother Nature, but a wanton female to be conquered by male aggression. Using language of the Inquisition, Bacon urged the domination of nature for human use:

He compared miners and smiths whose technologies extracted ores for the new commercial activities to scientists and technologists penetrating the earth and shaping “her” on the anvil. The new man of science, he wrote, must not think that the “inquisition of nature is in any part interdicted or forbidden.” Nature must be “bound into service” and made a “slave,” put “in constraint,” and “molded” by the mechanical arts. The “searchers and spies of nature” were to discover her plots and secrets.... Nature placed in bondage through technology would serve human beings. (Merchant, *Radical* 45)

The science of mechanistic reductionism reduces nature to a machine that has value only insofar as it has utility for humans and can be converted into a commodity that supports capitalist economics. Newtonianism posits that the cosmos is “like an immense clock, a mechanism whose basic components and principles could be revealed and examined through science. According to a Newtonian

worldview, nature is a machine and is no more than the sum of its parts,” meaningless in itself and subject to control by humans (Suzuki 15).

The transformation of nature from a living, nurturing mother to inert matter enabled capitalism to expand its exploitation of nature (Merchant, *Death* 182). “The removal of animistic, organic assumptions about the cosmos constituted the death of nature—the most far-reaching effect of the Scientific Revolution” (Merchant, *Radical* 48). Today, mechanistic science is the ideology that legitimates

and establish a jealous male god in the sky who creates the world with his *logos*, not by gestation.

Francis Bacon argued that nature’s womb harboured secrets that could be wrested from her using technology. Modern medicine executed Bacon’s science by taking over the work of midwives and medicalizing women’s reproductive functions from conception to parturition. Cultural knowledge embedded in birthing myths and rituals fell into dis-use as Western medicine took control of birthing away from mothers. Birthing became techno-

Mechanistic science is the ideology that legitimates industrial capitalism and its domination of nature, feeding a culture of greed that is emotionally disconnected from the earth. Necrophilia is indicated by Western addiction to self-gratification through consumption, an addiction so intractable that it must be fed even when it clearly contributes to climate change.

industrial capitalism and its domination of nature (58), feeding a culture of greed that is emotionally disconnected from the earth. Necrophilia is indicated by Western addiction to self-gratification through consumption, an addiction so intractable that it must be fed even when it clearly contributes to climate change. The perversion is manifest as pervasive disavowal—the state of disordered thinking which observes our culture’s slow death due to climate change but denies that it is so and makes no effort to reduce carbon emissions.

A philosophy of natality contributes to the project of disrupting mechanistic reductionism by drawing on the sciences of relationality that understand organic nature as creative, self-organizing systems which are active, intelligent, communicative and intentional. Charlene Spretnak, in *Relational Reality*, insists that New Sciences show us that “all entities in the natural world, including us, are thoroughly relational beings of great complexity, who are both composed of and nested within contextual networks of dynamic and reciprocal relationships” (4).

Matricide

Male appropriation of birthing was a way of erasing the matriculture that existed prior to Western patriarchy. In the Olympian myths, Zeus swallows pregnant Metis, mother of Athena, and later gives birth to Athena from his head. Zeus’ matricide in the Olympian myths over-writes an earlier matricultural mythology (Cavarero 108). The male appropriation of birthing is linked to male desire to become divine by claiming the ability to create life (Jantzen 141; Daly 65). The Abrahamic religions disavow the mother

logically-oriented and detached from natural phenomena of birthing. Many women lost their awareness of natural regeneration cycles and birthing processes, acquiring a type of nature blindness (Haarmann 259). Necrophilic perversion is indicated when drugs are administered to reduce a mother’s consciousness of the birthing process, making her the abject object, not the active and conscious subject of birthing. Necrophilic matricide is condoned whenever the obscenity *motherf-r* elicits no outrage.

Adriana Cavarero asserts that the lack of attention paid to the fact that we are born from woman has given Western philosophy a preoccupation with death rather than birth. Western philosophy juxtaposes life and death in a way that disavows culture’s dependence on women’s generative maternal force. She critiques the academy which spurns the abundant “documented evidence of the existence of an original matriarchy” by claiming it “does not add up to the kind of proof accepted by every scholar” (5). Cavarero investigates the “traces of the original act of erasure” contained in patriarchal records, exposing Zeus’ crime of matricide and interpreting that act as symbolic of patriarchy’s erasure of the Great Mother (7f). She emphasizes that cultural continuity depends on the maternal power to generate. Continuity is assured only when the mother/daughter relationship is visible to human eyes. Nature flourishes only when females give birth to daughters. When the maternal no longer has power to generate, we approach “the threat of nothingness” (61).

It is ironic that the Canadian Métis culture carries the same name as Metis, Athena’s Titan mother who was swallowed by Zeus. Metis’ fate mirrors the fate of the Aboriginal mothers whose identity was swallowed by colonialist fur

traders who claimed the mothers' children as their own by giving them Scottish and French surnames. Indigenous women are reclaiming matriculture by decolonizing their bodies. Leanne Simpson links the material, the political, and the spiritual when she declares that indigenous women are reclaiming their responsibility to serve their communities as carriers of culture (28):

If more of our babies were born into the hands of indigenous midwives using indigenous birthing knowledge, on our own land, surrounded by our support systems, and following our traditions and traditional teachings, more of our women would be empowered by the birth process and better able to assume their responsibilities as mothers and nation-builders. (29)

Nativity and matriculture are linked in the common value of mothering and birthing, not as an essentialist impulse, but as a cultural system embraced by both men and women for its contribution to cultural continuity. Indigenous cultures appear to be positioned to midwife the rebirth of matriculture, first in their own cultures and then in Western cultures. The Sedna myth integrates a core principle of indigeneity: living in balance and harmony with nature is impossible if the culture does not venerate generative power. Matriculture refers to cultural traditions that valorize nativity, in its literal and metaphorical meanings, and elevate the maternal for its creative, spiritual, affective, educational, and judicial contributions to cultural continuity. Matriculture does not presume the subordination of men, but rather a partnership between the sexes (Passman 85).

Domination

The ideology of dualism and human separation can be traced to Greek philosophers, and is embedded in the Abrahamic religions; however, Rene Descartes is considered the father of modern dualism. Descartes' philosophy consolidated and augmented Bacon's reductionism and formed the intellectual context for the current ecological crisis (Plumwood, *Nature*, n.p.). Descartes held that there are two kinds of existing things: physical and mental. He argued that self-conscious awareness is a unique human achievement that elevates humans above all other species (Suzuki 15). Cartesian dualism seeks to master the body in order to reside in purely rational, intellectual states. Dualistic thinking categorizes phenomena into binary opposites in which one part of the binary is valued as superior while the categorical 'other' is devalued as inferior or primitive; thus, Cartesian dualism bastions hierarchical systems of domination: anthropocentrism,

sexism, racism, androcentrism, colonialism, ableism and classism.

Human-centeredness, or anthropocentrism, is the hyper/separation of humans as a special species; it weaves a dangerous set of illusions about the human condition into the logic of our basic conceptual structures. Human-centeredness is a complex syndrome which rationalizes the delusions of being *ecologically invulnerable*, beyond animality, outside nature, and thus beyond the reach of the sixth mass extinction event (Plumwood, *Nature* np). Human/nature dualism conceives humans as not only superior to but as different in kind from the non-human, which is regarded as a lower non-conscious and non-communicative physical sphere (Jantzen 32f). Cartesian thinking is necrophilic in that its goal is to control the mind by transcending the body in order to achieve immortality and divinity in death. An otherworldly preoccupation is particularly evident for Christian and Islamic religionists who valorize martyrdom and yearn to escape embodied life for a heavenly home. The secular obsession with transcending the body manifests in celebrating war and building elaborate war memorials that beautify youth who die in battle. Science valorizes its own heroes—the astronauts who transcend our planet in space ships.

Nativity is situated in the continuum of ecocentric philosophies that include deep ecology, ecofeminism, organicism, and indigeneity. Freya Mathews's ecofeminist philosophy moves beyond deep ecology to explore ecological interconnectedness or "oneness" to describe personhood as the embodied relation of self to the self-realizing universe in the extended region of spacetime (149). An ecocentric philosophy recognizes that all beings are equal and interdependent in the living systems of nature, which is itself capable of agency and intentionality. As relationality with earth deepens, we acknowledge our ecological vulnerability and our animality. Interdependence is linked to the principle of sufficiency (enoughness) that frees humans from the drive to acquire and consume in accordance with the competitive ideology of capitalism (Plumwood, *Feminism* 5).

Loss of Cosmology

Western culture's scientific heritage from Bacon and Newton has bankrupted its cultural imagination; consequently, Western culture manifests symptoms of cosmological uncertainty such as anxiety, alienation, anomie, and a massive confusion over values (Mathews 134). The loss of cultural cosmology embedded in narratives and accessible to the entire community is accompanied by a reduced capacity for symbolic thinking, big-picture thinking and ethical thinking. Modernity remains stuck in Newton's atomistic

social order, which regards humans as atoms, individuals keen on survival, and competitively self-interested while adrift in a meaningless universe (30). Arendt is concerned about homelessness and rootlessness that are linked to an ungrounded worldview; she suggests that the Copernican paradigm shift toward a heliocentric and astrophysical worldview made it difficult for natalists to trust their senses (Arendt 261). The Copernican paradigm shift took only decades, yet modernity appears to be incapable of making another paradigm shift to a relational worldview in spite

en as well as non-European people” (Shiva, *Staying* 18). Freud and Lacan projected their male morphology onto the entire female gender, presenting their phallogocentric imaginary and symbology as a universal truth.

According to Lacan, there can be no women subjects. Subjectivity requires language, and language is masculine, grounded in the Phallus as universal signifier. Women qua women, therefore, cannot speak. When women speak, when women take up subject positions, it is not as women, but as imitation males, men in drag (Jantzen 43).

Necrophilic perversion violates the “other” after the “other” has been silenced and incapable of giving consent; it is indicated by the ethical void of globalization in which multinationals appropriate the homeland of Third World cultures without their consent pollute their environments and impoverish the people in order to feed the insatiable addiction of Western consumers.

of the urgency of multiple ecological crises. Popular film culture manifests necrophilia by attempting to create beauty out of terror and horror and to mimic male dominance, capitalism, and warfare in space; thus perpetuating the Cartesian myth of transcendence by escaping an over-heated planet in order to colonize other planets.

A philosophy of natality recognizes that “we stand in need of cosmological healing” (Mathews 47). Cosmology contributes stability and groundedness by evoking imagination and a shared symbology to express the sacredness of the whole and of ethical relationships. Indigenous cultures perceive the land as the source, the ground, and the womb, of life. It is sacred under the aspect of the Great Mother, the great body which sustains all natalists (156). Reclaiming cosmology restores the sacred. Some postmodern critics may level the accusation of essentialism regarding the Mother Earth metaphor that is so frequently used not only by ecofeminists, but also by many who ascribe to ecocentric and Indigenous philosophies. In this study, “Mother Earth” is a cosmological term regarding relationality to place; it recognizes nature’s agency, intelligence and communicative ability.

Silencing the “Other”

Bacon silenced nature so that she could be exploited. Similarly continental psychoanalysts silenced women by denying them a subjective voice and European colonizers silenced other cultures by denying them subjectivity. Silencing the ‘other’ is a colonialist strategy: “the de-mothering of nature through modern science and the marriage of knowledge with power was a source of subjugating wom-

Grace M. Jantzen diagnoses Lacan’s disordered thinking as masculinist repression and suggests a therapy by which the “material and maternal basis must be brought to consciousness” (97).

Gayatri Spivak uses the term “othering” for the process by which colonialist discourse creates “others”—those that are homogenized and marginalized by mastering them. When Spivak asks, “Can the subaltern speak?” she does not mean that it is impossible for the subaltern to reclaim a voice; she posits that when the subaltern speak, they create a voice consciousness that may not be perceivable by dominators because it is not pertinent or useful to the dominator (Spivak 80).

Necrophilic perversion violates the “other” after the “other” has been silenced and incapable of giving consent; it is indicated by the ethical void of globalization in which multinationals appropriate the homeland of Third World cultures without their consent, degrade their landscapes, pollute their environments and impoverish the people in order to feed the insatiable addiction of Western consumers. In contrast, a feminist philosophy of natality embraces difference and plurality.

Monoculture

Multinationals promote monoculture by marketing seeds that are genetically modified so that they cannot self-propagate, compelling farmers to purchase seeds annually instead of seed-saving. In India, more than 280,000 farmers have committed suicide after being forced into bankruptcy after investing in expensive, unreliable patented seeds. Vandana Shiva is a critic of multinationals who

claim Indigenous farmers' collective knowledge as their invention through biopiracy patents—a type of enclosure of the intellectual and the biological commons. Shiva advocates for farmers' right to save and exchange seeds in order to preserve biodiversity. Necrophilia is indicated by the complicity of governments and multinationals to make seed-saving illegal.

Indigenous farmers protect their biocultural heritage by actively resisting Monsanto. On the face of it, their protests may appear to be conservative resistance to modernity, but at the heart of their active resistance is a radical reclamation of the traditional knowledge that sustained biocultural diversity in the past. Like the Roman Janus, they look into the distant past in order to look deeper into the future, while Monsanto takes a short term view of future profits by promoting a culture of death in "Roundup-Ready" seeds.

Monoculture is three dimensional; it manifests as loss of biodiversity, loss of languages, and loss of cultures. The emerging field of biocultural studies has collected data that indicates the rates of culture loss and language loss parallel the rate of loss of biodiversity (Maffi 412). According to Luisa Maffi, an anthropogenic extinction crisis is indicated by the massive loss of biodiversity in Earth's plant and animal species and in the health of the ecosystems that sustain them. Cultures and languages are vanishing under the rising tide of global monoculture, and Maffi worries that we are rapidly losing critical life-support systems and the human knowledge that can teach us how to live in balance with our planet (414).

Nativity celebrates plurality and difference and recognizes that biocultural diversity is critical to cultural continuity. Vandana Shiva's work reflects the intersection of biocultural diversity, matriculture and political revolution: "When nature is a teacher, we co-create with her—we recognize her agency and her rights" (Shiva, *Everything* n.p.).

Choking Democracy

A healthy democracy is participatory and consensual, but Western democracies are collapsing into the post-political condition that makes democracy unrecognizable. The post-political condition has also been theorized as post-democracy, depoliticization and de-democratization. Governments, controlled by corporations, induce passivity in citizens by feeding an addiction to consumption and by discouraging activism. A passive citizenry is indicated by declining voter turnout. The lack of overt citizen consent and participation makes Western nations increasingly vulnerable to totalitarianism. Theorists concur on four theoretical elements of the post-political condition: a) the neoliberal economy has subjected governments to the demands of corporations, and this renders governments

powerless to deal with macro issues such as climate change; b) in consensual postpolitics, government is a social administrator, replacing an institution where activists debate ideologies of equality and justice; c) neoliberal governments create an environment of unspecific anxiety to soften public resistance to increased surveillance; and d) in the ideological vacuum created since the Left ceded victory to capitalism, there are few Western political organizations advocating an alternative economic ideology based on agenda of equality and eco-social justice (Dean; Swyngedouw; Žižek).

Politics has become a public relations game, with large corporations owning and controlling the media—both the message and medium. Mainstream media witness the perversions of necrophilia but keep citizens in the dark about the real state of the world by producing propaganda that keeps citizens in their place. The voyeurism of the media can be compared to the observers of a date rape who videotape the necrophilic act and then post it on social media to extort the victim who never gave consent, was not a participant and is powerless to reclaim her privacy. Human rights are eroding through distortion. Persons with mental disorders who commit violent crimes are regarded as domestic terrorists. Religious organizations demand the 'right' to exclude based on religion. Activists are regarded as domestic terrorists if they obstruct the economy with blockades or boycotts. Governments perpetuate the oppression of vulnerable citizens, silence them and instill fear by invading their privacy. Governments promote consumption, which has the strategic effect of numbing the shrinking middle class into giving up privacy and freedom if it means greater protection for their lifestyle. This then is the perverted necrophilia of democracy in the dominant Western paradigm.

Arendt's political philosophy of nativity celebrates collective imagination and initiative in generating new ideas and enacting them. Repoliticization disrupts the post-political consensus that has silenced and numbed citizens. The political task is to enlarge equality and freedom by acknowledging nature as a political being that is meting out justice through climate change and mocking those who co-opt the notion of sustainability in order to prolong capitalism's tyranny. For models on acknowledging nature's rights, we look to indigenous philosophies of vitality and regeneration including *Buen Vivir* or *Sumak Kawsay* in Andean cultures, *Ubuntu* in southern Africa and *mino bimaadiziwin* in Anishinaabeg (Simpson qtd by Klein np).

Conclusion

The dominant Western paradigm is experiencing massive system failure as it faces self-inflicted death by anthropo-

genic climate change. The urgent need to deconstruct the dominant necrophilic paradigm is not driven by reformist ideology. This deconstruction of necrophilia clears a space to imagine a different paradigm of natality that offers us a radically different way to think and be in eco-social communities committed to the vitality and regeneration of the ecosphere—our planetary home. In researching a paradigm of natality, I discovered that it not a new concept; it is, in fact, a living philosophy in many indigenous cultures whose resilience in adapting to climate change spans millennia.

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Sujata Thapa-Bhattarai holds a Masters in Peace Studies with a specialization in Gender and Peace-building, from the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica. She has directed and led initiatives on non-violence, environmental conservation, peace-building, women and youth empowerment, and post conflict reconstruction projects in South Asia for more than ten years as an active member of womenwagingpeace.org, and the South Asian Gender Activist Network (SANGAT). In 2003, she co-founded Youth Initiative, perhaps one of Nepal's most successful youth-led institutions. She worked as a peace-building specialist at Search for Common Ground, supporting partnerships during Nepal's peace process, and on reintegration of child soldiers in the post-conflict period. Currently she is a PhD candidate in Planning at the University of Toronto, with a research focus on safe mobility and transportation for women's empowerment in cities of the Global South.

VIVIAN DEMUTH

The Red Kyoto Button

The world caresses icy newspapers
while the rainforests lament
clenches human barren dreams
evaporating in desert capitals.

The cry of hurricanes
knocks on government doors
delivers dead birds
for presidential terror cells.

Everywhere darkness
gloved hands that grip pretense
except for the guy in grey suit
who inside a purple light bulb
cooks up a solar dream
for sleepless monsters
eyeing a red Kyoto button
unsure whether pressing it
will blow up Kyoto Accords or the world.

Vivian Demuth's ecofeminist novel, Bear War-den, has been published April 2015 by Inanna Publications. Her poetry book, Fire Watcher (Guernica Editions, 2013) was a finalist for the 2013 Banff Mountain Fiction and Poetry Award. Vivian is also the author of an ecological novel, Eyes of the Forest (Smoky Peach Press, 2007). She has worked as a park ranger and park warden, an outdoor educator and as a fire lookout in the Rocky Mountains.



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Earth Love

Finding Our Way Back Home

RONNIE JOY LEAH

Comment retrouver son chemin vers le refuge de GAIA? En adoptant les enseignements de l'antique déesse nous revenons à notre point de départ. Plusieurs sources alimentent l'écoféminisme, "l'amour de la Terre" qui nous entraîne vers l'équilibre, au tout et à la reconnexion avec la Terre, notre Mère.

The Earth is Our Mother

How do we find our way back home to the ancient Goddess cultures which embrace the sacredness of all life? How do we move beyond the centuries long disconnection of humans from nature fostered by patriarchal cultures and religions? How do we remember our kinship with the Earth community?

These are questions posed to students in "Goddess Mythology, Women's Spirituality and Ecofeminism" the course I teach at Athabasca University. Earth Love, a concept introduced to me by June Watts, my teacher of sacred circle dance, expresses this paradigm shift. Earth Love celebrates the power and beauty of the Earth, indeed of all life. It carries us forward to wholeness, balance, and reconnection in today's fractured world. Earth Love reminds us: "*The Earth is our Mother, we must take care of her*" (chant by Libana).

This tribute to Earth Love expresses my own journey with Goddess. I am dancing with the Goddess, embodying Her timeless stories, sharing the teachings of ancient cultures which honour the sacredness of women and the Earth. This new / ancient paradigm of ecological awareness is being carried forward by a growing river of understanding. It is fed by many streams: Goddess spirituality, ecofeminism, deep ecology, earth-based spirituality, Indigenous wisdom,

and engaged Buddhism. They speak to us and we listen.... The Earth is sacred. She is alive. She is our Mother.

We have a beautiful / Mother
Her green lap / Immense
Her brown embrace / eternal
Her blue body / everything / we know.
(Walker, cited in Bolen 39-40)

Hearing these words of African American writer Alice Walker inspires me to take better care of this planet I love as my Mother, this planet I love as myself.

What is this paradigm shift, the shift in consciousness that brings us closer to Earth Love? It is "awareness of Earth as a living system... we belong like the cells in a living body" (Joanna Macy and The Great Turning). We are embedded in the sacred Earthbody (Spretnak). "The world is a being, a part of our own body" (Seed 6). We are nature, nature is us, and we are all sacred manifestations of the Goddess (Wells and Leah 123).

Paradigm Shift: The Sacred Earth

Cultural ecofeminism, "the hands and feet of the Goddess in today's world," draws much of its inspiration from goddess mythology (Wells and Leah 113). Unlike the transcendent god of patriarchal religions who is separate from creation, the goddess is immanent in creation, she *is* creation. She is the source of life, death and regeneration. Ecofeminism, which links the domination of Earth and the exploitation of women, presents a vision of life free from all forms of oppression, including "naturism," the

oppression of nature by humans (Wells and Leah 114). Ecofeminism, the union of feminism with deep ecology, looks to transform the destructive relations of humans and nature to a life-affirming culture which respects the web of life (Reuther 13). Deep ecologist Joanna Macy calls on us to move from “the industrial growth society to a life affirming society” (*Joanna Macy and the Great Turning*).

Feminist ecological responses reconnect spirituality with the material world, challenging patriarchy’s false separation of spirit and matter. The subsistence ecofeminist perspective acknowledges the material “connection and continuity between the human and the natural” and recognizes the sacredness of the living Earth (Mies and Shiva 20; Shiva 4). Nature, “the complex web of processes and relationships that provide the conditions for life,” is not separate from or external to our being (Shiva 8). Spirit is the life-force in everything: “we ourselves with our bodies cannot separate the material from the spiritual” (Mies and Shiva 17).

As an activist for the world’s rainforests, deep ecologist John Seed calls on us to embody these understandings. He recalls a moment of “intense, profound realization” while defending the trees: “I knew then that I was no longer acting on behalf of myself or my human ideas, but on behalf of the Earth... on behalf of my larger self, that I was literally part of the rainforest defending herself” (Seed 5).

Feminist-pacifist writer Barbara Deming beckons us to remember this “Spirit of Love” which connects us with the earth.

We are earth of this earth, and we are bone of its bone.
This is a prayer I sing, for we have forgotten this and so
The earth is perishing.
(Deming, reprinted in Seed i)

Practices for Sacred Ecology: Council of All Beings

How do we open to these understandings? How do we come to “hear within ourselves the sound of the Earth crying”? This phrase borrowed from Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh underlies “The Council of All Beings,” a practice developed by Joanna Macy and John Seed in 1985, which “opens us to experiencing our fundamental interconnectedness with all life” (Seed 5). I was fortunate to train with Joanna Macy in 2009, as a facilitator for the Council and “The Work That Reconnects” (see www.theworkthatreconnects.org). My recent experience facilitating “Peace with the Earth,” a sacred ecology workshop in Calgary, has convinced me that, at a visceral level, we are indeed learning how to listen....

I played a heartbeat on my hand drum as we walked ceremonially out into the garden. We gathered in a semi-circle under the branches of a large tree. I spoke as the Guide:

This Council is called to order, on behalf of the future generations.

One by one, the beings introduced themselves through us...

I am a mama grizzly bear protecting her cubs. I am the krill in the ocean. I am the dirt under your feet. I am a tree dying from pollution...

After each being spoke, the circle answered:

We hear you.

As I guided this exercise, I no longer spoke in my human voice: I was the grizzly bear protecting her cubs. I spoke in her voice... and I was angry with the humans!

Other beings spoke:

Hear us, humans. This is our world too. Our days are numbered because of what you are doing. Listen to us.

We took turns listening as humans:

We hear you.

When all the beings had a chance to address the humans and call them to account, I spoke again as the Guide / Grizzly:

The humans are now frightened. Our life is in their hands. If they can awaken to their place in the web of life they will change their ways. What wisdom do you have to offer to the humans?

The beings offered us their insights, their powers, to stop the destruction of the world. We listened and we accepted these gifts with thanks, on behalf of all humans. I picked up my drum again to announce the closing of the Council, as I shifted back into human form.

The Council of All Beings was a transformative experience, a journey into the imaginal realm. It was a communal ritual experience, where we allowed the Earth and other life forms to speak through us. We expanded our human identities into our larger ecological selves. We spoke on behalf of the earth; this is an important step in experiencing the shift in consciousness that Joanna Macy describes in her film (*Joanna Macy and The Great Turning*). Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us: “Only when we recognize our connectedness to the earth, can real change begin.”

The “Law of Dependent Co-Arising” expresses the fundamental Buddhist concept of “interbeing”: our nonseparateness from a world where “all events and beings are interdependent and interrelated” (Kaza 57; www.joannamacy.net/engaged-buddhism). We are seeing

a convergence of three streams of thought and practice: deep ecology, Buddhism and ecofeminism. Most of all, we are remembering our Earth Love.

When we can truly see and understand the earth, love is born in our hearts. We feel connected. That is the meaning of love: to be at one. Only when we've fallen back in love with the earth will our actions spring from reverence and the insight of our interconnectedness. (Thich Nhat Hanh)

the Earth Mother, who is the first and ultimate giver of life. Our instructions are "*Minobimaatisiwin*—we are to care for her" (Williams and Johnson 252). Nishnaabeg women speak out about their sacred relationship with water, their responsibilities as caretakers of the land and keepers of the water:

We call the Earth "our real Mother," the land as our "Mother's lap" and water the blood of this Mother the Earth ... the Nishnaabeg people view the land,

Indigenous women in Canada have taken the lead in protecting the sacred earth and waters of our land... "Our systems are designed to promote more life (through) resisting, renewing and regeneration." The concept of *mino bimaadiziwin*—continuous rebirth—is a guiding cultural principle of Anishinaabeg society: it's the principle of regeneration.

This is the revolution, the shift in consciousness that needs to happen: "We need to wake up and fall in love with the earth" (Thich Nhat Hanh).

Creative and Spiritual Practices to Embody Earth Love

The creative arts play a crucial role in this expression of Earth Love. "Ecofeminist arts... [are] essential catalysts of change" that (re)connect us with nature and spirit (Orenstein 279). In my own journey with the Goddess, it is through sacred circle dancing that I feel most connected to the earth and all life. Dancing creates a shift in consciousness, it provides a way to embody the peace, wholeness and unity I envision for the world (Leah 74). Our circle dances in Calgary often incorporate rituals to honour the sacred earth and the turning of the year. Ritual practices help to awaken and deepen our spiritual connections with the earth and her continuing cycles of birth, growth, decay, death and regeneration (Starhawk 1989; Spretnak). Rituals help us to remember, to recognize and celebrate the sacredness of everyday life, to show gratitude and respect for our larger family, our nonhuman relations (Sanchez 222). We are all children of the Goddess. "In ritual we can feel our interconnections with all levels of being" (Starhawk 184). Rituals help to restore these sacred relations, allowing the Goddess to come alive in our bodies, minds and spirits.

Themes of interconnectedness with the living earth echo the ancient earth wisdom of First Nations. "The land, and all it has to teach, to give, and all it demands, is what it means to be Indigenous" (Alfred 10). Many Aboriginal cultures express values similar to the ancient goddess cultures. "All females are the human manifestations of

water, plants, animals and sky world as one unified and interdependent living system that works to sustain us all. (Bedard 96)

Through movements such as Idle No More (which began in December 2012), Indigenous women in Canada have taken the lead in protecting the sacred earth and waters of our land. In an interview with Naomi Klein, Anishinaabeg writer and academic Leanne Simpson articulates a clear alternative vision to destruction of the environment: "Our systems are designed to promote more life ... (through) resisting, renewing and regeneration." The concept of *mino bimaadiziwin*—continuous rebirth—is a guiding cultural principle of Anishinaabeg society: it's about the fertility of ideas, bringing forward and acting on your dreams and visions, it's the principle of regeneration (Klein and Simpson 5). Leanne Simpson describes the Round Dances which became a feature of Idle No More events. The dances reflected the joy of building "authentic relationships with the land and the people around you.... Let's make this fun. It was the women who brought that joy" (Klein and Simpson 9).

I was fortunate to be involved in Round Dances organized by Idle No More activists in Calgary in 2013 and 2014. These were expressions of community celebration and renewal, rooted in Indigenous traditions and spirituality, drawing in the youth and elders, native and non-native participants. Simpson goes on to describe how the dances embodied joyful transformation: "Watching the transformative nature of those acts (the Round Dances), made me realize that it's the embodiment, we have to embody the transformation." What were the emotions generated by the

dances? Simpson affirms that it was love, on an emotional, physical and spiritual level. "Like the love I have for my children or the love that I have for the land.... It was a grounded love" (Klein and Simpson 11).

Earth Love: Dancing the World into Being

In the words of Naomi Klein and Leanne Simpson, we are "dancing the world into being." This is the world of Earth Love: the paradigm shift to a life affirming culture; reconnected with our ecological selves, we are one with the sacred earth. Through ritual and dance we are remembering who we are. This is embodied transformation. "We dance to know ourselves and our place in the great scheme of things" (June Watts). "No longer separate from the web of life, *we are Gaia*" (Leah, "Foreword" iii). We have found our way back home.

Ronnie Joy Leah is an educator, dancer and feminist activist. She has a Ph.D. in Education (OISE, 1986) and is a Certified Expressive Arts Practitioner (2009). She teaches Women's and Gender Studies at Athabasca University and is course co-author for "Goddess Mythology, Women's Spirituality, and Ecofeminism." She has trained with deep ecologist Joanna Macy as a facilitator for "The Work That Reconnects." Ronnie Joy's vision of "Earth Love" is expressed through sacred circle dancing and sacred ecology workshops.

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CEO ROURKE

Plato on Vacation

I took the kids to Horne Lake
and there he was
spelunking with tourists
in a 'Save-the-Planet' t-shirt
intense eyes below a headlamp
searching dark damp recesses
between stalagmites
for some long lost idea
of Beauty
connected to Earth
not the ephemeral form
but the *thing* itself
buried in soil
rooted and living

Naturalist/poet, Ceo Rourke is an award winning writer and a graduate of Vancouver Island University. Widely published in anthologies and literary journals, Ceo writes from a small island cabin, inspired by marine life, coastal storms, and the tenacity of trees.

KATERINA FRETWELL

Effluvium

Yet, when 19 countries agreed ... to establish the Millennium Development Goal ... sanitation was initially left out.

—Jermy Keehn, "The Toilet Papers,"
The Walrus Vol.11

Joshed I'd eulogize the many-foliate
toilets in my travels — blooming
dorm-like squats at Ephesus
pissoirs chez Paris, loo of Waterloo
urine streams at Badaling
two-seater on my honeymoon

but sanitation is a serious matter
2.5 billion, a quarter of us
lack safe dumping grounds
fertilizing field, forest, potable water
with fecal fungi. Diarrhoea culls
800 million children every year.

We rush to invent affordable
portable, waterless water closets
for World Toilet Day — finally
our effluent forms the agenda.
On tour, hurtling by shacks
flowering on a dump, I begged

Halt! Bus stopped for me, cresting
on a hilltop, I crapped in Crete.
Fecal transplants cured Crohn's
in a wraith-like child — but the Lab
growing healthy microbes was forced
to shut down — microbes not sterile.

Katerina Vaughan Fretwell's eighth poetry book, which includes her arrrt, Dancing on a Pin, was published by Inanna Publications in 2015. Five of the poems placed as "runner-up" in subTerrain's Outsider Poetry Contest, 2015. Her seventh book, Class Acts, also published by Inanna in 2013, was included in Kerry Clare's Most Important Books of 2013: Poetry on the online 49th Shelf. She lives in Seguin, Ontario.

A Subsistence Perspective for the Transition to a New Civilization

An Ecofeminist Contribution to Degrowth

VERONIKA BENNHOLDT-THOMSEN

Après des décennies dominés par l'attitude qui a progressivement discrédité l'existence des autochtones, les paysans et les femmes à la maison, les choses finalement, changent. La perspective productiviste de la mondialisation sème le doute et on demande un nouveau respect envers la capacité de la nature. L'environnement et les désordres sociaux exigent un nouveau paradigme de la civilisation. Les féministes ont ouvert le débat éventuellement appelé l'écoféminisme dans les années '70. En Allemagne s'est enligné sur cette notion de "subsister" dans les pays du Tiers Monde. L'auteure a contribué au débat et présente quelques aspects cruciaux dans cet article.

We Cannot See The Future but We Can Dream It: A Fairy Tale

It was once upon a time, in the year 2,999. The millennium is approaching and all humanity is preparing for the celebration. In fact, there is much to celebrate. People are happy to have been living in such a long period of peace. There have been no wars or famines for hundreds of years. In the coming celebrations the people will re-affirm their commitment: to contribute to a situation where all people can be happy. The commitment is to the future, since they know that their present will be the past of their descendants. "It is important to have a good past in order to live well," they say in concordance with the philosophy of the people of the Andes. It was the South American Andean communities that had declared the *Buen Vivir/Living Well* philosophy as a goal for the third millennium a thousand years ago. They managed to stop the crazy race in the name of the so-called *Vivir Mejor/Living Better*.

On the eve of the fourth millennium, people in the whole world live in villages or small towns, surrounded by gardens and orchards full of flowers, vegetables, and fruits, and further on by woodlands, fields, and meadows that do not belong to anybody as private property, but are instead owned by the whole community. Water is treasured as something very precious. Springs, streams, rivers, and lakes are cared for with love, as if they were grandmothers. Although desertification on the one hand and flooding on the other belong to the distant past, they are still remembered regularly with commemorative rituals. The great megacities are also a thing of the past, and their many buildings have either disintegrated, or have been transformed into village communities. This is because all humanity bases its existence on a fundamental moral principle: *to live on what the region I belong to can offer me*. This had not been possible in the megacities.

The prevailing conviction is that every region and every human being is able to give in abundance. The concept of scarcity is unknown. In this golden age, it is a pleasure and a source of satisfaction to give, or pass on, something of one's own to the others, be it material or immaterial. Commerce and money are unknown. The planet is populated by societies that circulate gifts among and between themselves.

Songs, dances, and delicacies are being rehearsed and prepared for the great celebrations and some people have already left on pilgrimages to places emanating a special energy. In Europe, many are on their way to Venice where, almost a thousand years ago in 2012, at a memorable encounter, the foundations were laid for the great transition to a civilization leading to true happiness for all times.

The Foundations of the Great Transition

Reading the announcement of the Third International Conference on Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity (which took place in Venice, September 2012, under the title “The Great Transition: Degrowth as a Passage of Civilization”), made me think of the title of Karl Polanyi’s book, *The Great Transformation*, as the organizers no doubt intended. Polanyi’s famous thesis suggests that the ultra-liberal idea of a self-regulating market

from 44 countries, the future victorious powers, whose aim was to contribute to a structure that would guarantee world peace. In the same year, *The Great Transformation* by Polanyi was published, whose topic was a search for the reasons of the two world wars. It is more a tragedy than an irony when we consider that in that same year, peace was supposed to have been reached by the very means that Polanyi had meanwhile identified as the causes of the two previous wars, that is by postulating the predominance of economic market laws in society.

The Politics of Development presents financial gain as the pivot of any decision and replaces subsistence with commercial consumer culture with its thirst for ever more and more to ostensibly live ever better, without consideration for one’s neighbour, nor for the state of nature and the earth.

disengages the economy from the society. According to Polanyi, this disembeddedness is a fundamentalist utopia in which the basic substance of society is destroyed and human values are undermined. For Polanyi, an attempt to put this utopia into practice was the principal cause of two world wars. Today, this process of decay has gone even further. The economy itself has become a war. Such a trajectory must be averted if we wish for peace. But how?

Polanyi’s metaphor of disembeddedness is, in fact, more potent if applied in the opposite direction: the economy in terms of a mainstream economic logic based on ever-continuing growth, calculation, and numerical rationality has penetrated society and is now embedded within it. In other words: the economic principles of growth have invaded people’s hearts and minds. Degrowth thus means, at the deepest level, a decolonization of the hearts and the minds, and a decolonization also of the economic culture that has encroached on the daily life of ordinary people.

The Subsistence Perspective¹

The concept of subsistence has been pitted against the concept of globalization from the very beginning, that is ever since the idea of economic growth at a world scale was legitimized by the Politics of Development. At the end of World War II, the Bretton Woods system was created with its two Institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The basic intention is clearly visible from the name of the bank: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). The Bretton Woods agreement was signed in July 1944 by emissaries

Fighting the subsistence economy has become the objective of the Politics of Development. Its aim was—and is—to tear the culture of subsistence from the common cultural heritage of humankind, to annihilate the human ability to do what is needed for oneself and one’s neighbour in order to live well. The Politics of Development, on the other hand, presents financial gain as the pivot of any decision and replaces subsistence with commercial consumer culture with its thirst for ever more and more to ostensibly live ever better, without consideration for one’s neighbour, nor for the state of nature and the earth. At the time of McNamara’s presidency, the World Bank stated quite clearly in 1975 that its aim was “to draw farmers from subsistence to commercial agriculture” (World Bank).

When I saw this phrase and read the programs of “investing in the poor” (Chenery et al.), I could see that this perspective, bent on commercializing all the aspects of subsistence, could prove to be fatal. I was not yet consciously an ecologist nor a feminist, but my apprenticeship as an anthropologist among Indigenous people in rural Mexico was enough to enable me to understand how dangerous such penetration by international capital and markets would be for the autonomous sustenance of millions of peasants, craftspeople, and sellers in local markets. I had already observed the first destabilizing effects on such sustenance caused by the Green Revolution with its hybrid seeds, fertilizers, and chemical pesticides, leading peasants deeper and deeper into debt, a process that was latterly misrepresented as “investment in the poor.”

Since the announcement of the era of development, the economy of sustenance, or, as it is now called in a tone of depreciation, the economy of “subsistence,” has become a

synonym for “underdevelopment.” The idea of overcoming the underdevelopment of subsistence and of bringing the entire world into the economy of development or, in other words, the economy of growth, is a manner of continuing the project of colonization after World War II. Racism is re-instated using a new formula: to be underdeveloped is to be inferior, to be developed is to belong to a superior race. The harm caused by this colonialist brainwashing remains substantial to this day and has had its effect on both sides of the globalization coin. It is perhaps more pernicious on the side of the countries labelled as “developed,” whose citizens proudly identify themselves with the mechanisms of the growth economy and of consumerism, and can see less clearly through the brainwashing they are victimized by than the people on the other side, who are branded as underdeveloped.

Once “subsistence” is equated with “underdevelopment,” the subsistence economy is presented as the synonym of poverty, scarcity, absence of markets, lack of social division of labour, a bad life, in fact a lack of everything. But this is a lie. To better understand why the proponents of a growth economy reject subsistence, let us have a look at its etymological meaning. “Subsistence” has roots in Greek and Latin philosophy and means “*that which exists by itself, through its own immanent strength.*” This is the principle of growth in nature, of emergence and of evanescence. It is the maternal principle, of nurturing and caring. It refers to the rhythm of life; it is an ecological principle. From the point of view of subsistence, human beings form part of the organic world process, of the living being that is the earth. In this perspective, suddenly the transition of the civilization of economic growth toward degrowth appears obvious, even easy: let us aim for subsistence, let us make our decisions in accordance with what is necessary for living, for living well, satisfied, happy lives, without the equivocal desire for having ever more, as described in the popular song... “I can’t get no satisfaction.”

The subsistence perspective is a politics from the bottom-up, from the majority, from civil society; it does not rest on decisions by centralized power, but can “change the world without taking power,” as John Holloway would say. To aim for subsistence rather than profit is the parameter for the cultural change we need today.

Some Steps Already Happening

I live in Germany and can tell you with some pride that the new thinking is already gaining ground. Not so long ago most people at the university, at conferences, or after I gave a talk would say: “Subsistence? What do you mean?” Or, “That’s something for Third World Countries,” or maybe, “Do you want us to return to the stone age?” Today, the

subsistence discourse is present even in the most prestigious public spaces. The main theme of the 2013 biennial conference of the Evangelical Church in Germany, always a grand event with thousands of participants, was: “Take only what you need.” The main question was: “What is it that we really need?”

I might also mention the famous exhibition of modern and contemporary art, *documenta*, which takes place in Kassel, Germany, every five years: a friend brought me a work of art, a little envelope with seeds saying: “Subsistence is resistance, is existence, is autonomy.” Many parts of the exhibition were designed in a similar spirit. There were 850,000 visitors, a third of them young people under 25 years old, and it was the most visited “edition” of the *documenta* since its inception in 1955.

In the whole country, “transition town” initiatives are being formed, based on the philosophy that towns can flourish quite well based on local resources in terms of food provisioning, building materials such as clay or straw, providing clothing, or listening to music. Transition town members show that we can ride a bicycle instead of driving a car, and generally try to behave responsibly face to face with the peak oil crisis. They embrace themes such as art, health, and biodiversity. There are groups whose members teach each other to sew, to cook, etc. (see also works by Rob Hopkins). In Germany, Austria, and Switzerland there are now around 80 transition town initiatives (see www.transition-initiativen.de).

Another related movement is the movement of community gardens, known as urban gardening, which is multiplying rapidly. There is a network that joins approximately 200 community gardens in Germany; we have 135 “intercultural gardens,” and since 2009 a new type of mobile garden has emerged, with plants cultivated in containers, or in squares, and other public areas. The motto of a group from Munich: “The city is yours, cultivate it!” has been gaining popularity (see Anstiftung).

The antecedents of the projects discussed above, that taken together can be seen as forming a new social movement, are the communities/communes and eco-villages. For the last 30 years or so, they have been living and promoting a culture of subsistence and of equitable conviviality, often growing their own food, with economic models ranging from the co-operative to the common pot. Most have a left-wing orientation, some follow Christian or Buddhist teachings. But all of them, some 60 in total, espouse an ecological vision (see Eurotopia). For many years they had been objects of defamation and ridicule. Today, however, there is a new wave of people wishing to live in community and experimenting with novel forms of conviviality.

In the cities, community dining halls are beginning to

emerge. One can be found in the city of Bielefeld where I live. For the past two years,² we have been preparing a delicious meal with organic ingredients once a week for whoever turns up. The idea emerged within the local Social Forum. With the new social legislation, implemented between 2003 and 2005 by the Social Democratic government along with The Greens, the number of people who need to eat at food-banks to survive keeps rising. In the Forum, we discarded the notion of demanding money, adequate premises, etc., from the State, since

ization, very necessary for degrowth. It is an integrated politics in the sense that it supports the integration of the mind and the body. One learns by doing, by getting one's hands in the soil; it is a concrete, lived experience, and it is autonomous: one does not depend on financial and market abstractions. It is learning by doing: Yes we can! This time it really is so!

It is true that the action radius may encompass not more than one village, a group of neighbours, a city area, a town or city. But that's just it. Let other similar groups

The idea of overcoming the underdevelopment of subsistence and of bringing the entire world into the economy of development or, the economy of growth, is a manner of continuing the project of colonization after World War II. Racism is re-instated using a new formula: to be underdeveloped is to be inferior, to be developed is to belong to a superior race.

this would once again mean asking for something from "above," and we would remain trapped within a system of power and of economic reasoning that we, in fact, reject. All of us are affected by the situation, not only those who are homeless or badly paid within the system. The aggressive economic culture and the atmosphere of anxiety affects us all. They create a climate of hostility, envy, and confrontation. We, on the other hand, wish for a culture of conviviality, of equality, and of trust, where everyone has not only enough food to eat, but has enough good food to eat, and above all where nobody has to eat on their own. Loneliness is the greatest problem of our society. An easy and pleasant remedy is to sit together at a table, eat well, and in company, where those who have share more, while others share less or nothing. Some offer the kitchen and seating space, others play music or tell fairy tales. It has worked well, and similar initiatives are underway in other parts of the city.

You Cannot Eat Money³

There are many critics who say, "This is not politics," or else, "This kind of activity has a minimum action radius." I have also heard the following many times, "It is only a question of food, not of the economy."

I believe that this kind of activity *is* politics, though not in the sense of politics as hierarchical power, where a great number of people and votes accumulate in order to obtain the necessary weight to instigate centralized top-down policies. It is politics in the sense of a changing of attitudes and of patterns of thinking, a drawing back from the *homo economicus* culture. It is a politics of decultur-

of people with a new way of thinking appear. Let them be similar because they tug in the same direction. But may they be diverse as well, in tune with their specific context, just as plants need to be diverse in order for biodiversity to flourish. The ideology of growth tends towards the uniform, the monoculture, towards megalomania. Look at what happened to organic agriculture. Let us step out of our niche markets, said the farmers. Let us grow, let us sell our products in the great national and international supermarket chains. The result today is that they have to adjust to a pattern of cheap prices for an ever-increasing amount of units, be they tons of monoculture vegetables, units of chickens or of pigs. A reduced action radius on the other hand, local or regional, enables the closeness and warmth of human relationships, and of relationships between humans, animals, plants, and landscapes. And, finally, many niches, one next to the other, taken together can have quite a wide action radius.

The objection that "It is only a question of food, not of the economy" is perplexing. ONLY? Isn't food the basis of the economy? We all know that in this world more than a thousand million people, especially mothers and their small children, go hungry, suffer from malnutrition, and die prematurely. To paint a less abstract image: it is one seventh of all humanity and many more people than all the inhabitants of Europe combined.

It is precisely in this context that the globalized growth economy with its principles of financial calculation and numerical rationality demonstrates its disfuncionality most and drastically. The Millennium Goals, adopted by the 189 countries who were members of the United Nations in 2000, express as their first objective:

Target 1.A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day.

Target 1.C: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.

I ask myself: what do the members of the respective UN assembly think will happen to the other half? It will still be more human beings than the population of the United States together with the rest of the North American continent. In any case, 16 years after the famous Millennium Goals have been announced, it is clear that they have failed. The number of people suffering hunger in the world has not diminished, instead it keeps rising day by day.

Let me now pose a question: What appears to be less real: my fairy tale at the beginning of this text, or the Millennium Goals of the UN?

The Subsistence Perspective: An Ecofeminist Contribution to Degrowth

The theory of the subsistence perspective arose out of the indignation we felt when faced with the ideology of development. Those were the years at the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies when the theories of development and its approaches were first formed and expressed. From the beginning we, the German sociologists and anthropologists who were beginning to elaborate on the feminist theory of subsistence, rejected both the theory and the development practices that were then beginning to be implemented, for their inherent *colonialist racism*. We had already spent many years in regions of the third world. Our sensations when facing development racism were similar to what we felt in relation to the sexist racism confronting women in our own society that we were beginning to see at almost the same time. The women's movement (*Frauenwegung*) was born, the journal *Beiträge zur feministischen Theorie und Praxis* was launched, with the first issue appearing in 1973, and in 1983 we published a collection of articles, *Women: The Last Colony* (Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1992, 1988), with 17,000 copies at its third printing in German in 1992.

The similarity between the colonialist approaches to communities labelled as primitive, on one hand, and the oppression of women on the other, was an eye-opener for us, and remains an important guide for our analysis. Women as "the last colony" is more than just a metaphor. The concept expresses the situation and the process that establish the inferior social position of women. It expresses both the *economic and material* and

the *ideological and cultural* (racist and sexist) levels of exploitation and oppression that accompany the inferior position of women in our societies, as well as pointing to the hidden *violence* behind women's subjugation. The image of woman as colony also captures the anticapitalist impetus of our feminist theory. But, of course, there are many types of anticapitalism. Our perspective, focused on subsistence, is directed against the capitalist growth imperative. While seeing ourselves as left-wing and Marxist, we unsurprisingly also perceive the developmentalist (growth-oriented) and productivist aspects of the socialist vision, criticizing it in its turn.

We realized that the ideological-mental foundation of the two colonialisms, both regarding the communities and their lands, and regarding women, is a depreciation of the natural, of the organic, of that which germinates, is born and lives of itself, in sum a depreciation of that which has, and those who have, the capacity to give and reproduce life. Seen thus one can understand that colonizing bodies and land is in fact just one sort of colonialism, as both spring from the mindset that energizes the patriarchal system. This is apparent already from the etymology of the concept "*pater arche*": first the father, originally the father, precedence of the father, juridical power emanating from the father. There is no respect nor recognition of existence and life itself; instead, what counts is control over it. Value is ascribed only to that which is produced, manufactured, that which is constructed using materials that are assumed to be dead and that are seen to be imbued with a life value only after the act of production.

It can be seen that the subsistence perspective has since its beginnings in 1970-1975 been in fact ecofeminist, although it was not called that at the beginning. It was only in 1993 that the theorists of subsistence, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, used the term "ecofeminism" as a title for a collection of articles. In 1980, Carolyn Merchant published *The Death of Nature*, which helped disseminate the term "ecofeminism" to denote the kind of thinking that we, the authors writing on subsistence, shared. Merchant however concentrated on an analysis of European philosophy and values accompanying the onset of the Age of Reason and of Natural Sciences that led to "the death of nature" and to the deaths of millions of women designated as witches, without particularly taking into account the conquest of the colonies that took place simultaneously. On the other hand, our group, concerned with the third world, focused on the violent patriarchal impetus of European colonialism that has been attacking the natural and social foundations of the reproduction of life itself in the whole world: of Indigenous cultures, of mountains (mines), of plants, soils, lands, crops, waters, fish, genes, etc. We have analyzed how, through the violation brought about

by colonialism, the world has gradually been evangelized until the point when faith in Development and Growth seems to have been implanted as the global civilizing religion of our time.

Subsistence Perspective Feminism Within the Feminist Discourse

Subsistence has never been a perspective coming only from women or meant only for women, rather it has

social position, or lack of equal opportunities, had much in common with the causes of environmental destruction, both being connected with patriarchal subjugation of all that sprouts and grows autonomously.

Our focus is often labelled as “biologistic” or, in the gender studies jargon, as “essentialist.” The depreciating tone coming as it does from gender studies is not surprising. Gender studies theory itself is constructed around the assumption that there are no natural differences between the sexes, but rather that the characteristics of each sex are

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aspired to be holistic. Our approach is to analyze the world from the perspective of having been born and having the capacity to give life, or in other words from the perspective of recognizing human beings as part of the reproductive process of nature. At the same time it is a perspective involving action to make possible another future. It has an antipatriarchal and antimonotheistic focus that opposes the colonialist mandate to “have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Genesis, 1. Mose, 1:28) “subjugate the earth,” in all its aspects and whomever by, men or women. In the formative stages of the German feminist movement, we lived under the illusion that due to its character of being a movement to liberate women, its spirit would naturally be anticapitalist and oppose the growth economy. But this was not to be. Soon the perspective of equal opportunities prevailed, supported among others by Marxist arguments coming from socialist feminists. Great was the scandal when, in a speech in Zürich in 1989 on Women’s Day, I had the temerity to say that the only thing that most women in the movement aspired to was an equal share in the booty. My talk had the title: “To What Extent is the Women’s Liberation Movement Truly Liberating?” There was a similar scandal in Cologne in 1986, after my contribution at a big conference on “Women and Ecology.” Its title was: “The Ecological Question is a Question Intrinsic to Women” (see Bennholdt-Thomsen 1987; 1988-89). Many women, though seeing themselves as environmentalists, wanted to have nothing to do with their own human feminine nature. They did not wish to even consider the fact that the causes of their inferior

scripted exclusively by the norms of a given society. On one hand, the impulse to develop this approach is understandable, as it is a reaction to the patriarchal biologistic sexism that in effect says, “she is a woman, so she must wash the dishes.” Less understandable however is the solution that gender theory proposes: so as not to be obliged to wash the dishes, it is denied that there is such an entity as a woman. In effect, this position is just as fundamentalistic. It pays homage to biologistic fundamentalism by denying the existence of natural pre-conditions, paradoxically giving them more weight through such denial. Nature is here once again separated and isolated from the social process; it is once again declared to be dead. But nature is not a static entity, separated from the historical and social process. Nature and human society are continuously transforming each other through mutual influence, with no clear signs of whose impulse came first. A case in point would be the long-term development of the species *homo sapiens* within its territorial and climatic environment: where is the cause, where the effect?

It is no coincidence that the concept of “gender” has dominated feminist discourse in the era of neoliberal globalization. “Gender” is an ultraliberal philosophical reflection similar to the “level playing-field” of neoliberal economic theory. According to the concept of “gender” there are no sexes, all is naturally homogenous in the sense of being at one and the same level, enabling unbridled development from this level, free of any limitations.

From a subsistence perspective, we oppose this modernist secular transcendence with its ever-present assumption that the future will bring unlimited liberty in every respect. It is faith in development and growth that feeds this hope.

From our perspective, it is on the contrary important to respect, estimate, and appreciate the spirit immanent in the world. The subsistence perspective recognizes the unlimited diversity existing on the planet: the diversity of sexes, of seeds, of human beings, of landscapes, and of cultures. It searches for cooperation and complementarity within this diversity. It can help us in the transition to a civilization of peace between men and women, between the generations, and between human beings and the other beings on our planet.

Translated from the Spanish by Nadia Johannisova, 2014.

This article is a slightly expanded version of my keynote speech: "The Subsistence Perspective: The Great Transition Can Be Gained With Small Steps" (in Spanish), presented at the Third International Conference on Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity, "The Great Transition: Degrowth as a Passage of Civilization," held in Venice, Italy, in September 2012.

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¹See Bennholdt-Thomsen (1981; 1987; 1997; 1999).

²Meanwhile in 2016 the project functions well since four years.

³See Bennholdt-Thomsen (2010). Available as a free download since 2011 at <www.wloe.org/English.en.0.html>.

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Transformative Feminisms

Expanding Feminist Strategies for Living in Troubled Times

MARTHA MCMAHON

L'auteure assure que subsister, se suffire, pour les paysans, c'est une transgression face aux arrangements économiques et politiques dominants qui sont banalisés et même déclarés morts. Mais ils serviront à nous garder vivants.

This paper began as a talk for a session on transformative feminisms at the Canadian Congress meetings in Ottawa in 2015. The session included themes of ecological economies whether subsistence, anti-commodity, peasant, sufficiency, or others. I argued that subsistence, sufficiency, peasant or repeasantized economies are so transgressive of dominant political and economic arrangements they are trivialized or declared dead. But they will help keep us alive.¹ I am using a narrative style here because it helps me to talk about ideas I find hard to pull together. Hard because the theme of the session forced me to try to assess the usefulness of my work both as a feminist sociologist focusing on farming, environment, and climate change and as a part-time, small-scale sheep farmer where I live in British Columbia. What am I really trying to do on both fronts? When I listen to the news on CBC about Climate Change or about the scale of the TPP trade agreement of which Canada is most likely to be part, I feel like crawling into some hole to hide and curling up with a book that uses words like subsistence, commons, peasant, sufficiency, and different kinds of earth-respectful economies. Maybe there in subterranean networks I can be with others who also feel these words hold some precious insights and passwords to better worlds. I remember those lines in W. B. Yeats' poem that invokes the flight underground by the ancient Tuatha na Daanan peoples when invaders (some attribute the flight to the arrival of Christianity) came to

Ireland in early times. They continue to seductively sing unheard to us moderns above ground, "Come away, oh human child! To the waters and the wild... for the world's more full of weeping than you can understand" (W. B. Yeats, "The Stolen Child"). In Irish folklore, the "pagan," once god-like, Tuatha na Daanan continued to live their subaltern lives emerging to play with, disrupt, and thwart those living above ground with disturbing frequency. Mythologically, they embodied beliefs about the sacredness of the Earth. We moderns misunderstood the importance of living respectfully with the Earth, reducing such pagan ideas to mere irrational disruptions of our projects of controlling nature. Today the notion of peasantry is trivialized for "messaging up" the fantasies of modernity. It is symbolically buried as a relic of history rather than a potentially life-saving intervention into our fantasies.

But this is no time to go underground. Even if we did, the troubles won't go away. And we have debts to pay. One of these debts is to pass on to others lessons about what Vandana Shiva framed as "Staying Alive." Depending on our experiences this might include the wisdom and logic of peasant-like economies, subsistence economies, ideas of enough, refusing to participate in the destruction of the environment or respecting our storied ways of living that deeply value place. I grew up around the remnants of a so-called post-colonial but still colonized semi-peasant economy. I use the term logic above because I am talking about the kinds of understandings that inform the organization of economies. I am not talking about the empirical historical experiences of peasant economies that were often framed within larger contexts of colonialism or other kinds of exploitative value extraction, but about

the understandings that informed them. These peasant logics (they are plural) I am talking about varied and vary historically and from place to place. They are built on logics of living interdependently with place under difficult circumstances—in good time and bad times. In these logics nature embodied in and as place keeps us alive. Jan Douwe Van der Ploeg has described the contemporary challenge of the peasantry (and maybe or most of us) as that of “living with Empire.”

It has taken my own academic work on re-peasantization to allow me to see the intergenerational and multispecies logic of the small-scale farming of the world in which I grew up in Ireland. On the surface it looked like a lot of hard work and no money. The land was so important—in good and bad ways.² Despite its darker sides I am coming to grasp how invaluable much of the logic organizing that economy is to helping us today to live in a time of climate change—if we could extract it from Empire—or Empire from it. Learning more about climate change, food, and farming I see new connections. Elisa Da Via’s, Anthony Pahnke’s, and Van der Ploeg’s research on the contemporary, globally diverse processes of re-peasantization, the world’s largest social movement network of Via Campesina, feminist analysis of subsistence perspectives (Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies), Vandana Shiva’s misunderstood early work in *Staying Alive* and those small farms in Ireland are all analytically connected in important ways.

In modern societies, even when we felt nostalgically romantic about the past, there was a tendency to feel we had moved on, that we have progressed toward the promises of better futures. Climate change has shattered that confidence. Just as some of us were being taught by Indigenous societies to think in terms of seven generations to come, scientific information raised questions about the possibility of a seventh generation at all or about what their worlds might be like. But if we are ethically obliged to care for those who will live in the future are we also not ethically obliged to care for the dead? It seems to me that right now we are unable to do either and that these inabilities are connected. Put another way, caring for and respecting the dead is a way of caring for the future. In recognizing the logics and value of subsistence and peasant economies are we calling on the dead to help us stay alive? Such an idea will only shock if you think of those older logics as dead. But they are not dead. They are not relics but lively guiding spirits—maybe like those mythological helpers who, at least in ancient myths or in some kinds of psychoanalytic theories, constantly turn up in time of need.

But what has talk of the dead and relics got to do with subsistence economies, peasants or re-peasantization? Quite a

bit. I am not being flakey. In the modernist consignment of the peasantry and subsistence economies to the trash cans of history (McMichael) along with other no longer useful apparent relics of the past one can see an element of mythical if not magical thinking. First, it is ‘magical’ in its attempts to make the peasantry disappear when, as we will read below, the peasantries are far from gone away. It is magical also in that it is an attempt to externalize what it fears. Peasantry and subsistence are humbling conditions to modern subjects’ self-understanding and to modern States’ political claims about territory. Onto “the peasant” and the idea of subsistence are projected the very things from which modernity is supposed to have freed us. Modernity’s self-shadows. Backwardness, drudgery, dependence on nature, constrained in time and space, and the recognitions that we are creatures of the earth, water and the land. We belong first to place and only secondary—if at all—to the imagined geo-political space of State territory. Place, of course, may not be fixed but may include nomadic pathways, fluid and liminal relationships.

It is no accident then that notions about subsistence, the commons, the peasantry are so often pronounced “dead” by many in the Global North, even when speaking of the Global South. This declaration of death is premature, or more correctly, unwarranted. It is everyday disrupted by the growing vitality of new forms of peasant, peasant-like and related movements. It is even being found to be alive and well in the Global North (often travelling under assumed identities) as the work of Van der Ploeg and others shows. “It Takes Roots” declare an Indigenous people delegation at COP 21 in Paris—to “build an economy for people and planet” (It Takes Roots). But the fake obituary notices still run in many places. Declarations of premature death, Mary Hawkworth reminds us in her analysis of the semiotics of the premature burial of feminism, really tell us about the living. The public writing of death-certificates, whether for feminism, or in our focus here on the idea of subsistence, involves particular kinds of mis-representations. Such textual accounts of premature death, Hawkworth writes, “...serve as allegorical signs for something else, a means of identifying a perceived danger in need of elimination, a way for a community to define itself through those it symbolically chooses to kill” (963). What are the dangers in the concepts of subsistence? What is it about the idea or reality of the peasantry that need to be symbolically killed or erased by illusions of modernity? Could it be that what is being killed-off in the declaration that subsistence economies and the peasantry are dead (or dying) are a) ideological threats to the fantasies of modernity and b) practical threats to the political economies of global agri-business? If so, this would help explain why it

is important to declare the peasant way, subsistence, and sufficiency dead, dying, or irrelevant.

All that said the term subsistence still feels like a bit of a downer...

The term subsistence stills feels like a bit of a downer to me. It sounds dreary, as being about drudgery and endless struggle. But at least one etymological dictionary surprised me with the positive meanings of that word and offers me deeper insights into the impulses towards the concept's erasure and degradation.

of economic realities are often inversions of what is really going on. They argued that popular ideas about economic dependence and independence need to be turned upside down. It used to be, they point out, that wage labour was seen as an undesirable form of economic dependence, not as independence. From that perspective being a waged employee is to be economically dependent. One does not need to be a political libertarian to ask how it is that relying on debt and someone else's decision to hire us to put bread on the table and a roof

Concepts like subsistence, peasantry or sufficiency have been misrepresented in ways that hide the transgressive nature of the logic of peasant-like economic ideas. Could it be that our dominant ideas about "the economy" are keeping us trapped and that actually concepts like subsistence, sufficiency and peasantry offer keys to escape?

Subsistence

*“early 15c., “existence, independence,” from Late Latin *subsistentia* “substance, reality,” in Medieval Latin also “stability,” from Latin *subsistens*, present participle of *subsistere* “stand still or firm” (see *subsist*). Latin *subsistentia* is a loan-translation of Greek *hypostasis* “foundation, substance, real nature, subject matter; that which settles at the bottom, sediment,” literally “anything set under.” In the English word, meaning “act or process of support for physical life” is from 1640s.” (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=subsistence>)*

If Mary Hawkworth is right then ideas of independence, reality, foundation, real nature, processes of support for physical life embedded in the concept of subsistence contain symbolic dangers for the contemporary social order. In an age of extinction and climate change—the meaning of subsistence doesn't sound so bad to me. In an age of globalized private governance the notion of independence has appeal. Subsistence is beginning to sound more and more attractive.

When one looks more closely one finds that concepts like subsistence, peasantry, or sufficiency have been misrepresented in ways that ideologically validate the contemporary forms of socio-economic order and hide the transgressive nature of the logic of peasant-like economic ideas. If so, could it be that many of our dominant ideas about “the economy” and economic arrangements are keeping us trapped and that actually concepts like subsistence, sufficiency and peasantry offer keys to escape? Feminist theorists Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon explain that every day understandings

over our heads is not seen as political and economic dependence? Could it not be argued that it is a very real kind of drudgery and misery to live in a world framed by elite organized trade agreements in which we are told that we can't stop climate change tomorrow because we need to produce and purchase (largely unnecessary) stuff today? Subsistence and peasant economies are at least partially outside those catch 22 prisons. Despite the unjust conditions under which those economic logics were often found in historical times, today subsistence and peasantry as logics of being-in-the-world may have a lot going for them.

Michael DeFlorian is getting at something similar when he advocates for sufficiency as a new form of governmentality in an era of climate change. Sufficiency, he explains implies a critique of the imperative of economic growth. It calls for a return to a “sufficient” degree of consumption and partial subsistence in order to reach qualitative well-being. As such it would involve the reconfiguration of current governmentalities and the construction of new kinds of subjects to counter the consuming subject of neoliberalism. This, he continues, would involve what he describes as the development of two new “technologies of the self: the rebalancing of needs (through the reflection on personal aspirations) and the self-furnishing of demands”. This latter transformation of the subject from consumer to ecological citizen in a more just forms of self-and public governance and would include practices like gardening, repairing and shared consumption. In that way, he explains, “the governmentality of sufficiency remediates elements of liberalism and modern progress to guarantee a ‘good life’ for all in a warming world.”

Trying to Put into Words

You can see how I was so pleased to be part of that session in Ottawa and very grateful to people like Leigh Brownhill and Angela Miles and others for enabling this kind of work that in a time of climate change is more important than ever. It felt like an invitation to join others in taking ecofeminism or ecological feminisms into new political and conceptual hybrids—new species adaptations between feminisms and peasant agro-economics, subsistence, an-

economic logics and those who embody them are being declared dead.

If I had to sum it up what would I say? I would say that the concepts of subsistence, sufficiency provisioning, the commons and others that were central to our discussions in Ottawa are in fact radical, potentially mind-body and consumer-society transformative conceptual and political tools. As conceptual tools they are relatively easily accessible to those of us who are not Indigenous to the places where we live, work or study in Canada. These may allow those

Re-peasantization is a logic of ecological, economic, and socio-cultural survival in the shadow of Empire. We all now live in new kinds of Empires' shadows. Peasant movements and re-peasantization are fields to which we feminist scholars and activists need to better attend. Doing so would help evade new kinds of colonization by seductive neoliberal subjectivities.

ti-commodity production, different kinds of provisioning system, ecological respectful and socially just way of living with each other. And equally important, ways of living with other-than humans, whether winged, finned, four-legged or otherwise embodied: a world of Donna Haraway's multi-species muddles or Chris Cuomo's ethic of co-flourishing.

Mostly I find myself talking in places where I am not among like-minded colleagues and feminist thinkers. Trying to talk of subsistence, peasant economic logics, the commons or reproduction in such situations reminds me of the impossibility of speaking with female sounding voices in places of power. If I may heuristically and temporarily employ essentialisms here I am reminded of how feminist theorists explained years ago that in places of power one can't be really heard or taken seriously if one speaks like or sounds like a woman. However, speaking like a man with a woman's voice sounds shrill and also un-listenable to. It is challenging to speak in conventional sites of power. So too is it challenging to use words like subsistence, peasant, and the commons in an age of bi- and multilateral trade agreements, and of a war on climate change (rather than care for the earth), because it makes one sound irrelevant or silly. To use these words is to speak from beyond the pale of intelligible global conversations.³

There must be some way of talking about these concepts, ideas and alternative economic logics that can be heard. But heard by whom? Am I trying to get privileged elites to take these other logics of being in the world seriously? How can they? These words are the counter narratives to their own stories: stories that justify their lives and their privilege. This at least is partly why these alternative

of us who are relatively new to the places where we live to revisit our own dead and tell different and more livable stories for different futures, and to not try to appropriate others' stories. Indigenous peoples have immense knowledge traditions that speak to being in and of place and although these are profoundly instructive and must be respected; they cannot be appropriated.

Stock market indices, GDP, debt, interest rates, and markets for new kinds of financial derivatives, all sound like more realistic kinds of economic-talk than talk of subsistence or peasant economics. How does one argue that there needs to be new kinds of hybrid politics, economics and research to help us to survive in troubled times? How do we have these important conversations when economic logics and words such as subsistence or peasantry that embody living interdependently with nature have to be symbolically killed for the good of the "the (globalized-market) economy?" But let me try.

If I Could Put It Into Words...

If I could be articulate and coherent I would say that work on subsistence, re-peasantization, food sovereignty, and the articles in this issue of *CWS/cf* can help steer feminism away from being co-opted by capitalism and the seductions of neo-liberal subjectifications that Nancy Fraser, Hester Eisenstein, Ann Ferguson, and others identify so clearly in the case of feminism, and Julie Guthman and others identify with respect to the growing local food movement.

And if I could speak in any half coherent way I would put into words why those of us who work in the local

food movement and around agri-food systems and (what is called) sustainability need far better feminist analysis. I would try to explain that reference to family, household, and community in much of the politics, practices, and theorization around re-peasantization, alternative food networks, and anti-commodity sociations can unintentionally reproduce classed, racialized, and gendered assumptions. These fields of research and inquiry need more feminist analysis. And much contemporary feminism needs to attend seriously to work on subsistence and peasant economics. This is not least because of the problematic seductions of neoliberal consumer identity that colonize much contemporary gendered performances and in so doing inevitably symbolically (and materially) erases the significances of subsistence and the logics of peasantries. The editors of this issue, of course, will quickly remind us that what is (probably) the largest social movement network in the world, Via Campesina, translated as *the peasant way*, makes the rights to subsistence and gender justice central to its politics and its resistance to the neo-liberalization of the dominant agri-food system. These interconnections are no accident but conceptually as well as politically grounded. These lessons from the Global South need to be learned by those in the Global North.

In other words—the marginalized technologies of being-in-the world of subsistence, sufficiency, and peasantries can teach much about how to *Stay Alive* (Shiva). Re-peasantization, Van der Ploeg explains, is a logic of ecological, economic, and socio-cultural survival in the shadow of Empire. We all now live in new kinds of Empires' shadows. Peasant movements and re-peasantization are fields to which we feminist scholars and activists need to better attend. Doing so would help evade new kinds of colonization by seductive neoliberal subjectivities.

My point is that instead of seeing the word “peasant” as referencing either a despised or romanticized pre-modern past, we can learn lessons about living in an age of Empire and Extinctions. These latter terms, Empire and Extinction (or made to disappear) to me are better terms than the Anthropocene. Research on small scale-farming and alternative provisioning of anti-commodity production or the diversity and resilience of peasantries globally is telling us that we have much to learn from these ways of being. This is not a retreat to the past (which of course is not past—the same struggles about respect and justice continue in new embodiments). It is about being very smart and brave, staying alive, and keeping those we love and care for (including non-human nature) alive and well. Sounds like “women’s work.”

Ecofeminism has long told us that the dominant political and economic systems of high modernity and

corporate dominated capitalism actively constructs Nature(s) as Other from which we need protection and which must be managed as resources, by experts. What do we do when new experts offer green capitalism or some variation on sustainable corporatism as the only realistic way of responding to climate change? The peasantry, on the other hand, have long relied on the diversity, complexity, and autonomy of the self-organizing capacities of nature to protect and buffer them from the vagaries of the market place and elite exploitation. This is a very different way of being in the world—materially and symbolically. It opens an intergenerational logic of co-survival—of intertwined nature and people. It speaks to complex entanglements of co-production between animate and inanimate, of webs of actants (Latour), of multispecies muddles (Haraway). This world cannot be contained by the modernist simplifications of life and space so central to the organization of State building industrial societies (Scott), and the territorialisation of place. How did terra become State territory? I suspect the dead can tell me.

I have argued that it is because particular ways of being-in-the world such as subsistence, sufficiency, peasant or re-peasantization, anti-commodity production or the commons are so transgressive of dominant political and economic arrangements that they have to be declared dead. But they are not. They do and shall keep us alive.

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¹Networks of scholars working outside mainstream academia are showing how peasant agro-ecologies and Indigenous people’s methodologies avoid the destructiveness of modernist food provisioning. More than that, research is showing, these kinds of agro-ecological world can both feed communities and help cool the planet.

²The ownership of land was used to reproduce patriarchal relationships and inequalities.

³No wonder I find it challenging to speak of such profoundly different economies and ways of being-in-the world without sounding flaky. Yes words like subsistence economies are used when talking (in the Global North) about the Global South. The unspoken assumption is that ‘they’ will escape subsistence and join ‘us’ in the global marketplace—with the help of Philanthropic Foundations and International Aid from the North and all sorts of neo-liberal economic governance regimes.

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ALISON NEWALL

Drag the Red

In Winnipeg,
the stalwart women grieve,
draw on long, strong roots,
and cast their nets for a harvest of sorrow.
Where are our sister, daughters, mothers?
Vanished into the indifferent snow.

Once they sang, loved, hoped.
Now, there is silence, a festering absence.

Once these women were the cradle
for the people,
once they were the vibrant,
sacred heart of the land.

Now, unrecognized, elided,
they lift urgent voices:

Drag the Red:
reclaim the disappeared,
bring home the broken bodies of our sisters
so we can make them whole again,

with love.

A Montreal-based writer and translator, Alison Newall has been an avid reader and writer all her life, discovering the magic of words when she learned to read, and the magic of writing shortly after that. Short stories have appeared in Hejira and The Female Complaint, while her poems have been published in Fruits of the Branch, carte blanche, JARM, and CWS/cf. She is currently working on a poetry chapbook and a novel for younger readers.

VIVIAN DEMUTH

Moose Research

We had to put Winter ticks on them, the first wild moose to be captured and penned in Algonquin Park. Controlled. For the scientist's post-doc. It was winter, cold. We watched them weaken. They were starved deliberately. Why aren't those photos in the public's eye?

I was temporary. The other technicians, all women, became unruly, screamed louder than wind. In the end, the moose were cut into pieces, liver, heart, blood. Did the moose think us human, stumbling blind through snow to attach more ticks to their relatives?

The scientist's eyes sparkled when he raved about his research. Photos in books of his children petting the moose. He thought diet played a role in the moose's death with ticks. Wasn't that obvious? The women tech went on strike. Holy flying furies.

They refused to harm the moose. I dreamed of my mother's coat of arms, the deer family, and prayed. But I was sent to another job, interviewed deer hunters. Examined ungulate jaws while those Algonquin moose were killed. Babes too. For knowledge.

Science meant nothing to the surviving park moose. It never benefitted them. Later, another scientist stated there was no connection between the number of moose and ticks. The scientists stabbed the surface. When will we leave others alone?

The moose and ticks can take care of themselves. I wanted to work in nature. With animals. Instead, I worked with the dead. Commodities, an outdoor, voiceless market. We talked with the research moose. Learned their language. Guttural bawling moans.

A few years ago, I heard a wild moose while picking nettles. I fled immediately but she gave chase. Protecting her young. The moose show us when it is okay to run. Earth's eco-cycles teach a different lesson than blue-ribboned science experiments.

Vivian Demuth's ecofeminist novel, Bear War-den, has been published April 2015 by Inanna Publications. Her poetry book, Fire Watcher (Guernica Editions, 2013) was a finalist for the 2013 Banff Mountain Fiction and Poetry Award. Vivian is also the author of an ecological novel, Eyes of the Forest (Smoky Peach Press, 2007). Her fiction and poetry have been published in journals and anthologies in Canada the United States, Mexico, and Europe and has been broadcast on CBC radio. She has worked as a park ranger and park warden, an outdoor educator, and as a fire lookout in the Rocky Mountains.

The “Greening” of the UN Framework on Climate Change and Environmental Racism

What Payment for Ecosystem Services Means for Peasants and Indigenous Peoples, Women and Men

ANA ISLA

Dans cet article, l’auteure présente la perspective d’une écologie politique de l’environnement suivie de critiques écoféministes et écosocialistes qui soulignent que le système patriarcal capitaliste a maintenu des relations de pouvoir sur les femmes, les paysans, les autochtones dans les pays soi-disant sous-développés et sur la nature. Ensuite elle applique ces données aux analyses issues du protocole de Kyoto, au Costa Rica, du programme REDD+ au Brésil. Elle a décrit la guerre des autochtones et des paysans qui subsistent en dépit des économies émergentes. Elle a introduit le capitalisme “vert” comme une autre façon d’accumuler et avance que la vraie guerre n’est pas contre la pauvreté et les émissions de gaz mais contre subsister.

The Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in November 2014 confirms that “human influence on the climate is clear, and [that] recent anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are the highest in history. Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human

and natural systems.” (IPCC 2014: 2). The Fifth Assessment Report predicts further increases in average surface temperatures, and the report demonstrates that anthropogenic emissions such as fossil fuels, cement, and flaring, as well as forestry and other land uses, are central in the warming of the climate worldwide. Many scientists agree that the most effective way to respond to the loss and damage of ecosystems produced by global warming is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions made by coal, oil, gas, and cement in large corporations located in the U.S. (21), Europe (17), Canada (6), Russia (2), Australia (1), Japan (1), Mexico (1), and South Africa (1) (Heede). As the Fifth Assessment Report states, “Limiting climate change would require substantial and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that, together with adaptation, can limit climate change risks” (8). A net reduction in emissions by 2050 could keep global warming below two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit). However, scientists argue that two degrees Celsius is a prescription for a long-term disaster (Roach).

While the large-scale drivers of deforestation and climate change remain unaddressed, a grim concern at the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (UNCCC) is the development of numerous “payments for ecosystem services” (PES) for carbon capture. In this paper, I analyze the UNCCC neoliberal political ecology of monetizing nature: first, through the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty which extends the 1992 UNFCCC that commits State Parties to reduce greenhouse gases emissions; and second, through REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), a mechanism that has been under negotiation by the UNFCCC since 2005, with the objective of mitigating climate change through reducing net emissions of greenhouse gases in the industrial world as long as it can purchase carbon credits from indebted rainforest-dense countries. There are several other payments for ecosystem services, resulting from the Conference of the Parties on Climate Change, that I do not cover in this piece due to space constraints.

I will focus on the ways that corporations and governments in industrial countries maintain they can achieve

emissions reductions through buying forestry certifications that attest to the claim that carbon has been absorbed in the forest in question. In this paper, I will draw on ecofeminist subsistence perspectives and ecosocialism to look at the use of the forest as carbon credit. My purpose is to challenge claims often made by the UNCCC that the “green economy” creates social

how the patriarchal capitalist system maintains relationships of domination and subordination of women, peasants, Indigenous peoples, the so-called developing countries, and nature. I then apply these insights to analyze the Kyoto Protocol in Costa Rica and REDD+ in Brazil. I document a war against the subsistence lifestyle of peasants and Indigenous people,

In short, nature is transformed into a means of production and value commodification of ecosystem services.

Key concepts in the “green economy” are: natural capital and payment for ecosystem services. Natural capital refers to the goods and services that the planet’s stock of water, land, air, and renewable and non-renewable resources (such as plant and animal

They advocate that the “green” economy can resolve this problem through the monetization of nature, meaning the transformation of ecosystem components or processes into products or services that can be privately appropriated, assigned exchange values, and traded in markets.

equality, reduces poverty, confronts ecological destruction, and combats climate change. Instead, I argue that the “green economy” is a new stage of capital accumulation, led by the United Nations, which is a result of monetary economics being applied to nature, and which I call “greening.” It has nothing to do with cutting greenhouse gas emissions or climate change. Instead, both the Kyoto Protocol and REDD+ program swing the burden of reducing climate change onto the indebted periphery and its inhabitants, thus delaying the decision to move to cleaner technologies. This approach allows industrial countries to continue building polluting infrastructures, and therefore rely even more on dirty energy. This “greening’s” *raison d’être* is the restructuring of indebted peripheral capacities to expand global capital and create new conditions for capital accumulation, while robbing and undermining the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the worker.

In this paper, first, I present the political ecology of the environmental management perspective, followed by critiques from ecofeminists and ecosocialists that have underlined

women and men, in the peripheral and emerging economies. I conclude by introducing “green” capitalism as another phase of capital accumulation, arguing that its real war is not against poverty and emissions of greenhouse gases but against subsistence.

The Environmental Management Perspective of the United Nations

Since the recognition of the environmental crisis (WCED), nature has become monopolized as a property of globalized capital. Articulated by the World Bank, at the Earth Summits, capitalist development and the environment have become linked. According to World Bank economists, the root of the environmental crisis is due to the absence of prices for biodiversity, air, water, scenery, etc. (see Pearce and Warford; Hamilton). They advocate that the “green” economy can resolve this problem through the monetization of nature, meaning the transformation of ecosystem components or processes into products or services that can be privately appropriated, assigned exchange values, and traded in markets.

species, forests, and minerals) provides. “Payment for Ecosystem Services” (PES) is a voluntary transaction in which a buyer, from the industrial world, pays a supplier for a well-defined environmental service, such as a patch of forest or a form of land use, and that supplier effectively controls the service that ensures his supply (Fatheuer 46). PES can be quantified through the calculation of compensation, i.e., the costs and benefits of a decision. In sum, payments for ecosystem services represents tons of CO₂ from an arboreal project that declares it is reducing CO₂ emissions and avoiding deforestation.

The monetization of nature and its services has unified financial institutions, corporations, the industrial world, indebted periphery, emerging markets, environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS), and others. For instance, in Central America, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, developed Plan Puebla Panama (PPP), also called the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. The 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, outlined the *Iniciativa para la Integración de la Infraestructura Regional Sudamericana*

(IIRSA) (the South American Regional Infrastructure Integration Initiative). The argument in both initiatives is that investment in infrastructure needs to be scaled up to support the broader economic growth and development agenda that will be expanded by the commodification of nature. In 2012, the Earth Summit Rio+20, held in Brazil, promised to deliver the “green economy” by stimulating reduction of carbon emissions, efficient usage of natural resources, and social inclusion, through the monetization of nature (Isla). The People’s Summit, held at the same time as Rio+20, however, called the “green economy” a false solution. They maintain that the ecological calamity is due to production and consumption patterns developed by the market economy.

Critiques to the Environmental Management Perspective: Ecofeminism and Ecosocialism

Feminists worldwide (Shiva; Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies; von Werlhof; Salleh 1997, 2004) challenge the environmental management school by arguing that in the current economic system, in which there are three economies working—the market economy, the sustenance economy, and the natural economy—the clash between these economies, has produced the current social and ecological crises.

The *Market Economy* is the visible and regulated part of the growth economy. It counts in the GDP. The growth economy is a cultural, financial, and political system in which the means of production and distribution are privately owned to create surplus value and increase labour productivity. This domain (of men) has created a public world that ignores the physical reality of human existence. It is where pollution is produced by industrialization, urbanization,

and consumerism, resulting in the *ecological rift* expressed in the social and ecological crises.

The *Sustenance Economy or Social Reproduction* is the invisible unpaid or poorly paid parts of the economy that sustain metabolic relations with nature. Those in this economy are feminized, resourced, primitivized, and diminished. But *they are suited for the continuance of life* and do not produce waste. This economy is reproduced by:

- women, through the maintenance of a home, bearing children, socializing children to reproduce labour power, though their work is enforced by rape, harassment, and sexual assault;
- peasants working on subsistence farming and horticulture;
- Indigenous people’s cultural survival lay knowledge; and,
- colonies that reproduce biological infrastructure for all economic systems.

Feminists argue that the sustenance economy bridges human and natural cycles, because this work is universal, integral, and in touch with the ecosystem. It rarely uses up more matter/energy in resources than is needed for bodily provisioning. All of these members can meet their needs for health care and nutrition through their resources and knowledge. Nevertheless their work is enforced by repression. Most times, they are reduced to cheap labour or DNA.

The *Natural Economy* is reproduced through ecological processes: the water cycle, the oxygen cycle, and the nitrogen cycle that sustain all life forms. The ecosystem provides life through its free environmental services and it is a perfect recycling body where nothing goes to waste. The *water cycle* is organized around the heat of the sun that causes water in rivers, lakes, and seas to evaporate.

The moist air rises, it condensates into particles of water or ice. Water precipitates out of the clouds and back to the earth’s surface. The *oxygen cycle* is produced around the plants that produce oxygen. Animals breathe the oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide (CO₂), and plants absorb CO₂ and produce more oxygen. The *nitrogen cycle* is organized by bacteria that help the nitrogen change between states, through decomposing bodies, until plants and trees absorb them through their roots. Human and non-human animals get nitrogen from plants. It produces free environmental services and does not produce waste, however nature’s work is enforced by ecocide or destruction of nature.

In sum, ecofeminists maintain that the market economy is a small island surrounded by an ocean of unpaid, caring, domestic work, and free environmental services.

Ecosocialists also contest the environmental management school. They claim that in the ecosystem, time and space modalities in the market economy are in conflict with the time and space of the natural economy. They maintain that the planet is materially finite, meaning there are biological limits to the volume of economic activity the biosphere can support. Elmar Altvater, for example, argues that the first law of thermodynamics (i.e., the total amount of energy in the universe is constant), and the second law of thermodynamics (entropy always increases in the universe) are natural laws that the economic system cannot overcome (84-85). He contends that ecological modalities of time and space are irreversible and inevitable as disorder increases in the universe. Jean-Paul Deléage contends that capital cannot control the reproduction and modification of the natural conditions of reproduction in the same way it aims to regulate industrial commodity production (50). Despite this reality, Michael Goldman

maintains that "...Global Resource Managers continue to serve the institution of development, whose *raison d'être* is restructuring Third World capacities and social-natural relations to accommodate transnational capital expansion" (47). According to John B. Foster, Brett Clarck, and Richard York, Marx's analysis highlights the *metabolic rift*, a rift that clashes with

The "Greening" of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Environmental Racism

At the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, governments first agreed to tackle climate change. Scientific theories have highlighted the fact that forest vegetation absorbs and stores carbon

carbon dioxide, focused on the forests of indebted countries. The Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Fund evolved into the Clean Development Mechanism that allows a country to implement an emission-reduction project in developing countries, while giving industrialized countries some flexibility in how they meet their emission reduction. Since the indus-

Capitalism robs and undermines the original sources of all wealth—soil and worker—by reducing nature's use value to goods and services for capital accumulation. The expropriation of producers from their conditions of labour constitutes the common basis of class struggle in a capitalist system.

the natural cycles of life under capitalism. Capitalism robs and undermines the original sources of all wealth—soil and worker—by reducing nature's use value to goods and services for capital accumulation. The expropriation of producers from their conditions of labour constitutes the common basis of class struggle in a capitalist system. In sum, ecosocialists challenge the political ecology of neoliberalism, that is, the transforming of global nature into "market natures," but they still deny that the class politics of capital accumulation is tied to the experience of the unwaged (women and Indigenous people) or poorly waged (peasants and colonies), being resourced and the degradation of their natural work condition.

What follows exposes how the use value of nature is damaged and how the unwaged and poorly-waged are incorporated into capital accumulation by the Kyoto Protocol implemented in Costa Rica (Isla) and the REDD+ programs implemented in Brazil. I argue that giving monetary value to the natural economy requires damaging the soil and devaluing other forms of peasant and Indigenous peoples' social existence.

that might otherwise trap heat in the atmosphere, driving up temperatures and speeding up climate change. At the Climate Change Convention held in Kyoto in 1997, industrial countries proposed the creation of mechanisms to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Absorbing carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the overflowing waste of industrial countries to reduce the greenhouse effect has become part of the sustainable development agenda. According to the UNFCCC, countries or industries that manage to reduce carbon emissions to levels below their designated amount would be able to sell their credits to other countries or industries that exceed their emission levels.

The Kyoto Protocol was the aftermath to the UNFCCC, which set a non-binding goal of stabilizing emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000. Among the six kinds of targeted gases is CO₂, which is discharged disproportionately by the industrial world. However, reducing emissions implies high costs for industries. So the major emitting corporations, with the backing of their governments, proposed a self-interested solution: the creation of a global market in

trial world is not held responsible for mitigating its own level of emissions, this type of solution allows the industrial world to continue polluting as long as it can purchase carbon credits from indebted rainforest-dense countries. Meanwhile, energy-related emissions produced by the increase in the amounts of fossil fuels, cement, and flaring, mainly in the industrial world, proceed unimpeded.

Since Kyoto, rainforests have been valued economically in terms of the amount of carbon they sequester. As carbon emissions became subject to trading on the open market, the rainforests of the world became valued as carbon sinks, with predictably disastrous results for the forest dwellers. An example of this is the widespread peasant land dispossession that took place in Costa Rica.

A) Kyoto Protocol: Peasants' Expropriation and Crisis of Women and Nature

Costa Rica was the first country to take part in the Joint Implementation Program (JIP) organized by the United Nations (UNFCCC). JIP allows an industrialized country to earn emission reduction credits by buying

them from another country. Costa Rica was one of the first countries to voluntarily sell carbon credits to the industrial world to achieve emission reductions. It was presented as the international model for Kyoto and guidelines were outlined by the World Wild Life Fund (WWF) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in collaboration with the national government (Isla).

One of the worst effects of “greening” is the crisis of nature. The Costa Rican government, through its Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), appraises the ability of private forest farms to sell carbon credits. However, selling carbon credits is particularly promoted among large-scale agricultural entrepreneurs in association with international capital. Lands categorized as forest reserves, which receive payments for environmental services, are exempted from property taxes. This tax relief, under a scheme called Fiscal Forestry Incentives (FFI), subsidizes plantations owned by international capital to promote foreign forest species of high yield and great market acceptance, such as gmelina (*Gmelina arborea* used by Stone Forestry, a U.S. corporation) and teak (*Tectona grandis* used by Bosques Puerto Carrillo, a U.S. corporation and Maderas de Costa Rica S.A., or Macori, now Precious Wood Ltd., a Swiss corporation). These trees are native to South and Southeast Asia. Mono-arboriculture has been defined in this system as “reforestation” even though these plantations constitute artificial ecosystems, and corporations are allowed to cut the trees down after 15 years of growth and transform them into wood for floors or paper, boxes for fruit export, or for furniture. With credits provided by the World Bank, the Costa Rican government enthusiastically promoted the conversion of forest ecosystems into sterile monocultures by planting homoge-

neous forests (Baltodano 2003, 2004; Figuerola 2005).

The monoculture of tree species has become a time bomb for biodiversity in Costa Rica. The natural forest of the humid tropics is a highly productive ecosystem. For instance, a hectare of tropical forest has more than three hundred species of trees. Biodiversity means that a forest will have a great number of *leguminosae* (trees, shrubs, plants) with leaves of different sizes, which lessen the impact of rainfall and prevent erosion. Sonia Torres, a forestry engineer, explains how teak plantations have resulted in the erosion of flatlands:

Since the planting of these foreign species, I have observed that teak has a root system that grows deep into the soil, but in the rainforest the systems of nutrient and water absorption are at the surface. In general, nutrients and water are concentrated at a depth of between 70 and 100 centimeters. As a result, teak trees are encircled by flaked soil. In addition, when it rains, the large-sized leaf accumulates great amounts of water that then pours violently onto the soil. A drop of water, at a microscopic level, forms a crater; when water falls from 15 meters or more it forms holes. Water descending on soft soil destroys the soil. The far-reaching spread of the roots and the shade produced by the leaves obstruct the vegetative growth on the lower forest layer, which could prevent the soil damage from the violent cascades. (Personal interview, August 2000)

Ecologists from Costa Rica oppose the payment of environmental services for arboreal monoculture. A monoculture is not a forest because it does not reproduce itself but

rather needs external inputs such as agrochemicals to grow to maturity (Shiva). Many of the ecologists are not against selling so-called environmental services in general, but instead they promote reforestation through the natural and simple regeneration of secondary forests, which conserve biodiversity and regulate hydrology (Figuerola 2003; Franceschi). They argue that the conservation of forests with native wood species and associated plants and fauna should be a priority, that restoration and natural regeneration, with its own ecological complexity, is a legitimate goal, and that local peasants must be taken into consideration to avoid irreconcilable conflicts.

As the ecosystem disintegrates, it has powerful effects on the degree of oppression endured by peasant women and children. For them, the disappearance of forests is an issue of survival, forcing them to migrate to San José, the capital of Costa Rica, and/or to other ecotourist areas, in the hope of earning an income for themselves and their dispossessed families. Introduced into the cash economy, some impoverished women have little option but to earn all or part of their living as prostitutes. Ecotourism links conservation areas and promises a risk-free world of leisure and freedom for those with money to pay. At the same time, sex tourism offers women’s and children’s feminized bodies as commodities that are pure, exotic, and erotic. This image of Costa Rica entangles two aspects of capitalist patriarchal economics: the domination of creditors (core countries) over debtors (the periphery); and the psychology of the patriarchy in which men develop their “masculation.” Masculation is the exploitative masculine identity created by the alienated world of patriarchal capitalism through compliant bodies (Vaughan). As Costa Rican people are increasingly impoverished, the

enclosure of the commons, the mark of international power relations, is stamped on the bodies of its children and women.

Jacobo Schifter estimates that there are between 10,000 and 20,000 sex workers in the country, and between 25,000 and 50,000 sex tourists—he calls them “whoremongers,” meaning regular clients—who visit each year.

greenhouse gas emissions, but instead has allowed capital to stake a total victory for a market-based approach to climate change. Thus, during the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP), new programs for payment for ecosystem services, such as Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest (REDD and REDD+) and the European Emissions Trading

droughts in South, Central and North America should be expected.

At COP 21 in France, in December 2015, the increase of greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere, from around 360 parts per million (ppm) to over 400 ppm, was acknowledged. As a result, the international carbon markets and carbon pricing that achieved international recognition

As the ecosystem disintegrates, it has powerful effects on the degree of oppression endured by peasant women and children. The disappearance of forests is an issue of survival, forcing them to migrate to the capital of Costa Rica and/or to other ecotourist areas, in the hope of earning an income for themselves and their dispossessed families.

Eighty percent are U.S. citizens (43). Schifter concludes:

Obviously, globalization has linked us to an international economy in which each country finds their specialization. In the Latin countries, it is increasingly concentrated in our genitalia. If in agriculture and industry our hands and feet had given us food before, now penises and vaginas do. In the case of Costa Rica, whether we like it or not, sex tourism is a strong component of our Gross National Product. (265)

Tim Rogers reports that the U.S. has become Costa Rica's pimp, as crack cocaine and sex with prostitutes helps narcissistic male tourists and old retirees affirm their masculinity and “escape reality” from their dissatisfied financial and social decline back home.

As Costa Rica slides into a subordinated position internationally, the country becomes a paradise for sex trafficking, paedophilia, and child pornography.

The Kyoto Protocol has not reduced

Systems (ETS) emissions certificates were sanctioned.

B) REDD+: Expropriation of Indigenous Peoples' Territories and Crises of Nature and People

The crisis of nature in Brazil lies in the Amazon rainforest. The Amazon Basin contains the world's largest rainforest, which represents over 60 percent of the world's remaining rainforest. Through transpiration, the Amazon creates between 50 to 75 percent of its own precipitation. But its impact extends well beyond the Amazon Basin by feeding the largest river on the planet (the Amazonas), suppressing the risk of fire as well as creating moisture that travels through the canopy to Central and North America (Medvigy, Walko, Otte and Avissar). The canopy refers to the dense ceiling of leaves and tree branches formed by closely spaced forest trees that make up the level known as the overstory. The moisture, created in the Atlantic Ocean in combination with the constant rainfall in the Amazon Basin, travels through tree canopies that have now been broken. Deforestation reduces local transpiration. As a result, increasing

with the Kyoto Protocol, was central in the UNFCCC agenda. REDD+ is one type of payment for ecosystem services, which ultimately translates into compensation for destruction. This initiative, however, claims that no damage is done because destruction of biodiversity in one place will be compensated by restoring a location elsewhere. Who buys these ecosystem services? Corporations involved in extractive industries (oil, mining, etc.), industrial agriculture, the entertainment industry, airlines, the construction of large-scale infrastructure, as well as the World Bank, industrial countries, international conservation NGOs, etc. Jutta Kill (2016), referring to mining corporations, argues that the basic principal behind payment for ecosystem services is that a mining company that destroys 4000 ha. of forest for its open pit mining activities can “protect” another 4000 ha. of forest elsewhere. The communities affected, however, are not provided with any information about the industries financing or buying “offset credits” from their lands; nor they do not know why there are restrictions on the way they have traditionally used

the forest and are now being forced into hunger and food insecurity.

Those opposed to REDD+ implementation believe the initiative is highly questionable. At COP 20 in Lima, Peru, in 2014, the World Rainforest Movement (WRM) maintained that REDD+ is the largest land grab in history and that it is a false solution to climate change. Instead, they state, these instruments threaten to extinguish Indigenous people. WRM argues that REDD+ speculates with Indigenous peoples' territory; robs communities of their autonomy by creating restrictions and prohibitions for these communities that depend on the forest for their subsistence; violates culture and tradition by integrating them into the international market; and in the process, destroys and divides communities; threatens subsistence and food sovereignty; creates conflict and exacerbates inequality, while producing huge profits for corporations. (WRM; "10 Alertas"; Bonilha).

At COP 20, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Foundation supported a full-day seminar on *Financialization of Nature and Extractivism* organized by Latin American and Caribbean Friends of the Earth, and several other organizations. Several cases of the implementation of REDD+ in Indigenous territories were discussed and publications by the foundation were made available. For reasons of space here, I will refer only to REDD+ in Brazil where divergences of opinion over the use of market-based mechanisms between the federal and state levels have been taking place.

At the gathering, Jutta Kill (2014b), a biologist and activist, argues that REDD+ logic is problematic.

In order for the REDD offset project to generate carbon credits, the users of the land have to describe their activities as a threat to the forest. If the activities are not a threat to the forest, there

is no risk of deforestation and therefore no credits that can be generated from avoiding deforestation!... Without such a story—that the forest would have been destroyed – there is no carbon to be saved, and no carbon credits to be sold. This necessity by design to describe the land use of forest dependent communities as a risk to the forest is already reinforcing the dangerous myth that forest dependent communities and small-scale farmers are among the most important agents of deforestation. (10)

Jutta Kill (2014a, 2014b) also argues that REDD+ deepens injustice and historical inequalities. She explains that since 1999, several individual forest carbon projects have been formulated, among them the Guaraqueçaba Climate Action Project in the state of Parana. This was a joint initiative between the U.S. Nature Conservancy and the Brazilian Society for Wildlife Research and Environmental Education, and funded by General Motors, American Electric Power, and Chevron. Kill claims that this project was presented as an international model for REDD+. However the locals involved and affected by the implementation of the program consider it a failed project.¹

Furthermore, REDD+ credits constitute a form of property title. Those who possess the credit do not need to be owners of the land, water or trees that are on the ground, but they have the right to decide how these will be used. Two cases of REDD+ in Acre, Brazil, implemented under international guidelines, since 2010, outlined by the World Wild Life Fund (WWF), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Federal University of Acre (UFAC), IPAM, The Woods Hole Research Center, Embrapa, and the

German Agency for International Cooperation (GTZ) in collaboration with the local governments (Herbert, 2010; WWF, 2013) were researched by Cristiane Faustino and Fabrina Furtado. Faustino and Furtado claim that organizations and social groups of Acre have denounced REDD+ for: 1) violations to land and territory rights; and 2) violations of the rights of the peoples in REDD+ occupied territories. Relatoria del Derecho Humano al Medio Ambiente (RDHMA) (Rapporteurship of the Human Right to the Environment) investigated the Acre case and found several problems. Among them are:

- a) Indigenous people in Amazonia have no land title, deepening territorial conflicts. The Acre government has put Indigenous land on the REDD+ market without prearranging land title to the owners of the land. This situation violates ILO Convention 169 as well as the Federal Constitution;
- b) territory for subsistence and traditional activities, such as family agriculture or fishing, have been reduced or eliminated;
- c) blockage of rubber paths which is the main activity of the rubber tappers;
- d) failure to generate sufficient income for Indigenous peoples' livelihood as they have lost their subsistence economy;
- e) Indigenous land speculation has forced entire Indigenous families to move to the periphery of cities, such as the Jaminavá Indigenous people whose children are forced into prostitution and pedophilia;
- f) broken promises by the government and those that promote REDD+.

Faustino and Furtado cite Dercy Teles, Union President of Rural Workers of Xapuri, as she summarizes her outrage:

The impact of the green bag (REDD+) is that we lose all the rights that people have as citizens. [We] lost control of the territory. No longer can we plant. [We] can no longer do any daily activity. [We] receive some money, but only to be no more than observers of the forest, without being able to touch it. Thus, the true meaning of life as a human being is taken away. (5)

These authors conclude that REDD+ in Brazil occurs in a context of extreme inequality in which environmental NGOs such as WWF-Brazil, Comisión Pro Indio (Pro Indian Commission), Forest Trends, and Centro de Trabajadores de la Amazonia (The Centre for Amazonia Workers) are profiting while Indigenous people are dispossessed. REDD+ in this context has been “transferring responsibility for environmental degradation onto subjects that historically have maintained an environmental equilibrium throughout their traditional activities of sustenance. In this way, [people] are devalued and their different modes of land use and occupations practiced by traditional communities and Indigenous peoples are placed at risk” (Faustino and Furtado 22). Further, they submitted the following question: How is it possible, on the one hand, to meet the objectives of social and environmental recovery when, on the other hand, violations of rights occur?

La Carta de Belém Group maintain that other questions not answered by REDD proponents include: how to integrate the forest in the financialization framework; how environmental damage or mitigation payments can be calculated; what to include in the calculation; and who assesses the “true” value of an ecosystem? Belém’s Group of Brazil declared that REDD+ programs are highly political:

We stand together in rejecting mechanisms that commodify and financialize nature and market-based solutions to the climate crisis, because their impacts on territories, local residents and workers cause the violation of social and territorial rights... We believe that Brazil’s proposal to estimate the historical contribution of each country, using a concentric differentiation, is a relevant approach.... We reaffirm our opposition to the introduction of forests into carbon markets.... We instead see the solution in mechanisms to build a just transition, which do not repeat or enhance the same forms of production and consumption that caused and continue to cause global warming and the loss of biodiversity.

The murder of Indigenous women and men, denounced at the U.N. (Conselho Indigenista Missionário) points to the dispossession of land and extermination of these peoples. These communities occupy strategic territories that transnational capital requires for REDD+ and other megaprojects.

Conclusion

Kyoto Protocol replaced the natural forest for artificial forest farms in Costa Rica and REDD+ has been murdering and displacing the guardians of the forest—Indigenous people—in Brazil. In this paper, I have argued that the “greening” is a new imperialist stage of capital accumulation organized under the umbrella of the United Nations that entails four aspects:

First, the expansion of credit instruments by financial capital to create economic growth. Kyoto and REDD+ have been incorporated in Wall Street financial markets;

Second, the World Bank licensing big environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) to broker the indebted countries’ resources with large corporations involved in economic restructuring and globalization. The role of ENGOS is to establish the monetary values of the “global commons” of the indebted periphery, such as the forest, and to export these values in stock exchanges. These new experts, most of them biologists grouped in ENGOS, have emerged as new models of modernization and environmental protection by using the discourse of “protecting” the global commons in protected areas;

Third, there are new types of markets created—such as biodiversity for biotechnology and Intellectual Property Rights, scenery for ecotourism and forest for carbon credits—located in conservation areas. A conservation area is a designated domain where private and public activities are interrelated in order to manage and conserve a region’s nature for capital accumulation;

Forth, the “greening” process, in this case forest for carbon credits, results in peasants and Indigenous people losing their land and territories and acquiring in some cases new roles as service providers in new industries such as ecotourism; in other cases forced into hunger and food insecurity.

At the end of this analysis, my conclusion is that the new imperialism led by the United Nations, through the Kyoto Protocol and REDD+ organized by the environmental management of the World Bank, ignores ecosystems, genders, species, and promotes poverty and unsustainability in the indebted periphery. The enacting of monetary value to the commons of peasants and Indigenous territories requires the destruction of nature as living grounds and devalues other forms of social existence, such as transforming agriculture skills into

deficiencies; commons (scenery, forest, mountains) into resources; knowledge of biodiversity into ignorance; peasants and Indigenous people's autonomy into dependency; self-sufficiency of men and women into loss of dignity for women's and children's bodies.

We must undo patriarchy, colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism to stop plundering the forests, the earth, and its inhabitants in other parts of the world. Ecofeminists propose a subsistence perspective for the entire world to transform the nature of our economy. Subsistence orientation means achieving another relationship with our fellow humans and non-human world. Starting points for another economy exist in the work done by women every-day without pay, and poorly paid work done by peasants, Indigenous people, and peripheral countries. A manageable size economy will allow us to live from our land, from our climate, and from our resources in that part of the earth we call home (Bennholdt-Thompson). Ecosocialists warn to create social and political frontiers before capitalist accumulation poisons the atmosphere that is the last ecological limit.

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¹For more information, please refer to the following three films: "Disputed Territory: The Green Economy Versus Community-Based Economies" (WRM 2012); "The Carbon Hunters" (Shapiro); "Suffering Here to Help Them Over There" (FERN).

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JOANNA M. WESTON

To My Daughters

the daughters that I have
mix sons with tea and beer
and fill tall cups
with bridal champagne

these are the girls
I dreamed into life
with wisteria roses
and wild sunflowers

they sprang out of books
singing contemporary jazz
juggling baskets of muffins
tennis balls and cookies

these precious girls
painted in blue silk
tied with white ribbons
laugh from my heart frame

Joanna M. Weston is married with one cat, multiple spiders, a herd of deer, and two derelict hen houses. Her most recent poetry collection, A Bedroom of Searchlights, was published in spring 2016 by Inanna Publications.

Report on the Climate Change Conference (COP 20), Lima, Peru

ANA ISLA AND XOCHITL RUBIO

La Convention des Nations Unies sur les changements climatiques tenue entre le 30 novembre et le 12 décembre 2014 à Lima au Pérou, a attiré des milliers de délégués autant que les indignés. Cet article est un rapport sur la conférence du COP20 ainsi que sur les deux forums parallèles, à savoir le Deuxième tribunal sur les droits internationaux de la nature et le Sommet des peuples. Pendant plusieurs jours, témoins après témoins ont donné des témoignages personnels accusant le pétrole, le minerai, l'hydroélectricité et la destruction des crédits au carbone, le tout appuyé par l'évidence des experts scientifiques.

We begin this report with a historical account of the host country, Peru, where the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference took place, in Lima, from 30 November to 12 December 2014, and which attracted thousands of delegates, as well as protesters.

The Host-Organizing Country: Peru

For journalists attending the UNFCCC conference and interested in Peru's ancient history, a visit to Caral's Ar-

cheological Zone was organized. Peru is home to the oldest civilization in the Americas, as old as the Egyptian civilization, developed some 5000 years ago. Caral is located in the Supe Valley, about 200 kilometers north of Lima, in a space extending 400 by 300 km. It was a highly organized "City of Peace" because no weapon fragments, no remnants of fortifications, and no evidence of conflicts were ever found in archeological digs. The Sacred City of Caral is made up of 32 monumental architectural structures, including seven buildings, three sunken circular plazas, a large central plaza, and two small plazas (Shady Solís). Today, Caral is slowly becoming a popular tourist destination.

Peru has been a cradle of the agricultural revolution. It has been a genetic reservoir for potato germplasms, which the International Agriculture Resource Centre of the World Bank has used to breed resistant crops for commercial use. For instance, the Lima based International Potato Center, used for agricultural experimentation, also serves as a germplasm bank for numerous varieties of domesticated and wild potatoes from the Andes.

Quinoa, is another crop characterized as "The Gold of the Incas" for its high quality proteins, it is native to the Andean Regions of Peru and Bolivia, where it grows between 2000 and 4000 meters above sea level. Quinoa comes in various colours—white, red, black, pink, orange, yellow—with a range of different flavours from bitter to sweet. Several other native agricultural varieties, such as corn, beans, chili peppers, and tubers, were also displayed at the People's Summit.

The UNFCCC Conference

The location of the UNFCCC conference, COP 20, is important to acknowledge, because it was packed with business consultants, corporate CEOs, and NGOs endorsing the go-ahead of carbon markets and carbon pricing such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) in developing countries (REDD+). It was located beside *El Cuartel General del Ejército del Perú*, aka *El Pentagonito*, which owes its name to its namesake, the Pentagon in Washington. This is the Lima that Ricardo Uceda, a Peruvian journalist, described in his book, *Muerte en el*

Pentagonito: Los Cementerios Secretos del Ejército Peruano (Death in the little Pentagon: The Secret Cemeteries of the Peruvian Army). In his book, Uceda documented the assassinations and incinerations that took place during the administrations of Alan Garcia (1985-1990) and Alberto Fujimori (1990-2001), many of which took place inside the Pentagonito, the Peruvian military headquarters. Since 1985, under the pretext of national security, the Peruvian army and police force have killed thousands of peasants, Indigenous people, students, and professors accused of being Shining Path or *Movimiento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru* (MRTA) collaborators. According to Uceda, “Basically, the modus operandi was the same: the arrest of people close to their home by agents of the army’s intelligence service, detention in the Army Headquarters’ basement (Pentagonito) and subsequent execution and incineration in the furnace that existed for that purpose in that military unit” (cited in Godoy). It was no accident that the conference took place close to the Pentagonito as this location represents a place of security for the bourgeoisie.

The conference was a total victory for a market-based approach to climate change. However, it was also a clear demonstration of a radical climate movement in which the presence of peasants and Indigenous people was central.

The Rights of Nature Tribunal

The Second International Rights of Nature Tribunal, parallel to the UNFCCC COP 20, convened in Lima, Peru, on December 5-6, 2014. The Tribunal is a permanent International People’s Tribunal for the Rights of Nature. The Judiciary Committee heard evidence from experts and witnesses who are impacted by gross violations to the rights of Mother



Quinoa, corn, and beans exhibited at the Peoples’ Forum, COP 21, Dec. 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Climate Justice organizations at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, COP 21, Dec. 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



El Pentagonito (The Little Pentagon), COP 21, Dec. 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Canadians marching against the Alberta Tar Sands at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Anti-oil activists at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Anti-mining activists at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.

Earth, nature, human rights, and rights of Indigenous communities. During two days, witness after witness gave intimate testimony on the impacts of oil, mining, hydroelectric, carbon credits destruction, reinforced by the scientific evidence of experts, on nature and the communities that depend on nature's biodiversity to survive. The Conga-Cajamarca initiative, a Peruvian anti-mining movement defending land, water, and freedom, was one of the projects presented to participants. This initiative has successfully put on hold the biggest mining project in Cajamarca for the last four years.

Several earlier cases of REDD+ from Costa Rica, Kenya, and Brazil were also presented. REDD in developing countries (REDD+), as carbon credit, was introduced at Bali UNFCCC in 2007 and has been implemented since 2009. It opened an international carbon market to be injected into forestry conservation. It is highly problematic for the so-called developing countries, in particular for Indigenous peoples everywhere. When Indigenous lands become part of REDD projects, their populations are typically prohibited from hunting, fishing, and/or using biodiversity, all of which are the sources of their livelihoods. This exclusion exacerbates inequality, while producing huge profits for corporations and NGOs.

A case that particularly impacted the audience was the presentation of the ETC group on geo-engineering, which is known as "Plan B" to address climate change if governments fail to legislate and enforce measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is a set of proposed techniques to intervene in and alter earth's ecosystems on a large scale. These interventions constitute manipulations of climate systems; among them are Solar Radiation Management (blocking sunlight) and Carbon Dioxide Removal. Geo-engineering covers other

earth system interventions such as in the oceans and the atmosphere, disrupting rain and wind patterns (ETC Group).

“The Tribunal collected the proposals of plaintiffs acting on behalf of Mother Earth who proposed a boycott of companies that cause the destruction of Earth systems. The Tribunal asserts that companies

capitalist system; to respect various forms of life; and to stop the exploitation and plunder of nature. They seek the recognition of the people to decide on a model of life in harmony with Mother Earth, such as the Indigenous *El Buen Vivir* (Balch), this is achieving another relationship with our fellow human-animals and non-human Animals.

lar, transnational corporations must take responsibility for their practices globally. It also believes that a just world and a moral economy that is communal, cooperative, and feminist must recognize the human rights to food and the great contribution of family farming, which contributes more than 70 per cent of the globe’s food (Declaración de Lima).

The Peoples’ Summit organizers demanded world governments respect their territories, rights and livelihoods, cultures, customs, and worldviews about life and the world they inhabit. They condemned the exploitation of their natural resources by extractive industries that affect their livelihoods and their harmonious relationship with Mother Earth.

who are responsible for destroying earth ecosystems be banned from the United Nations negotiation process” (Global Alliance). Among some of the other cases presented were the Chevron-Texaco pollution case (Ecuador); BP Deep Horizon oil spill (USA); Yasuni-ITT oil project (Ecuador); the endangerment of the Great Barrier Reef due to coal mining (Australia); hydraulic fracturing (USA), and the impacts of Climate Change (global).

The Peoples’ Summit and the March

The Peoples’ Summit on Climate Change also paralleled the official UNFCCC. It was held, from December 8-11, 2014, as an expression of the processes of mobilization and resistance undertaken by a variety of organizations, movements, platforms, networks, and social groups, unions, women, peasants, Indigenous peoples, youth, environmentalists, religious, and others. They met for four days to further discuss and share multiple forms of struggle and resistance. Their aim was to promote social justice; to work against the patriarchal, racist, and homophobic

The Peoples’ Summit organizers wrote a declaration where they demanded from world governments to respect their territories, rights and livelihoods, cultures, customs, and worldviews about life and the world they inhabit. They condemned the exploitation of their natural resources and territories by extractive industries that affect their livelihoods, their source of identity and their harmonious relationship with Mother Earth. They commanded the recognition of land ownership of the Indigenous communities that have traditionally lived on their land. They do not accept colonial control of their territories or the negotiation processes and implementation of false solutions to climate change. Further, they claimed that governments must have at its core the respect of their ancestral ways of life and the recognition of their self-determination as nations and peoples (Declaración de Lima).

The Peoples’ Summit insisted that the industrial North must consider the historical responsibilities of its development and recognize and repair the historical and ecological debt to the global South. In particu-

On December 10, 2014, a World March in Defense of Mother Earth took place in Lima. Thousands of people from different countries marched in Lima’s streets against the lack of agreements on climate change. The slogan “Change the System not the Climate” was central among the banners. Numerous groups marched, among them were Women in Defense of Our Bodies and Territories, and Against the Commodification of Life. Women understand their body as a disputed territory, similar to the earth, nature and the commons. They revealed that extractivism in their territories increased violence against women, prostitution, domestic work and daily life to reproduce. Their slogan was “Change Women’s life to Change the World.” They proposed the recognition of the interdependence between production and reproduction in order to construct alternative relations based on equality.

An important statement in the March was made with the depiction of Indigenous face crossed out by the word “REDD.” This image speaks to how UNFCCC is attacking Indigenous peoples’ territories as a convenient



From left to right: Groups denouncing the selling out of Mother Nature at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014; Indigenous face crossed out by the word REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) at the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Participants of the Rights of Nature Tribunal. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Peruvian police following the participants of the World March in Defense of Mother Earth, December 10, 2014. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Protesters disapproving the privatization of the forest. The banner states "We all live from the forest." Photo: Xochitl Rubio.



Protestors denouncing the selling of Amazonia forest. Photo: Xochitl Rubio.

means to confront the increase of CO₂ while increasing economic growth and profits through REDD+.

Conclusion

The UNFCCC conference, COP 20, has clarified that the actions to cut and curb emissions that poison the atmosphere favour the financial market. Meaning, that the delegates have removed from their vision the planetary crises by making the ecological problem a question of management and markets. Meanwhile, the second International Rights of Nature and the Peoples' Summit proposed to transcend capitalism in order to cut off ecological and social cataclysm.

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NASHWA KHAN

Land of hope and glory

my grandma spoke the language of milk and cardamom

she couldn't fly but I swear she had wings
the world in her henna dressed palms
rhythm of her heart still sings
hair trimmed with peacock feather wings

my grandma lives through stories
labour of a cinnamon brown woman
she lived without glories
paan leaves and cumin

her children crossed an ocean
threadbare clothes in tow
luggage lost
nowhere to go

her grandchildren water down their names
tongues swollen with apologies
for a land of hope and glory

Nashwa Kham is currently enrolled in the Masters of Environmental Studies at York University with areas of concentration focused on narrative medicine, community and public health, as well as refugee and migration studies.



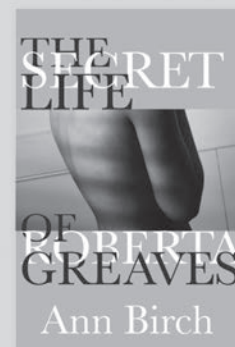
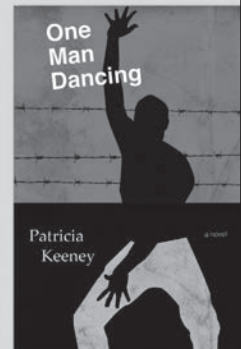
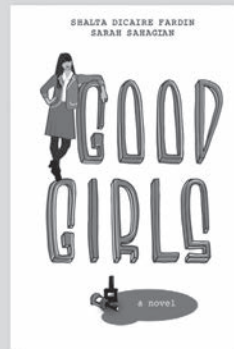
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CLARA A. B. JOSEPH

Spivak

Good-lookin' lady sheathed in a saree,
And under them? I suspect – sneakers; hair
Trimmed like a widow's
I know you've risen out of *Water*,
Refusing to drown or deny yourself
Pleasures of jouissance.

The year my mother died in Toronto,
One thousand gather at King's Circle convinced
You are royalty;
With them I too, for a vision –
You. You whom I have
Studied, explained, and reinterpreted,
Argued about, passed an exam on.

Your studied lecture goes well,
Your pages of footnotes Harvard respects;
You narrate. We settle into our chairs
Glad to see you, hear you, know
You are speaking to us about yours
In so many words of speech and words,
Ending only at the most conventional of events:
The question period.

One black woman, a student, I swear,
Shoots out of her chair to ask
One simple question about who your audience
is –
"Who," she asks, "is your
Audience?" And I watch in horror as you
Crumble right before my eyes

In defense of a name
You cannot wring out of your chest;
One well-hidden under so much pain
For so long, loved and hated, adored, criticized,

Crushed in what appeared as bear-hugs
In comings and goings, arrivals, departures....

Drawn-out goodbyes,
Frantic phone calls,
Refusals to talk,
And bad words
In an inherited tongue.

The unspeakable name even this woman
cannot wrench out of you:
The name "mother" or "my mother" you just
cannot speak
The moment you are caught

In terror's stillness.

The subaltern weeps.

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Sāsīpīhkēyīhtamowin¹

Nīso Nēhiyaw Iskwēwak

MARGARET KRESS

L'auteure explore les biographies de l'aînée Stella Blackbird et de la chef Tammy Cook-Searson, deux membres de la tribu des Cris (Nēhiyawak) fidèles à la mémoire de leur tribu. Elles ont invité les intéressées à comprendre le statut des autochtones dans une justice environnementale et de revitaliser Nēhiyawak en vue d'une réconciliation et même à une véritable rédemption des autochtones qui ont subi les effets du racisme environnemental. La lecture des termes reliés à Nēhiyawak nous enseigne que "la langue est au cœur de ce que nous sommes" et que nous sommes liés intimement au bien-être de la terre et aux politiques de ceux qui y demeurent.

Nēhiyawīwin as Justice

Through my language I understand I am being spoken to, I am not the speaker.

The words are coming from many tongues and mouths... and the land around them.

I am a listener to the language's stories, and when my words form I am merely retelling the same stories in different patterns.

—Jeanette Armstrong, "Land Speaking"

This storywork of resistance lives in the experiences, spiritual narratives, and the blood memories of two Cree *onīkânīwak* (leaders), and within the bodies of the two *Nēhiyawak* knowledge keepers I have come to know² (Archibald 2008b; Anderson, 2000, 2011; Burnouf, personal conversation, 15 March 2016; LaDuke 2004; McCall; McLeod). I am listener, and I pay attention to the *Nēhiyaw* sounds, words, and phrases which Stella Blackbird, Tammy Cook-Searson, and other Cree linguists have shared with me on this journey. On this day, I give gratitude for their land lessons, their life lessons, and most importantly, their heart lessons.

As I accentuate *Nēhiyawīwin* within this storywork, I do so to signify an ontological redemption of Indigenous women's knowledge as environmental justice. Words found in Cree narrative memory or oral histories (McLeod) are tied to ancestral knowings and traditional lands, and as such, *Nēhiyawīwin* (the language of the people) with all its intricacies is entwined by subsistence and survival, ceremony, and spirit. In this revitalization of tribal identity and place, words and phrases reclaim a pedagogical and spiritual space for

what comes alive in Cree knowledge systems. In this context, place is land, spirit, and body, and by using, defining, and re-establishing the nuances within the language and culture, a *Nēhiyaw* worldview is reclaimed, preserved, and elevated within academic discourses. Within the dominant narrative of environmental justice, an adoption of *Nēhiyaw* decolonizes the euro-centricity of such a framework as it creates space for Indigenous voices and Indigenous bodies. The principles of natural laws (Michell) and Indigenous ethics (Brant) within a *Nēhiyaw* worldview help dismantle this dominant narrative, and bring truth to the imparting of colonial histories and the Indigenous resistances that followed.

For many Canadians, the viewing of "land justice" through an Indigenous lens is both foreign and fresh. By moving past a framework of Western justice work, and an analysis of such, to acknowledge the truth of colonialism and to make an effort to truly understand the state of environmental racism, and its antidote, Indigenous environmental justice, one must embrace the counter position of this westernism by reclaiming

pimâtisowin: the sustenance, the good life, and the spiritual drive of life for *Nêhiyawak* (Ermine 1995).

Past histories have shown us numerous examples of Indigenous peoples recognizing value in contemporary justice frameworks, those pieces of reconciliation holding up both settler acknowledgments and apologies, and yet many scholars and activists

actively shares historical and contemporary realities of land and body conflicts, its primary function helps to dismantle the systemic defences of environmental racism through truth telling, as it makes way for a return to Indigenization and *pimâtisowin* (Kress; LaDuke 2004, 2011).

Environmental racism discourse has not graced the lexicons of Indige-

lands and territories, their major means of subsistence, their language culture and spirituality all of which are derived from their cultural, physical, and spiritual relationship to their land. (International Indian Treaty Council, 2008, para 6, cited in Kress 35)

The women in this story see justice

Environmental racism discourse has not graced the lexicons of Indigenous peoples until recently; and further, the phrase “environmental racism” is not held as a commonality among First peoples, however, these *Nêhiyawak* women recognize, feel, and know the explicit and subtle examples of such infractions and crimes.

believe these to be watery and thin. It seems an authentic segue, and the recourse necessary, must include the ceremonial and traditional knowledges and languages of First peoples so all persons’ sensibilities, and especially those of Métis, Inuit and First Nations peoples are intact (LaDuke 2011; Sinclair; TRC). In this way, the Cree concept of *Pimâcihiwêwin* (“a giving or a saving of life”) (Solomon qtd. in Kress 250) or in a Western sense, this idea of an Indigenous redemption prompts both settler and Indigenous peoples to become partners in peace, this achieved by embracing the other through sincere acknowledgement, reconciliation, mutual respect, and collective action (Kress; LaDuke 2011; TRC). Within this Canadian salvage, settlers must be first to extend the ‘olive branch’ as they recognize and accept Indigenous peoples are the ones to lead in this renewal; Indigenous peoples will be the ones to set the tone in restoring language, ceremony, oral history, culture, and tradition as an ontology of environmental justice through the harmony of political, earthy, and spiritual acts. This reclaim not only exposes perpetrators’ actions and

nous peoples until recently (Blackbird and Richardson cited in Kress); and further, the phrase “environmental racism” is not held as a commonality among First peoples, however, these *Nêhiyawak* women recognize, feel, and know the explicit and subtle examples of such infractions and crimes. As Stella and Tammy speak of their ancestors’ endurances, including those of “whipped bodies” and “stolen lands” (qtd. in Kress 68), I am reminded of how environmental racism is

an assault on Indigenous Peoples’ human rights and public health including their right to their unique special social, cultural, spiritual, and historical life ways and worldviews. Environmental racism results in the devastation, contamination, dispossession, loss, or denial of access to Indigenous peoples’ biodiversity, their waters, and traditional lands and territories. Environmental racism is now the primary cause of human health effects of Indigenous Peoples and the forced separation and removal of Indigenous Peoples from their

as an Indigenization of Canadian history, a spirit-filled prophesy, uplifting sacred dialects, nuances, and rhythms of the *Nêhiyawak* in the reclamation of territory, kinship, and *pimâtisowin*. They resist

the pressure to participate in academic discourse that strips Indigenous intellectual traditions of their spiritual and sacred elements. [They] take the stand that if the spiritual and sacred elements are surrendered, then there is little left of our philosophies that will make any sense. (Hart qtd. in Kress 87)

Embedded in the life works of Stella Blackbird and Tammy Cook-Season, is the understanding of *Kanawayhitowin* (the Cree word calling for the spirit in each of us to come forth to protect each other, and in a sense, all living entities) (Kress). The English translation of *Kanawayhitowin* generates an idea that all peoples are responsible to care for each other’s spirit and, in turn, for all life forms and Earth Mother, herself. This concept of caring is central to the evolution of understanding how and why Indige-

nous knowledges and languages are necessary, critical, resistive, and empowering in a spirit of reconciliation and environmental justice. *Kanawayhitowin* is supported by *Wahkohtowin*, (the Cree word meaning kinship); and as an Indigenous pedagogy, *Wahkohtowin* (O'Rilly-Scanlon, Crowe, and Weenie) supports "kindredness" (Anderson 2000) tradition, language,

borders of one knowledge or another, we must support each other through this learning (Kress; Swampy Cree word gifted by Alex Wilson). The foundation of *Kanawayhitowin*, this place of protecting each other's spirit (Kress) not only provides a context of caring when retelling stories, it frames many Indigenous women's concerns for future generations, and at the

That most of us do not speak these languages is irrelevant. Each of them is a passageway into the meaning of this place. Each one lost is a loss of meaning and possible understanding. (Saul 106)

It seems scholars who dilute storywork (Archibald 2008b; Fitznor, 2006) by neglecting to recognize and honour the languages of Indigenous

The ability to open oneself to the Cree language, and to the knowledges of these *Nêhiyaw* women brings one to the place of *Wahkohtowin*. This state of being related is fundamental to Indigenous culture and traditional beliefs and to the redress or Indigenization of environmental justice. Language, land, and love are at the core of who *Nêhiyaw* are.

and ceremony (O'Rilly-Scanlon, Crowe, and Weenie). This *being in relation*, young and old, learning and living with each other, is integral to *Nêhiyaw* knowledge and the lifeworlds of these women.

Further to this, the ability to open oneself to the Cree language, and to the knowledges of these *Nêhiyaw* women brings one to the place of *Wahkohtowin*. This state of being related is fundamental to Indigenous culture and traditional beliefs (Ermine) and to the redress or Indigenization of environmental justice. Language, land, and love, you see, are at the core of who *Nêhiyaw* are. Through an embracement of the oral, of Cree cosmology and story, and of relationship or *Wahkohtowin*, one moves to a place of understanding, hope, generosity, solidarity, and reciprocity (Senehi; Wilson). I believe this fusing of Cree narrative memory (McLeod) and storywork (Archibald 2008b), shows a collective understanding of justice, reconciliation, and peace generation.

In understanding *kâkinow ni wâgômâkanak*—the degree to which we are all related—I recognize that regardless of where we sit, on the

same time demands the protection of traditional ecological knowledges, cultures, and languages as pillars of survival and environmental justice. As a non-Indigenous speaker, I follow the protocols of Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers (Blackbird, personal conversation, July 18, 2015; Burnouf, personal conversation, 25 May 2012; Fitznor, personal conversation, 14 May 2015; Ratt, personal conversation, April 13, 2014; Wilson; Wilson, A. personal conversation, 18 March 2012) to assert *tâpowakeythi tamowin* (truth), *kisewâtisowin* (kindness), *asakîwin* (sharing/caring), and *tâpwîwin* (honesty) within this work (Michell). By sharing *Nêhiyaw* in the way I have learned, *by* simply offering pieces of the language, I keep the embodied knowings of Chief Cook-Searson and Elder Blackbird alive within this understanding of a critical Indigenous justice:

When one indigenous language slips away, it is as if heavy doors, once open and giving us access to a particular understanding of this place, have slammed shut, shutting us out forever. Part of our shared understanding is gone.

nations fracture the spirit of Indigenization. This action not only signifies the differences in sensibilities between euro-settler identities and discourses, and those of Indigenous knowledge keepers, it accentuates the dominant view of justice or environmentalism, while dulling or perhaps even avoiding the Indigenous and collective history of our nation state. Only with the acceptance of ancestral and contemporary traditional knowledge entwined in territory, language, and spirit, can one come to a complete vision of Indigenous environmental justice, and *pimâtisowin*. An Elder has this to say:

We cannot intellectualize Spirit; allow yourself to live from the heart. You cannot have truth without respect, you cannot have truth without love, you cannot have truth without courage, you cannot have truth without honesty, you cannot have truth without wisdom, you cannot have truth without humbleness.... The mind is concerned with power, control, ownership... but we owe our existence to the land itself....



Tammy Cook-Searson, in Ottawa. Photo: Ruth Thompson.



Stella Blackbird and Margaret Kress (at Stella's home Keeseekoowenin First Nation).



Elder Dr. Blackbird with Elder Audrey Bone, Dr. Margaret Kress and Dr. Laara Fitznor celebrating her Honourary Doctorate in Laws, University of Manitoba, May 2015

We [Indigenous peoples] have stayed here.... We still have memory of the land, a memory, duty and sacred responsibility to our people. (Courchene)

In this justice story of Indigenization, reclamation and redemption, I give you a glimpse of the leadership held by two women *who* embody *Nēhiyawêwin*: Elder Stella Blackbird and Chief Tammy Cook-Searson share a blood memory of territory and language infused within the borders and waters defined in Treaty Six. As long living, thriving traditionalists and contemporary visionaries, each is *okimāwiiw*, an honest, trustworthy person, a trailblazer, and a worthy provider who consistently thinks about the future and the sustainability of her kinship (Fitznor, personal conversation, November 18, 2015).

Sāsīpikēyitamowin: Strong Women Speak

Truth, understood in our language ... is the spirit of grandmother turtle.

—Elder Courchene (2015)

When Indigenous women speak, they do so in a throng of ways. Old stories become new, ancestors guide words, and reverences and wisdoms, gifted by spirits and children, are deep and wide. Jo-ann Archibald uses the composition of a cedar basket and the symbolism of the basket's strips to help us synthesize an understanding of the knowledges embedded in the peoples and the lands: "the pieces of cedar sometimes stand alone, and sometimes they lose their distinctiveness and form a design" (2008a: 373). And so it is in this knowing with the stories of each of these *okimāwiiw*, sometimes they "are distinguishable as separate entities, and sometimes they are bound together" (Archibald 2008a: 373). As I define the position-

alities of Stella Blackbird and Tammy Cook-Searson and re-tell their stories, I reflect on the teachings of *respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy* found within Archibald's *Indigenous Storywork* (Archibald 2008b). With their permissions, I use *Askiwina* to define their personas: "over the years" signifies their history, traditionalism, and resilience (Cuthand, 2007). These women are long living, deep of thought, and grounded within *Nèhiyaw* accessible to outsiders only through the fluidity of blood memory and story.

This understanding of memory as story is vital to understanding *Nèhiyaw* history, governance, language, traditions, ceremony, and survival (McLeod). "Cree narrative memory is more than simply storytelling'. It involves the collective, intergenerational memories of many skilled storytellers. Through the examinations of family, spirituality, identity, and connections through time and space of the Plains Cree people" (Nickels 154). I share the stories of Elder Blackbird and Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, their lived histories, and their resistances of environmental racism as I examine the necessity of *Nèhiyaw* preservation through the context of the language, cultural revitalization, and Indigenous women's leadership.

When I first heard the word *Sāsīpibkēyihitamowin* I understood it as resilience, and at that time, felt it was a fitting word to use for a collective description of the women in my dissertation research. It was also a word of *Nèhiyawitwin* (the Cree language) and the ancestral language of Elder Stella Blackbird, who was first among Indigenous women to recognize my relationality, to acknowledge it and extend her acceptance of me as she showed me how I was "one of them." When Denesuline Elder Marie Adam asked me about the depth of this Cree

word, I put out a query to several Elders, traditional peoples, and Cree linguists including Elder Stella Blackbird, Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, Cree knowledge keeper Joseph Naytowhow, Métis/Cree educator Laura Burnouf, and Elder Stan Wilson. These are their responses:

Strong willed. Nothing can interfere with your actions. (Blackbird qtd in Kress 129)

I have been told that the word means "resilience, great patience, stubbornness even" and a fortitude to keep on trying and never give up. This means a person will have a lot of resilience. (Burnouf qtd in Kress 129)

The person has the ability to see things through and has enough perseverance to make it through times of turmoil and hardship. [It implies that] one has the will to keep on going. (Cook-Searson qtd in Kress 129)

Definitely resilience, patience. One must be strong in character to have this quality. Will power certainly fits as well. Definitely perseverance. (Naytowhow qtd in Kress 129)

It means patience, stick-to-it-ness, persistence, striving, unswerving mind.... *Sasophita* is the not letting go part and the *tabimowin* is the strong mind part. It seems that this word is referring to relationships that are connected to especially women and could mean "to be long suffering" and to be able to overlook slights. (Wilson, S. qtd in Kress 129)

When examining the context of *Sāsīpibkēyihitamowin*, I classify it as a resistance, and place it alongside

the words and phrases describing the resilience and conscientization of Woodland Cree Chief, Tammy Cook-Searson of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band (Treaty Six) and Cree Elder, Stella Blackbird of Beardy's and Okemasis Willow Cree First Nation (Treaty Six) and Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation (Treaty Two). In these threads of story, it seems blood memory instigates a continued protection of place. This form of spatial justice becomes aligned with traditional ecological knowledges these women hold, and their connection to *pimâtisowin* (the good life).

Kwakwu as Reflection

Let me tell you a story about a revelation.

It's not the colour of a nation that holds a nation's pride. It's imagination.

It's imagination inside.

—Andrea Menard (2000)

In the heart of the Métis nation, I was introduced to Elder Stella Blackbird while looking for healing. Here I received new life, recognition from a woman of affluence, and a renewed commitment to *pimâtisowin*. Although Stella Blackbird was a woman of reverence, I did not immediately see the power of this Elder healer. Recently, past Grand Chief, Ovide Mercredi, shared with me that he holds Stella Blackbird in great esteem and that "she is one of the few old-time traditional medicine women practicing today" (Mercredi, personal conversation, March 20, 2015). Since our meeting almost a decade ago, I have come to understand both her and Chief Tammy Cook-Searson through the knowledges of *Kwakwu*—Cree word for porcupine (Lincoln). For you see, "*Kwakwu* is known as the little carrier of the medicines; she is revered in Indigenous culture and her quills are found within their dec-



From left to right: Chief Tammy Cook-Searson receiving an Honorary Doctorate in Laws, University of Regina, May 2016. Stella Blackbird at Washageamee Sages or Clear Lake, on the reclaimed land of the Keeseekoowenin First Nation.

orative symbolisms of strength, trust and faith” (Kress 208). The imagery of *Kwakwu* symbolizes re-emergence; a powerful place one comes to after entering and then separating from a travesty or hardship. Revered among Eastern and Western peoples, *Kwakwu* carries energies of the sacred. As they practice the sacredness of life, these *okimâwiw* live in the spirit of *pimâtisowin*:

Like *Kwakwu*, they have been begged to listen—*nutoka moo*—and often, they step back from their situations to look forward, *usa puyew usu wapiw*, just as the porcupine does (Lincoln). The recounts of their own histories, the respect for ancestral wisdom and traditional knowledge, and their persistent vision to move forward within a contemporary world is reflected in [their] *Storywork*.... The complexities of

these women emerge as they engage in their work by “reversing and suspending historical time, [and as they] re-enter that protective burrow of tradition looking out on the future” (Lincoln 127). Like *Kwakwu* these women defend their territories in quiet and non-confrontational ways. However, when provoked, they will do everything in their power to protect themselves, their kinships and their territories. Joyful calmness, youthful thinking and open negotiation are among their strongest medicines of defense. Through cooperative and somewhat quiet interactions laced with humour, playfulness and humility, these women exhibit the traits of *Kwakwu*. They are fearless, confident and relaxed, and as they trust in their own abilities to protect themselves, they know others

recognize their strengths. (Kress 208, 209)

Through *Kanawayhitowin*, Cook-Searson and Blackbird protect, love, and understand. Their embodiment of this natural law gifts them power to lead and heal, not only themselves, but also others they encounter. As they look to unearth environmental racism and neo-colonialism, they find solutions to kinship wellness in the knowledges of their ancestors and in the collective. Although it may seem simplistic, Cook-Searson and Blackbird lead through movement, ceremony, listening, and loving. This back and forth from the “burrow” helps them generate a milieu for the sanctity of life; they respect each role, large or minor, and their actions elevate intergenerational respect, interdependence, and equanimity among peoples, other living entities, and the land, waters and cosmos.

Their resistances against injustices impacting both Indigenous lands and bodies are offered by their physical and vocal presences in homes, lodges and community halls, and in the classrooms, assemblies, board rooms, and courtrooms of our nation, through arrangements of the political, cultural, and spiritual. As circumstance presents, they have collectively opposed and often cooperated with governments and corporations on countless occasions; and both have fought personal demons and have endured deep pain. As survivors, they support kinships across the woodlands and plains in addressing issues of mental health conveyed through the abuses of residential schools, intergenerational trauma, environmental racism, and neo-colonialism, and the psychological and physical poverty these elements present. Both women recognize what has to change. Tammy elaborates:

I always feel bad when I see a young man about 18 to 25 or 30 walking downtown or just a young guy walking down because the young men had such an important role in our society, when they were hunters, trappers, they still are, because they have so much potential ... but then maybe they get frustrated and keep running into different obstacles. They want to do something. Then you have literacy [levels] where people can't read or write.... The land ... they've lost the will of how to survive off the land. There is so much violence in our community. So much sexual abuse, it still continues to happen, but how do you control it and minimize it? So you know, you just know, you see the court systems that are still there, our people are filling up the jail system, and it has to do with alcohol, either alcohol or

drugs. We do our best to protect the children, our youth and we try to provide programming for them, try to give them hope. But there is so much to be done. (Cook-Searson qtd. in Kress 210)

As *Nèhiyaw* speakers and traditional knowledge keepers, these women are community leaders of men, women, and children. Nomadic and of the land, these *onikànîwak*, manoeuvre in two worlds, as they persist and thrive. In 2005, Cook-Searson was the first woman to be elected chief of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, a portfolio she has held since; and, Stella Blackbird's life, defined by her lineage—the unwavering Chief Little Pine was her grandfather—and her *storywork* and healing actions, shows the significance of her infinite relationship with *pimâtisowin*. Prior to leading others, her personal work came with her own conscientization—critical reflection, critical action, and it seems, critical prayer. She has told me she has been on a healing journey for almost a half century:

And finally going through a healing, lots of healing, I found my name. I was given a name by the spirits. My name is Mihko kihêw iskwêw—Red Eagle Woman. My name Stella is in Latin, it actually means star. And so my colours are here, blue, yellow, white, red, and I have black for the turtle and Turtle is my clan. (Blackbird qtd. in Kress 219)

Although Tammy and Stella continue to live within the limits of the *Indian Act*, they reflect on the intergenerational and familial trauma of residential schools and other limiting reserve policies and confinements, but focus on their resolve to push through those boundaries and protect the *Nèhiyaw* knowledges embedded in their psyches and upon their lands.

Personal acknowledgements of their grandparents show how both women identify with the customs of the Woodland and Willow Cree; and how they preserve even the old parts of their language, *Nèhiyaw*. These *iskwêwak* know the properties of the medicines within their territories distinctly, as well, some might say, as they know the terrains of the boreal and the parklands where they protect, honour, and harvest to sustain their kinships. Both women have fought internalized patriarchy of Indigenous and settler governance, and acknowledge their roles in resisting this entanglement of environmental racism, colonialism, and patriarchy against Indigenous women and children, in particular. One example of this lays in the misogynistic behaviour of men who claimed they spoke for the Elders of Treaty 4 territory. On her first official occasion as Chief for the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, these men challenged Cook-Searson by requiring her to report to the Elders, specifically because her embodiment signified the feminine and she did the unspeakable; she wore her headdress in their territory (Cook-Searson cited in Kress). Cook-Searson removed her headdress in this instance (while male chiefs did not), and learned quickly to redress the continuation of this misogynistic action by what is known as “soft power” (Vizina qtd. in Kress). Firstly by consulting a number of elders from the Prince Albert Grand Council, and by receiving their sanction for the wearing of the headdress while acting in an official capacity she felt redeemed: “Chief Wesley Daniels from Sturgeon Lake ... was very supportive. ‘Nobody, nobody,’ he said, ‘only your people can take that off your head, not anyone else but your people, your people put that on you’” (Cook-Searson qtd. in Kress 243). Following this, she encountered another incident in which she was asked to remove her

headdress and at which she bluntly refused, unless all chiefs did the same; this resulted in everyone's headdress being removed and blessed along with the sacred bundle. With her actions, this type of misogynistic behaviour was exposed, and although it prevails in some territories, it has never reared its ugly head again in her presence. Today she freely and proudly wears

Blackbird's lifework reverberates with the hope of this directive and in her teachings for young peoples (Mihko kihêw iskwêw). This same hope is shown in the actions of Chief Tammy Cook-Searson while tirelessly campaigning for the mental health of her 10,000 plus band members. As I observed her, I see this hope in the respect she extends to all peoples,

breaking work around healing and environmental redemption sees followers around the world revere her traditional ecological knowledge of medicines and her love of all things living. Since the mid-1990s she has filled the role of Elder-in-Residence for the Urban Circle Training Centre in Winnipeg; it was her vision that spurred both it and Makoonsag, the

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her headdress and traditional clothing as she partakes in local and global ceremonial governance as a proud *Nêhiyaw* woman. Like Blackbird, who learned long ago that women are the leaders, she did this in a quiet and strategic manner.

The contemporary Stella Blackbird leads many male counterparts, chiefs, government officials, educators and other spiritual warriors. She muses about the time years ago when she was taught by a male elder to take her place in a circle of men:

...years back women weren't given that voice. But when I received my pipe, not my pipe, the pipe I carry for the people, 'cause I don't own anything. I carry my bundle for the people. But, the Elder told me, "Now, you're ready." He taught me. I did ceremonies with him. He taught me how to do naming and other ceremonies. And he said, "You take your tobacco when you see men sitting in a circle and doing, you take your pipe and go and sit with them, put your tobacco there." (Blackbird qtd. in Kress 247)

western and Indigenous, contemporary and traditional:

I talk to Elders and I learn from them because they have so much experience. I go berry picking with my grandma. My grandma is very patient. That's what I learned from my grandma, 'cause I'm always in a rush, always in a hurry, but my grandma will just be really, really patient. She would have one cigarette a night, that's all she ever had; she would sit on the floor and clear everything, have her ashtray there and have her one. That's all she would have. I learn [also] from the healers. Both my parents do medicine, so they heal people and they pick medicines. They know where to get it and how to mix it and stuff like that. I am always learning and I continue to learn from others. (qtd. in Kress 212)

As she explores how one creates healing spaces for children, young people, women and men, Cook-Searson expressed interest in meeting Elder Stella Blackbird to learn more. Stella's ground

intergenerational childcare centre attached to the post-secondary learning centre. As an elder, traditional healer, and medicine teacher, Stella has facilitated healing programs throughout Canada and into the United States, and one of her great joys was founding the Medicine Eagle Healing and Retreat Place with Elder Audrey Bone on the sacred and reclaimed territory bordering Riding Mountain National Park. Here at *Wasagaming*, she harvests and prepares medicines and leads ceremonies to heal the hearts, minds, and bodies of many peoples, however, it is the children who keep her most focused. In *Kwakwu* form, her stamina, quiet persistence, playfulness, and humour ground her during sunny days and dark encounters. Like Chief Cook-Searson, Elder Blackbird has endured the loss of family; intergenerational trauma from residential school left residue and her kin, and her children and grandchildren, have succumbed to diseases, accidents, suicide, and even murder. Her trials have hurt, however they've strengthened her resolve—she exudes joy, love, and peace, and each day she continues

to love and to give all that has been gifted to her.

Pimâcihiwêwin: Redemption

Leadership is just about helping people.

—Chief Tammy Cook-Searson
(qtd. in Kress 2014)

By their very presence, these women hold *Kanawayhitowin* as responsibility. This natural law clears a collective pathway to both reconciliation and redemption as it adheres to a foundation of Indigenous justice (Kress). For Cook-Searson and Blackbird, Indigenous governance embodies a landscape of sacred teachings; the laws of love, respect, wisdom, courage, humility, honesty, and truth are a part of their environmental justice. Their protection of traditional lands, waters, plants and animals, denotes more than a Western notion of environmentalism or eco-justice can encompass. And while I understand a Western reconciliation to be atoning for a mistake or clearing a debt to make something better, I also know redemption to be something more. It brings peoples together and allows for testimony and listening, while inching toward settling a difference through the alliance of both apology and forgiveness. Cree knowledge keeper Solomon Ratt shared with me the *Nêhiyaw* word which supports redemption—*pimâcihiwêwin* (Alberta Elder's Cree Dictionary), however, it seems much richer, and deeper, and transcendent in its stance. *Pimâcihiwêwin* signifies a giving of life or perhaps a saving of life (Kress).. Through *Nêhiyaw* eyes, one begins to see how a conscious action associated within the meaning of this word might move beyond a settler's appreciation of reconciliation. *Pimâcihiwêwin* applies the association and infusion of spirit, place and culture within *Wahkohtowin*,

and it instigates a public, physical, intellectual, or spiritual honouring, as this is what gives it life. In fact, "*pimâcihiwêwin is to give life*" (Ratt qtd in Kress 251) and as such it holds close the *Nêhiyawak* understanding of *Kanawayhitowin*, in protecting and honouring the spirit. Elder Blackbird knows full well how one counters environmental racism in the protecting of bodies and spirits, peoples and lands. The following blatant example compels each of us to understand how vast parcels of traditional lands have been stolen from First Nations to cushion the lifestyles of the white settler:

In 1936, the National Parks Branch evicted the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation from a small reserve 'within' the park boundary in "response to pressure from both local and departmental tourism boosters who hoped to create an attraction for automobile travellers from within the province and from the United States" (Sandlos i). This, however, was not the only motivation. The Department of Indian Affairs supported this move from the Band's rich hunting and fishing territory as "they thought such a move would bolster the department's program of assimilating Native people through immersion in the supposedly more civilized occupation of agriculture." (Sandlos qtd. in Kress 67)

Stella Blackbird has told me personally of the hurting hearts and bodies of her peoples as they were forcibly moved off their lands. In protest, many were whipped while witnessing the burning of their homes. Although Parks Canada acknowledged this wrongdoing and a small parcel of land was returned to the Keeseekoowenin First Nation in 1986, Elder Blackbird

and others took upon themselves the roles of "watchdog" as the colonial effects of racist policies continued to rear their ugly heads. Historically, the Keeseekoowenin members were banned from the Park and punished when they sought to pick medicines or to look for sustenance. This and other historical accounts show how Parks Canada and several provincial park and town authorities within our state country are guilty of environmental racism by the sheer expropriating of lands and the application of police and military force for the leisure needs of settler peoples (Kress; Sandlos; Westra 1999; 2008).

Today, almost thirty years after Parks Canada first issued an apology (1986), this national body has a different kind of relationship with the Keeseekoowenin First Nations, and Elders Stella Blackbird and Audrey Bone, based upon the principles of *pimâcihiwêwin*. Through a policy agreement signed in 1998 between Parks Canada and the Keeseekoowenin First Nation, members and those of neighbouring reserves may enter the park and harvest medicines under the guidance of Elders Blackbird and Bone. In this same year, the Canadian government acknowledged their wrongdoing in the 1936 expropriation of these reserve lands, and they returned all 435 hectares of former lands including the lakefront access lands to the First Nation along with a 12 million dollar compensation package. This historic action sets example for all First Nations and it provides impetus for Parks Canada to continue the work of reconciliation. Cheryl Penny, from Parks Canada, comments on the will of Stella Blackbird and other members: "This would not be happening without the tremendous insight and tremendous good will of Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation, without their commitment, their willingness to let us learn, to

help us learn, and then find ways of working together” (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada). Recently, Parks Canada contracted a young filmmaker, Christopher Paetkau, to tell the world this story of cultural reclamation and redemption. *Makwa Mee Nuun* tells the story of a dark history and the light of today. In this story, three generations of medicine

way the resources were given to the province in the 1930’s. That [is a] total disrespect of the First Nations people, saying this is all of Saskatchewan’s lands and resources. (Cook-Searson qtd. in Kress 186)

In addressing the social and environmental ills of these colonial

shared her apprehension of federal and provincial park strategies, I heard about the dismissive nature of officials, and the policy which limits her membership’s access to the territory of these ‘protected lands,’ specific to the termination of harvesting rights. At that moment, I shared with her the story of Elder Stella Blackbird and Riding Mountain National Park, the

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women, one *Nèhìyaw* woman (Stella), and two *Anishinabe* women (Audrey and America), ensure *Washagamee Sagee* or Clear Lake remains a sacred place for the Keeseekoowenin First Nation as they teach people from around the world about the medicines and ceremonies graced on these reclaimed lands.

Cook-Searson has many thoughts regarding land use specifically around resource development, leisure and agriculture. When I met with her she voiced concern over the political process of land distribution, and she spoke of *tipascanikimow*, “those that measure up the land” (Woodland Cree word gifted to me by Cook-Searson, 2012) and the *Saskatchewan Homesteaders Act* as realities which systematically colonize Indigenous peoples:

The ways the permits are issued by the provincial government regardless if we have opposition to it or not, I think that’s environmental racism.... It’s almost like there’s a total disregard of us being the first people here, and having a treaty and agreeing to share the land, and then just the

impacts, she has her own set of knowledges and practical experiences to shy into the circle. She follows the wisdom of Sharon Venne, Cree legal scholar, who is sure the Elders have not “ceded, surrendered, and forever given up title to the lands” (192).

We are always asserting our rights. [Sometimes] you also have the push back. You know, you have Premier Brad Wall saying “No way in my time as the Premier will there be a resource revenue sharing for any special groups.” He refers to us as a special group and we are not a special group. We have a treaty, an inherent right to these lands, and we agreed to share these lands. Somehow, I think our lands have been ‘legally’ taken. Because [the governments] developed the rules and regulations on how to take over control of the lands. (Cook-Searson qtd. in Kress 267)

She expressed concern over the infusion of a euro-centric notion of leisure and the leasing of lands for tourism. As Tammy Cook-Searson

historical infusion of assimilation, the dislocation of a peoples, and land encroachment for white settler privilege and enjoyment. I also reflected on the counter-story of resistance and the redemption found through the efforts of both the peoples of Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation and Parks Canada itself. This retelling functions as a redeeming act. It is this sharing that gives Chief Tammy Cook-Searson hope because it signifies authentic reconciliation encompassed in redemption; for redemption is both an apology and a forgiveness, albeit, one that moves parties to rightful action.

This explicit example of environmental racism within Riding Mountain National Park history encompasses the physical removal and dislocation of Indigenous peoples for settler industry, and although perhaps hidden from settler eyes, it shows the fractured spiritual realm of a peoples. When Indigenous peoples are removed from sacred lands, waters and sites of ceremony, a disembodied spiritual life is left for families of today. In this case, the settler industry of leisure and recreation, and those engaged in it

foisted what is known as a cultural genocide upon this Ojibway nation. This act of environmental racism affected human, plant, and animal life, and moreover, the spirit and biodiversity of the land and living entities within and outside the park boundaries. This story is an important story in of itself, however, it also gives life to current realities, and to the cases of environmental racism Indigenous peoples face and resist today. It resonates with the women across Turtle Island who protect the spirit of *Pimâcihiwêwin* through measures of truth telling, apology, forgiveness, and mutual action and healing.

**Seeking *Mamâtowisowin*:
Resurgence through
Aniki kê-pimitisahhkik
pêyâhtakêyimowin**

*Power is in the earth, it is in your
relationship to the earth.*
—Winona LaDuke (2014)

Cree philosopher and scholar Willie Ermine describes the depth of these *Nêhiyaw* women in the conceptualization of Earth energy: “*mamâtowisowin* is the capacity to connect to the life force that makes anything and everything possible” (Ermine 110). I argue the embodiment of *mamâtowisowin* is the key to Blackbird and Cook-Searson’s resurgence and vitality. This energy of the *Nêhiyaw* feminine gives hope to kinships as these women believe all living entities have the ability to “be in tune with the universe” (Naytowhow qtd. in Faith 24). The positionality of feminine Indigeneity found in the solidarity of these *Nêhiyaw* women is grounded in the foundation of *mamâtowisowin*, it reverberates for all, and it makes their work a spiritual and peace-giving leadership. Stella has this to say:

One morning I woke up and

realized I was part of this, the creation,” says Stella. “I am related to the grass, the trees, the sky, the water. This was my awakening and that’s when things began to change. (Status of Women Manitoba qtd. in Kress 218)

“Within the energies of *mamâtowisowin*, are *aniki kê-pimitisahhkik pêyâhtakêyimowin*—‘those that follow peace’” (Cree word gifted to me by Solomon Ratt, qtd. in Kress 271). My fresh awareness of Haudenosaunee customary law shows me how women often “carry the burden of peace,” (Gabriel qtd. in Kress 271), however, in *Nêhiyaw* natural law, there is an acknowledgement of women who follow peace (Kress). Upon discovering this distinct difference within Indigenous knowledges, it seemed to me, each experience of coming to *Nêhiyaw* justice is a teaching, a lesson, a coming out, or a resistance, rather than a burden. The value of each person, each mother and daughter, and how Blackbird and Cook-Searson honour and validate roles in a kinship, should perhaps be considered in the ways in which we analyze our experiences when searching for justice, or peace:

Perhaps it is that peace is not a burden at all. Perhaps it is that peace is not carried, but rather, journeyed. Perhaps, in fact, peace is a journey of love, in which a place upon the path is set for each member of a community. (Kress 272)

When I think about the lives of Stella Blackbird and Tammy Cook-Searson, and about how their body politic impacts the consequence of wellness in their communities, and equally for themselves, I see clearly how *Nêhiyaw* is critical to the dignity of a peoples, and the sustainability

of their territories and culture. Alex Wilson references the importance of women’s work through the *Idle No More* movement and their adherence to *sakihiwawin* (Kress). So it is this natural law, the one of *sakihiwawin*, I believe, which validates the positions, the voices, and the actions of these *onîkânîwak*, Elder Stella Blackbird and Chief Tammy Cook Searson. Their peaceful resistances and their attention to the love of what they do for those they serve is a vital piece of redemption and resurgence. The upholding of *sâkîhitowin* by these teachers of peace is critical, timely, and necessary. Their actions have paved the way for all to become *Aniki kê-pimitisahhkik pêyâhtakêyimowin* in this collective journey.

Conclusion

As I draw this effort to a close, I reflect on the gift of awakening I have received from Elder Stella Blackbird and Chief Tammy Cook-Searson. I think about my conversations, the questioning and the listening, and the spaces in between. I reflect on the spirit of the land and that of these *Nêhiyaw iskwêwak* as one and the same. I think about their voices, the intonation and softness, and the privilege of listening to their stories, their language, and truly learning to hear. Through *Wahkohtowin*, I believe I have come to understand some pieces of *Nêhiyaw*, what this ancient language means for kinship wellness and for Indigenous women’s leadership. I now see the path ahead to *Pimâcihiwêwin* and what I must do as my part in the search for an Indigenous environmental justice. *Weatoskemitotan mena setoskatotan*. Let’s work together and support each other (Cook-Searson cited in Kress 157).

Born in Saskatchewan, Margaret Kress, a woman of Métis, French, English,

and German ancestry, is guided by the words of elders in her quest of a transformative education, and a conscious society. As teacher, advisor, and learner, Margaret works to explore and present discourses encompassing inclusivity, gentleness, traditional knowledges, and justice frameworks to help others see in new ways. She has worked closely with women Elders and knowledge keepers throughout Canada in the area of Indigenous wellness and environmental justice. Currently, she supports students and faculty at the University of New Brunswick in teaching, research, and critical issues associated with Aboriginal education, Indigenous research methodologies, environmentalism, storywork, and decolonizing and self-determining practices.

¹Sāsīpīhkēyīhtamowin (two Cree women).

²I have come to this storywork under the guidance of Elder Dr. Stella Blackbird, *Mihko kihw iskwēw* (Red Eagle Woman) of the Turtle Clan. It is she who propelled my understanding of Nēhiyawak, along with the redemption found within this Indigenous language, and a Cree worldview of *Sāsīpīhkēyīhtamowin*. As I present this story, I do so in her honour, and in the honour of all Indigenous women leaders who have gifted me on this journey. On this life path, I honour all Cree language keepers, and the oral histories and dialects preserved in the Swampy, Woodland, and Plains Cree knowledge systems.

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CLARA A. B. JOSEPH

Hardboiled Egg

I've never tasted
boiled egg so good
as from your hands
that still morning at ten
when I was just about to leave
and two suitcases stood
large and locked
for the taxi
the knapsack still on my back
holding a face-towel
the poisoned bible
a wallet and a toothbrush
a tube of paste
a tongue-cleaner

you had it ready
unshelled and warm
at the tip of a thumb and two
fingers
as if you'd ordered the hen
to lay so well ahead
for you to just pluck
the warmth from the hay
the yoke especially made
for me so smooth
oh so round
even the smell oh
so perfect

it is a pity
just to bite and break
such wholesomeness
and you in that posture

of letting go

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“I Know About My Own Body They Lied”

Environmental Justice, and the Contestation of Knowledge Claims in Institute, WV, and Old Bhopal, India

REENA SHADAAN

A Institute, dans la Virginie de l'Est et dans le Old Bhopal en Indes, les femmes poussées par l'injustice environnementale ont noté que les médecins refusaient de reconnaître le lien entre les luttes pour leur santé et leur exposition aux toxines industrielles. Cette opposition met en évidence le rôle sous-jacent de la marginalisation du genre, de la race et de la classe en refusant cette évidence connue des femmes.

I had come back from my [in-law's] house that day. My daughter was eight days old.... [M]y eyes were tearing, and my daughter was coughing. I thought somebody was burning chillies.... [E]verybody was coughing and vomiting.... My daughter died about two and a half years after the disaster.

—Noorjahan, Old Bhopal, India (Personal communication, Jan. 2012)

They lied about that emission.... I don't care how long it takes. We're going to know one day that they lied to us.... I know about my own body.... They lied to us.... They come out smelling like a

rose, while the community goes on with this stench.

—Sue Davis, Institute, West Virginia (Personal communication, Apr. 23, 2015)

For the sense of smell, almost more than any other, has the power to recall memories and it's a pity we use it so little.

—Rachel Carson (1956: 83)

In 1962, Rachel Carson published her ground-breaking work, *Silent Spring*. With that, Carson introduced the American public to the harmful ecological and health impact of pesticide-use, and particularly DDT.¹ She noted, “Residues of these chemicals linger in soil.... They have entered and lodged in the bodies of fish, birds, reptiles, and domestic and wild animals.... [They] are now stored in the bodies of the vast majority of human beings...” (Carson 1962: 15-16). As a result of *Silent Spring*, Carson faced a barrage of industry-led attacks, questioning her knowledge claims. Notably, much of Carson's critiques were rooted in her gendered identity. Specifically, she was touted as a “hysterical” and “uninformed

woman” (Hess). Decades later, little has changed. Women-activists in environmental justice struggles are similarly belittled by “experts” in industry, the state, and the scientific community. Celene Krauss—in reference to her work with white, working-class, environmental justice women-activists in the U.S.—notes, “Male officials ... exacerbated [the] intimidation by ignoring the women, by criticizing them for being overemotional, and by delegitimizing their authority by labelling them ‘hysterical housewives’” (1998: 139-140).

Gender is often evoked when discussing the dismissal of environmental justice women-activists' knowledge and lived experiences. As Phil Brown and Faith Ferguson aptly summarize,

The women activists transform their everyday experiences, most typically their own and their neighbors' children's illness, into knowledge that they can use in the struggle against toxic waste, and they insist on its validity as knowledge. Such validity is contested by scientific experts and professionals, whose cultural

beliefs about women and science lead them to refuse to accept the women activists' claims about the consequences of toxic exposure. (151-152)

Nonetheless, a more nuanced analysis is necessary. Specifically, how do race and class factor in the construction of "knowers?" The need for a race and class-based analysis in the context of environmental justice cannot be overstated. In a recent study of 3,433 hazardous chemical facilities in the U.S., it was found that localities adjacent to hazardous facilities are "disproportionately Black ... or Latino, have higher rates of poverty than for the U.S. as a whole, and have lower housing values, incomes, and education levels than the national average. The disproportionate ... danger is sharply magnified in the 'fenceline' areas near the facilities" (Orum, Moore, Roberts and Sanchez 4).

In effect, this article will consider the phenomenon of the dismissal of women's health-related knowledge and lived experiences within the context of two diverse, but historically connected, environmental justice struggles. The first is located in Institute, West Virginia, within the wider region of Kanawha Valley—known as "Chemical Valley." The second is in Old Bhopal, India, an area that is severely impacted by the 1984 Bhopal Gas Disaster²—known as the "world's worst industrial disaster" (Hanna, Morehouse and Sarangi). In both areas, women discuss the dismissal of their health experiences, and specifically doctors' refusal to draw connections between their health struggles and their exposure to industrial toxins—which many identify as the root cause of their illnesses. While diverse factors—ranging from industry-touted misinformation,³ to the absence of comprehensive health studies—contribute to this denial, I intend to discuss the intersections

of gender, race and class marginalization, and the underlying role of these factors in the dismissal of these toxic-impacted women's knowledge claims.

"Chemical Valley" – Kanawha Valley, West Virginia

Institute is located within the region of Kanawha Valley (West Virginia), which is home to a number of chemical corporations, such as Dow Chemical (Institute, WV), DuPont (Belle, WV),⁴ and (formerly) Monsanto (Nitro, WV).⁵ According to Maya Nye, former spokesperson of the Institute-based environmental justice group, People Concerned About Chemical Safety (People Concerned),⁶ "Institute is primarily an African American community... Other surrounding communities ... are mostly poor or working class white. The entire area is Appalachian ... a marginalized culture stereotyped as being ignorant and poor" (Personal communication, Sept. 27, 2013).

Institute—a mixed-income, African American community—has a particular experience of toxic exposure, rooted in residents' racialization. Pam Nixon—spokesperson for People Concerned, and former Environmental Advocate at the Department of Environmental Protection—notes, "[O]ther than the ammonia tank up at the DuPont plant [in Belle] ... the Institute area had the most dangerous chemicals. They had 1,3 butadiene, they had the phosgene, they had ... MIC [methyl isocyanate]" (Personal communication, Apr. 21, 2015). This is not a chance occurrence. As Robert Bullard, Paul Mohai, Robin Saha and Beverly Wright note, "Race continues to be an independent predictor of where hazardous wastes are located, and it is a stronger predictor than income, education and other socioeconomic indicators" (xii).

As Institute resident and People Concerned member, Donna Willis, notes, "We could do the Black Lives Matter. Have our hands up in the air.... They killin' us on the street every day with their chemicals. We'll hold up our hands and say Black Lives Matter" (Personal communication, Apr. 23, 2015).⁷

Parts of Kanawha Valley are known for high cancer rates. This became apparent when driving through Institute with Donna Willis, and another life-long Institute resident and member of People Concerned, Sue Davis. The following excerpt aptly described our two-hour drive in and around Institute: "Mr. Pruitt over there, he had cancer.... Billy had cancer.... Jerome James, he died of cancer. He lived right there ... [and] his widow died of cancer.... Diane Carter was raised right here.... She died of cancer" (Donna Willis, Personal communication, Apr. 23, 2015). However, cancer is just one of many health issues plaguing residents. In 1987, People Concerned, with support from allies at several U.S. universities, carried out a comprehensive health survey of Institute⁸—the only one to date. When compared to national statistics, Institute residents have "significantly higher" rates of bronchitis, cataracts, hay fever, itching skin, tinnitus, indigestion, psoriasis, constipation, goiter/thyroid issues, bladder problems, hearing impairments, ulcers, and tachycardia (Hall and Wagner). Interestingly, and as if anticipating mistrust, the study notes: "The respondent-assessed health status is generally in line with national estimates. Respondents also reported less experience of stress in their lives than is the case nationally.... [This] would tend to indicate ... that *respondents in this survey were not overemphasizing their health problems*" [emphasis added] (Hall and Wagner 6).

“The World’s Worst Industrial Disaster” – Bhopal, India

Bhopal, India, is the site of the 1984 Bhopal Gas Disaster—the “world’s worst industrial disaster” (Hanna et al.). In 1969, the American-owned Union Carbide Corporation (UCC) sited a facility in Old Bhopal, the poorest subsection of the city. As

International 2014), and to date, approximately 25,000 have been killed (Sarangi 2012). Currently, 150,000 people face a myriad of chronic health issues, including respiratory illnesses, eye diseases, immune system impairments, neurological damage, neuromuscular damage, endocrine system disruption, reproductive health issues, gynecological disor-

MIC leaks (Agarwal, Merrifield and Tandon).

The Bhopal disaster, coupled with decades of toxic emissions and industrial pollution, led to the emergence of People Concerned, which has been at the forefront of environmental justice in Kanawha Valley. Sue Davis—whose brother, Warne Ferguson, was a founding member—expresses the

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in the U.S., the siting of hazardous facilities is deliberate, placing a disproportionate burden of toxic exposure on marginalized communities. According to Satinath Sarangi of the Bhopal Group for Information and Action (BGIA),⁹

[O]ld Bhopal is [largely] composed of ... immigrants, driven out of their [villages] ... as a result of ... mechanized agriculture ... and other “development” projects. Over 75% ... earned their livelihood through daily wage labor and petty business.... [T]he Muslim poor ... formed over 35% of the population.... (1996: 101)

Utilizing untested technology, and amidst a myriad of safety hazards, the UCC-Bhopal plant formulated, and later manufactured, pesticides (Hanna et al.).

On December 3, 1984, 40 tonnes of methyl isocyanate (MIC)—a substance five times more toxic than phosgene, which was used as a chemical weapon during World War I (Rajagopal)—leaked. Within three days, up to 10,000 were killed (Amnesty

International 2004), as well as cancers (Sarangi, Personal communication, Jun. 28, 2014). Notably, many of the illnesses experienced by the gas-affected population are dismissed, as will be discussed further in greater detail. In fact, an early health study felt it necessary to clarify, “Each symptom was described in such graphic detail that it was obviously based on the patient’s own experience and *could not be malingering or wild imaginations as some are apt to allege*” [emphasis added] (MFC 6).

The Historic Connection between Institute and Bhopal

While the Bhopal Gas Disaster is a prime reference point for the U.S. environmental justice movement (see Pariyadath and Shadaan), it has particular significance in Institute. Following the Bhopal disaster, Institute residents learned that MIC was being manufactured in Institute’s UCC facility. UCC claimed that the facility was safe; however, the company’s records indicated that the plant had leaked MIC 28 times between 1979 and 1984. UCC later admitted to 62

deep connection between Institute residents and Bhopal gas survivors. She notes, “I share their grief. I share their heartache and heartbreak. When it happened to them, it happened to me” (Personal communication, Apr. 23, 2015).

In effect, while Institute and Old Bhopal are distinct sites of environmental racism, they are also sites of an intertwining history, and shared struggle. This deep connection is aptly summarized in the following statement by People Concerned in 1985:

We are residents, professors, and college students¹⁰ who oppose MIC production in our community. We do so not only because a disaster similar to Bhopal could happen here, but also out of respect for the victims and survivors in your city.... We see Union Carbide’s haste to make profits again from methyl isocyanate as an indication of little concern for what happened to the Indian people, and little concern for the predominantly black community that lives just downwind from the Institute plant. The lesson of the Bhopal

disaster for us is that Union Carbide cannot be trusted to insure our safety.... We hold our hands in brotherhood to you. May our common concern for safety and health bond your community and ours for many years to come. (Agarwal, Merrifield and Tandon 31)

It is further indicated in the solidarity statement released by the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal (ICJB), following the 2014 Elk River spill:

[ICJB] ... expresses solidarity with the communities of West Virginia that are facing a toxic nightmare.... The contamination of our water ... is a heinous crime. Like you, Bhopalis have faced widespread groundwater contamination.... Toxic facilities are routinely situated in areas populated by the poor, working-class and/or racial minorities and, left to self-regulate, chemical industries will continue to pose a threat to the lives and environments of such communities. (2014b)

My impetus for focusing on Old Bhopal and Institute is to demonstrate that these distinct struggles, which are connected by history and their fight against the toxic trespass of their bodies and environments, converge to (informally) form a transnational environmental justice struggle that contests the disproportionate burden of industrial pollution and the resultant health impacts on racialized and working-class bodies (see Pellow).

Methodology

A feminist and phenomenological methodology underlies this study. Qualitative methodologies are “flexible, fluid and better suited to under-

stand the meanings, interpretations and subjective experiences of those groups who may be marginalized, ‘hard to reach’ or remain silenced” (Bhopal 189). Feminist methodologies, in particular, aim to “capture women’s lived experiences in a respectful manner that legitimates women’s voices as a source of knowledge” (Campbell and Wasco 783). This is pertinent, as environmental justice women-activists are routinely excluded from knowledge production (being viewed as hysterical, ignorant, and suspicious) largely due to their marginalized gender, race, and class identities. Moreover, a phenomenological approach “argue[s] ... that the patient’s self-understanding and experience of illness ... offers a legitimate source of relevant medical knowledge,” making this framework particularly apt (Goldenberg 2628).

As an observer of the struggle for justice in Bhopal, as well as a participant in the solidarity group, the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal, North America (ICJB-NA), I will draw on historical data, as well as narratives gained from my various interactions with women-activists residing in Old Bhopal, who are impacted by the ongoing Bhopal gas disaster.¹¹

It is in the capacity of ICJB-NA that I learned about, and connected with, People Concerned. In April 2015, I travelled to Institute in order to meet these women-activists, and learn about their experiences of toxic emissions and industrial pollution. While I had initially planned to explore issues surrounding women’s motivations for activism in People Concerned, health and healthcare emerged as prime issues in each of the five semi-structured interviews carried out. A similar trend was apparent in my interactions with Bhopali women-activists. The struggle for environmental justice is, after all, a struggle for health, recognition, and justice.

Making the Connection

In both Old Bhopal and Institute, women find their knowledge and experiences of illness—and particularly the causation—dismissed by medical professionals. As Phil Brown and Edwin J. Mikkelsen note, “Science is ... limited in its conceptualization of what problems are legitimate and how they should be addressed.... [P]hysicians are largely untrained in environmental and occupational health matters, and even when they observe environmentally caused disease, they are unlikely to blame the disease on the environment” (132). In the context of Institute, and in relation to an autoimmune disorder she developed after a chemical emission, Pam Nixon notes,

[The doctor] didn’t want to... give a causation of it.... None of the doctors here in the Valley ... would ever say what was causing your problem.... I know [the chemical release] affected me.... [T]he reason I say that is [because] every time I would almost go into remission, and they would have a release at a particular unit ... I’d have symptoms again.... I knew it was coming from the plant, but I couldn’t get a doctor to say it was coming from the plant. (Personal communication, Apr. 21, 2015)

Although not in Institute, Stephanie Tyree—a Board Member of People Concerned, and a long-time environmental justice advocate in West Virginia—relates a similar narrative. Following the 2014 Elk River spill in the region,

What they told you to do was turn on your hot water at full force, and just flush all the water out. The chemical that was spilled, when it was heated up, it

turned into ... a neurotoxin.... When we were doing this ... [the] whole apartment filled up with gas. You could smell it. It was really intense.... I got a really bad migraine from it that lasted for like a week.... [E]ventually I went to ... a MedExpress Center.... I told them that I got it because of the [contaminated]

ers who have lost their offspring or who are bringing up deformed infants, the shocking accounts given by the junior staff of the hospitals, midwives and nurses who insist they have never seen any birth-and-death cycle of this kind before.... Against this we have the official version of bureaucrats and senior doctors

ground water” (ICJB 2014a). Or that when travelling though Institute, Donna Willis noted, “I just had an aunt die of cancer. I just had a girlfriend who ... was raised with me that just died of cancer. Her mother died of cancer,” to which Sue Davis responded, “It’s unbelievable, and we can’t get a study” (Personal communication, Apr. 23, 2015).

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water, and the doctor didn’t believe me.... He was like, “I don’t think that’s what it’s about... I think you just have a bad headache....” I was like, I think I know what it’s about.... (Personal communication, Apr. 24, 2015)

Maya Nye concurs. “A lot of stories that I heard after the Elk River chemical spill was that doctors were refusing to make any sort of connection between their symptoms and the exposure to the MCHM [crude 4-methylcyclohexane methanol].” However, “[A]fter the Elk River chemical spill ... I’ll bet doctors were more likely to make the connection versus a one-off release ... because more people were impacted [and] ... people of affluence were also affected ... white folks, not ... people of colour” (Personal communication, Jun. 8, 2015).

The experiences of Nixon and Tyree are consistent with those of women in Old Bhopal. Shortly after the Bhopal disaster, and in reference to the prevalence of reproductive health problems, a journalist observed,

There are shocking tales of moth-

who are under instruction not to talk. An attempt is being made to cover up the deformities and abnormalities being recorded.... Nobody knows if the trauma will end with this generation, or the next. (Sarin)¹²

A 2004 study re-iterates some doctor’s hesitancy to relate illnesses to MIC exposure. Following visits to various hospitals, it was noted, “Doctors were refusing to admit to the fact that MIC ... had affected major organs” (We for Bhopal 37). Further, “The doctors were not willing to admit that the high incidence of cancer can be related to the affect of the gas. There was simply not enough research to back up any such theory...” (We for Bhopal 56). Here, it is imperative to ask: Why are there so few studies on the health impacts of toxic exposure in Old Bhopal and Institute? Consider that over three decades after the Bhopal disaster, survivors’ organizations continue to have to ask for, “[T]reatment protocols specific to exposure related health problems and ... medical research that benefits the gas victims and those exposed to contaminated

Maya Nye provides a useful response in the context of Institute, but with lessons that can be applied in Old Bhopal and elsewhere:

[T]here have been [more] studies done on the Elk River chemical spill, [than] any of the spills that happen ... in Institute or in Belle, [which is] more of an economically depressed area.... *[M]ore affluent people were impacted [which] is the reason why more studies happen.* [emphasis added] (Personal communication, Jun. 8, 2015)

The Influence of Race, Class and Gender

It is integral, then, to ask how gender, race and class oppression influences the apparent denial of illness causation. Prior to delving into the particular context of Institute and Old Bhopal, it is imperative to note the knowledge/power hierarchy that can underlie the relationship between medical professionals and lay persons. Martha Balslem provides a useful summary from her in-depth case study of a working-class community

in Philadelphia. She notes the strained relationship between the medical establishment and residents, who attribute their illnesses to industrial pollution—an assertion that the medical community is less willing to make.

For many lay people, contact with the medical-care system has at some point involved the felt experience of a loss of personal authority. These experiences are often dramatic and terrifying.... Medical social scientists have described in elaborate detail the physician's power to confer or deny legitimacy to particular interpretations of patient sign, symptom, and behaviour; charged that through the distinction between scientific knowledge and folk knowledge, lay interpretations are cast as illegitimate and inconvenient counterpoints to real medical knowledge.... (6-7)

Pertinent here is: What groups, if any, are granted more legitimacy than others? C. Sathyamala notes, "In the doctor-patient relationship, generally the patient is considered a malingerer unless clinical and laboratory tests prove that she/he show some changes.... This is exaggerated when the complainant belongs to an "inferior category"... either in terms of class or sex" (1988: 40). The role of gender, in particular, has warranted a significant amount of scholarly attention. As Marci R. Culley and Holly L. Angeli-que summarize, "Science ('rational/masculine') has typically rejected women's 'ways of knowing' in antitoxic efforts ('informal,' 'experience based,' 'housewife surveys') as unscientific, unobjective, and irrational" (2003: 447). This analysis is pertinent in the context of Old Bhopal where "[t]he belief that women are emotional and hysterical creatures, led researchers to conclude that the effect on pregnan-

cies was due to the enormous stress these women underwent.... Stress, of course, may have taken its toll, but the tendency was to put the entire blame on the emotional state of the women" (Sathyamala 1994: 130). This is also pertinent in the context of Institute. Sue Davis notes,

[They] say, "Oh, she suffers from paranoia. She's paranoid regarding the chemical plant"... Both hospitals said it.... [T]hen you look at their descriptions, and ... you see where they created all this stuff that they lied about.... They were so rude, and so ... non-caring, and they don't know what we go through.... [T]hey said, "She has fears"... Who am I gonna fear? Who am I gonna fear? I don't fear them. I don't fear their chemicals. I live so that if I die tomorrow, I know where I'm going. (Personal communication, Apr. 23, 2015)

Complicating the analysis, allegations of "paranoia" and "hysteria" are not limited to women. In the context of a working-class community in Southern West Virginia, Stephanie Tyree notes,

They were having [coal slurry] through their water systems, and having a lot of health impacts from that, and cancer clusters.... [T]hey [both men and women] really struggled to get doctors to recognize the health impacts.... *A lot of doctors telling them that they were imagining things.... They were hysterical....* [emphasis added] (Personal communication, Apr. 24, 2015)

In addition, Donna Willis shared the particular ways in which African American women's knowledges, lived experiences, and resistance is discounted:

"Black women aren't afraid of speaking out against injustice.... Society is quick to place a label on anyone who isn't snowed in by their hypocrisy.... There are elements in our environment that are killing us... If a Black woman returns an insult in kind, then up pops the race card. She's loud, trying to intimidate us, threatening...." (Personal communication, Feb. 17, 2016)

In effect, reducing the discussion to gender serves to ignore other key aspects of identity, such as race and class, which—alongside gender—confer to assign (or deny) legitimacy. In the context of Old Bhopal, the intersections of race, class, and gender serve to deny legitimacy, in particular, to gas-affected women. To illustrate, a gynecological health study, conducted in 1985, found a correlation between MIC exposure and gynecological illnesses. The findings were widely contested by Bhopal's medical establishment, in a manner that indicates gender and class discrimination, as well as anti-Muslim sentiments. Gynecologists affiliated with India's leading, state-sponsored medical body, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), said, "Oh, these poor women live in such filthy conditions. All of them have pelvic infection. It is very frequent amongst Muslim women" (Kishwar 38). Moreover, three Bhopal-based gynecologists, and one Bhopal-based obstetrics and gynecology professor identified "...gynaecological symptoms as 'usual,' 'psychological,' or 'fake' and the gynaecological diseases ... as 'usual,' 'tuberculous,' or 'due to poverty and poor hygiene'" (Sathyamala 1988: 50).

The perception that gynecological illnesses were "fake" warrants further discussion. It is rooted in the oft-touted allegations of "compensation neurosis" (feigning illness in order to gain larger sums of compensation),

which is linked to the marginalized class identities of the gas-affected population. C. Sathyamala observes, “The gas victims were poor and a larger proportion were women ... and it was easy for the medical community to dismiss their complaints out of their ... suspicion of such people” (1988: 40). These perceptions persist. In a 2004 interview with the former

assistance with healthcare.... You’re less likely to have quality healthcare, I would say, or to be taken seriously.... [A]s far as race goes, I would say that there are probably similar barriers.... I would say that the barriers are the same regardless of class, when it comes to race.... (Personal communication, Jun. 8, 2015)

Although the People’s Health Centre was raided by police, and shut down after twenty days, it is an early and notable example of the struggle for healthcare in Bhopal that addresses the needs of residents impacted by MIC exposure. Today, the Sambhavna Trust Clinic carries on the tradition of the People’s Health Centre. Established in 1995, and

The perception that gynecological illnesses were “fake” is rooted in the oft-touted allegations of “compensation neurosis,” which is linked to the marginalized class identities of the gas-affected population. “The gas victims were poor and a larger proportion were women ... and it was easy for the medical community to dismiss their complaints.”

Director of Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation, Bhopal’s Chief Medical Officer, and several high-ranking Bhopal-based hospital officials, it was noted, “Look don’t be taken in by what people tell you.... It is all gimmicks.... When the question of giving them compensation money came up they all lined up.... The fact of the matter is that 95% of these people are not gas victims” (We for Bhopal 57).

Notably, the suspicion of impoverished, working-class, and racialized communities is pertinent in the context of Institute as well. Maya Nye notes,

I would say that there’s ... a stereotype of “working the system,” the healthcare system.... “Working the system” ... would probably be someone who is low-income, on disability potentially, who has Medicaid.... Those are people who are considered people who “work the system,” people who are living off the system.... I would say that, with the class issue, you’re less likely to be taken seriously if you’re on disability, or if you have some sort of public

In effect, in both Institute and Old Bhopal, toxic-impacted communities have been labelled by some of the medical community as “paranoid,” “hysterical,” “ignorant,” and “fake.”

However, both communities have led a relentless struggle for health and justice. Aware of Union Carbide’s attempt to silence the health impacts of MIC exposure, Bhopali survivors and solidarity activists opened the People’s Health Centre in 1985, noting:

For the past six months, politicians have hidden the problems of gas victims; withheld effective cures and blindly pumped people full of random drugs, playing havoc with their lives. We have fundamental human rights to health and proper medical care.... This clinic was made for the people by the people, it is for the benefit of gas victims. We intend to make it a model for public struggle against the merchants of death... Down with the murderer Union Carbide! The fight for medical care is a fight for our rights! (Bhopal Medical Appeal and Bhopal Group for Information & Action 27)

staffed primarily by survivors, this clinic provides free ayurvedic and allopathic care to those impacted by the Bhopal gas disaster. In addition, medical research and public health education is carried out, to the benefit of survivors, their children, and those living in the communities impacted by groundwater contamination.

These efforts are in addition to the ongoing work of the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal—led by survivors’ groups and a grassroots support group. Under the guiding principles of the precautionary principle (a substance must be proven non-harmful prior to use), the polluter pays principle (those who pollute are responsible for clean-up), right-to-know (the public must have accessible information about threats to their bodies and environments), international liability (corporations must not be allowed to abscond from legal action, wherever that action is initiated), and environmental justice (racialized, Indigenous and poor communities should not have to bear the burden of toxic bodies and environments). ICJB focuses on the short-term goals of relief and rehabilitation, and the long-term goals of justice and

accountability. This includes the rights to adequate medical care and research on the long-term impacts of MIC exposure, social and economic rehabilitation, environmental remediation, adequate compensation, and justice and accountability within the Indian and U.S. legal system. The Bhopal campaign's three decades of work has led to a number of significant victories, although the struggle for justice is ongoing.¹³

In Institute, the only comprehensive health study to have taken place was sponsored by People Concerned (Hall and Wagner). The study aimed to identify recurring health issues, develop a community health profile, demonstrate the need for improvements in healthcare responses, and demonstrate the need for epidemiological studies (Holt). A group newsletter during the time noted, "Was it deliberate oversight or mere negligence that led to little effort to obtain systematic information about the health status of communities living in close proximity to chemical plants?" (Holt 1).

Like ICJB in Bhopal, People Concerned has been at the forefront of both prevention and remediation efforts in West Virginia for the past three decades. This includes the development of a Pollution Prevention Program in the 1990s. A notable part of this initiative was an "Odor Patrol," in which community members would monitor, identify, and report odors stemming from the chemical facilities. In addition, a community air-monitoring program was put into place, following the 2008 explosion at Institute's Bayer CropScience facility. Finally, People Concerned has advocated for effective emergency response plans, third-party safety audits, greater transparency, and has been a key voice in calling for chemical safety and environmental legislation in West Virginia (Maya Nye, Personal communication, Jul. 30, 2016).¹⁴

Conclusion

Environmental justice is a struggle of Indigenous, racialized, and working-class communities—and particularly the women in these communities (Brown and Ferguson; Krauss 1993). A significant aspect of the struggle is gaining recognition in order to gain healthcare, justice, and equality. Notably, while race and class oppression influences the siting of hazardous facilities; it also operates in conjunction with gender oppression to influence the communities' ability (or, more appropriately, inability) to gain recourse. Due to this, residents find their knowledge claims dismissed, as they are perceived as "hysterical," "paranoid," "fake," and "suspicious." For Old Bhopal and Institute, this means that medical professionals do not link the myriad of health issues to toxic exposure—a refusal that is at odds with residents' claims, which, in turn, impacts resident's ability to gain recourse.

However, these communities possess a knowledge that can supersede outsider knowledge claims. Underlying their knowledge claims is a historical awareness, an understanding of the larger framework (Brown), as well as sensory perceptions. As Phil Brown and Edwin J. Mikkelsen note,

[P]eople often have access to data about themselves and their environment that are inaccessible to scientists. In fact, public knowledge of community toxic hazards in the last two decades has largely stemmed from the observations of ordinary people... Even before observable health problems crop up, lay observations may bring to light a wealth of important data... Yellow Creek, Kentucky residents were the first to notice fish kills, disappearances of small animals... (127)

Consider the importance of smell in Pam Nixon's narrative, "[W]here I grew up... we were downstream from the Belle [DuPont] plant... [W]hen they would have releases into the water, there'd be large fish kills, and of course the fish would float down river... and so the smell of the dead fish would come up into [our home]" (Personal communication, Apr. 21, 2015). Or the significance of sound for Savannah Evans, following the 1985 leak of methylene chloride and the aldicarb oxide in Institute. At a town hall meeting, Evans noted, "The birds stopped singing Sunday morning, and they came back Wednesday. I pay particular attention because my husband and I both love birds" (Pickering and Lewis). It is largely through the senses that these communities *know* the impact of toxic exposure on their bodies and environments. It is this community-based, expert knowledge that must underlie and drive the comprehensive health studies that are so desperately needed in both Old Bhopal and Institute.

While in Institute, I experienced an odd, itchy sensation in my throat. I immediately dismissed myself as "paranoid," as I could see the chemical plants nearby. Two weeks later, my colleague in ICJB-NA noted a similar experience when she was in Institute, with an activist from Bhopal. She said, "It felt like [my nose and sinuses] were burning... It started about five minutes after we got there, and stayed throughout our time in the area" (Ellen Shifrin, Personal communication, May 11, 2015). I reflected back to my own experience, and, particularly, my reducing my knowledge and experience to "paranoia." Perhaps it is time that we stop dismissing, and start embracing the truth of our senses.

Acknowledgements: To the women of Institute and Old Bhopal, who—despite decades of toxic exposure and illness—continue to fight for a toxic-free

future. I will forever be impacted by your strength, struggle, knowledge, and resilience. To Maya Nye for her ongoing support, and wealth of knowledge. To Dr. Susie O'Brien for her invaluable support and feedback. To faculty, staff and my former colleagues in Gender Studies and Feminist Research (McMaster University) for their guidance and support. Finally, to Ryan Sparrow for his assistance.

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¹My intention is not to dismiss the foundational work of labour unions and activists, who were at the forefront of promoting industrial health and safety long before Carson's work brought these issues to mainstream attention.

²The Bhopal gas disaster is often referred to in past tense, being that it occurred over thirty years ago. However, as the impact is both ongoing and growing, I choose to refer to the disaster in the present tense.

³Consider Institute resident, Donna Willis's, observation: "So, when we heard that [the chemical company] maintained that they contained [the chemical release] into the fence area, you either have to be an idiot or a stone-cold fool to think that the chemical didn't get outside that chain-linked fence that's got big holes in it. They actually could con our legislatures into believing that crap" (Personal communication, Apr. 23,

2015). This kind of misinformation contests resident's claims of toxic exposure and subsequent illness. Or consider that following the Bhopal disaster, UCC's Bhopal-based medical officer informed hospital staff that MIC was non-poisonous, and that applying a wet towel on the eyes was a sufficient remedy (Agarwal, Merrifield and Tandon). Unfortunately, the instances of industry-touted misinformation in the case of both Bhopal and Institute are vast.

⁴According to the U.S. Chemical Safety Board, "A series of preventable safety shortcomings . . . led to a string of three serious accidents . . . on January 22 and 23, 2010 . . . In one of these accidents, a worker died following exposure to phosgene, a gas used as a chemical weapon in World War I."

⁵Monsanto ceased its Nitro operations in 2004. In 2012, the company was ordered to provide compensation to residents due to dioxin contamination (RT).

⁶People Concerned About Chemical Safety was formerly called People Concerned About MIC. To avoid confusion, I will refer to the organization as People Concerned.

⁷A forthcoming publication by Dillon and Sze (2016) looks at the constriction of breath, through environmental racism and anti-Black police violence.

⁸The study includes Institute, Pinewood and West Dunbar, which collectively make up the community of Institute.

⁹BGIA is one of five Bhopal-based leading groups within the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal (ICJB), a coalition of environmental and social justice groups.

¹⁰Notably, Institute is the site of West Virginia State University, a historically Black college.

¹¹ICJB-NA is the North American solidarity tier of the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal. I have been involved in ICJB-NA peripherally

since 2006, and more centrally since 2013. It is, therefore, apt to describe myself as a *keen* and *active* observer of the struggle for justice in Bhopal.

¹²Here, it is worth noting the power dynamics (gendered, and otherwise) *within* healthcare institutions. In Sarin's observation, it is the "junior staff of the hospital, midwives and nurses" that note the prevalence of reproductive health issues, while the "bureaucrats and senior doctors" choose to silence this narrative.

¹³For more information, and to support the ongoing work of the Sambhavna Trust Clinic and ICJB visit: bhopal.org (Sambhavna Trust Clinic), bhopal.net (International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal).

¹⁴For more information and to support the work of People Concerned, visit: peopleconcernedaboutmic.com.

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ILONA MARTONFI

Mikulás nap (Saint Nicholas Day)

In your childhood house

sixth of December, Mikulás nap
in the morning
mother braids your hair
ties it with red polka dot ribbons

buttermilk boiling
on the woodstove

reddish-yellow Beno on the chain
chickens' cackling.

Bavarian chalk hills ridge
Danube river boglands

rubble on the old airfield strip
ice-covered bomb craters

you live in an old Luftwaffe hangar: Halle # 7
two-story red brick house attached to a factory
shed

roofless hallway
leaded windows, blasted

unpainted cement floors
short white cotton curtains.

Grandmother Mariska's Lebkuchen
chocolate Mikulás in cellophane

Dominican nuns in long black habits,

pigtails Magyar refugee girl of nine
in the classroom, movie days,
blinds hang closed,

Herr Lehrer, Anton Mathes,
fourth grade teacher, molesting you.

Ilona Martonfi is the author of three poetry books, Blue Poppy (Coracle Press, 2009), Black Grass (Broken Rules Press, 2012), and The Snow Kimono (Inanna, 2015). Ilona has published in Vallum, Accenti, The Fiddlhead, and Serai. She is also the recipient of the QWF 2010 Community Award.

DONNA LANGEVIN

Dinah Nuthead*

Saint Mary's Historic City, Maryland, 1660

You leering old lawyer!

How easy to guess your thoughts
when I grip the press's
long black handle
we call *the devil's tail*.

My bosom bouncing and heaving
as I push and pull
the lever
that lowers
the platen on to the press board
after the letters are inked
I wager you wish
you were Old Nick himself unlacing
my bodice while I pump
his tool that never tires
unlike your own member.

Later, when you doze
like a dog by the hearth waiting
for your contracts to dry
I stroke a G and a D, and pray
you never discover
I'd give a slice of my soul
to learn the couplings of letters
that can spell the sun, moon and stars
the secrets of warts and wings
and fly me past drudgery.

I can't stop playing
with the alphabet-blocks
lined up in the devil's hell-box
though I'm scared
by the *i*'s severed head
the teeth of the *E*
and the *Y* that insists on asking
*why must a woman
who teaches herself to read
be suspected of witchery?*

**Dinah Nuthead helped her husband run a printing press in St. Mary's Historic City, Maryland circa 1660. Though she probably knew the letters of the alphabet, she couldn't read or write. At that time, judges, lawyers, and clergymen were the only ones who were literate.*

Donna Langevin's latest poetry collections include In the Café du Monde (Hidden Brook Press, 2008), and The Laundress of Time (Aeolus Press, 2015).

Biotechnology and Biopiracy

Plant-based Contraceptives in the Americas and the (Mis)management of Nature

RACHEL O'DONNELL

Ce texte est une relecture de la nature et du développement biotechnologique international basé sur l'histoire et les politiques du colonialisme, les savoirs naturels, et les méthodes de contraception en Amérique latine. Il nous propose un questionnement créateur face à l'utilisation des contraceptifs naturels et pointe les contextes naturels où on les utilise afin de dénoncer les malentendus autour des traditions médicinales des femmes et du développement des politiques environnementales et internationales.

In May of 2015, a scientist at the Jamaican Scientific Research Council was granted a new U.S. patent on *Petiveria alliacea* called “Composition and Method for Treating Cancer” (Brooks 1). The “invention” of the plant compound in the laboratory relates to the treatment of various disease states with Dibenzyl Trisulfide (DTS), a phytochemical that can be extracted from *Petiveria* in the laboratory. As its name denotes, the patent relates to the use of DTS for therapeutic treatment for cancer. According to the patent application, the drug developed will have the potential to treat a wide range of cancers and other diseases. Some of the cancer cells

that this drug has been found to be effective against include neuroblastomas and sarcomas, brain and skin cancers. One of the major findings, according to the patent, is that this drug made from the DTS compound does not appear to affect healthy cells, whereas most contemporary cancer treatments also damage healthy cells in the body.

The Jamaican Scientific Research Council reports that the cancer-fighting compound that was developed into this pharmaceutical was extracted from a local plant called Guinea Hen Weed, which is a common name in Jamaica for *Petiveria alliacea*. Many initial reports announcing the “discovery” also comment on how plants like Guinea Hen Weed have long been used by rural Jamaicans to cure a wide range of illnesses. Plants used by rural communities in local medical practice have been pursued by scientists with interest in “discovery,” classification, research, and the global market. Indeed, in the first publications on *Petiveria*'s curative properties for cancer in 2007, the scientist with this most recent patent reported,

The data compiled in the present

review on dibenzyl trisulfide (DTS) isolated from *Petiveria alliacea* L (the guinea hen weed or anamu) revealed that the compound and its derivatives could be of tremendous pharmaceutical interest. (Williams et al. 17)

In the title of the article itself, the researcher includes local names Guinea Hen Weed and anamu for reference. How did the Jamaican scientist discover the activity of this plant compound? Why is the research understood as necessarily connected to pharmaceuticals? How did these plants end up being tested in the laboratory? The science of botany often disregards these questions of historical and cultural process, as well as the social, political, and economic relationships involved in the creation of a drug and its connection to plant-based knowledge.

Mainstream media has since reported on the scientists' findings and drummed up “global” excitement about a possible cancer cure. Many media reports include reference to the offer to the scientists from the pharmaceutical companies to patent the development; the total offered has

already exceeded 100 million dollars (Lowe et al. 94; Williams et al. 23).

On the website of Cornell University, a graduate student has compiled five pages of information on *Petiveria alliacea* as part of a medicinal database. Thirty-one medicinal uses are listed there, including treatments for intestinal parasites in livestock and hysteria, rheumatism and

coincides with efforts made to resist the family planning initiatives imposed on Mayan communities from development organizations operating in Western medical traditions. This case study of a particular region's knowledge about *Petiveria* focuses on resistance to family planning at the highest levels, starting in the 1960s, which persisted for more than three

cells via "signal transduction" modes of action (Cohen 309). Dibenzyl trisulphide (DTS) is one such molecule (Figure 1) and was first coded in the laboratory when its insecticidal/repellent activities were discovered. DTS was first isolated from the root of *Petiveria alliacea* at a university laboratory in Brazil in 1990 (Sousa et al. 6353).¹

Apacina is a plant made into a tea that some women drink to prevent a pregnancy. Women have maintained this contraceptive usage of the plant, and the ongoing use of the plant and the development of the local knowledge surrounding it can be seen to represent efforts to resist twentieth century changes in their communities.

rabies in humans. In addition to its traditional medicinal use, *Petiveria* has gained the attention of a number of organic chemists. At least twelve different biologically active compounds have been assayed from root, leaf and seed of the plant. A study published in 2001 reported that the presence of two diastereomers of S-benzyl-L-cysteine, isolated from fresh roots. This is reportedly the first evidence of these compounds occurring in nature.

Apacina is the Guatemalan word I am familiar with as a researcher in rural Guatemala for *Petiveria alliacea*, a plant made into a tea that some women drink to prevent a pregnancy. It has a very strong acrid smell and an almost unpalatable taste. Mayan women sometimes boil it for use after intercourse and save the pot of tea to drink over three days. Interestingly, women have maintained this contraceptive usage of the plant, and the ongoing use of the plant and the development of the local knowledge surrounding it can be seen to represent efforts to resist twentieth century changes in their communities.

The maintenance of traditional plant-based forms of contraception

decades and impeded the spread of family planning. Multiple doctors and nurses in APROFAM (Asociación Pro Bienestar de la Familia or the Association for Family Well-being), the major family planning agency in Guatemala, partially funded and supported by USAID (United States Aid for International Development), in clinics throughout highland Guatemala spoke of the "resistencia" to family planning in Mayan communities. Despite the establishment of a dynamic private family planning association in the mid-1960s, 40 years later, Guatemala ranks last in contraceptive use in Latin America (Population Reference Bureau 2014). This resistance to change and Western forms of health care and pharmaceutical application deserves more attention than can be provided in these pages.

Recent studies have revealed that of the top 150 propriety drugs used in the Western hemisphere, 57 percent contained at least one major active compound derived from natural sources (Setzer et al. 21). One of the major aims of the pharmaceutical industry is to find small molecules that regulate the biochemistry of disease

Guinea Hen Weed is also used as a tonic by the Caribs on Dominica and Jamaica. In Grenada, it is commonly used by traditional healers for coughs, colds and as an effective 'cleaner' for the intestines. Its active compounds are often cited in scientific papers:

Cudjoe root [a local name for *Petiveria alliacea*, see Appendix 1] is well established, if only half-remembered, in Grenadian folk botany and medicine, used predominantly for sinusitis and colds, but also for diarrhea/dysentery and gynecological complaints. It has been shown to contain unique sulfur compounds (e.g. dibenzyl trisulphide) with immunostimulant and antiviral activities, both of which have value in diarrheal disease (e.g. Rotavirus). (Whittaker et al. 490)

It also features prominently into the medical traditions of Obeah in St. Kitts (Urueña et al. 30) and Grenada/Carriacou.

At the same time we see plants growing in use in pharmaceuticals, in

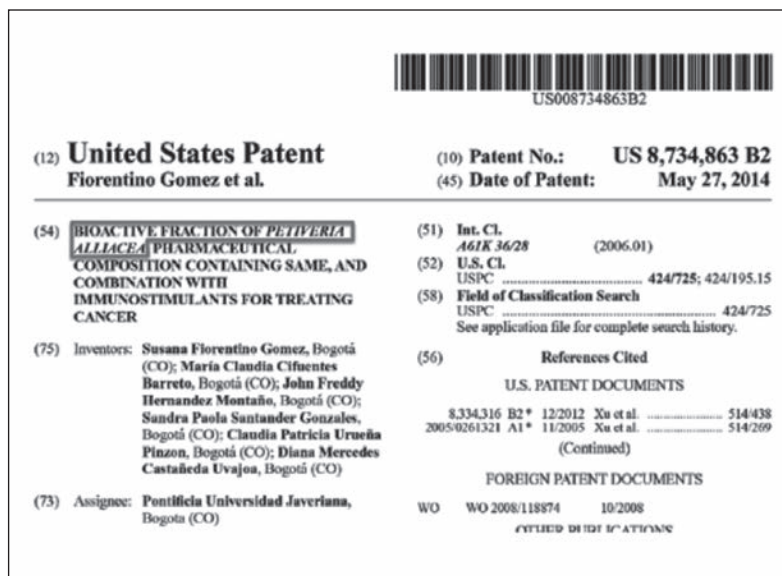


Figure 1: Original cancer-fighting patent on *Petiveria alliacea*, 2014 patent that led to the 2015 Jamaica patent mentioned above

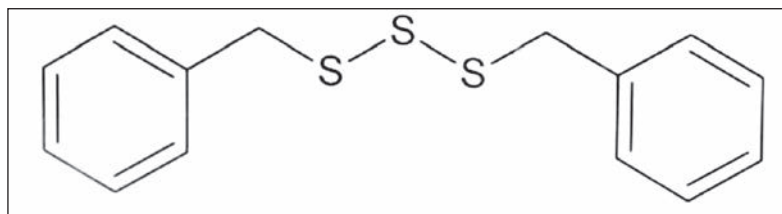


Figure 2: Lawrence A.D. Williams, H. George Levy, U.S. patent application number US20080070839 A1..

our present political condition under contemporary neoliberal globalization, we are seeing an intensification of control over women's bodies. Much of this control manifests itself as reproductive control. In Latin America, especially, contraception and abortion have been contentious issues, and 'population control' remains an important component of international development policy. The United States has a long history of promoting sterilization and Western forms of pharmaceutical contraception globally; international organizations are making inroads in international family planning programs and birth control efforts. Struggles for justice over these issues have emerged in recent decades, especially surrounding forced sterilization and international adoption. We also see current debates over the right to control of fertility in

Latin America, including the right to control birth and bodies and maintain access to contraception. Recent press over why most Brazilian women get c-sections highlight Brazil's attempts at pregnancy surveillance, including recent legislation to maintain state records of all pregnancies in an attempt to control population increase. With the stated aim of meeting the UN Millennium Development Goal of reducing maternal mortality, enacted a law in 2012 to establish a national system of registration, surveillance, and monitoring of pregnant and postpartum women. Under PM 557, every pregnant woman who enrolls is entitled to a small payment to assist with prenatal care, and the law intends to "improved access, coverage, and quality of maternal health care, especially in high-risk pregnancies" (Wilson 24).

This type of surveillance is directly related to the ways in which women's bodies are considered in modern science and medicine. Women are not protected from state control of their bodies, and a genealogy of contraceptive plant knowledge easily highlights the relationship between women and empire. The critique of the embeddedness of gender relations in both the practice of science and scientific knowledge itself has been one of the most important contributions of feminist science studies (Harding 1997: 303; Subramanian 956). Feminists have also tracked how science and scientific knowledge exist in markets, capital, and the economy. Many have called modern science a scientific-industrial complex to point to the links between scientific knowledge, post-colonial peoples, and market application. The development of *Petiveria* as a cancer-fighting treatment must have come directly from the knowledge of lay people in the Caribbean, but we have no understanding of this development as a cultural process, or even a reference point to figure out how this knowledge traveled from local people to the scientific community in the development of a cancer-fighting drug. Feminists and critical science scholars have also connected laboratory funding and practice to global circuits of capital (Wilson 94), noting the false divide between 'science' and 'industry,' with universities supporting science and funding coming from industry. The flows of global science mirror the flows of capital, especially with the creation and marketing of drugs, and commodification of natural resources such as seeds, soil, and water. Therefore, bioprospecting and stories of pharmaceutical development are really at the heart of feminist science studies. Sandra Harding (2008) writes that it is difficult to produce any 'objectivity' in science and the myth

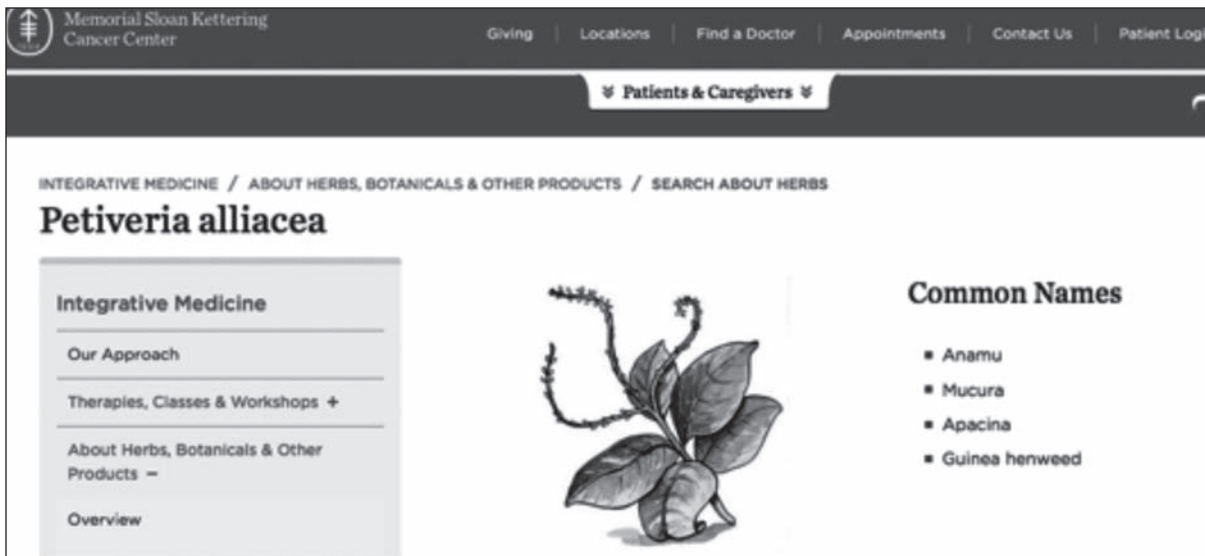


Figure 3: *Petiveria alliacea*, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (mskcc.org/cancer-care/integrative-medicine/herbs/petiveria-alliacea).

of value-free knowledge. Situated knowledge (Haraway 1991: 183), and strong objectivity (Harding 1991, 138) have been particularly valuable in imagining a new ‘science’ that would incorporate women’s and lay people’s knowledge. The postcolonial focus on Western science sees its developments as one category of many, and also considers how indigenous knowledge has been appropriated, and how science has been implicated in violent forms of colonialism. Alternative knowledge systems, practices, and sciences have been viewed more recently as equally worthy of inquiry (Shiva 2010; Harding 2008), arguing that sciences must be understood in the plural (Subramanian 1966).

Ultimately, the way we use *Petiveria* and the way it is used in the laboratory reflects our understanding of science, women’s bodies, and narrow scientific study. In fact, so called ‘folk medicine’ has long made use of aqueous and alcoholic extracts from *Petiveria alliacea*, so this ‘invention’ was made first by the people doing this work in the Caribbean, Central and South America (Hernandez et al.) and thought it may have been modified in the laboratory, it is impossible to suggest that this knowledge arrived in the

laboratory without local knowledge.

Knowledge of the properties of medicinal plants is seen as a local common resource in much of the world, not something to be held privately and made use of for individual profit-seeking. It is clear that the use of traditional knowledge pinpoints plant medicinal uses efficiently; without the use and abuse of Indigenous communities, the biotechnology industry would have no place to turn. Transnational corporations have defended their intellectual property rights and often won their freedom to purchase and patent biological materials, to the detriment of indigenous communities in the Global South. It has been clear that much of this biological knowledge gained and patented by transnational corporations is knowledge that comes from indigenous communities themselves, as problems have arisen where one indigenous community is contracted for their knowledge, but another may use it. *Anthurium tessmannii* is contraceptive in Colombia by three different indigenous nations, for example. The same medicinal compound may be used in various Indigenous communities (either for the same or different medicinal uses), but

corporations have been able to claim that they acquired their biomaterials from whatever country and community they choose—under terms and conditions most favourable to them.² Knowledge of local geographies, geologies, animals, plants, classification schemes, medicines, pharmacologies, agriculture, navigational techniques, and local cultures that formed significant parts of European sciences’ picture of nature were provided in part by the knowledge traditions of non-Europeans.

Such work, then, reminds us that plant collecting and knowledge about medicinal plants have been globally extensive and systematic before the colonialism took hold and that not only Europeans continued to learn about and classify the plant knowledge of the Americas. Genealogies of contraceptive plants correspond nicely with contemporary discussions about the patenting of natural knowledge and what has come to be termed ‘biopiracy,’ the exploitation of traditional knowledge through political means.

Scientists invested in plant biotechnology argue that the intensification of agriculture is necessary because of natural limitations that require

enhanced and more efficient plant breeding to inspire “the release of economical, high-return and patentable plant-derived products” (Meiri and Altman 41), stressing the importance of this research to the pharmaceutical and agricultural industries. They argue that corporate funds must support advanced research and development in biochemistry, physiology, genomics and biotechnology of agricultural and medicinal plants (Borlaug), citing the population explosion as a global crisis and biotechnology as necessary solution (Meiri and Altman 3). The new plant biotechnology centers around three major areas: first, as an aid to “classical” breeding of plants, including ongoing genome mapping projects in global food staples, such as rice, maize and tomato, in an effort to shorten the time required for breeding cycles (Meiri and Altman 10-12). Second, the generation of engineered organisms: in view of the ‘limitations’ of naturally-occurring genes, a more ‘efficient’ engineering of plants has resulted in improved plants that grow faster or taller, or are able to withstand less water. Scientists value “the creation of novel, and otherwise impossible genetic recombinations” (Meiri and Altman) or the creation of plants in the laboratory that would not exist in nature without the hand of the scientist. Further work is being done to integrate microorganisms into plant production systems, that is, to develop plants that have genetic material to resist microorganisms that may harm them, such as fungi, bacteria, and insects using both laboratory-engineered plants and microorganisms.³

During the last two decades, new biotechnologies have been adapted to agricultural practices, meaning plants are being used in ways and in scientific disciplines where they never were before, and this will continue and intensify in the next decade. Plant biotechnology (especially in

vitro regeneration and genetic modification) is changing the way we understand and know plants, as it affects everything about them, from their growth and characteristics to the ability to reproduce themselves. Plants are being specifically redesigned to produce specialty foods, biochemicals and pharmaceuticals.

In contemporary biotechnological development discourse, then, a complex ecosystem is reduced to individual plant properties, pieces of a system are taken to be a knowledge of its whole, particular properties are placed hierarchically above others, depending on the values of a particular population and time-period, to allow for the manipulation of the ones deemed significant. In particular time periods, including our own, contraceptive plant properties were not deemed significant or important and a plant is commonly reduced to its commercial value, manufactured into a commodity, and reduced again to a profit for pharmaceutical industry. Women’s knowledge of plants and nature is manipulated to increase the production and distribution of these commodities, which are in turn legitimized scientifically as a productivity increase, even though its destruction decreases the reduction of diversity and the power or use of any medicinal property, recreating life and violating the ecosystem in the name of progress, science, and development. Profit is then the only gauge of a plant’s value, and life as nature’s organizing principle disappears. In science, the value is in the application, not in knowledge for other reasons, such as knowing for its own sake or for the betterment of human situation. The epitome of scientific understanding, the controlled experiment, is what Vandana Shiva calls “a political tool for exclusion such that people’s experimentation in their daily lives was denied access to the scientific” (2010: 31). Contemporary scientists

are bound by such controlled experiments and as a result, disseminate research findings that correspond to a directly observable natural world.

In International Development Studies, population statistics are often used to measure poverty and development statistics, including measures of family planning and reproductive health. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 500,000 women die from pregnancy-related causes worldwide, and that perhaps one-third of those stem from unsafe abortion (WHO Feb. 2015). The WHO also ranks Guatemala as the most difficult to implement family planning initiatives, citing the ethnic makeup of the population as reason for it (WHO 2010). The scholars who write on the history of abortifacients often suggest that although plants were popular contraceptives, they were never particularly reliable (Himes; Riddle). Political Scientists likewise argue that these preparations were passed down prior to implementing Western medicine and disappeared because they were found to be unreliable and cause severe side effects. In fact, some say, plant-based contraception only disappeared when surgical abortion became much more accessible (Siedlecky 105).⁵ Instead, plant knowledge and contraceptive recipes are still widely used and remain outside the knowledge realm of modern science, which would explain why the results (contemporary child spacing) do not appear to justify their reputation. Still, it is necessary that medical science record their efficacy? Many ethnobotanical studies mention plants used for menstrual regulation, but little information is provided, such as preparation dosage, reported effectiveness, or analysis of how women seek this care. In addition, individual women circulate information about abortifacients mainly by word of

mouth and maintain their efficacy by developing this knowledge locally

Indeed, the assumption that plant-based abortifacients have disappeared because of their lack of effectiveness remains prominent in the Western Medical Tradition. In contemporary scholarly work, it is common to depict the contemporary Western world as automatically and without question

liberal globalization and corporate control of local knowledge and life forms. In the twentieth century, the solution to environmental and political problems often fell on the backs of Third World women, who were faulted for overpopulation and accused of ignorance to Western birth control, amid a political agenda that pressed for the sterilization of poor

for “natural” medicines and nature’s remedies are vast. The Native American Ethnobotany database at the University of Michigan-Dearborn brings up 160 plant species that can produce abortion. Still, scholarly treatment of folk methods of birth control remains focused on its absurdity, and some catalog magic and superstition along with herbal and

Women’s knowledge of plants is manipulated to increase the production of these commodities, which are in turn legitimized scientifically as a productivity increase, even though its destruction decreases the reduction of diversity and the power or use of any medicinal property, violating the ecosystem in the name of progress, science, and development.

more ‘advanced’ than in previous historical periods. This is incorrect more often than not, and may cause us to ignore or dismiss the knowledge and understanding that people have gained in earlier times. The historical record demonstrates that women throughout many cultures and time periods have been managing their fertility without Western scientific methods of doing so, and have been long adept at understanding precise uses and misuses of nature. They have likewise made use of ambiguity in language in order to allow space for a variety of reproductive options, including plant-based ones. It is also common to assume that earlier times were more inflexible in comparison with our more “enlightened” age, but many feminists have demonstrated how women have historically had more freedoms regarding their bodies across times and in cultures, not less. Indeed, the twentieth century can in part be categorized as an era marked by the intensification of control over women’s bodies (Bush 242; Ehrenreich and English 5-15).

The maintenance of fertility control remains part of this cultural maintenance and resistance to neo-

women worldwide. Indeed, instead of further investigating plant-based contraceptives and making them worthy of scientific investigation, recent efforts have been to patent particular life-forms and develop them under corporate ownership for profit in laboratories.

In the Guatemalan countryside, erosion is a continuing problem from slash and burn agriculture and monoculture that pushed indigenous communities further and further into the highlands. As a result, much natural plant life is dying out. We might also cite capitalist development as part of the destruction of this natural knowledge. A midwife I interviewed in the highlands of Guatemala was very angered to tell me that that the younger midwives do not have as much knowledge of plants “and do not know where to find them” (Personal communication, 2014). She cited that they were too urban and that only midwives “further out” (that is, in more remote locations) had more knowledge of where to find Apacina.

Pharmaceutical companies are well aware of the plant-based remedies that have spurred drug development, and indeed, their marketing campaigns

barrier methods. Indeed, comments in many botanical texts refer in passing to plants that may have “some antifertility activity,” reminding us that to much of the scholarly world, at least, this information remains hidden. Further, we cannot assume that because an herbal drug has not been tested, it has no contraceptive effect.

Some of the most popular contraceptives, such as birth control pills and intrauterine devices (IUDs) have had adverse health consequences for women. Depo-Provera, an injectible hormonal birth control, it has been argued, has been deemed dangerous by women in the developed West and has been outsourced to the Global South. The introduction of the birth control pill appears to have actually increased pregnancies in some areas of the Global South, in part because indigenous methods of child spacing, such as extended breastfeeding or abstinence, have been displaced (McClaren 6). Breastfeeding does not provide a completely effective contraceptive method, but it has no known side effects. Depo-Provera has been linked to cardiovascular and uterine problems. Latin American feminists have attempted to make this

known, but the powerful campaigns of pharmaceutical corporations have squashed their efforts. Many women in rural Guatemala who use Western forms of birth control choose Depo-Provera because this method is easy to hide from family members, as it only requires one injection every three months. Another obvious problem with many of these pharmaceutical contraceptives is that their continual use must be maintained, whereas plant-based contraceptives are only used when needed. In my interviews, many women cited the importance of only drinking the tea after being intimate with a man, a type of control women cannot find in contemporary pharmaceutical forms of birth control. Contraceptive plants offer women a sense of privacy and control because no one else has to know they are using them, including local health providers and families.

As Donna Haraway has written, it is almost impossible to separate nature from ourselves, but we do so consistently, especially in the context of the developing world when the carbon dioxide production of industrial cultures is absorbed by plant materials and the plants themselves become service providers for the industrial economy, providing a clear example of her concept of “naturecultures”: we cannot divide a view of nature from the cultural (Haraway 2000: 25). The botanical history and contemporary biopiracy of Apacina demonstrates how knowledge and power are intimately linked, and this is nowhere more obvious than in the present global political economy. The base of the global economic system shifted in the twentieth century from heavy industry to information technologies and service industries, and scientific innovation has moved decisively to the base of the contemporary economy. Those who own nature and are able to access its product as well as the global knowledge of it

are able to decide how to make use of nature’s resources and profit from contemporary scientific innovation and technological change. The majority of the world’s people, and especially women, have few of these resources, no ownership of pieces of nature nor the resources to access it, and are in fact systematically denied the knowledge of how to gain access to nature’s abundant resources.

Ultimately, what is demonstrated by this non-Western worldview among the Maya K’iche’ is that medicine and food are not separate life pieces, but part of a holistic understanding of health and bodily care. Market-based herb sellers often asked if I wanted Apacín as a food condiment or a remedy; either way, one woman said, the plant has excellent effects, suggesting that plant-based abortifacients and emmenagogues are most often used for a wide variety of women’s health complaints. In rural Guatemala, food and medicine are one and the same, maintained and valued as part of women’s knowledge base. In Western contexts, we rarely recognize the possibilities of plant-based remedies and their political function. Yet for other parts of the world, these understandings, long missing from Western scientific study, are very much part of women’s knowledge bases and everyday lives.

Rachel O'Donnell is a doctoral candidate in Political Science at York University, Toronto. Her ongoing work is on feminist critiques of science, colonialism, and biotechnology. She has lived and worked in Latin America, and has previously published on Sor Juana de La Cruz, revolutionary movements, and migration.

¹A substance found in *Petiveria*, dibenzyl trisulphide (DTS), exhibits antitumor and immunomodulatory activities (Williams et al. 17). The ex-

tract displayed several mechanisms of action that may explain its antitumor activity, such induction of cytoskeletal reorganization and DNA fragmentation (Urueña et al. 1). Several compounds isolated from *Petiveria alliacea* compounds have antibacterial and antifungal activities (Benevides et al. 744) and another showed promise as a wound treatment (Schmidt et al. 5223). Anti-inflammatory and analgesic effects have also been studied and reported (Lopes-Martins et al. 245). A 2009 publication supported the molecule’s possible role in the treatment of inflammatory ageing diseases (Williams et al. 57). A product that includes the patented dibenzyl trisulphide compound was indicated for the treatment of cancer in 2015 (Patent 20080070839 A1).

²See “A Closer Look at the Royalty Payment Agreement Negotiated by Monsanto Corporation and Washington University ICBG Bioprospecting Agreement for Collection of Peruvian Medicinal Plant.”

³From Proceedings of “Plant Biotechnology and In Vitro Biology in the 21st Century,” conference held in Jerusalem, June 1998.

⁴A future project will look at the ways in which migrant women maintain access to this knowledge, even though access to particular plants may become limited.

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ILONA MARTONFI

The girl by the sea

When you see me
swim in the Aegean sea
my name is Marisa.
Hard armpit lumps
burst and crust over
the size of brown-purple figs.
Undiagnosed lung sarcoidosis —
scar granulomas.

White sand Varkiza beach.
Here is a photo of us:
I am the girl in the blue sundress,
Plaka tavern, Old Athens, 1987 .
Yes, I get very tired.
Five-week family vacation.
My fiancé back home.

Standing in line with our bags,
Paris, Gare Montparnasse:
I don't remember fainting.
Mama slapping my face, calling my name.
Seven-hour transatlantic flight.
Yes, I get very tired.
I cough and wheeze.
Melancholia. Anxiety disorder.

Here is a photo of us:
silver champagne glasses.
a diamond ring.
I come to the marriage with my own house and linen.
Pearl necklace, black velvet dress.
The eldest daughter.
Two sisters, one brother.
You ask, do I remember
love words —
Mother's green plastic knitting needles.
Papa beating mama.

My name is Marisa.
I am the girl with
the wooden easel, gessoed canvas.
Tubes of oil, boar bristle brushes.

Ilona Martonfi is the author of three poetry books, Blue Poppy (Coracle Press, 2009), Black Grass (Broken Rules Press, 2012), and The Snow Kimono (Inanna, 2015). Ilona has published in Vallum, Accenti, The Fiddlhead, and Serai. She is the founder/producer of The Yellow Door and Visual Arts Centre Readings, and the co-founder of Lovers and Others. She is also the recipient of the QWF 2010 Community Award.

LAURA SWEENEY

My Epitaph Will Read

I rose, to follow my dreams
beyond the Brewster Place Wall.
I broke loose to become a flaneuse,
rumbling the streets like George Sand,
crackling the sharp whip of a
savage mind, transcendent of
love-ownership or one-up-man-ship,
writing to Nefertiti
we are the eccentrics
who make herstory.

Laura Sweeney facilitates Writers for Life in central Iowa. She represented the Iowa Arts Council at the First International Teaching Artist's Conference in Oslo, Norway. Her recent and forthcoming publications include poems in Evening Street Review, Negative Capability Press, Main Street Rag, Folia, Wordrunner eChapbook, Yellow Chair Review, Balloons Lit. Journal, East Jasmine Review, and Nuclear Impact Anthology: Broken Atoms in Our Hands.

ANDRÉE LACHAPELLE

16

Spring arrived
and pretty girls were in full bloom
making me consider all the possibilities
of my budding sexuality.

Andrée's work deals with issues of sexuality, survival and social isolation. Her poetry, fiction and non-fiction have appeared in numerous online and print publications including Dining Out; Scarborough Arts; Safeword Magazine; Broken Pencil; and Canadian Woman Studies. She works as a Yoga and Pilates teacher in the Greater Toronto Area and shares her life with a wonderfully supportive husband, an aging lady cat. and birds of many feathers.

"A must-read for all Canadian women who are sick of patriarchy..." -Michele Landsberg

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Finite Disappointments or Infinite Hope

Working Through Tensions Within Transnational Feminist Movements

DOROTHY ATTACKORA-GYAN

Ce texte explore les défis face aux différences dans les organisations transnationales féministes et souligne la marginalisation et l'invisibilité des femmes rurales, des paysannes et des autochtones. Elle cite l'exemple de la Marche mondiale des femmes qui a été un agent féministe qui a construit des solidarités féministes autour de la souveraineté de la nourriture et au-delà des différences. En mettant l'accent sur la justice environnementale qui met en cause la gérance transnationale de la nutrition, l'auteure espère que les féministes qui gèrent l'oppression sur plusieurs fronts, puissent exprimer leurs désappointements et les utiliser pour explorer des sites d'espoir.

In many countries, it is women who are first to experience increased workloads, health problems, and other damaging effects associated with the off-putting impacts of globalization, deterioration of agriculture, economic instability, and migration (Van Esterick; Horvorka, DeZeeuw and Njenga; Patil, Balakrishnan and Narayan; Perry). From food production and acquisition to food processing, preparation and serving food both within their homes and for the public, we know that women play a major role in feeding their communities worldwide (Van Esterick; Pandey; Horvorka 2009;

Desmarais; Sachs and Alston; Shiva). Food tends to shape, reflect, and mirror much of human nature and values (Van Esterick). Yet the study of food largely gets relegated to disciplines such as nutrition, economics, and agronomy, which according to Penny Van Esterick, are disciplines guided by rules of hard science. Many have been and continue to redefine the terms in which the globalized food system works and how it can be rearticulated. I call for a redefinition of food that requires an analysis that would take into account the complex circuits of power. I ask for us to reassess the contemporary food system in ways that question how power is created, reinforced, or disrupted across dynamic, multiple, and overlapping power imbalances across various axes of difference. An appropriate space to observe how such circuits operate is constituted by the engagement with and alliance-building framework on Food Sovereignty (FS) of the World March of Women (WMW). The WMW is one of the most dynamic contemporary transnational feminist networks and Food Sovereignty, as a political project, represents an innovative space that brings together the urban, rural, peasant, and Indigenous women of the world. Food Sovereignty aims to achieve a re-configuration and

re-articulation of power relations characterizing the contemporary food system and as a project that originates in the Global South.

In the first part of the paper I want to first theoretically address the identified challenges of working across difference in transnational feminist organizing, with a particular focus on the marginalization and invisibilization of rural, peasant, and Indigenous women. Borrowing from Chandra Talpade Mohanty I:

want to speak of feminism without silence and exclusion in order to draw attention to the tension and the emancipatory potential of crossing through, with, and over these borders in our everyday lives. (2)

Because I inevitably will leave people and issues out of this paper due to constraints, I draw from Mohanty "to address how the feminist writings I analyzed here, discursively colonizes the material" (19) I seek to speak about. In the mapping out of transnational feminist scholarship, my concerns with tensions and power within feminist movements will inevitably show. However, in the words of Mohanty, my "...comments and criticisms are intended to encourage, not blame or induce guilt" (110). I

believe that feminist theories, practices, and theoretical works can be used to counter inattention to rural and peasant women and help to address the context of rural women's lives when it comes to food systems and issues of food sovereignty (Sachs).

In highlighting a key dimension of environmental justice that challenges the food system's transnational governance, it is my hope that as feminists fighting and simultaneously navigating oppression on multiple fronts, we can reflect on our disappointments, using them as foundation to explore sites of possibility and hope.

Challenges of Working Across Difference in Transnational Feminist Organizing

The body of literature on transnational feminism illustrates a field that is contested, in flux, and constantly evolving and shifting. Growing debate over questions of power, privilege, and representation has shown that at times, feminists—both academic and activists—may reinscribe and reinforce the very power imbalances feminism seeks to dismantle. Many scholars have argued for *feminisms* rather than one monolithic homogenized understanding of the discourses and practices that come to make up feminism. Viewing the field through a monolithic lens creates imbalances and sets the stage for how feminism should be understood and articulated. Any discourses or practices falling outside of this assumed norm is rendered invisible, as alternative, or erased altogether. Transnational feminist practices, “while they connect collectives located in more than one national territory, also embody specific social relations established between specific people, situated in unequivocal localities, at historically determined times” (Mahler 444). Contemporary understandings of transnational feminism developed as a response to exclusionary practices within feminist discourses, development discourses, globalization, and tensions within NGOs (Mohanty; Mahler and Pessar;

Grewal and Kaplan; Chowdhury; Dufour, Masson and Caouette; Patil; Bachetta; Alvaraz 2000, 2014; Blackwell; Conway 2012; Dempsey, Parker and Krone; Razack; Hawkesworth). Transnational practices vary and include organizational, networks, individual, collectives, local and national movements, and feminist ngos, international ngos who work towards addressing gender and feminist issues

Growing debate over questions of power, privilege, and representation has shown that at times, feminists—both academic and activists—may reinscribe and reinforce the very power imbalances feminism seeks to dismantle.

(Dufour, Masson and Caouette; Patil; Vargas; Alvarez 2000, 2014a, 2014b; Moghadam; Basu; Hewitt). Transnational processes are anchored in and transcend more than one nation-state (Mahler and Pessar). Sherene Razack articulates that scholars interested in analyzing women's agency within a globalizing context prefer the term transnational to other conceptualizations like international women's movement or global feminism. Indrapal Grewal and Caren Kaplan employ the term transnational and call into question the use of the term global feminism. These scholars argue that voices are not all the same, nor do they speak in unison (Razack; Grewal and Kaplan; Mohanty; Lock Swarr and Nagar). Breny Mendoza articulates

why voices cannot speak in unison, stating that transnational feminism has not been able to deliver the bases for political solidarity between women across race, ethnicity, sexuality, and national borders. In spite of the different frames in which transnational feminists envision themselves in relation to the theory and politics of feminism, it is clear that there are limitations that have and continue to rise. Such nuanced complex ways of understanding and making sense of transnational feminism gives way to various open interpretations of the field and emerges as a site where power is reproduced.

Decentering Power(s) In (and through) Transnational Feminist Organizing and Beyond

As feminist discourses emerge and grow, it becomes apparent that a woman's social location shapes and impacts the ways in which she comes to understand feminism.

What transnational feminism has meant for some women is what Mohanty (2003) identifies as the reality of international, global processes and organizing, heavily rooted in Western discourses privileging Western definitions, and Western assumptions about how things should be. This concept endorses the idea that the West is the origin of all organizing, feminism, theory, discourse and thus perceives itself as having the power and authority to grant the rest of the world with a model and best practice to follow. According to Mohanty, the West, it is assumed, equates to “originality,” whereas postcolonial is perceived as “mimicry.” Oversimplifying, not recognizing, and taking for granted diversity within Western and Third World areas has not only created problems, but dangerous myths about women in the Global South, particularly rural and peasant women.

Philip McMichael asserts “to historicize food sovereignty is not simply to recognize its multiple forms and circumstances across time and space, but also to recognize its relations to the politics of capital” (1). If scholars

are not attentive to how they present rural and peasant women, they risk reproducing the very narratives Mohanty, Grewal and Kaplan, and Jacquie Alexander and Chandra Mohanty ask us to be weary of.

Carolyn Sachs provides an account of women in agriculture in a unique way, tracing three specific crops: corn, rice, and coffee. This preference of historicizing the genealogy of food movements by tracing crops rather than human bodies alone adds a nuanced layer and rewriting/writing in of Aboriginal, Indigenous, and First Nations peoples globally, and their knowledges and teachings that account for more than just human bodies, but rather acknowledges the land and the harvest that it provides us. In *Gendered Fields: Rural Women, Agriculture and Environment*, Sachs urges scholars to understand the daily lives of women and their situated knowledges. Sachs pushes scholars to shift how they conceptualize resistance in ways that capture non-traditional understandings of it. This creates space to affirm the role of women traditionally as plant gatherers, and as early inventors of horticulture, who have long studied plants and crops. With this understanding of women as historically, already knowledgeable inventors and scientists. Carolyn Sachs helps shift our traditional understanding of the hard sciences, and ways of perceiving women in the Global South, often the object of the West's conquest to save. Sachs provides an account of rural women and their agency beyond our contemporary understandings, one that disrupts traditional mainstream conceptualizations of rural and peasant women as solely recipients of knowledge imported from the West.

Building on Sarah Mahler and Patricia Pessar, transnational feminists often leave unanswered the question of who gets to define issues to be brought to the transnational political arena, who gets to participate in different forms of activism, whose voices are left out of various dialogues that are had, and how transnational feminism risks privileging women in positions

of power as well as organizations and nation-states (7). Not only must rural women always be made to disappear, Robyn Dallow states that "rural life and some degree of geographical isolation go hand-in-hand" (4). Geographically, metaphorically, and literally, rural women are rendered to the margins, the outskirts, and made to feel isolated and invisible. Rural women's community involvement

Women in the Global South have long been resisting and organizing despite limited dialogue around their agency, and yet some scholars in positions of power still render their narratives as alternative or invisible.

is accepted and even expected as part of their "natural roles" as wives and mothers, but never as decision makers' (5). Women in the Global South have long been resisting and organizing despite limited dialogue around their agency. Irrespective of this, some scholars in positions of power still render their narratives as alternative or invisible.

While many scholars either erase completely narratives outside of the Americas, or risk essentializing and perpetuating colonial narratives, Leigh Brownhill and Terisa Turner provide a historical account of women's organizing in Kenya tracing the Mau Mau resistance dating as far back as the 1940s. Both Brownhill and Turner, and Emma Mawdsley,

introduce us to The Kenyan Green Belt Movement championed by Wangari Mathaai. Other scholars direct our attention to India, for instance. Anupam Pandey, Vandana Shiva, and Emma Mawdsley add to the literature and provide accounts of women's involvement in the Chipko movement. This way of tracing women in the Mau Mau and Chipko movements, as well as Sachs tracing crops, brings in actors typically not spoken about from Native American women in the U.S. to Indigenous peoples in Latin America and Africa.

Other counter-narratives draw our attention to the role of rural and peasant women in urban centres. Rural and peasant women who find themselves in urban centres due to the difficulty of finding work in rural agriculture tend to find deserted, vacant lands to begin growing crops, sometimes starting kitchen gardens (Sachs; Sachs and Alston; Hovorka, De Zeeuw and Njenga). In these cases, crops are cultivated in people's compounds, along roads, railways, and under power lines; livestock's is kept in compounds and slums, on vacant lands, while others are free-range and wander the city (Sachs; Sachs and Alston; Hovorka, De Zeeuw and Njenga). Other locations where women grow their crops include road reserves; bank and drainage channels; wetlands; contaminated scrap yards; dumping sites for solid and liquid waste; vacated industrial areas; family gardens; gardens belonging to community kitchens; community gardens; school gardens; gardens located on private lands and communal areas; public lands and institutional lands (Sachs; Sachs and Alston; Hovorka, De Zeeuw and Njenga). Many of these locations come with limited access to clean water, and lack electricity (Sachs; Sachs and Alston; Hovorka, De Zeeuw and Njenga). Simply put, lack of ownership and access to land drives women to growing crops in unsafe areas.

Experiences of sexism while seeking lands drive women to borrow and search for free unused plots in different, often dangerous neighbour-

hoods, garbage dumps, or undeveloped lands in valleys (Sachs; Sachs and Alston; Hovorka, De Zeeuw and Njenga). If women are lucky, they may find vacated plots of land closer to their homes of residence, or near their children's schools so their children can help them transport different crops after school. In other cases, women work collectively to find land so they can help each other out with tending to it (Sachs; Sachs and Alston; Hovorka, De Zeeuw and Njenga). Because they are seeking sources of income, many rural women arrive at urban locations cash poor and are often left with no choice but to turn to squatting, finding urban slums to reside in, or risking eviction and their crops being destroyed at any moment. Growing urban agriculture has meant that more women have been able to feed their families and grow medicinal herbs, and do so while saving money by avoiding market value products (Sachs; Sachs and Alston; Hovorka, De Zeeuw and Njenga). Increasingly many women have also engaged in urban agriculture as a means to not only feed their families and save money, but to bring an added source of income into their homes. In both small and large scale plots, women provide labour and yet production and land often still belong to the men (Sachs; Sachs and Alston; Hovorka, De Zeeuw and Njenga).

Furthermore, in some Latin American countries such as Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, and Venezuela, women are taking their cooking skills and transforming them into "commercialized housework" in order to support their families (Abarca 94). Community kitchens, also known as public kitchens in the literature, are complex spaces with the potential to both empower and subjugate women. Meredith Abarca shares that public kitchens are grounded in three basic principles: "to offer a space to listen to the voices of traditionally muted people; to recognize the validity of different fields of knowledge; build on trust which means keeping ourselves honest" (106). Kathleen Shroeder highlights how public kitchens, be-

yond being a safe space for women to gather, are prominent places in communities and a source of civic pride. It is said that public kitchens are so powerful that politicians understand the power of women who run them and tend to approach them during election season looking to win voters (Shroeder). Going back to the work of Sach, Sachs and Alston, Brownhill and Turner, and Mawdsley, we are still

Many women have engaged in urban agriculture as a means to not only feed their families and save money, but to bring an added source of income into their homes. In both small and large scale plots, women provide labour and yet production and land often still belong to the men.

reminded of the value of shifting how scholars view rural women within agriculture as knowledge producers and scientists. This shift grants rural women the agency as experts working carefully with crops in ways that not only heal and feed their communities, but also brings profit and income.

The notion that certain issues are only taken up in the Global North and eventually travel to the Global South is problematic and has been a site of tension within transnational feminism. Mina Roces argues that while "not all countries could boast of a clearly organized movement for female enfranchisement, this did not mean that there were no women's movements in Asia even dating back to the 1920s and 1930s" (7).

Variations and diversity then should not be articulated as falling within a hierarchy, or failure. Even within movements that were in the same location, hemisphere, region or country, some women found that relations of power and dominance were present and often failed to acknowledge such differences.

While very little scholarship has been documented around Aboriginal/ Indigenous/ First Nations, Asian (both East and South), Caribbean and Middle-Eastern women organizing Desmarais (2007) acknowledges that much work still needs to be done around these regions. In 1989, the first Latin American Meeting of Peasant and Indigenous Organizations took place in Bogotá launching the 500 Years of Indigenous and Popular Resistance campaign. Since then, subsequent meetings have taken place in Guatemala in 1991 and Nicaragua in 1992 (Deere and Royce 2).

Women in the Global South have long been resisting and organizing despite limited dialogue around their agency, and yet some scholars in positions of power still render their narratives as alternative or invisible.

Transnational movements such as La Via Campesina, The World March of Women, Latin American Coordinator of Rural Organizations (CLOC), The Continental Coordination of

Indigenous Nationalities and People of Abya Yala are all making strides to bridge many of these gaps within food movements. (Desmarais 2007; Deere and Royce). In various places women are leading the way but continuously being silenced and written out. Viewing the negative outcomes of globalization as mutually exclusive I argue has been detrimental to rural women.

Scholars such as Anupam Pandey continue to argue that women are solely victims, thus limiting the potential to incorporate them into higher levels of decisionmaking. Because many view women as victims unable to navigate globalization, such narratives are still used to justify and keep women outside of decision-making. Economists, politicians, policies,

decision-makers, men and women in positions of power and privilege, tend to provide partial accounts on situated perspectives of women, never stopping to consider that all knowledge is partial, situated and subject to distortions (Sachs 1996). While women do not have the key to solving all the world's problems, neither do men (Sachs 1996). To date, studies of both international globalization and antiglobalization movements have largely ignored women, yet women have been at the forefront of regional, national, international and transnational struggles.

Peter Rosset contends that rural women's voices traditionally are excluded from social, economic and political power. Many women are dedicated to organizing vis-à-vis non-violent means that are grounded in concrete demands, seeking recognition of their basic human and social rights (Rosset 7). They are concerned with the defense of rural livelihoods and increasingly, with the development of sustainable livelihoods that respect nature, and traditional knowledge (Rosset 7). Across the literature, the most striking narratives are out of India and point to the potential of women and traditional knowledge's.

In India, during the Chipko Movement, Garhwali women were turning towards organic farming in order to rejuvenate an ancient practice of farming (Pandey 351). Vandana Shiva, although contentious, provides data and narratives on the ways in which women have been producers of knowledge and continue to hold on to knowledge that many scientists, pharmaceutical companies and food corporations are seeking out.

The forest provides the means for sustainable food production systems in the form of nutrients and water, and women's work in the forest facilitates this process (Shiva 59). Rural women hold on to knowledge that many are not aware of. Bina Agarwal goes on to state that while rural women are by no means the sole repositories of this knowledge they are often the significant bearers of such information on the particular items they collect

or use, thus such information about local trees, grasses and food related forest produce which are required for nurturing families are threatened and under severe threat of food shortage conditions (Agarwal 58).

Pharmaceutical companies have threatened such knowledges by introducing patents and an attack on rural women's knowledge is further at risk when younger generations are

An attack on rural women's knowledge is further at risk when younger generations are not able to neither attain nor retain some of this knowledge. Being able to retain and pass down traditional knowledge provides an outlet for women to keep their ways of resisting and survival alive.

not able to neither attain nor retain some of this knowledge (Shiva). Being able to retain and pass down traditional knowledge provides an outlet for women to keep their ways of resisting and survival .

Any attempts to undo the past must be engaged in collectively, working at all levels and across different regions. Given that privilege and access to resources are unequally distributed, Annette Desmarais points to how bringing women together from various regions allows them to exchange ideas, information and experiences about agricultural realities in different countries at local, national and international levels.

While tensions will always be present where people gather to organize,

for the most part rural women farmers have found power in numbers and working across borders transnationally has proven useful.

Rural women have had and continue to have agency and utilize various tools to resist and organize. They have been plant gatherers, early inventors of horticulture, studying plants and crops and passing such knowledge down to younger generations (Sachs 1996; Shiva). Rural women's work provides various insights on understanding how gender relations in rural places have largely ignored women (Sachs 1996). While power imbalances limit the effectiveness of some of this organizing, progress is being made.

The reluctance of scientists, researchers, policy makers, politicians, etc. to incorporate women's knowledge into their conceptions of problems has slowed down the process of solving various injustices including hunger, environmental degradation and sexism, classism and other such forms of domination are at the root cause (Sachs 1996).

Understanding the daily lives of rural women is important as it demystifies our understandings of who they are and how they work. Understanding their situated knowledge and that there are multiple women's knowledge's (Desmarais) opens us up to finding new ways of advocating for rural women and working along side, not in front or ahead of them.

Conclusion

The future of transnational solidarities, according to Paola Bachetta, depends largely upon "a continued ability to self-critique and a mutual will to avoid bulldozing, effacing, distorting and excluding" (970). Sachs (2010) suggests women worldwide become more interconnected though the process of global restructuring and that...

it does not imply that women will know, nor form alliances or organize with other women, or that their situations are the same,

however, it does mean that the impact of global economy on their lives will be strengthened as corporations increasingly consider and compare the advantages and possibilities of using women's labour. (141)

Mainstream assumptions often romanticize the rural woman and her work. These assumptions have impacted how rural women are perceived and thus how they continue to be left out of roles that impact their day-to-day lives. Paola Moya argues that any attempts to work with others across differences require us examining our shadow selves and parts of us that we are not always proud of. Moya quotes Cherrie Moraga who eloquently and beautifully articulates,

Because the source of oppression form not only our radicalism, but also our pain, to do the kind of world self-examination requires us to admit how deeply "the mans" words have been ingrained in us. The project of examining our own locations within the relations of domination becomes even riskier when we realize that doing so might mean giving up whatever privileges we have managed to squeeze out of this society by virtue of our own social locations. We are afraid to admit that we have benefitted from the oppression of others. We fear the immobilizations threatened by our own incipient guilt. We fear we might have to change our lives once we have seen ourselves in the bodies of the people we have called different. We fear the hatred, anger, and vengeance of those we have hurt. (Moya 150)

As scholars we must shift how we conceptualize feminism. Peggy Antrobus highlights that within Inuit tradition, story telling takes form of a spiral. She challenges feminists to perceive the transnational feminist movements as a spiral:

A spiral is open ended, continuous, ever enlarging our understanding of events, our perspectives. The global women's movement can be thought of as a spiral, a process that starts at the centre (rather than at the beginning of the line) and works its way outwards, turning, arriving and what might appear to be the same point, but in reality, at an expanded understanding of the same event. A spiral is dialective, allowing for the organic growth of a movement of women organizing- a movement in a state of on-going evolution as consciousness expands in the process of exchanges between women, taking us backwards (to rethink and reevaluate old positions) and forwards (to new areas of awareness). (21)

Shifting towards Sachs's approach to rural women as knowledge producers, rural women's agency are pushed forward rather than the constant message of them being impoverished recipients of globalization with nothing to offer. By shifting the narrative and giving space for alternative ways of knowing and being to be validated, hierarchies of power slowly disentangle.

A self-identified African feminist Dorothy Attakora-Gyan straddles multiple often conflicting positionalities. With identities as hyphenated as her last name, she is currently completing her Ph.D. at the Institute for Feminist and Gender Studies at the University of Ottawa. Dorothy is invested in studying the processes, discourses and practices of solidarity building across differences within transnational feminist networks. Always keen on pushing boundaries and disrupting taken for granted assumptions of normativity, she is continuously interrogating how power and privilege operate in interlocking ways.

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**JOANNA M.
WESTON**

That Birthday Night

I was born in a backwoods
hospital on a day between
Thursday and Friday

a nothing time
that I caught in my teeth

held to the hard parts
of being female
against a tide of violence
and a rising smell of guns

in the air until I wiped
it clean with the dust
of desert sand

and made fireworks
from bed sheets to hang
banner high on signal hills

while my mother curled
her body into the question
of my existence

Joanna M. Weston has a middle-reader, Frame and The McGuire, published by Tradewind Books. Inanna Publications published her poetry collection, A Bedroom of Searchlights.

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MARLENE KADAR

Ode to a Node

I have met you before but you weren't as boisterous or portly and so I had almost forgotten your silhouette.

Now you plague me, a silly little node supposedly full of benign lymphatic fluids, a Frankenstein peg in my neck with one to match on the other side.

I can't erase you nor can I hate what you have become since our first encounter.

Your contours have always been obvious to me, and yet sometimes loving friends claim not to see you, you, a swollen lymph node wriggling along a vagus nerve like a worm.

Lymph nodes never featured in *Vogue*, or even in *Chatelaine* so I wonder

how you got such beautiful genetic credence, so much power over me, so much stability when I am the one who made you.

Marlene Kadar is a Toronto writer, and Professor in Humanities and Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at York University.

LAURA SWEENEY

BINDER WOMEN

Saturday morning following the Romney-Obama Presidential Debate

As you leave the grocery store, putting on your "I Voted" sticker, three women mumble, as some women do, that *they* aren't going to vote. Their excuses irk you. You remember your friend Diane, the retired lobbyist, who once asked, "What's in a sticker?" She served the George McGovern campaign. Voracious about her views on the reds and the blues - she's no binder woman. And you remember the women in your writing class: Robyn the doctor, Susan the art teacher, Ruth Ellen the speech pathologist, Doris the biologist, Amanda the freshman - women who know the difference between electing a boss or a president means not being pushed back into the 50's. They're no binder women either. And when you think about so many women missing, without names, invisible faces on the sidelines, in harnesses halters bridles leashes, *binders*, however you call them, you turn and, attempting to educate, say, "You stand on the shoulders of those who've gone before...remember, and proceed."

Laura Sweeney facilitates Writers for Life in central Iowa. She represented the Iowa Arts Council at the First International Teaching Artist's Conference in Oslo, Norway. Her recent and forthcoming publications include poems in Evening Street Review, Negative Capability Press, Main Street Rag, Folia, Wordrunner eChapbook, Yellow Chair Review, Balloons Lit. Journal, East Jasmine Review, and Nuclear Impact Anthology: Broken Atoms in Our Hands.

Ecofeminism and System Change

Women on the Frontlines of the Struggle Against Fossil Capitalism and for the Solar Commons

TERRAN GIACOMINI

Plusieurs universitaires et activistes reconnaissent que les femmes sont plus nombreuses à travailler dans les “communes.” Ce texte nous présente une analyse écoféministe des communes, ces mouvements ou réseaux d’actions et de perspectives qui travaillent en commun avec deux mouvements où les femmes sont très présentes: le Réseau des femmes d’action pour la Terre et le climat (WECAN) et La Via Campesina. L’analyse démontre les luttes des femmes qui comprennent la coopération comme un contrôle des moyens de survie, elles défient les relations capitalistes et font la promotion des alternatives. Donc, les alliances entre ces communes et celles qui sont intégrées au capitalisme sont essentielles pour transformer le capitalisme anti-écologique en capitalisme écologique.

A large number of high profile activists for the commons, including Vandana Shiva (2016), Silvia Federici, Peter Linebaugh, Terisa Turner and Leigh Brownhill (2004), Angela Miles, Pat Mooney, Clayton Thomas-Muller and, members of Friends of the Earth have pointed out that women are at the forefront of the defense of the commons. These commons include territories, against enclosures, especially by extractive industries (extractivism) Commoning is defined here as

class struggle for collective control over and “direct access to social wealth, access that is not mediated by competitive market relations” (De Angelis 7). Subsistence production—caring for nature including families by, centrally, securing household food, water, fuel, medical and other needs—requires direct access to the material commons and a context of peaceful community relations. Subsistence production is overwhelmingly women’s social responsibility. According to Federici, (143) “historically and in our time, women more than men depend on access to communal resources, and have been most committed to their defense.”

I examine selected statements made by women activists and their networks within two social movement organizations: the Women’s Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN), that campaigns to keep fossil fuels in the ground, and La Via Campesina’s global movement for agroecology and food and seed sovereignty. I do so in order to understand the gendered, ethnicized class dimensions of activism for system change.¹ These networks are chosen because women are prominent in them, and because both groups address food and energy—relations which are core to capitalism

and its negation by commoners in resistance.

The statements made by WECAN and Vía Campesina women and their organizations recognize that extractivism exploits and threatens women by destroying or undermining the social relations and ecosystems they rely upon for subsistence. The statements also indicate that women commoners are taking action to undermine extractivism and elaborate alternatives to capitalism. These alternatives, including community-controlled energy and small-farmer or peasant-centred agroecology, can be generalized to address the global life-threatening food-fuel-climate crisis faced by everyone on Earth. As the analysis below shows, WECAN and La Vía Campesina activists’ insight that women are exploited by capitalism while also being agents of commoning transformation, is crucial to informing system change praxis and averting ecological crises.

As I show below, capitalists’ profitability depends on women’s unwaged and devalued work, as well as on the exploitation of nature. This work is primarily labour power production that includes child care, housework, food production and preparation, emotional work, health care, elder care, and the regeneration

of nature. Time use surveys across a wide range of countries estimate that women work more than men, spending 85-90 percent of their time on household food preparation (Ilahi 2000 cited in FAO 2011: 14). Many women, especially racialized and colonized women, are also exploited in precarious and low-paid service work and commodity production. When women take action to deny capitalists their labour, by transferring their time and energy from exploitative relations and to commoning, capitalism is fundamentally undermined (Turner 2012). I identify these actions as “commoning ecofeminism” because they are made on the basis of (i) a recognition that the exploitation of women and nature is central to capitalism, (ii) a stand against that exploitation and (iii) an affirmation of life-centred alternatives.

Women’s system change activism has been strengthened by members of other social groups who join with women to challenge capitalism and affirm the commons (Turner and Brownhill). When all dispossessed men and dispossessed white women fight together with racialized women at the bottom of the capitalist hierarchy, capitalist divisions are challenged and potentially undermined, leaving room for these groups to establish horizontal relations (Sitrin and Azzellini).

WECAN Challenges Extractivism and Affirms Solar Commoning

The Women’s Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN), founded in 2013, is a global grassroots network of multi-ethnic women activists and their allies who work together across more than 54 countries “to stop the escalation of climate change and environmental and community degradation” and support “women’s empowerment, partnerships, hands-on trainings, advocacy campaigns, and political, economic, social and environmental action” (WECAN 2015b). To this end, WECAN members have committed themselves to

bringing forward a post-fossil epoch (Amazon Watch).

In September 2014 at a WECAN organized event in connection with the 400,000 strong Peoples’ Climate March in New York City, Kichwa WECAN member from the Ecuadorian Amazon, Patricia Gualinga, stated that her community’s fight to stop oil extractivism in Ecuador’s Yasuní territory is a struggle to support life:

When all dispossessed men and white women fight together with racialized women at the bottom of the capitalist hierarchy, capitalist divisions are challenged, leaving room for these groups to establish horizontal relations.

Their [the Ecuadorian government of Rafael Correa] rationale is basically that we are poor, that by developing ‘we are going to change your life and we are going to help you so that you are not poor anymore.’ My response is: who is poor? You are the ones who bring poverty; we are the ones who have clean air, we are the ones who are breathing freely, we are the ones that have clean water, we are the ones who have a market. You are the ones who bring us poverty.... What we need to do is to challenge this greed, look at new models. We want the Amazon to live. We have models, we have ideas, we have ways of living sustainably. t

Since the 1940s Indigenous women and allied men in Ecuador have been mobilizing against fossil fuel extractivism to defend the Amazon and territories and the way of life they support. In one famous instance from the 1940s, the uncontacted Huaorani people killed a Shell Oil Company employee who they presumed to be a threat to life (Rival). This mobilization has involved direct actions as well as women-led marches, for instance, from the Amazon to Puyo and to Quito (Pachamama Alliance). Gualinga offers a ‘subsistence perspective’; a politics that prioritizes life-support and rejects neoliberal ‘structural adjustment programs’ that impose corporate markets on the world’s poor. These programs expand corporate markets via enclosures that dispossess Indigenous communities of the means of life, and in particular most women, thereby reducing women to waged and unwaged units of labour power (Isla). Said another way, extractivism encloses the commons. From the perspective of Gualinga and her allies, her community’s wealth comes from the Amazon and commoning relations.

Patricia Gualinga and her community are at the source and primary site—the wellhead—of petroleum extraction. Hence they are crucially important actors in the fight to keep carbon in the ground by virtue of the strategic location of their residence near the beginning of Big Oil’s value chain. The struggle against fossil fuels in the Amazon is part of a broad and expanding network of anti-extractivist struggles around the world (Break Free).

Also at the source of extraction are members of Idle No More, a remarkable mobilization that emerged in 2013 in Turtle Island (North America). Idle No More is a grassroots movement initiated by Indigenous women, and joined by Indigenous men and allies from amongst settler communities, to defend treaties and Indigenous territories. On 29 September 2015 at a WECAN event in New York City, Cherri Foytlin, a Dine, African American and Latina

woman from Idle No More Gulf Coast, (southern Louisiana) and The Mother's Project, underlined the fact that, from the perspective of the oil companies, her community is a "sacrifice zone" which, for Cherri Foytlin, "means that you are not worth anything. That means your children are not worth anything." She explained that, "we need to understand extractivism as a form of violence toward women and children. It is part of rape culture and it is a continuation of colonization. It is the commodification of the natural world, and it is destroying us" (Foytlin).

Foytlin's analysis is that extractivism is inherently brutal toward women, children and nature. This view is supported by a wide network of Indigenous women and their allies who are fighting against extractivism (Honor the Earth). According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples (from 2008-2014), James Anaya; Indigenous women suffer an increase in violence, including rape, when extractive industries operate in or near their territories.² In the Bakken oil fields of North Dakota, for example, some non-Indigenous men employed by the oil industry who live in temporary 'man camps' near three native communities are known to commit acts of violence against Indigenous women and children. These men are transient; they do not have connections with or a sense of social responsibility to the surrounding community (Honor the Earth). Foytlin's statement indicates that putting an end to rape culture, colonization and the commodification of nature is necessary to fundamental system change.

Foytlin characterizes her community's struggle as a fight for a fundamental change in power relations so that people, not corporations, control the means of life:

It is time to bring the power back to the people and to recognize that our greatest natural resource is not oil or coal or LNG [liquefied natural gas] but it is our children

and our future generations. We are in a place where we have to make decisions. And we have to talk about a few things because it goes a little farther than just finding some solar panels. Who is in charge of that? Who benefits from it? It is not any good if BP [British Petroleum] moves off of oil and starts selling solar panels, if they are still the ones in power.

"We need to understand extractivism as a form of violence toward women and children. It is part of rape culture and it is a continuation of colonization. It is the commodification of the natural world, and it is destroying us."

We have to shift the power back to the people. (Foytlin)

Foytlin recognizes that global warming cannot be addressed without also challenging the social relations that underpin ecocide. Foytlin does not seek 'decarbonization' or a simple shift to renewable energy under the current capitalist system. Rather, she and her allies seek grassroots democracy constituted by horizontal power relations.

Since 2014 WECAN has strengthened its cross-border connections and direct action strategy to challenge fossil capitalism. In the concluding hours of WECAN's 2015 New York City event, a group of Indigenous women from territories across the Americas

signed the Indigenous Women of the Americas Protecting Mother Earth Treaty. The Treaty is being signed by women around the world who are committing themselves to political action in defense of Mother Earth (Grassroots Global Justice Alliance). This ceremony in New York City—at the symbolic and actual centre of fossil capitalist "male dealing" (Turner 1991: 70)—coincided with a direct action by a group of Ecuadorian Indigenous women at the Quito office of the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation, or CNPC. The women occupied the Quito headquarters of the Chinese state oil company engaged in exploiting oil in the Amazon.

On March 4, 2016, on International Women's Day in Puyo, Ecuador, Indigenous women members of WECAN from the U.S. and Ecuador gathered for a series of protests and workshops to "reject new oil concessions and stand for the rights of Mother Earth and communities" (WECAN 2016).³ Speaking at a rally attended by upwards of 500 Indigenous Amazonian women and their allies, WECAN's Osprey Orielle Lake affirmed the centrality of women's actions to defend life in the context of ecological crisis: "We all depend on the flourishing of these precious rainforests, the lungs of the planet. Now is the time to keep the oil in the ground and stand with the women who have been putting their bodies on the line for years to protect the forest, their cultures, and the health and well-being of all future generations" (cited in WECAN 2016).

According to the above analysis, extreme extractivism threatens women's lives, the communities and the future generations for which women are most socially responsible. The WECAN network is pursuing global, joint actions to challenge the global, integrated fossil fuel companies. WECAN's activism also promotes alternatives: commoning relations and community control over the means of life, especially energy.

WECAN's commitment is part of the long history of direct action by women to 'keep the oil in the soil' and to elaborate life-centred political econ-

omies (Turner and Brownhill). Such actions are crucial to averting climate catastrophe given that the exponential growth logic of the capitalist system prevents voluntary emissions reductions (Kovel). WECAN and their allies' activism against fossil capital pushes oil closer to the point of becoming a 'stranded asset'—unburnable or unproducible carbon that cannot be converted into profits due to the environmental risk (liability) and the consequent downward revaluation of fossil energy shares in the context of climate change (Giacomini and Turner 38).

I now turn to an investigation of the transformative ecofeminist content of statements made by La Vía Campesina.

La Vía Campesina's Fight Against Agribusiness and Expansion of the Commons

La Vía Campesina is a global movement of peasants, small-scale farmers, Indigenous peoples, landless workers, youth and women that has helped to coordinate global actions against agribusiness and for food sovereignty alternatives.⁴ Food sovereignty involves expanded commoning by way of securing popular democratic control over the food system. La Vía Campesina defines agroecology, a path toward food sovereignty, as both a method of ecological food production and a political movement against agribusiness enclosures and for peasant and community control over food. According to La Vía Campesina's (2015a) Declaration of the International Forum for Agroecology, "[c]ollective rights and access to the commons are a fundamental pillar of agroecology. We share access to territories that are the home to many different peer groups, and we have sophisticated customary systems for regulating access and avoiding conflicts that we want to preserve and to strengthen." Many groups and individuals within La Vía Campesina recognize that women are central to the agri-food commons. "As savers of

seed and living libraries of knowledge about local biodiversity and food systems, women are often more closely connected to the commons than men" (La Vía Campesina 2015b).

Since 2006 La Vía Campesina and their international allies, including the feminist World March of Women, have been organizing together in the Global Campaign to End Violence against Women. In *Stop the Violence*

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strategy."**

against Women!, La Vía Campesina explains that agribusiness' control over land and territories undermines women's lives and work: "agribusiness has become the manifestation of capitalism in the countryside, bringing with it exclusion, exploitation and violence against peasants, and particularly women family farmers. Agribusiness can therefore be considered patriarchal capitalism's rural strategy" (La Vía Campesina Internationale 2012: 23). According to the farmers, commodification and agribusiness concentration create the conditions for violence against women by "expell[ing] thousands of women from their land, destroying their cultures and generating isolated spaces in the countryside" (23). Under

capitalist agriculture, women are "left with no place to work and are forced to remain in the domestic sphere, to carry out invisible and unrecognized labor" (23).

Agribusiness separates women from their means of life and devalues women's work in agriculture, a process Maria Mies (110) calls "housewifeization," that entails hierarchical relations between women and men. Under capitalism men, with few exceptions, are socialized to control women in order to ensure that the products of women's wageless, invisible labour (especially labour power itself, the most strategically central of capitalists' commodities) are channeled upward to enhance corporations' bottom lines. "[P]atriarchal capitalism's rural strategy" to which La Vía Campesina refers is the enclosure of women's time and bodies in the service of agribusiness profits.

Below I draw on statements made by Korean women seed savers within La Vía Campesina to indicate that for these women and for La Vía Campesina, horizontal and non-exploitative gender relations are central to system change.

In many parts of the world, women peasants are the main custodians of seeds (Shiva 1989; Pionetti 5). The commodification and genetic modification of seeds harms small-scale farmer, peasant and Indigenous women in at least three ways. First, privatized seeds are costly, whereas common seeds are virtually free. The commodification of seeds makes it more expensive for women—who are, by and large, unwaged or low-waged—to access the seeds they need to feed their families. Second, the loss of control over seeds associated with commodification "either destroys the basis of women's work or devalues it. With the decline in the perceived or real productivity of women is associated a decline in their status in society and within the household" (Shiva 1989: 117). Third, technologies in seeds are paired at the genetic level with chemicals that are fossil fuel-based and implicated in the acceleration of climate crisis.

In 2015, the World Health Organization classified Monsanto's glyphosate—one of the main chemicals used in industrial agriculture worldwide—"probably carcinogenic." When human health is compromised by agri-chemicals, women spend more time and energy caring for the sick and compensating for the departed. Seed enclosures lead to an enclosure of the body, along with women's time and creativity.

La Vía Campesina puts forward food and seed sovereignty as an alternative to the corporations' monopoly control over food and seeds, and the hierarchical gender relations commodification entails. In the 2013 publication "Our Seeds, Our Future," a La Vía Campesina member-organization, the Korean Women Peasants Association (KWPA) outlines at least six ways in which the seed commons is central to women's and their communities' lives and well-being: (i) seeds have deep significance for women's collective history and culture; (ii) working with seeds gives women social standing, including "respect and admiration"; (iii) seeds are an "essential right" as the first link of the food chain; (iv) peasant saved seeds are a line of defense against fossil chemical agriculture; (v) peasant seeds secure farmer autonomy and; (vi) shared control over seeds is necessary for maintaining or establishing broad transformation to "create a new society." By affirming and enhancing the seed commons, the Korean women peasants in KWPA contribute to the development of a commoners' value chain. The commoners' chain is an alternative to the fossil-fuel dependent corporate value chain and the housewifeization arising from its expansion. The commoners' chain makes possible the elaboration of horizontal, commoning social relations.

A core component of La Vía Campesina's global transformative project—establishing collective control over the means of life—is putting an end to gendered exploitation and violence against women by ending agribusiness' commodification and housewifeization. The men farmers

also recognize that women are central to the elaboration of worldwide commoning grounded in food sovereignty. According to La Vía Campesina (2011), peasant agriculture is an alternative to agribusiness and violence against women—"[o]ur work creates and celebrates life and it is in [sic] its own a form of prevention of violence."

La Vía Campesina farmers are indispensable allies in the time-sensitive battle for system change and to avert climate crisis. This is because, first, they prioritize the perspectives and actions of those women who are most exploited by capitalism, and whose knowledge, skills, capacities and cosmovisions linked to the commons offer essential starting points for elaborating a replacement system. By aligning with Indigenous and peasant women at the forefront, other social groups within La Vía Campesina help to shift the world further away from capitalist hierarchy and closer to commoner horizontalism.

Second, La Vía Campesina women and men are already taking action to defend and extend ecological agriculture. They have the skills, knowledge and capacities to grow and distribute food without fossil fuels or petrochemical feedstocks. These skills are essential to generalizing food and energy relations based on solar energy and "soil not oil" (Shiva 2008) by helping farmers and consumers to "break free" (Break Free) from fossil fuel dependency (Gliessman), expand biodiversity (Shiva 2008) and "cool down the earth" (La Vía Campesina 2009: 1).

Conclusion

Women activists' and their networks' statements claim that ecofeminist action and system change are inextricable. That is, a transformation in gender power is essential for system change. System change requires a fundamental shift in power from the one percent class, who monopolize the means of life, to the 99 percent class, who face dispossession or who must sell their labour power in order

to survive. Because capitalists organize nature and labour within a global racialized and gendered hierarchy of labour power, with racialized and Indigenous women at the bottom; bringing about system change requires transformative ecofeminist actions that prioritize the interests and initiatives of the most exploited or threatened women. The selected statements considered above confirm that extractivism separates women from the means of life—the land, seeds, water—by commodifying and degrading nature and undermining commoning social relations. Agribusiness and fossil fuel extractivism undermines or threatens the basis of women's lives and livelihoods.

However, the women within WECAN and La Vía Campesina, far from being de-historicized passive victims, fight back on the basis of the knowledge, skills and community relations to halt enclosure and the ecological devastation arising from it. The women profiled here do not pursue reformist "green" capitalism or technology-fixes. Rather, they seek broad transformation in social relations away from capitalist hierarchy toward commoning horizontalism; including, centrally, the expansion of collective control over energy and food.

The insight that system change and ecofeminism are inseparable calls for strategic action: the formation of alliances between women at the bottom of the capitalist hierarchy and other social groups to undermine capitalist relations (including sexism, racism and colonialism) and to promote commoning. This commoning can be viewed as the process through which the 99 percent becomes a global class not merely in itself but consciously 'for itself'. In other words, activists who acknowledge and stand against the exploitation of women, prioritizing racialized women who are most exploited under capitalism, challenge and undermine the capital relation as a whole. On the other hand, the actions by those who ignore the struggles of women at the bottom of the hierarchy constitute

reformism because such actions risk perpetuating capitalist relations, with women at the bottom paying the price. As Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe scholar Lynn Gehl says, “we need to follow the most oppressed to get the momentum we need. Otherwise, the moment other groups get what they need, my needs are dropped.”

Commoning women and their allies within WECAN and La Vía Campesina are already taking action to challenge extractivism at multiple links of capitalist, fossil fueled value chains. These resistances simultaneously affirm the commons, especially by establishing collective control over food and energy—core sectors within the capitalist system. The alternatives practiced by members of WECAN and La Vía Campesina can be readily expanded to address global warming and stop ecocide. Alliances with commoning women build on the recognition that such women have the knowledge, skills, land, seeds and community networks to “live better without oil” (Shiva 2008: 4). To the extent that WECAN and La Vía Campesina’s commoning initiatives are strengthened, so too is the potential for deepening and expanding transformative actions that promise to move us closer to a climate-stable world.

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¹I draw on elements of gendered, ethnicized class theory. A more in-depth discussion of this theory than is possible here is available in Turner, Brownhill, and Giacomini (2011). In brief, gendered, ethnicized class analysis centralizes the “revolutionary significance of the life-sustaining activities and resistance of unwaged exploited peoples” (Brownhill 16).

²“...Indigenous women have reported that the influx of workers into indigenous communities as a result of extractive projects also led to increased incidents of sexual harassment and violence, including rape and assault. In one case in which I intervened, Indigenous girls walking to school were sexually assaulted by workers operating under a concession granted by the government for the extraction of forest resources in the indigenous peoples’ traditional territory” (Anaya).

³The events involved women from seven Indigenous nations: Andoa, Achuar, Kichwa, Shuar, Shiwar, Sapara and Waorani.

⁴While La Vía Campesina national affiliates share a common political strategy, there is great diversity in member organizations’ perspectives on the meaning of and ways to achieve food sovereignty.

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ARIZONA GIBBS

Unique

When I was a girl,
I ran through fields of butterflies;
When i was a boy,
I went down to the creek and caught frogs.
Now that I'm me,
I think I'll do some reading,
Maybe some writing,
Pretend to be different from everyone else.
And be whoever I want to be.

HEIDI TABATA

Marie Curie at the Bank

Oh sweetheart
you said
chucking me under the chin
you need to understand
that's how money works

so I stacked up all my money in the world
carefully sorted into denominations
and waited
to see how money worked

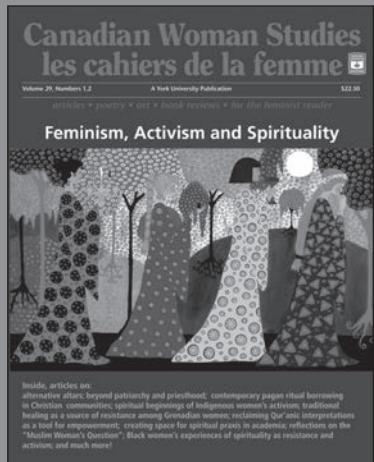
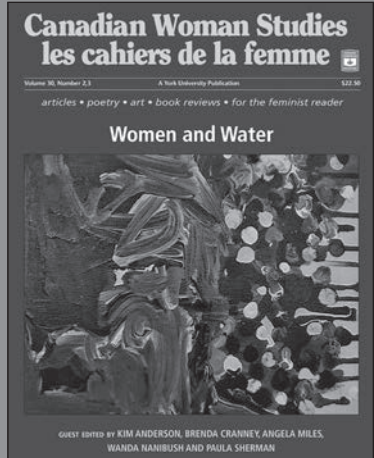
as it turns out, money
like most metal, is a conductor
it doesn't actually do any work
but transmits an odourless, colourless cold
soul death of its handlers
in a specific metallic whisper

you want some? Jump then.
Oh you're hungry?
jump higher.
You're powerless, you say?
open your legs
see how powerful you are?
Now ... you hungry people
go fuck the powerless
... *Christ*, you people are barbarians

Oh sweetheart
please don't talk to me anymore
about how money works
I fear that
I do not have the warmth
To melt
the frozen blood in your veins
the frozen tears on our cheeks
the frozen future in my womb
I fear that I have been
contaminated
by contact
with your stories
about how money works.

*Heidi Tabata is a traveller and student of life, love, law, and philosophy.
Sometimes she writes incoherently about these things.*

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Women and Sustainable Development

LAAVANYA KAUSHIK

Cet article identifie le rôle joué par les femmes dans le développement durable au 21e siècle et ses implications dans notre société.

There are various stakeholders such as the government, private sector research institutions, and the development community, which fail to recognize women's role in and contribution to sustainable production and consumption, often because of their informal role. However the influence of women, even in an informal capacity, is far too important to be ignored.

Sustainable development in layman terms means a judicious and efficient use of resources available to meet present day needs and wants, keeping in mind the needs and wants of future generations. As defined by the United Nations sustainable development is based on three basic principles:

- Sustainable use of resources;
- Equitable distribution of resources at the inter-generational level;
- Equitable distribution of resources at the intra generational level.

Inter-generational distribution refers to distribution of resources between young and elder generations

in a family which is subsequently reflected broadly in society. The common interpretation of the term intra-generational equity is often only understood as equity among various economic sections of society. However intra-generational equity also denotes gender equity. Moreover, Soledad Aguilar argues, sustainable development is not possible without gender equity. In fact, it is a prerequisite for any action aimed at improving people's quality of life.

In order to understand the importance of gender equity, it is necessary to identify the role and contribution of women in sustenance and development.

In Rio, women were considered a "major group" whose involvement in the United Nations Earth Summit held in 1992 was a necessary pre-requisite for achieving sustainable development. Ever since gender issues have been given high priority in the international political debate on sustainable development. Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 talks specifically about a global plan of action for women towards sustainable and equitable development. This agenda promotes the formulation of policies and actions by local governments in association with non-governmental organizations.

The International Women's Uni-

versity in Hanover, the first gender-specific university of its kind in Europe, in an announcement in 2000, stated that: "looking at women's work we can see the variety of social engagements, which are necessary for the survival of a society: domestic work, subsistence work, care work, work in the formal and informal sections of labour markets."

Women have been victims of the problem of disguised employment, since time immemorial. Disguised employment is the phenomenon wherein people do not have full-time paid employment, but are not counted in the official unemployment statistics. This disguised employment is most commonly seen in the form of domestic work. Conventional gender roles have usually designated women as in-charge of household work and budgeting. It is the women of the family who decides the kind of groceries that are to be purchased, the recycle and waste disposal practices adopted by a household. These forms of informal policy adopted by women at a minuscule level provide the building blocks for an ecologically sound consumption pattern. For instance, if women adopt the practice of cooking with seasonal vegetable, it increases the consumption of seasonal vegetables, which are a more ecologically sound alternative as opposed to

using unseasonal vegetables that are grown as cash crops. The producers are driven by the simple law of supply and demand to focus more on production of seasonal vegetables. This, in turn, reduces the use of cold storage, chemical fertilizers, artificial means of cultivation, and the use of preservatives to a large extent.

It is evident that a small decision made by a woman at a domestic level play can essential role in adopting a sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production pattern—that is, insofar as she has the power to make such decisions and to allocate time, resources, and the labour to adopt such practices at the micro level.

In the so-called developing countries, the formal work done by women is largely in the agriculture sector. Women are primarily responsible for cultivating food crops, vegetables, managing small animals and running small-scale commercial agriculture enterprises. Women account for an average of 43 percent of agriculture jobs among developing countries, and for nearly 50 percent in some countries in Africa and Asia. Women represent only 12 percent of fishery labour but over 65 percent of the 400 million livestock keepers (United Nations).

Many cultures revere older women who possess a seemingly infinite amount of knowledge of management of natural resources, such as, for example, how to preserve seeds for best yields, or patterns of crop rotation for preserving nutrients of the soil. Though exaggerated by folklore, this mythical perception is firmly rooted in reality: Indigenous women have spent centuries gathering, sharing and preserving knowledge in the realms of botany, agricultural livestock, health and nutrition, and other environmental knowledge. Many women have also taken economic advantage of their knowledge when market realities have allowed.

Moreover women worldwide, specifically in developing countries, spend more than 200 million hours per day collecting water and have

developed considerable knowledge about water resources, including their location, quality and storage methods. Just like any other job gives the highest value to experience, the policy makers of sustainable development have a treasure to gain from these women. The biggest challenge faced by women around the work with respect to this is that women own less than 20 percent of the natural resources even today.

“The land we hold in trust is our wealth. It is the only wealth we could possibly pass on to our children. Good old Mother Earth with all her bounty and rich culture we have adopted from her treasures is our wealth. Without our homelands, we become true paupers.”

This poses a problem as a majority of decision-making power lies with the men (and often wealthy or foreign men who do not share the same connection to the environment), while women are reduced to being nurses to an increasingly ill or degraded environment.

Peasant and Indigenous women are undoubtedly the major contributors to subsistence economies (Kuokkanen 220). Subsistence economies have successfully existed for centuries in all parts of the world. This has only been possible because the methods of production, however small scale they may be have been, are sustainable. The importance of subsistence economies was first recognized in the subsistence approach advocated by

Maria Mies and Veronika Bennholdt Thomsen, which linked subsistence work to sustainable production. Some would argue that subsistence work only contributes to the gross domestic production in decimal percentages. However, in recent times, subsistence work has also played a vital role in replenishing the environment and reforming practices. Many such subsistence projects have been successful around the world. Rwandan farmers have brought to market organic “women’s coffee.” In Kenya and Zimbabwe, women are protecting and planting indigenous and medieval trees, establishing bee populations in arid areas, and learning how to maintain them while processing trees and honey for sale. Women in Benin have adopted environmentally sustainable methods of oyster harvesting and are also reforestation a lagoon to ensure it can continue to provide livelihood.

Women have proven themselves to be a force to be recognized when it comes to bringing about reform and change. Women have time and again challenged existing power relations and, discriminatory laws, policies, and institutions to demand for example the right to land ownership and they are continuously striving to improve their status in society. In Rio, women were considered a “major group” whose involvement in the United Nations Earth Summit of 1992 was a necessary pre-requisite for achieving sustainable development. Ever since, gender issues have been given high priority in the international political debate on sustainable development. Chapter 24 of Agenda 21 talks specifically about a global plan of action for women towards sustainable and equitable development. This agenda promotes the formulation of policies and actions by local governments in association with non-governmental organizations.

There has been a long-standing relationship between women and nature that can be explained as the personification of nature as a mother, since both create and nurture life. It

is only because of the co-existence of various elements of nature that human life arose and has been sustained for so long. It is this common characteristic of nurturing that weaves an important and critical bond between nature and women, which is cemented by the very real relationship of caring that women have had with the natural world, both in achieving sustenance from nature's bounty, as well as caring for nature to ensure she can continue to do the same for all people.

At the first world conference on women in 1975, held in Mexico City, the "women and environment" issue was brought into public consciousness by the physicist Vandana Shiva, now a global environment leader (see also Schultz et al.). She reported the struggle of the Chipko Movement in the Himalayan region of India, where Chipko village women embraced the trees to protect them against threats of deforestation. It is one of the oldest environmental protests by women against government and business joint policies. Various other movements such as the Women, Environment and Development; Alliance for the Future; and Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) came up in the late 1990s.

It is evident that women are major contributors, if not the majority stakeholders, and they share equal burden in this regard. Moreover, women have proven to be effective instruments in bringing reform and adopting ecological practices on a large scale. Their stake in environment and development cannot be ignored.

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CHRISTINA LLOYD

ON THE CHAMPS ELYSEES

she tells me that three doctors peered in
to declare her hymen intact, that church
edict demanded such proof.

I imagine Agnes' daggered throat,
Agatha's severed breasts and this woman
splayed, her faith tested clinically.

In the Louvre I join the processional of tourists
gawking at Murillo's numb-faced Madonnas,
Fra Angelico's shocking pinks.

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Building Food Sovereignty through Ecofeminism in Kenya

From Export to Local Agricultural Value Chains

LEIGH BROWNHILL, WAHU M. KAARA AND TERISA E. TURNER

Les auteures ont revisité le district de Maragua au Kenya et ont analysé les protestations des fermières face à l'exploitation du café en 1990. En 2016 elles ont noté une transition très claire vers une agroécologie biologique caractérisée par des alliances générées et générationnelles démarrées il y a plusieurs années par les femmes qui protestaient. Depuis elles ont imaginé le partage des sols, elles ont préservé une variété de semences qu'elles ont semées et ont ajouté certaines connaissances écologiques et des préférences culinaires locales.

Reprising Kenyan Women's Struggle Against the Coffee Economy, 1986-1997

In 1997, in the pages of *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme*, we co-authored an analysis of a women-initiated movement of Kenyan farmers to break free from long-standing coffee commodity value chains in which they had been entangled for a century. The article described how coffee was first grown in the temperate Central Kenyan highlands on white settler plantations in the early part of the twentieth century. By 1940, coffee was one of the most lucrative commodity markets in the world. After protest against discriminatory coffee licensing practices, large

land-holding African farmers were allowed to grow coffee. Smallholders were later provisionally given license to grow coffee, but restrictions still barred the majority, whose under-four acre farms were deemed in policy as uneconomical for coffee production.

By the 1980s, the World Bank was actively advocating for farmers to grow more coffee, and for governments of peasant nations to adopt policies that would facilitate increase of export production, in part as a means for those governments to repay international loans. Corporate coffee value chains came to benefit auctioneers and middle men, as well as foreign bankers, far more than the average farm husband, whose name was on the land title, the production contract, and the bank account (Brownhill, Kaara and Turner 43). That piece described the gendered class dynamics within which peasant women in coffee growing districts like Maragua in Central Kenya uprooted coffee trees, and in tandem planted food crops on their small farms.

Our 1997 analysis emphasized the ways that women collectively asserted their usufruct rights to grow food on their own family land. In asserting this claim, women broke the “male deals”¹ that had bound husbands (and wives) into unfair

production and trade relationships with men of the state and of international capital, relationships which were becoming harmful to the environment through chemical application, and to producers' health and well-being through exposure to chemicals but also significantly to loss of food gardens when the coffee economy expanded.

The article also examined the “ethnicized gendered class alliance” that emerged to support women's return to cultivation that prioritized local food value chains, starting with feeding farm families and supplying basic nutritious foods, like organic bananas, to urban markets. Women farmers found allies among young men who worked in transport and trade, and who built links between rural farmers and urban eaters. We held up the case as an example of the contemporary state of global struggle that saw the enclosures of neo-liberal corporate rule being resisted by peasant women, whose efforts in alliance with young, dispossessed men were aimed at enabling the re-emergence of subsistence-oriented agriculture and local trade. Twenty years later, how far have women and men in places like Maragua succeeded in re-establishing what we can call in contemporary parlance, local food sovereignty?

The Coffee Economy Transformed: Maragua in 2016

In March 2016, I, Leigh Brownhill, returned to Kenya to visit my co-author, sister, and friend, Wahu Kaara. During that stay, we made a daytrip to the collective farm of a youth group in Maragua to learn about the progress of the agricultural transformation there, in the heart of a region that spurned coffee some thirty years ago. What had happened to the farm women's efforts to transition to the cultivation of food crops? What follows is our collective reflection on this question, with attention to the gender dynamics and ecological outcomes in the Maragua case.

It is one thing to uproot coffee trees and plant bananas and vegetables to supply household subsistence, as women in Maragua and surrounding areas did beginning in the mid-1980s. But it is quite another thing to continue to maintain a food-first focus year after year in a market and policy context that is hostile to subsistence agricultural production and trade.

Farmers who have abandoned a cash crop, for reasons varying from world market forces to plant disease and cost burdens, need not only to grow their own food, but also to find alternative sources of income to cover purchases of goods they cannot produce, and for their other cash needs. To produce surpluses of vegetables for sale takes time, not only to convert the farm, but also to find the customers and build the market links. Hence in rural areas of Kenya today, there are large surpluses of fruits and vegetables that never reach markets or paying customers, due to lack of affordable transport.

The Maragua ex-coffee farmers were not given much chance, or any official support, to re-establish local agricultural skills, indigenous seed stocks, and local produce markets. The dominant view guiding policy and development planning in Kenya remains entrenched in a neo-classical economic paradigm whose proponents assert that subsistence means poverty, and global markets mean

development (Seavoy 252). International advisors have designed and imported development interventions that sought (and continue to seek) to fully commercialize Kenyan farming (as elsewhere in the world) by linking smallholder farmers into global value chains.

In this neo-liberal policy milieu, instead of supporting the coffee farmers' initiatives with research, extension,

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and education focused on the crops that farmers do prefer, agricultural scientists and international advisors simply sought to recapture the coffee labour force and channel it into alternative export crop production. Canadian and U.S. development agencies, for example, in alliance with biotech and big agribusiness firms, promoted ex-coffee farmers' adoption of other mass-market-oriented crops, especially perishable horticultural products, such as strawberries, macadamia nuts, and French beans (Komu).

Maragua, as it happens, was the site of one such project to promote tissue culture bananas (Karembu 2). "Tissue culture" is a method of propagation of plant material, done in laboratories in a specially formulated

nutrient medium, using the tissue of disease-free plants. Tissue culture bananas produce uniform, disease-free plants and fruits, but require more labour, more inputs, and more expenditures, as planting material must be purchased each season rather than propagated on-farm from suckers from mature banana plants (Indimuli 7). Many of these crops were touted as "women friendly" and marketed to appeal to female-headed households (Kabunga et al 22). Now the old coffee "male deal" was being repackaged as a new kind of deal for both women and men to independently contract their labour for supply to global horticulture value chains.

About six years ago (2010), when the Shiriki youth group began a collective organic farm in Maragua, they were confronted with the reality of a local political economy still heavily slanted towards highly chemicalized commercial production. Tissue culture bananas were only one of the new cash crops that farmers had adopted to replace coffee. Some neighbours grow cucumbers for urban wholesalers. Some have tried French beans, destined for export. But in Maragua, even for those who adopted the production of these alternative cash crops, many have found similar problems, including high costs, variable incomes, unequal burden of labour in the household, and negative ecological implications. Farmers' low adoption and discontinuance of those crops has become a problem for the bio-tech firms operating in Maragua (Indimuli 5; Kabunga et al 2). The alternative cash crops have turned into false solutions to critical problems of rural hunger and youth unemployment.

The Shiriki group is comprised of young Rastafari, most of whom were originally living in urban slums. Rastafari in East Africa is rooted in the region's nineteenth-century Nyabingi militant matriarchy and the global Rastafari movement (Turner 9). "Shiriki" means "participation" in Kiswahili, and signified the youths' commitment to self-sufficiency and self-determination. The group



organized for the purpose of raising money from craft manufacture and fundraising cultural events to enable them to move to the rural area, find land to farm, and build houses, storage sheds, and a communal hall. They did so after forging an agreement with a widow who could not farm the land due to her employment in a distant urban centre. Now a core and fluctuating group of some five to fifteen youth live in Maragua and operate a two-acre collective farm, with the long-term aim of establishing a rural cultural education and media centre.

The group's goals include food self-sufficiency through organic ecological farming, and establishment of rural food processing, crafts, and trade. Members also seek to build a larger community of "fossil fuel-free" farmers (Shiva), and so educate and disseminate information in the weekly village market, where they sell surpluses of their local organic foods and handmade arts and crafts. They do outreach among neighbours, school children, visitors, and international volunteers, along with demonstrations of the use of their powerful solar cooker. The land is richly endowed with spring water and a high water table, allowing for readily available ditch irrigation. They have a local as well as a continental view of their initiative for "cultural independence" (Shiriki website).

The Shiriki group has gained ground since 2010 in becoming largely food self-sufficient. The initiative has grown as group members have integrated with the community. The seed varieties they have planted have come from local women farmers, especially elder women seed savers, who encourage the Shiriki youth's effort to revitalize local farming with Indigenous agricultural knowledge and seeds. The biggest challenge they reported was that while most of their neighbours want to "go organic" and to focus on local food crops, the markets for these crops are not developed, and the need for increased labour (e.g., for weeding and pest control) acts as a barrier, due to the migration of youth away from rural

areas and farming professions. To counter these challenges, the Shiriki youth have worked diligently to build marketing links, both in local village markets and central urban areas. They have even managed to represent their group at an international trade fair in Tanzania (Shiriki).

Rural-urban migration is a highly gendered phenomenon. Shiriki's group members, the majority of whom are young men, have developed a position on the gender dynamics of contemporary agricultural communities, where both women and men are prone to leave for the town or urban areas. They ask,

...where are the young men and women of this community? And the answer is quite apparent for the young men are [taking work in the] unintelligently designed industry of motorcycle transport [taxis]. And if the men are not in the farm, who shall attract the young women to till the land? So the sisters have found themselves in this exodus to the urban [areas] where they offer themselves for pure exploitation. (Shiriki)

Their analysis relies on an understanding of land relations in the country where women rarely get independent access to land. Without up-turning the whole colonial and cultural history of bias against women's land access, the only viable option for most young women is to seek employment in towns or cities to meet their subsistence needs. This gendered dynamic is firmly at the root of the emptying out of rural areas and the filling up of urban slums—the cumulative socio-cultural, economic, and geographic impacts of waves of colonial and post-colonial imperial enclosures. Ecological degradation and deep social injustice in both rural and urban areas have also been the persistent, disastrous results of these ongoing enclosures.

The Shiriki youth do not *advocate* women's access to land only through relationships with men. They rather *acknowledge* that the huge project

of establishing food sovereignty and transforming the capitalist food system must be started—*is being started*—even before all of the perfect conditions are present in the society. The construction of a food sovereign future requires concrete work now. And the Shiriki youth have shown themselves prepared to work within, against, and around the existing policy and market barriers, and discrimina-

One of the biggest challenges is the need to transform the policy context into one that supports local trade of local goods. Public budget support and international development funding could go a long way towards advancing the transformation of rural economies globally from food insecure to food sovereign.

tory social norms around land access, in order to get a footing from which to replace the old hierarchical and exclusionary order with an inclusive, gendered, and generational alliance for food sovereignty.

As much as farming is a seasonal and cyclical activity, it is also a generational matter. So the willingness and ability of the Shiriki youth to ground themselves on land can only go so far, and for so long, if there are no young women around. Both in the day-to-day and seasonal cultivation of the farm, and as importantly in the founding of successor generations, women's presence and labour can be a deciding factor in the success of the organic transition in the long-term, at Shiriki farm and more widely.

Given the double impact of a history of women's exclusion from land ownership and decades of youth outmigration from the countryside, young women's return to rural areas in large part depends on the availability of land. Access to that land may come both through marriage (which then requires securing of potential spouses' land rights) and through independent means (owning, leasing, or borrowing). Very few women, particularly young women residing in urban slums, can ever afford to buy or lease land and make an income to cover all the associated costs of farming. And most do not have any direct relative from whom to borrow even a small plot. So how will the landless, men or women, be able to return to farming in Kenya, and elsewhere for that matter?

Barring massive state-sponsored land re-distribution, which is unlikely, the transformation of the rural economy from its present doldrums and decline to the emergence of vibrant, youthful, agroecological communities may well depend upon a re-invigoration of the customary practices of overlapping entitlements. In particular, the critical return of young women to rural areas calls for the re-institution and re-invention of some long-lost Indigenous forms of land tenure that applied specifically to women (e.g., variations on old Kikuyu customs of some daughters' and widows' rights to occupy land singly). Farmers who cannot utilize all of their land or who need extra help on their farms can find their own ways of following the example of land-sharing at Shiriki, to bring young women and young men back to the land, perhaps as farm apprentices in exchange for periods of usufruct rights. Whatever path the Maragua farmers choose, their decisions will shape the future of farming on their own land and within the wider community, including within the urban diaspora, for generations to come.

The transformation of the food system in Kenya remains in progress in 2016. This progress is accompanied by diverse efforts to retain and

rebuild Indigenous knowledge, seed systems and soil fertility, not only at Shiriki's farm, but in hundreds of farmer groups mobilizing for food sovereignty across Kenya. One of the biggest challenges to the food sovereignty movement is the need to transform the policy context into one that supports local trade of local goods, and spurs youth self-employment and urban-rural migration. In tandem with farmers' own efforts and initiatives towards the building of movements and communities of organic farmers, public budget support and international development funding could go a long way towards advancing the transformation of rural economies globally from food insecure to food sovereign.

When going into organic farming for local markets, while farmers' incomes may begin small, they come with other unpriced values (health, biomass, soil fertility, social capital) which can be re-invested in the farm to enable the small income to grow. The main lesson gleaned from the visit to Shiriki was that an ecologically-conscious new generation of Kenyan farmers has emerged with the energy, skills, willingness, and orientation to realize an agricultural transformation that has eluded previous generations. The younger generations' potential stems in part from their cosmopolitan urban experiences and from their exclusion from their elders' lifelong entanglement with export crop production regimes, commercialization policies, and agro-chemical applications.

Because youth have for decades been taught to "rise above" mere farming, and so have fled rural areas for elusive urban educational and job opportunities, most youth have also never been enmeshed in corporate agricultural value chains. There is great willingness among Kenyan farmers and capacity among the youth, in Shiriki and in other food sovereignty initiatives, to switch from corporate control over oil-dependent, global agricultural value chains to commoners' value chains that enable organic and Indigenous methods,

seeds and culinary preferences, and are characterized in particular by farmers' sovereign decision-making over land, seed, knowledge, and on-farm energy sources.

But besides a willingness to learn and capacity to work hard, the wider transformation of the farming system towards agroecology requires people who can change the social relations of rural areas from hierarchical and

Market-driven agricultural development has meant that public resources (whether Kenyan scientific organizations or publicly funded international development and research funding) are failing to realize or to mobilize the knowledge and power of local agricultural systems.

extractive towards horizontal and harmonious. We have characterized these relations as "male deals" and "ethnicized gendered class alliances" (Turner and Brownhill 1046). The most important change characterizing the Shiriki farming initiative was the establishment and elaboration of ethnicized, gendered class alliances, first between the young men who wanted to return to farming, and the elder women who had the advantage of land, and Indigenous knowledge and wisdom to share. The extension of this alliance to wider constituencies depends on the increased involvement of young women who share an interest in returning to the land. Such alliances, rooted in making access to land more equitable, remain key to the

transformational power of ecofeminist food sovereignty initiatives.

Eric Holt-Gimenez, the Executive Director of Food First and the Institute for Food and Development Policy in Oakland, California, recently blogged that researchers need to go beyond studies of and strategies for "scaling-up" agroecology and "changing the food system," to inquire more deeply into "how agroecology [can] help us transform capitalism itself" (Holt-Gimenez). In reviewing what is needed to make agroecology "the norm rather than the alternative," Holt-Gimenez also partially answered his own question, when he noted that, "agroecology requires extensive human labor coupled with place-specific knowledges—both of which are incompatible with the current system's need for vast, cheap inputs" (ibid).

Extensive human labour and place-specific knowledge? It sounds like the emerging youth agricultural initiatives, urban-rural migration and Indigenous knowledge systems that the Shiriki youth and the wider food sovereignty movement are championing. It is precisely in the process of new generations actually reversing the erosion of farming as a livelihood, and learning and sharing Indigenous knowledge and seed systems, that agroecology transforms the capitalist system (Giacomini). Agroecology provides grounds for the more widespread replacement of capitalism by offering the opportunity for household and community food self-sufficiency and "cultural independence" outside of corporate value chains.

Conclusion

The decades-long commercialization drive of international development through trade and aid has failed to overcome the chronic humanitarian disaster of hunger and malnutrition, especially in East Africa (Brownhill 2009(a), 225). Neo-liberal policies have only served to scuttle, divide, and weaken the alternative answers to the hunger question, including

local food self-sufficiency initiatives, crop biodiversity, and Indigenous knowledge. Market-driven agricultural development has meant that public resources (whether Kenyan scientific organizations or publicly funded international development and research funding) are failing to realize or to mobilize the knowledge and power of local agricultural systems. They only deem it worthy to do so if there is something that can be patented and commercialized, whether by a local or foreign firm that will privatize the knowledge and exclusively reap the profits.

Instead, through direct household food self-sufficiency and the re-institution of local marketing of local goods, the Shiriki farmers and others linked (often through mobile technology) into wider Kenyan, East African, and global food sovereignty networks, are tackling hunger and malnutrition by refusing to participate in the corporate market, and by implication, by strengthening Indigenous agricultural technologies and practices and recreating peoples' markets. They do so by changing with whom they do business (urban and rural commoners rather than local or foreign capital) and under what terms they carry out their farming initiatives (cooperative, organic and life-centred rather than competitive, chemical-intensive and profit-driven).

In an age of extreme extractivism, post-peak oil, climate chaos and political and economic uncertainty, the Shiriki case highlights the critical relation of youth to the coming transition to post-capitalist (and therefore more labour-intensive) organic food systems, globally. It also suggests that the reversal of rural-urban migration requires, to start, a wider recognition of the many kinds of opportunities that could entice jobless youth into self-employment in services and trades supporting farmers' food sovereignty initiatives. Everywhere in the world are urban dwellers, especially youth, who are returning (or wishing to return) to rural livelihoods, learning to farm without expensive and damaging chemical inputs, and

grappling with the imbalance between the labour required and the labour available. Youth unemployment and farmers' on-farm labour shortages could both be addressed through further urban-to-rural migration, and this likely requires support through the establishment of new types or re-constitution of old customs of land-sharing, such as that reached by Shiriki youth and the widow on whose land they farm.

Youth are a powerful catalyst for rural transformation, insofar as they can inject energetic labour, skills, and creativity into labour-intensive agriculture-related fields, and whose self-employment in rural areas could facilitate farmers' existing efforts. Supportive industries range from supply of local construction materials and carpentry services (e.g., for irrigation, fences, granaries, coops and barns), to ox-ploughing, composting and post-harvest value-addition in crop processing, packaging, branding, and distribution.

This kind of transformation of the farming system is not the effort of one season; but the slow, steady work of rebuilding self-sufficient, subsistence-oriented rural political economies. In Maragua, that work is well advanced. Elaborating on the transformation begun by a women's coffee protest in Maragua twenty years ago, the enthusiastic initiative of young Rastafari women and men in Shiriki sets a stellar example of the vast untapped potential for a generational succession from extractive corporate agri-business to a new era of climate-adapted, youth-mobilized agroecology.

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¹Male deals are cross-class and cross-ethnic collaborations between

capitalists and colonized or working class men, for the purpose of channeling the land, labour, fertility and other resources of women, poor men and whole communities into the commodified, cash economy and global markets (see Brownhill 2009(b): 24).

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PENN KEMP

Complementary Hooks

"A turning point in history," our leaders claim.
Hanging in the gallery, an empty skirt swings.

I've been pondering that red dress symbol for
missing aboriginal women as Red Riding Hood.

So I dream my mother reclaims the green silk
dress she wore, the one that fits me now that I

just had it dry-cleaned. What use is it to her on
the other side? What reversal is she sporting?

The green life vine winding along generations
down a deep forest path. Sunlight glimmers on

a green dress of lawn this too warm December as
the Paris conference concludes in timely fashion.

"Climate agreement falls short of a fair deal – but
Paris is only the beginning... an important hook on

which people can hang their demands" ...and act.

Poet, performer and playwright Penn Kemp is the League of Canadian Poets Life Member and their Spoken Word Artist of 2015. Her latest works are Barbaric Cultural Practice, a collection of poetry from Quattro Books, and two anthologies edited for the Feminist Caucus Archives of the League of Poets: Performing Women and Women and Multimedia.



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The LARGENESS of RESCUE

POEMS BY

Eva Tihanyi

Slowly Wrecking Our Planet

ROSALIE BERTELL

Cet article est le dernier que Rosalie Bertell a publié en 2011 avant sa mort en 2012. Elle a colligé les résultats importants de sa recherche sur le développement d'un mouvement secret de géo-militarisme qui a partiellement détruit la vie sur notre planète depuis déjà des décennies. Le dérèglement de la température, les changements climatiques, les catastrophes naturelles toujours plus violentes et fréquentes résulteraient de ces manipulations dans le monde. Au lieu d'enquêter sur cette situation, la récente science de la géo-ingénierie tente de sauver la planète épuisée mais paradoxalement elle propage les mêmes mesures qui ont causé les problèmes. Un débat public s'impose autour de ces nouvelles technologies, mais il n'est pas encore développé.

This is the last article Rosalie Bertell wrote in 2011 before she passed in 2012. In this article, her aim is to gather the most important results of her research about the development of a secret "geo-warfare" that is threatening, and has already partly destroyed, the life systems of our planet. Increasing freak weather conditions, climate changes, and seemingly "natural" catastrophes around the world are the possible result of these undertakings by the military worldwide. Further, a recently appearing civil science of "geo-engineering" today presents itself as the "saviour" of a planet under stress, paradoxically propagating the same measures that may be at the root of the current climate crisis. A public debate of the background and development of these new technologies has not yet taken place.

We are all children of the universe. Billions of years before we were born, the furnace of the stars made, in prolific abundance, the basic chemicals that are needed for all of life, and the supernovas gave up their lives to make all

of the heavier chemicals and trace metal that our bodies need to properly function. More than four billion years ago our planet earth was formed. Not too close or too far from our planet's sun, so that our temperature was just right to support life. Our planet formed a moon, to rule over the night, the water waves and life-giving cycles. Water covered our early planet, forming a chemical soup in which long molecules including the proteins of life were formed of the elements made in the stars. Then the waters receded to the places of oceans and the dry land flourished into grasses, trees, flowers, insects, butterflies, birds, amphibians, animals of all sorts, and humans. How grateful we must be for this magnificent gift of life and all we have needed to sustain it over the last hundreds of thousands of years! Yet, today it is under threats never felt before in its entire unfolding journey.

While the earth's human civic community has been trying to rid itself of nuclear weapons over the last 65 years, some economically developed nations have quietly moved into the realm of geo-warfare. Geo-weaponry has recently been introduced to the public as a "new" high-tech way to mitigate the effects of global warming, and it is being called "geoengineering." Geoengineering is defined as planetary-scale environmental engineering of our atmosphere: that is, manipulating our weather, our oceans, and our home planet itself. The methods that are being proposed in geoengineering are already a reality without public participation in debate, prior public notification, or democratic oversight. They are based on a deep understanding of the earth system, learned through space exploration, and are staggering in number and scope.

Why have these plans not been announced to the public and openly discussed, even in so-called democracies, although geo-experiments have been taking place since the post-World War II period? This question was answered by a geoenvironmentalist at the February 2010 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS):

...Studies show, however, that people make judgments based primarily on their values, belief systems, world views, and emotions. Facts play a much more minor role. *This gap cannot be bridged by loading the public with facts, or trying to make the public more science literate...* [my emphasis]

Likely the legal reasons have to do with the fact that no one owns the atmosphere above the earth, and environmental impact studies for atmospheric manipulation are not required by law. One might add that military secrecy is also an essential part of military culture. The implications of these global experiments involve profound impacts on life itself. Clearly the public and their life support system are under attack and no one has clearly considered, laid out and admitted to the potential consequences, nor have they sought a formal permission from the at-risk public.

The Background

Since the Nuremberg trials after World War II, the legal principles guiding experimentation with human beings have been clearly stated. Its very first principle is:

Persons involved should have legal capacity to give consent; and should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, overreaching, or other ulterior form of constraint or coercion; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved as to enable him/her to make an understanding and enlightened decision. This latter element requires that before the acceptance of an affirmative decision by the experimental subject there should be made known to him/her the nature, duration, and purpose of the experiment; the method and means by which it is to be conducted; all inconveniences and hazards reasonable to be expected; and the effects upon his/her health or person which may possibly come from his/her participation in the experiment. (*Trials of War Criminals*)

It seems quite clear to me (although I do not know the legal opinion) that experimentation with one's life

support system, the earth itself, is an experiment that fits this definition and requires informed consent.

As early as 1946, the General Electric Company discovered that by dropping dry ice in a cold room one could "create" ice crystals similar to those in clouds. Within months of this discovery they were dropping dry ice from planes into cumulus clouds, converting the water droplets into ice crystals, and then watching them drop onto the earth like snow. By 1950 industry researchers had found that silver iodide had the same effect. The era of weather modification had begun and no one considered the people's right to know and accept this experimentation. Of course, rain was natural, so there was no reason to bother getting permission. The original expressed purpose of rain-making was to make the dry areas of the plain states more fruitful. It is said that Russia used rain-making to cause the fall-out from Chernobyl to drop before reaching Moscow.

The Escalation

In the race to the moon, early in 1958, both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. cosmonauts discovered the Van Allen Belts, magnetic belts protecting the earth from the destructive solar wind's charged particles. Between August and September 1958, in Project Argus, the U.S. Navy exploded three fission type nuclear bombs 480 km (300 miles) above the South Atlantic Ocean in the lower Van Allen belt. The U.S. Atomic Energy Agency called it "the biggest scientific experiment ever undertaken" (Baldwin). The "experiment" caused worldwide effects creating new artificial aurora borealis. Long-term effects of this incredible destruction, that occurred before the protective function of the Van Allen belts was understood, have never been declassified.

This "great" experiment was repeated a second time over the Pacific Ocean on 9 July 1962 in Project Starfish. Three nuclear "devises," one kiloton, one megaton, and one multi-megaton, were exploded, seriously disturbing the lower Van Allen belt and altering its shape and intensity. Scientists predicted that the belts would not return to their original formation for a hundred years (which may be wishful thinking) (*Comptons 1996, 1998; Microsoft Encarta, 1999*). This so disturbed the Queen's Astronomer in the U.K., Sir Martin Ryle, that he became a staunch anti-nuclear critic.

By 1962, the U.S. military was using electronic beams to ionize and de-ionize areas of the atmosphere in imitation of lightning. In the same year Canada began launching satellites into the earth's ionosphere and chemically simulating the plasma.¹

Later in 1962, the U.S.S.R. undertook similar planetary "experiments," creating three new radiation belts

between 7000 and 13000 km (4300 and 8100 miles) above the earth. The electron fluxes in the Van Allen belts have change markedly since this event and have never returned to their former state (*Keesings Historisch Archief*; Harle).

Zhigniew Brazinski, advisor on Foreign Affairs to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson during the Viet Nam War, discussed, investigating ways of using artificial lightning as a weapon in Project Skyfire and hurricanes in Project Stormfury. According to Lowell

2000 kg (4400 pounds) of chemicals were dumped into the atmosphere including 1000 kg (2200 pounds) of barium and 100 kg (220 pounds) of lithium. Lithium is a highly reactive toxic chemical easily ionized by the sun. This increases the density of the lower ionosphere and creates free radicals capable of causing further chemical changes (Begich and Manning). Although these experiments are clearly a part of the military desire to control weather as a weapon, reports of their environmental impact are non-existent in the public sector. Instead ozone depletion was

Although these experiments are clearly a part of the military desire to control weather as a weapon, reports of their environmental impact are non-existent in the public sector. Instead ozone depletion was blamed on under arm deodorant and cologne, atomizers and asthma medicine dispensers.

Ponte, author of *The Cooling*, the military also investigated the possibility of destroying the ozone layer over North Vietnam with lasers or chemicals, causing damage to crops and humans.

The Effects

The United Nations General Assembly became so alarmed by these activities that on December 10, 1976, they approved a Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques. However, they failed to exclude “peaceful projects” such as “pure research,” solar energy projects or industrial resource development. No thought was given to informed consent of the public. Governments merely changed their public relations posture. As an example, the U.S. began weather research to increase the output of food in the North American plains. Russia was carrying on comparable research to increase food production.

For over 50 years atmospheric modification experiments have been undertaken either by adding chemicals to the atmosphere causing reactions that may or may not be seen from earth, such as artificial aurora borealis (“Northern Lights Thrill”), or wave experiments using heat or electromagnetic force,² or even nuclear atmospheric explosions. These latter interrupt or distort the normal wave motion of the upper atmosphere, often effecting weather changes in the troposphere.

Chemicals dumped into earth’s atmosphere included barium azide, barium chlorate, barium nitrate, barium perchlorate, and barium peroxide. All are combustible and destructive of the ozone layer. In 1980 alone, about

blamed on under arm deodorant and cologne, atomizers and asthma medicine dispensers.

Actually, it became evident in the early 1970s that the 300 megatons of atmospheric nuclear bomb testing by the U.S., U.K. and U.S.S.R. between 1945 and 1963 had depleted the ozone layer by four percent and had seriously damaged human embryos, fetuses, children, adults, and the whole living environment (*Long-term effects*).

Supersonic military planes and rockets also damage the ozone layer and cause atmospheric changes. This was made public in the evening news during the ’70s, and probably influenced the decision of commercial airlines to decline supersonic flight, with the exception of the Concord. However, the public soon looked the other way and forgot the supersonic flight problem and atmospheric nuclear testing when refrigerators were blamed for the serious ozone hole damaging human health and crops in various parts of the world, especially the southern tip of South America. Civilian uses of CFC’s exasperated the problem, but were not likely the first cause.

By 1974, U.S. research into heating the lowest edge of the ionosphere first undertaken at the Pennsylvania State University; moved to Plattsville, Colorado; Arecibo, Puerto Rico; and Armidale, New South Wales, Australia. This prompted the U.S. Senate to introduce legislation that would bring all military experimentation in weather modification under the control of a civilian oversight committee. Unfortunately, the bill failed to pass Congress.

In 1981, the Plattsville Ionospheric Heater moved to the Poker Flats rocket launch site in Alaska. A second Plasma Physics Laboratory (exploring the ionosphere) is located at Two Rivers, Alaska, and is called HIPAS (High

Power Auroral Stimulation). In the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, near Gacona, Alaska, a massive array of transmitters has been erected, called HAARP (High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program) by the U.S. Army and Navy. It now contains 180 transmission towers in grid formation, although it began operation in a modular form of a 48-tower grid in 1994. There is reason to believe HAARP may further expand to 384 or 720 transmission towers. This powerful synchronized transformer is accompanied by a series of SuperDARNs (Dual Auroral Radar

climate change.” Those who watch the military prepare for a weather war are alarmed.

Most recently, on September 19, 2010, the U.S. Navy undertook an artificial cloud study called CARE (Charged Aerosol Releases Experiment). The Naval Research Laboratory and the Department of Defense Space Test Program used a NASA four-stage Black Brant XII suborbital sounding rocket from Wallops Island, Virginia, to dump aluminum oxide and chaff, creating an artificial cloud in the earth’s outer atmosphere at 280 km (174 miles) above

**Shall we place the healing of our earth in the hands of those who have
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Networks) that continuously monitors the effects on the earth’s surface of manipulations of HAARP on the earth’s ionosphere (Bertell 119-128).

It now appears to be possible to “steer” the jet stream, deciding the line between warm and cool air in geographic regions; or manipulate the large vapor rivers that move the rain from the tropics to the temperate zones, causing draught or floods. Natural occurrences or instabilities like monsoons, hurricanes, tornados, etc., in the atmosphere can be made more severe by “adding energy.” Insertion of oil in tectonic faults, or creating artificial earth vibrations with electromagnetic pulses can cause earthquakes.

This is not to say that military experimentation causes all atmospheric events and ultimately climate change. I am just saying that it is difficult in each case to separate out the military geo-experiments from the genuine heaving’s of the planet. The increase in violent weather is obvious to everyone. Is Mother Earth try to send us a message of distress? Is only the civilian economy responsible for climate change? I think not!

The Future

The U.S. is not the only country involved with this high tech assault on the earth system. At least Russia, China, the U.K., Australia, Canada, and Japan are also involved. The geo-warriors are, I believe, wishing to go public with even more risky experiments, with public approval, and maybe even become “climate change heroes.” At the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen, in 2010, geo-warriors made their most public pitch under the guise of “geoengineering” as a “solution to global

the surface (normal clouds are at a maximum of about 80.5 km (50 miles) above the surface in the mesosphere). The cloud was designed to glow in the dark. The aluminum will, of course, eventually drop into the ocean or on farmland polluting crop and food supplies. The tests may damage the various atmospheric boundaries that protect life on earth and no one knows what they will do to climate, agriculture, and human health, or if they will alter infrared or UV radiation reaching the planet. The U.S. marine breeding habitats, including the National Marine Sanctuary, are at risk from this experiment. Apparently this artificial cloud shading of the U.S. East Coast in the fall of 2009 brought on unusual snow and wintry weather. What else it caused is not reported (Moscovitz; Bernhardt; Peterson; “Night Clouds”).

Similar Naval experiments include: the Unified Aerosol Experiment (UAE 2) in the United Arab Emirate in 2004 and Seven South East Asian Studies conducted from Singapore in 2007. The earth has already become a “research victim” of militarism and it is time to stop geoengineering as a cruel farce and crime against life itself. Civil society should clearly not give the geo-warriors a public blessing to do more planetary damage.

Shall we place the healing of our earth in the hands of those who have for over 65 years shown the grossest carelessness of its well-being? Shall we throw away this magnificent planet, like we do cheap plastic trinkets? It is time to honour and protect planet earth as the Indigenous people have done for thousands of years. We must acknowledge our philosophy of life to be faulty since it has brought us to this crisis. It is time to question patriarchy, which implies domination over all living things, and raw

capitalism that requires excessive military force to guard its greedy hoarding of natural resources. We sorely need a critical plan for a more intelligent, feminized, and humanized future.

There is great need to stimulate a sober look at our global life style, philosophy, and social planning so that humans, all life, and planet earth may have a long and fruitful era of peace and prosperity. Our sun has some four to five billion more years to bless us with its energy—let's not squander it.

Rosalie Bertell was born in the U.S. in 1929, and passed in 2012, at the age of 83, at her Order "The Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart" in Pennsylvania. She received her PhD in biometrics from the Catholic University of America, Washington, in 1966. She was awarded nine PhD honoris causa and many awards, among others the Right Livelihood Award in 1986. She was the co-founder of the International Institute of Concern for Public Health (IICPC) in Toronto (1984) and the International Physicians for Humanitarian Medicine in Geneva (1999). She is the author of No Immediate Danger? Prognosis for a Radioactive Earth (Women's Press, 1985) and Planet Earth: The Latest Weapon of War (Women's Press, 2000). She was a consultant to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and to Health Canada. Since 1990, she was a member of the U.S.-Canada International Joint Commission (IJC). She has conducted research with institutions in Japan, Germany, popular ecological organizations on the Marshall Islands, in Malaysia, India, and the Philippines. She was also a member of the Permanent Tribunal of Peoples, the International Medical Commission of Bhopal, and the International Commission of Physicians for Chernobyl in Viena (1996).

¹Plasma is a fourth state of matter. Starting with the solid state, followed by the more energetic liquid then gaseous states, plasma is even more energetic and contains molecules that are dissociated into positive and negative ions. For example, water molecules in air can be converted into HO⁺ and H⁻, positive and negative ions. An example of plasma is lightning.

²The NASA/U.S. Air Force CRESS 1990 Press Kit outlines an atmospheric NASA testing program (linked to HAARP and the U.S. Air Force, that could produce the Vibrant Spectrums (auroras) (cited in Peterson).

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Geoengineering and the Planetary Movement for Mother Earth

CLAUDIA VON WERLHOF

Ce texte est basé sur un discours prononcé au Symposium sur la science et la spiritualité en 2013 Allemagne. Il expose le problème encore inconnu de la géo-ingénierie militaire comme l'ont révélé les recherches de Rosalie Bertell et essaie de discréditer la thèse officielle que le CO₂ n'est pas responsable du chaos grandissant dans le monde. Au contraire, il cache les conséquences de 70 années de développement suite à l'intrusion de cette nouvelle guerre. Pour une meilleure compréhension de ce problème, cet article prône une analyse théorique écoféministe et critique patriarcale de ce que nous connaissons à date.

This article is based on a speech given at a large Symposium on Science and Spirituality in Germany in 2013. It addresses and tries to inform the public of the still unknown issue of military "geoengineering," as described in Dr. Rosalie Bertell's research, and tries to make clear that the officially propagated thesis of CO₂ as the reason behind the growing climate chaos in the world is not true. It is instead hiding the consequences of 70 years of development of a new military geo-warfare, applied internationally. For a better understanding of the issue the article tries to include an ecofeminist and patriarchy critical theoretical analysis of the facts we know so far.

Introduction

"It is not Greenhouse Gases—it's the military!" Dr. Rosalie Bertell stated emphatically when she was interviewed in 2010 at the thirtieth anniversary of the Right Livelihood Award (an international award that recognizes and honours those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today), which Dr. Bertell herself

received in 1986. After her book about the dangers of low nuclear radiation to our health, *No Immediate Danger: Prognosis for a Radioactive Earth*, released in 1985, she published *Planet Earth: The Latest Weapon of War* in 2001, which offers an analysis of post-wwii military technologies in the fields of nuclear and post-nuclear weaponry. Today we call these technologies "geoengineering." There is, nevertheless, a lot of confusion about geoengineering that Dr. Bertell tried to clarify until she died in 2012. I have assumed the mantle left behind by Dr. Bertell, and in 2010, founded the "Planetary Movement for Mother Earth" in Germany/Austria (www.pbme-online.org).

We have continued to try and inform the public about the background and history of so-called "geoengineering," which today is suddenly promoted officially as "civil" geoengineering, called upon to "save the earth" from "climate change" supposedly resulting from greenhouse gas emissions. Decades of secret military geoengineering, however, are the actual cause of the planetary crisis we are currently confronting. And this fact, as proved by Dr. Bertell, has to be made clear everywhere and very urgently. The application of geoengineering methods on a planetary dimension, under a civil cover, is going to make things much worse and can eventually lead to the extinction of even more life on earth. The hidden interests of the military-industrial-complex to take control of the planet at a macro-dimensional level must, therefore, be taken into account. The public, nevertheless, has nowhere been informed about the background of geoengineering and continues to be made to believe that CO₂ is the cause of everything that is identified as a problem on our planet today.

The following is from the text of speech on geoengineering that I gave at the Congress, “Borders of Horizon: Science Meets Spirituality,” held in Heidenheim, Germany, on September 7, 2013.

Speech

I hesitated to accept the invitation to this symposium, as I cannot offer you a message that will please you. I do not think that the synthesis of contemporary science and

d) We are plants in spring and wish to grow, but the sun cannot reach us because of the dense and broad stripes of artificial sprayings and clouds in the sky, and because we are hit by aluminium, barium, and strontium which gives us a shock. And though the sun will reach us some time later in the year it will bring ultraviolet rays, and possibly also cosmic gamma- and x-rays, penetrating the air weakened by the loss of the protective ozone. And these rays burn the already diminished blossoms, leaves and fruits....

Men attack and destroy nature and all its elements, even the entire earth in her “life systems” (as Rosalie Bertell called them) as if they want to oust life from the earth, the only planet on which we can live, in all its material abundance. For men accept the destruction — they participate in it in great numbers, or look the other way.

spirituality will eventually lift the earth and our consciousness to a higher level.

On the contrary! Modern science and spirituality, as they are being practised, already form a synthesis inasmuch as spirituality turns a blind eye on the crimes committed by science. Without a radically different science and a radically different spirituality, a synthesis of the two is not at all worth striving for. Therefore, we first need to develop a vision of the way that science and spirituality would have to radically change in order to form a fruitful alliance.

In more concrete terms, we are talking about the modern science of geoengineering and the Planetary Movement for Mother Earth, which was founded three years ago (in 2010) and presently has 730 members. Our aim is to start a public discussion about the globally practised and planned destructive methods and procedures of the military, of politics, economics, science, and technology (as seen in the declaration of the Planetary Movement for Mother Earth).

Proposal: We change the perspective from which we look upon the earth:

- a) We are trees in the Amazon approached by the motor saw.
- b) We are plankton in the Pacific Ocean off the east coast of Japan. Hundreds of thousands of tons of highly radioactive cooling water from the devastated complex of reactors in Fukushima are flowing into the ocean.¹
- c) We are a field in the blue of the planet, and the electromagnetic bundle of rays of the ionospheric heater called HAARP in Alaska is starting to bombard us, cutting the atmosphere like a knife.

What we see from this perspective is that men attack and destroy nature and all its elements, even the entire earth in her “life systems” (as Rosalie Bertell called them), as if they want to oust life from the earth, the only planet on which we can live, in all its material abundance. It is as if men have lost their ability to think, which they are so proud of, as well as their ability to feel. Many of us have lost every sense of responsibility, every affection, compassion, caring, let alone love for nature and the planet as such. For men accept the destruction — they participate in it in great numbers, or look the other way. What has happened to them? From the perspective of nonhuman life, we experience that “the ones up there” put at stake life, the earth, and everything that lives on it. As human beings, we experience that there is no official public discussion about it. On the contrary, this discussion is suppressed everywhere, and those who bring up the issue are defamed as people conjuring up a “conspiracy theory,” or as lunatics who get in the way of progress, the good things and development. What they, who are responsible for what is going on, are aiming at is that, officially, nobody notices and points at the destruction of our planet, but that the destruction, paradoxically, is to be considered as something good and fitting! We seem to need the “sacrifice” to move this civilization “forward.” But where to?

Allegedly, the destruction is followed by the new creation of something better, even higher, and is therefore justified. Everything else is defined as sentimentality. For the soil, the tree, water, and the food chain, light and air, are considered “mere matter” and not as living beings in their own right, which are of importance to the earth. And the earth, as such, is but a lump of dead matter to the

perpetrators, or “The ones up there”—at least the involved scientists, engineers, politicians and media, the military, the military-industrial-complex, and “capital”—think in purely anthropocentric ways, with man ranking highest and everything else below, at his disposal. The patriarchal project of the dominance over nature, of its destruction and transformation, has earned them a lot of money and vested them with even more power. This is the why this project is so popular with them, and why it has even become the universal religion of modernity. Today this “alchemical” project of “creation through destruction”—as I call it, *because it is a creation that is supposed to be “better” though being made out of the destruction of the existing*—is no longer to be restricted to the micro-dimension of life (the atom, the gene, and the nano-dimension of living matter). It is also to conquer the macro-dimensions of life as well: the earth, our planet itself, and to change her into the colony of man.

This is geoengineering in its broadest meaning: the attempt to subjugate the entire planet to the control, manipulation, and destructive transformation of the ruling class, using already existing and yet-to-be-invented means with the aim of turning the planet into an allegedly better one, namely into a subservient mega-machine.

As Mother Earth does not go along with this plan, she is demonized as “evil nature,” a kind of mega-witch, which has to be tortured and violently changed in order to become “good nature”—a mega-machine—for the Sirs.

For the perpetrators and “winners,” only life in the sense described above is positive, i.e., only if it behaves the way *they* want it! (Referring to its historical background, it is important to know that geoengineering developed after the construction and launch of the atomic bomb in 1945, a massive physical experiment, and one in which none of the scientists involved knew if it would cause an electromagnetic shock that could well have destroyed life on the entire planet. This risk was allowed to be taken! Nobody can, therefore say anymore that it comes as a surprise when I talk about the hubris of geoengineering. It is clearly in accordance with the psychopathy of “the ones up there”).

What is Geoengineering, and What Does It Do?

For about 70 years, namely since the end of World War II, the militaries in the East and the West have been developing technologies, which the North American scientist Dr. Rosalie Bertell, refers to as “weather war, plasma weapons and geoengineering.” Her book, *Planet Earth: The Latest Weapon of War*, led to the foundation of Planetary Movement for Mother Earth. We translated the book into German and updated it by adding recent

material. Bertell states: “What they are planning now are climate and weather wars, wars in which earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flooding and droughts, hurricanes and monsoon rains play a role” (2013a: 57).² Much of this was applied for the first time in the Vietnam War, “when cloud-seeking techniques were used ... to prolong the monsoon season and block enemy supply routes along the Ho Chi Minh Trail” (Chossudovsky). This is why the UN drafted its ENMOD (Environmental Modification Techniques) Convention in 1977, which read: “Under no circumstances should earthquakes, tsunamis, a disruption of the ecological balance of a region, changes of the weather, including the formation of clouds, cyclones, tornadoes, (and) climate change, changes of the oceanic currents, changes of the ozone layer, as well as of the condition of the ionosphere” be caused for military or hostile reasons. This was written 36 years ago. Most of us, nevertheless, have been ignoring this decades-long development, though the technologies described above have been feasible for a long time, can be applied, and are indeed being applied right now. However, the UN has not ruled out the peaceful application of such already-existing technologies. Hence, it was possible for the USA to build the radar unit called HAARP (High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program) in the 1990s in Alaska, which is the largest so-called “Ionospheric Heater” in the world. Indeed, HAARP claims to be a peaceful plasma physics research project—on the basis of official U.S. patents concerning the findings of Nikola Tesla (Tesla invented the use of artificial electromagnetism). In 1999, the European Parliament called for a closer examination of HAARP, a demand that was turned down by the EU Commission on the grounds that HAARP was a military project devoid of European influence. Proof enough that this is not a civil, but a military project.

Hence, this issue has not been not tackled all these years. However, in April 2013, one new attempt was made. In the European Parliament a meeting was organized, entitled “Beyond Theories of Weather Modification: Civil Society versus Geoengineering.” On this occasion, 48 activists (I was one of them) from all over Europe gathered to debate the latest findings on this topic.

At our stall, we had a petition inviting participants to join the protest of the organization called “Skyguards” (the members of which are independent activists as well as former European parliamentarians), which organized the meeting and was proposing that the issue of geoengineering be also officially dealt with in the European Parliament. For, as Bertell says, “If the military meddles with air, water and soil we have to be informed about it, as these are our vital resources” (2013a: 49f).

Geoengineering concerns us already: bio-chemical spraying, called “chemtrails” by the military, has been

practised in military and civil aviation both in Europe (since the '90s) and in the U.S. (since the 1980s) and has intensified since. It pollutes the lower atmosphere with millions of tons of aluminium, barium, strontium, viruses, gene- and nano-particles as well as polymers, which do damage to air, water, soil, and living beings. Field crops are suffering, and we are also faced with the fact that, after years of spraying, organic farming will no longer be possible. The consequences are deficiency symptoms on the one hand, and the inability of the body

Wood, and David Keith and Ken Caldeira, the most famous scientists of present civil geoengineering).

The use of the technology of geoengineering, at least in the form of spraying for Solar Radiation Management, has been common practice for decades already, obviously for very different purposes. (And we are not yet speaking of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, draughts, floods, and tsunamis, to mention only some of the effects caused by geoengineering as the UN defines it in the ENMOD Convention of 1977).

Bio-chemical spraying, called “chemtrails,” has been practised in military and civil aviation both in Europe (since the '90s) and in the U.S. (since the 1980s) and has intensified since. It pollutes the lower atmosphere with tons of aluminium, barium, strontium, viruses, gene- and nano-particles as well as polymers, which do damage to air, water, soil, and living beings.

to discharge the metals on the other. We breathe in all these metals in the form of nano-particles which reach all our organs, including the heart and the brain, leading to memory decline, Alzheimer's disease, pulmonary diseases, the “morgellons” disease (the result of inhaling micro-fibers, not yet recognized as a disease), autism and unknown synergistic effects, in particular between barium and aluminium. The intake of aluminium (and eventual nano-sensors) makes humans also susceptible to HAARP activities. Their purpose is so-called mass mind-control (control of our thoughts and feelings) through the use of electromagnetic extreme low frequency (ELF) waves. Another general purpose is the conductive function for EM waves of artificial clouds containing metals, or the ability of sprayings to conduct storms (allegedly Hurricane Sandy in New York). This can be classified as extreme weather manipulation. In view of the bio-chemical contamination—or rather bio-chemical warfare—the multinational enterprise Monsanto has already developed heat- and aluminium-resistant GMO-seeds. So, the use of “Solar Radiation Management” (SRM), namely the spraying of the atmosphere with aerosols, particles meant to dim the sunlight and avoid the excessive warming of our planet, supposedly caused by the emission of CO₂ (carbon dioxide), is not something that is only planned for the future (as emphasized by Bill Gates, one of its main promoters). It is exactly this “spraying of the atmosphere”, as explained above that has already been taking place for decades (Murphy). Academic discussions by civil geoengineers, however, suggest that it is merely a project for times to come. (Among these scientists are Edward Teller, the inventor of the thermonuclear bomb, his disciple Lowell

In the meantime the UN has intervened again. In 2010, it proposed a moratorium against geoengineering drafted at the environmental conference in Nagoya. It, nevertheless has never declared itself against the military, though, as Bertell comments already about the nuclear geoengineering experiments in the atmosphere of the '50s and '60s of the past century: “We allowed nuclear bombs to be set off in the sky before we even knew what the sky was and what it did to protect the Earth's biosphere” (Bertell 2001: 70). And: “Long term effects of this incredible destruction that occurred before the protective functions of the Van Allen belts was understood, have never been declassified” (Bertell 2013b: 34). According to Bertell, the earth has become a “victim of military research” (Bertell 2013b: 38) or a victim of “military alchemy,” as I call it.

In general, scientists get down to business by means of “trial and error,” as is the case in other areas of science as well, i.e., they try something out (usually leading to destruction) and observe what happens. This is what Francis Bacon, the famous founder of modern science in the seventeenth century, has called the “scientific method” in all fields of the so-called domination of nature. You cannot test geoengineering in the laboratory, but only in a planetary outdoor test, as was the case with the atomic bomb explosion as well. Thus, scientists, geoengineers, are taking enormous risks with the health and the life systems of the planet, and nobody is impeding them. Bertell argues that the earth has been turned into a weapon of war by manipulating her own forces, e.g. her own electromagnetic fields, artificially intensified, so that they become “plasma weapons” that can be fired back to earth via the ionosphere. The ionosphere would in this case function as

a “gun barrel.” This act of war can cause immense damage to us, and indeed to the earth herself. Tesla discovered this 100 years ago (see his term “Magnifying Transmitter”; see Bertell 2013a: 454ff). This is the way that so-called “natural” disasters can be produced, and which we have been experiencing ten times as many of, since the seventies (as estimated by Bertell). It means that today we no longer know which of the ongoing disasters that have recently, or are currently taking place, are natural and which are artificially induced.

to increasing amounts of cosmic radiation. Ozone holes have been developing under which life is dying.

All these factors together, in particular the military experiments that have been going on for decades, and not merely civilian CO₂ emissions, are causing the climate and weather changes we are experiencing today. Bertell never ceased to point to the principal importance of the activities of the military in this respect. (The already-known effects coincide, by the way, with the time lag of nature, which can take 40 to 60 years to respond to human activities.) The

As a result of the degradation of the protective atmospheric layers, the earth is exposed to increasing amounts of cosmic radiation. Ozone holes have been developing under which life is dying. All these factors together, in particular the military experiments that have been going on for decades, are causing the climate and weather changes we are experiencing today.

It is, of course, very difficult to prove if a “natural” disaster has been caused artificially. So far, we have only been able to analyze parallel HAARP activity and watch plasma stripes similar to parts of auroras or rainbows in the sky that become visible on the path of EM waves through the atmosphere being heated that way. Such a stripe was seen when the huge earthquake struck in Haiti in 2010 (Bertell 2013a: 61), resulting in a quarter of a million fatalities. In sum: The era in which the planet is said to be under human control is called the anthropocene, the era of humankind. It will not last long, as we can already see.

The damage that has already been done (inasmuch as we know about it) is indicating how they are indeed “wrecking” our planet, as Bertell calls it (see, also, Mc Donald). Bertell found out that the rotation of the earth has slowed down; the earth “wobbles” like a spinning washing machine (which can be the effect of so called “Deep Earth Penetrating Tomography,” sending ELF waves through the core of the earth). The magnetic field of the earth, the Van Allen Belts, have been damaged; the ionosphere, the upper layer of the atmosphere, has got holes and incisions, also caused by rockets and supersonic flights, and is increasingly heated up by bombardment with EM waves. Presently there are dozens of ionospheric heating and radar facilities worldwide. The latest of them, called a Mobile User Objective System (MUOS), a narrowband military communications satellite system that supports a worldwide, multi-service population of users in the ultra high frequency band is just being built (MUOS 2013/2015) in Sicily (seemingly not for the use of ELF, but for high frequency EM waves to guide drones etc.) (Gruss). As a result of the degradation of the protective atmospheric layers, the earth is exposed

de-icing of the Arctic is also the result of its bombardment with ELF and EM waves by the Soviet Union and the U.S. together (cf. the 1974 secret treaty of Vladivostok, part of Salt II, see Ponte 1976, 134-139; Bertell 2013a, 445). This may even lead to an accelerated pole shift that has already begun, and a rupture of the Gulf Stream (which has been weakened already), causing the northern hemisphere to freeze over.

Some oil companies in Russia and in the U.S. have already profited from melting the ice in order to exploit the mineral resources below. For intercontinental transport, on the other hand, they will soon no longer need to use the Panama and/or the Suez canal any more.

Hence, an above-average warming of the Arctic is not only the result of climate change caused by CO₂ emissions, as we are constantly made to believe. The troposphere where the CO₂ gathers, for instance, has not changed much as opposed to the ionosphere further up which is bombarded by “ionospheric heaters” like HAARP. An ozone hole has been developing over the Arctic. According to Bertell, the radioactive fallout of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster led to this first ozone hole ever at the North Pole. So it is not only the CFCs, but also radioactivity (together with EM, supersonic flight, and rockets) that really harm the ozone layer. If we do not pay attention to all this, we will very soon be told to swallow geoengineering as the solution to the problems caused by geoengineering itself—and we may even consent.

All these weather modifications may also lead to great difficulties in agriculture. We can already witness signs of these problems in Africa, Australia, and the U.S. In 2013, as a result of sky and weather manipulations lasting for

months, Europe faced enormous crop losses in a broad corridor from Spain to Moscow. There was no actual spring, and it was followed by floods (leaving behind toxic sediments) and eventually, tropical heat and drought for weeks. Here is another proof: the weather derivatives at the stock exchanges are making huge profits. Yes, there is already speculation with weather manipulation. And this is no conspiracy theory. They are doing business and making huge profits with the destruction of the earth and life on it.

In conclusion, geoengineering comprises various technologies that can be applied simultaneously. They all lead to warlike conditions on our planet, to militarization on a global scale, and to a so-called “weaponization” of all our life conditions as such. The U.S. Air Force has played the most important role in weather manipulation (U.S. Air Force). Their Navy, on the other hand, has killed hundreds of thousands of whales and dolphins with their under-water weapons experiments (Phillips).

However, we are far from aware of everything that is taking place. Nor are we aware of the speed at which the experiments and their harmful consequences increase, as more and more governments and militaries all over the world are applying these technologies. Therefore the general public doesn't know what is happening, how these experiments are carried out, either mutually-supportive or countering one another, what their synergetic effects are, and to what extent they have already done irreversible damage to the biosphere or are about to do so.

Bertell warns us:

Unfortunately, waiting for these weapons to be employed in order to then be able to better understand them will mean the end of our civilization and our life. Our research must be ahead of the threats instead of limping behind. Chemtrails are the attempt of biological and chemical warfare. What they are dumping on us now might only be a pre-taste of what is actually planned. (2011)

She suggests parting with the secrecy surrounding military activities and installing acknowledged International Courts of Integrity with the purpose of replacing war by peaceful dispute settlements for all times in the future.

On the other hand, Bertell also acknowledges efforts that are aimed at the abolition of further nuclear threats. She, nevertheless, also asks whether those who are negotiating these agreements are aware of Telsa's research about a potential split of the planet into two parts, or about the possibility of the delicate equilibrium between the earth and the sun, between the moon and the sun, and the possibility of the earth and the moon being destroyed. This would catapult the earth into the sun or into outer

space. According to Bertell, these are very real, very possible outcomes of weather wars for which at least four nations are already preparing (2013a: 32).

Tesla, who had also developed technological alternatives (cf. “free energy”) thought such weapons would never be used because of their extremely dangerous effects for the whole of humanity and the planet, and thus that we would approach the end of war. Today he would be appalled.

The new kinds of “weather wars,” which need not be declared and can be staged clandestinely (as stated by U.S. presidential advisor McDonald as early as 1968), can be witnessed everywhere. The Fukushima nuclear disaster might even be a result. The “weather wars” are consistent with Bertell's insight that the “military is always 50 years ahead of the rest of us” and that “the military never uses the same weapons in a war as in the previous one” (48). Hence, there is no way in which a planetary consciousness or spirituality can be integrated into this kind of eco- and geo-terrorism called science. However, we cannot look the other way and ignore all this. We need to enter into the dispute on two fronts at a time, dealing with both the current situation and its tendencies, and the much needed alternative.

What else can be done?

Claudia von Werlhof, was born in 1943 in Berlin, Germany. She is an economist, sociologist and political scientist, and since 1988, Full Professor for Women's Studies and Political Science at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. She has conducted empirical research in Latin America, is the co-founder of International Women's Studies, the Bielefeld School, an activist against neoliberal globalization, and founder of “critical theory of patriarchy,” a new paradigm in science. She is also the founder of the “Planetary Movement for Mother Earth” (vwww.pbme-online.org), and co-founder of BOOMERANG—Journal for the Critique of Patriarchy, available on www.fipaz.at.

¹I have just learned that the radioactivity at this point has reached a level that would kill a person exposed to it within four hours: 2.200 mil. Sievert! (*Die Welt*, 4.9.2013).

²All quotes from Rosalie Bertell are taken from *Kriegswaffe Planet Erde* (2013a); *Planet Earth*, “Slowly Wrecking Our Planet,” and personal emails from Rosalie Bertell to Claudia von Werlhof.

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KRISTIN CAMITTA ZIMET

IN RETURN

What can I give you, who heap in my lap
the whole of earth? Cloud-gallop,
mountain flanks frost-struck,
leaf-lit ravines, and rivers blustering.

What can I say to you, who startle out
the covey of my senses, that were hid
thick-bedded in a sodden sleep of leaves?
Fern witchery, pluming a broken rock,
the musings multitudinous of wrens,
the cornered needle of the brushy spruce
mine at a leap. Hand-warmed, the heartleaf
and the spicebush pierce me through;
wineberries, persimmon rouse my tongue.

What can I do for you, who lay this world
wounded into my arms, your only child
scarred, stripped, and feverish with human
grub and greed? but cradle her entire,
weed and thorn, hugging her fiercer
than I may hold you, tending the ground
where your heart's seed is borne.

Kristin Camitta Zimet is the author of Take in My Arms the Dark, a collection of poetry, and the editor of The Sow's Ear Poetry Review. Her poetry is in journals including Lullwater Review, Poet Lore, and Salamander, and she co-founded a poetry performance troupe. She works as a nature guide, photographer, and Reiki healer.

PENN KEMP

The Crone's Double Vision

i

Age is the phase for integration as we enter the violet sphere, embracing shadows in whatever form they appear, welcoming all. We wear our lives on our faces, to be read.

We have stood in bright glittering sunshine long enough. We have given to the world what the wor(l)d required. Now we inquire what we ourselves need to feel complete.

We enter understanding, standing under all we have done, all we are. We rest in the full spectrum of fulfillment, scanning the span of a moment's totality. Time out of time expands

to include our whole life, with its possibilities realized or still potential, yet to be enacted, extended to the rest remaining us, doubling to manifest or stay outstanding as life allows.

Now is when to remember just who we entered this world to become. To gather, to recollect, to recall, to weave into a basket of plenty and pass our basket of us as bequest on, nest for the next.

None of our history is lost. It lives in the present as presence. We are the legacy we leave and that which we've received, stretching back over generations. We hold in our palms the prints

of past, present and unknown epochs to come. What brings us to wisdom, this transmission of all we are? Our grandchildren might hear what our offspring may not yet have learned.

For our wisdom to ripen, we need shelter, a place that respects us so we may continue to live the love that is antidote to fear, free of want. Where we can reflect upon, reflect

back gleams of insight gleaned from living

well, unhampered. May we listen to our body. Despite the indignities our flesh is heir to, we attend to aches in organs hitherto unknown.

ii

Now we understand why old women walk as they do, not from choice, but because knees don't bend and ankles tend to give way. We see our mothers in the mirror and marvel at

the flight of time, knowing that inside we feel thirty or forty max. on good days. We know the limits our younger selves blithely ignored growing up, growing over the lump in our heart.

As we enter elderhood, may we burn up rather than rust away till we are entirely retread, ready for whatever awaits. Retired, may we try again treating ourselves as well we need be treated.

May our inner weather be sun-dappled no matter what. May we recognize in the mirror the other that we were, as we are. May we elders be seen as lineage-holders, holding that mirror for the next

generation down the line and on. May we be heard. May our histories be recalled. May we all remember the right role of elders: to listen, to be heard, to be held in respect. To hold on. To let go. To be held.

Poet, performer and playwright Penn Kemp is the League of Canadian Poets Life Member and their Spoken Word Artist of 2015. Her latest works are Barbaric Cultural Practice, a collection of poetry from Quattro Books, and two anthologies edited for the Feminist Caucus Archives of the League of Poets: Performing Women and Women and Multimedia.

SUSAN MCCASLIN

Lao Tzu Meets the Progress Trap

"A tree as great as a human's embrace springs from a small shoot."

—Lao Tzu

1

Capitalism, not a person of vital flow or sentience
like these breathing trees

Who are you, Lao Tzu?

Sage fresh-born from the Tao flow

2

Our neighbor bought an acreage
along the Fraser filled with Western Red Cedars

Hemlocks, Douglas Firs
rooted like you, and nameless

(though we give them names)
purifiers of the shared air

yet for our neighbor
mere obstacles in the way

3

He summons hackers, hewers
excavators, trucks, diggers

screaming chainsaws
Elders crack, thud

ground reverberates
Banshee wind moans among falling limbs

Months of beeping
silences birdsong

His black truck scuttles up and down the drive
full of purpose and design

Are there city covenants?
Some, but seldom enforced

Council turns away

4

When a woman down the street
phones the city to challenge his doings

he pulls out his mantra:

"A man can do what he wants on his own
private land"

5

One day, landowner out,
Lao Tzu climbs his drive to survey the wreckage

stoops to touch ravaged limbs

Is old Lao Tzu trespassing?

"Great harm," he sighs

The owner drives by

6

Lao Tzu is invisible to the owner
deaf to the ancient voice

A woman weeps over the damage
Lao Tzu whispers in her ear:

Despoilers despoil themselves

Nothing abides outside the Tao

*The Tao flows around and through
breaking down the most adamant stone*

7

Yes, the Tao goes on, the woman interjects
but what of us stumbling

empathetic ones, who wittingly or not
find ourselves caught in the progress trap

despite our gentle mammalian brains
manipulated by faceless corporate kings

Greed-ravaged Gala
the only home we know

In time, though time is but a breath
surely there must be some effective resistance

not patterned on the bloodied fields of war

8

Dear Lao Tzu, how does your wisdom flow
into the arms of a more active yielding?

How does surrender to the Tao
empower the oppressed?

How do we stand
with our brothers and sisters the trees?

Will you dear Lao Tzu, awake in us
the Mysterious Female

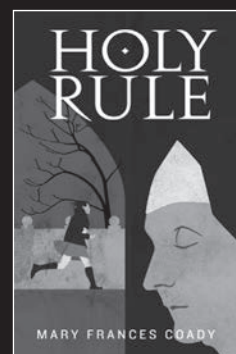
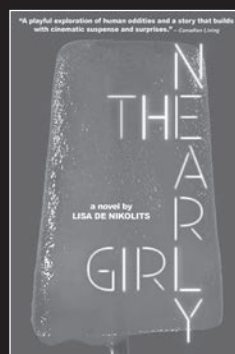
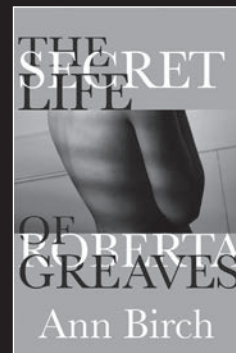
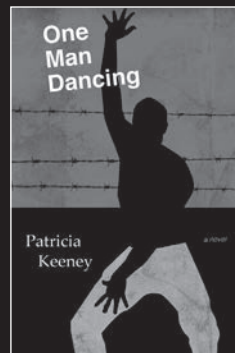
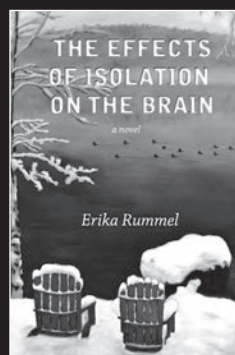
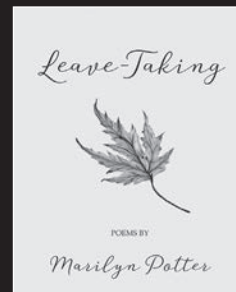
*who plays in all things
and is at the base of all things*

the door from which heaven and earth spring
that which is flowing in us all the time?

Susan McCaslin is the author of thirteen volumes of poetry, including The Disarmed Heart (The St. Thomas Poetry Series, Toronto, 2014), and Demeter Goes Skydiving (University of Alberta Press, 2012), which was short-listed for the BC Book Prize (Dorothy Livesay Award) and the first-place winner of the Alberta Book Publishing Award (Robert Kroetsch Poetry Book Award). Her next volume of poetry is Painter, Poet, Mountain (Quattro Books, Sept. 2016). In the Fall of 2017, Inanna Publications will be publishing her Into the Open: Poems New and Selected. Susan lives in Fort Langley, British Columbia.

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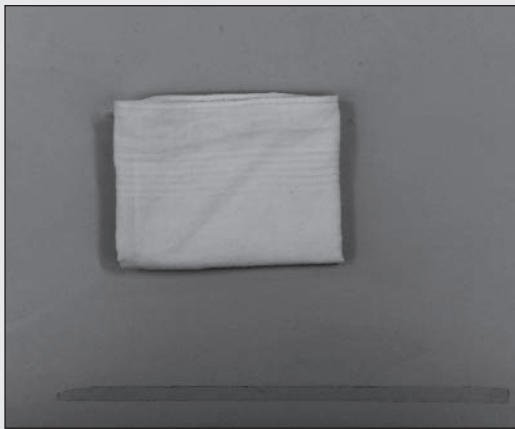
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MARLENE KADAR

Clean Poem

Squared by how many times a handkerchief white
for a man's pocket, I guess
But how does it migrate from the place it started
looking like this, a square
I only wondered afterwards after the laundry
Lucky I did not see a man's square handkerchief
in the mounds of wounded white
Tossed just like that, with towels, socks,
underpants, undershirts, jeans.
No, I just bent at the knees, straight back, lifted
the whites
And with speed anew or I threw the laundry into
the front loader.

The water pulsed through the hose and the drum
clicked and clacked, whooshed and
swooshed, pretty things scampering this way,
and that, rolling over like puppies with itchy
tummies the other way. But not me, I didn't notice
much, or care then.



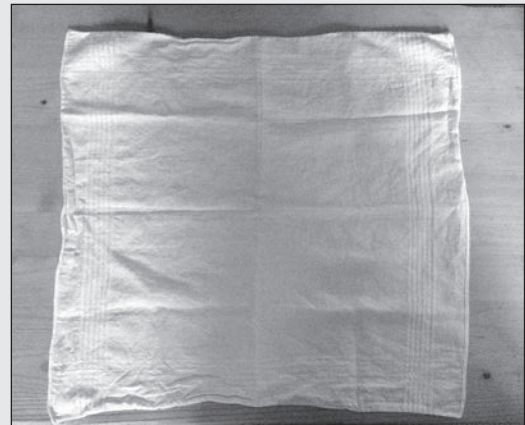
A near perfect square like that in there, wet now
but holding its perfect shape.

I removed the laundry from the front loader and
wanted to just pick it up and heave it with all my
strength into the dryer,
But instead I hesitated.
Who cares really, who really cares, I have
pretended that I care

But then in a red fire of burned skin I saw the
square and knew then it had been left for me,
A gift,
Folded,
Because I would, of course, expect a good woman
to unfold the handkerchief, so that it could be
properly washed, made clean again.

But I was meant to unfold it before the load was
consecrated. So it would be washed equally in
all its parts, and more easily ironed, maybe with
a flourish, and the whole thing would have
worked much better, wouldn't it?

Would it look like this then?



And you would be able to scrunch it up to wipe
your brow or blow your nose, and then maybe
fold it up so it fits like a square in your sleek hip
pocket. No one would ever know how I had not
unfolded it, nor how it wasn't really sanitary,
after all. Even though I did the whole load of
laundry, bending with a straight back only.

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THE “GREENING” OF COSTA RICA: WOMEN, PEASANTS, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, AND THE REMAKING OF NATURE

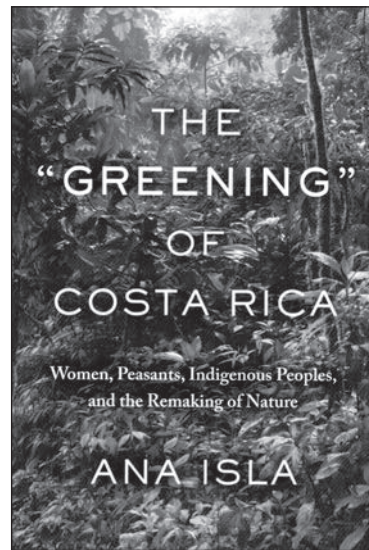
Ana Isla

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015

REVIEWED BY ANNALIESE POPE

In her book, *The “Greening” of Costa Rica: Women, Peasants, Indigenous Peoples and the Remaking of Nature*, Ana Isla elaborates upon the ways in which multi-national organizations have recuperated environmental concerns, and their respective discourses, to buttress the expansion of a new type of capitalism. Isla presents a conceptual understanding of this new form of capital accumulation, “greening,” which “represents a new form of exchange value based on biological forms and processes such as genetics and medicinal plants (bio-products), air and scenery (non-material commons), and water (material commons), which, when facilitated by debt-for-nature, is inserted into many forms of international market relations.”

She situates the “greening” of Costa Rica within an historical examination of the creation of the country’s debt and the ways in which said debt has lent itself to exploitation of the country’s natural and human resources through “debt-for-nature” exchanges within the discursive paradigm of “sustainable development.” Isla argues that such exchanges have led to the privatization of biodiversity and commodification of natural



elements, the privatization of the forest through the purchase of carbon credits from indebted rainforest-dense countries, the privatization of scenery that has resulted in the exclusion of local peoples from previously shared common spaces, wildlife, and agricultural land, the destruction of spaces and water resources by open-pit mining that has permanently damaged agricultural land and, thus, peasants’ subsistence survival, and the creation of a cycle of indebtedness and exploitative working conditions. In particular, Isla highlights the exploitation of women within this context by claiming that socio-economic shifts due to heavy-handed neoliberal policies have resulted in a restructuring of social life such that many peasant women now lacking access to land for subsistence survival have become involved in sex trade work and a medicinal plant economy that has resulted in entrapment in a cycle of debt and exploitation. Here, Isla moves beyond a traditional historical materialist approach to instead adopt an ecofeminist stance. This allows Isla to incorporate the unpaid labour of women peasants in her analysis, and also the embodied

and gendered nature of knowledge systems pertaining to such labour. The emphasis on such knowledge systems, particularly insofar as they highlight the interconnected nature of relationships between and among Costa Rica’s people and also its complex agricultural and biological ecosystems, for Isla, aids in understanding and combatting the fragmenting and commodifying tendencies, and epistemological groundings, buttressing neoliberal projects.

Isla’s analysis of the process of “greening” is intricate and highly informative insofar as it details the interconnected nature of multi-national global economic policies (as well as the involvement of Canadian corporations) and local quotidian realities in isolated and rural areas of Costa Rica. This strategy is seemingly an example of what Saskia Sassen has identified as a multi-scalar approach, which, in striving to overcome the conceptual global-local divide regarding the complex nature of power and exploitation within the global social sphere, enables the intricate examination of said power and exploitation *both within and across* varying scales of the social sphere. The strength of *The “Greening” of Costa Rica* arguably lies in this elaborate demonstration of a multi-scalar analysis that Isla buttresses with both macro-scale statistical data and also subjective personal narratives. In so doing, she cogently demonstrates the discrepancies between the quotidian impacts of international socio-economic policies and the discourse of sustainable development with which such policies have been enacted.

Isla suggests that “greening” is a type of neocolonialism. Therefore, what is arguably lacking from her analysis is an inclusion of the impacts of race in the Costa Rican context. Although Isla highlights

the success of the Zapatistas and indigenous movements in Peru in navigating neoliberal exploitation and as demonstrative of a potentially alternative approach, such groups have been clear about the significant impact of race relations on their struggles, a discussion of which is curiously absent here.

Would such a focus have addressed more aspects of the process of “greening” within differing levels of the social by allowing for an understanding of the tensions between Costa Rican peasants and their governments, or perhaps shed light on the exploitation of peasant women in contrast to women of other socio-economic status, for example?

The strengths of Isla’s *The “Greening” of Costa Rica* make this a particularly useful text for those interested in policy development, women’s studies, and environmental concerns. As we face serious climate challenges Isla’s book is a timely call for reflection on the impact of seemingly progressive claims such as “sustainable development” and the epistemological groundings with which such discourses are maintained.

Annaliese Pope is a Trillium Scholar and Ph.D. student in Social and Political Thought at York University. She is interested in the intersections between Critical Theories of Everyday Life and Postcolonial Thought, and has worked with various communities in Mexico including the Zapatistas and a group of nomadic artisans, musicians, and street performers who identify as el Colectivo por el Acción de Unión Mundial.

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THE GIFT IN THE HEART OF LANGUAGE: THE MATERNAL SOURCE OF MEANING

Genevieve Vaughan
Milan, Italy: Mimesis International 2015

REVIEWED BY KAARINA KAILO

Genevieve Vaughan has published her third book regarding the reality and transformative potential of the Gift economy, a logic and matrix of practices that imply the liberation of all genders. Two examples, among many, must suffice to illustrate the sort of antitheses Vaughan posits in her work: mother is aneconomic (exchange paradigm) vs. mothering is economic (Gift paradigm); market creates abundance (exchange paradigm) vs. market creates scarcity (Gift paradigm). The new theory provides solutions to the most urgent need in neoliberal capitalist societies: to overturn the civilizational crises that capitalism and patriarchy have caused with the distortion and appropriation of the Gift. *The Gift in the Heart of Language* provides sobering and mind-altering perspectives on the Gift economy in all of its manifestations. The Gift has mostly been discussed in sociology and anthropology, and in relation to Indigenous people. Vaughan’s contribution is to have made its presence visible in many other fields, where it is taken for granted but where it in fact represents the pillar holding societies together. Where French feminism has invented bisexual or feminine writing, Vaughan shows that language itself is at root maternal, not part of the Symbolic, or a symptom of the Law of the Father (Lacan). She shows that The Gift is a more typical matrix of values and

worldview among women, but not exclusively so. References to societies still engaged in ecosocially sustainable Gift practices serve to explode the taken-for-granted views claiming that patriarchy and exchange have been universal and without alternative.

Vaughan argues that the liberation of The Gift as a matrix of economic and communal values requires an end to exchange, the capitalistic market, and patriarchy. This is necessary in order to (re)create an egalitarian society that will function according to the values that have been appropriated and redirected to serve exchange, ego-oriented *homo economicus*, and capitalistic accumulation. Gifting within the model of competition, domination, and patriarchal power-over is a contradiction in terms (it goes against its prevailing logic at least among the “masters”) and it can never bring about a peaceful society. On the other hand, capitalism would not thrive without the free gifts that it appropriates and exploits. The neoliberal market economy is according to Vaughan composed of private property owners or would-be owners and exchangers in the midst of a sea of gifts we do not recognize as such.

Vaughan’s theoretical contribution consists in tackling the blind spots not only of gender studies but all patriarchal scientific fields from linguistics, Marxist theory, child development studies to semiotics and economics at large. Vaughan exposes all the fields which have built their methods and research processes subconsciously or intentionally on the biased model of exchange and masculated perspectives represented as “neutral” and “natural.”

Thanks to feminism, the LGBT movement and the men’s movement, many people are already questioning the prevailing gender stereotypes. This new book deserves

to be required reading in educational circles, foremost in gender studies, as Vaughan's theories move beyond the second and third waves of feminism to create a wave of their own—beyond performative gender, the misnomer called “essentialism,” and the disastrous impact of post-modern and neoliberal feminism. Vaughan is right to stress that we will not solve the crises of this era unless we recognize the important economic aspects of mothering as a *gendered dimension of epistemology* rather than reducing it ideologically to “biological essence” or “nature.” Neither eliminating Capitalism while maintaining Patriarchy, nor eliminating Patriarchy while maintaining Capitalism will change the situation. Indeed, we need to realize that language is based on a Gift schema. One main aim of the book is to help those men and women to be able to respect their own maternal origins and throw off the parasite of the exchange economy. Vaughan reveals the numerous ways in which humans receive gifts from their environmental niche. We are in receivership of endless perceptual gifts. Our eyes are continually exploring our environment even if we don't realize it, finding the gifts, the “affordances.” We breathe in gifts of air and breathe out carbon dioxide which is a Gift for plants. Our hearts pump oxygenated blood out to nurture our cells, and back to be replenished.

The virtual abundance that there is now online is like the virtual abundance in language and is conducive to Gift giving and to the positive human relations carried by the Gift economy. Egalitarian projects like free software, Wikipedia, Peer-to-Peer production, free cycling, Time Banking, the movement against copyrights, the promotion of free information, and even hybrids with the market as in

the shareable economy and crowd sourcing, demonstrate the viability of the Gift economy.

Vaughan claims that through mind-colonization we have distorted our concepts of who we are and what we should do by superimposing an alienated economy of exchange on a human communicative economy of the Gift. Recognizing this is the first step in making the change towards an economy based on free material and linguistic communication and the elaboration of the altercentric mother-child relation.

We will find the way to a positive material economy of abundance and a culture of peace, Vaughan claims, if we conceive altercentric mothering-being-mothered as Gift giving and receiving, if we recognize the positive maternal Gift character of Indigenous matriarchal Gift economies, of the ancient virtual invention of language itself, and of social incarnations of linguistic giving in symbolic Gift exchange. We need to also recognize the maternal and linguistic aspects of the modern internet wiki economy, of volunteering, of social experiments in gifting communities, of ecological initiatives like permaculture.

More specifically, Vaughan theorizes, providing convincing evidence from recent infant psychology (Braten, Meltzoff, Trevarthen and others), that children are born prosocial and they elicit interaction with motherer (whether female or male, mother, father, sibling or aunt). This challenges the widely-spread previous claim regarding infants believed by Freud and Piaget and Skinner to be passive and solipsistic.

Language, by repeating mothering at another level, maintains the altercentric giving/receiving capacity for children who later engage in the many variations on mothering that make up social life. By

re-enacting the maternal model in language, people's unilateral Gift capacity is maintained after childhood, ready to be used in their own practice of mothering. Thus language would have a selective advantage in that more of the children of speaking mothers would survive, grow up, and have children who would survive. Language functions as a kind of refrigerator, storing the altercentric nurturing capacity in the child as *s:he* becomes an adult, keeping it fresh for later use. Thus, contrary to the commonplace ideas of the maternal instinct and the “language instinct” (Pinker 1995), verbal giving as a social transposition of mothering would function to offset the *lack* of maternal instinct, especially after the initial hormonal drives of the birth mother are terminated. Vaughan replaces *he* and *she* by *s:he* to draw attention, on the level of the word-Gift itself, to the nurturing logic of maternal nipples, reflected now in her gender-inclusive pronoun.

The book is important for gender studies which have also thrown the baby out with the bathwater when discussing the social construction of gender. Widely accepted post-modern theories denigrating motherhood (overreacting to the patriarchal idealization/denigration of the Mother) caused a shift towards individualizing the “female problem,” and leaving a systemic view behind. In a “gender neutral” world the collective understanding of women is vanishing, and the political activism against structural injustice and violence is rendered impossible. There is no equivalent development aiming to abolish “men.” By favoring an individualistic and overly neutral view of “humans,” in the name of avoiding the feared concept of “motherhood” or “womanhood,” feminism is losing its transformative power. This approach contrib-

utes to the patriarchal project of replacing the mother (cloning, reproductive technology for example) with robots and a generalized male gender.

Vaughan's theory of giving has radical consequences for social change and the demise of the nefarious logic of exchange. Change, after all, must begin in human values, not only in politics. Giving is not moral or ethical, but simply the normal propensity of humans to create bonds and ensure collective survival. This contrasts with the neoliberal claims that competition and self-interest are the desirable motivating forces behind economy and even collective well-being. Receiving likewise is freed of any false projections of shame, dependency or debt as receiving is simply the required natural correspondent of giving as human capacity. Relationships of giving have maternal nurturance as their root but are repeated on all levels from language to communication and ecosocially sustainable economics. *Quid pro quo* exchange, in contrast, denies the mother while abusing women's and other groups' gifts to make profit and benefit the ego.

Vaughan's contribution is remarkable also in taking on the sociological and anthropological studies on the Gift from Mauss to Derrida, Bataille, and Bourdieu, revealing the extent to which they fail to see and consider the obvious: maternal giving. Vaughan's book deserves to be required reading also in this field as it fully exposes the lacunae and masculated biases of the "mauss traps."

The importance of the fact that mothers give unilaterally is that it is not charity, but a precondition for the infant's survival. Giving here is not tied with being good but with being human, recognizing that humans cannot survive without giving.

Vaughan discusses the particular capacity of the gifts in language to be expanded and generalized, functioning also when we use it for nurturing each other individually and collectively and when we care for Mother Nature. Vaughan sees money as a drastically altered rematerialized word-Gift, which is used to mediate relations of distrust and not-giving. Money broadcasts a figure of one over many which has merged with "one over many" patriarchal standards. This creates the patriarchal capitalist economy, which is motivated by the false masculated drives of competition, accumulation, domination, and the need to be the standard, the one at the top.

Both Gift giving and language bridge the gap between the human community and its environmental niche while maintaining and elaborating the border between them. In exchange, where the principle is mutual exclusion, nothing new can develop. Instead in a community where relations are created through Gift giving in life and in language, gifts, givers and receivers can multiply exponentially qualitatively, co-creating and making relevant all the aspects of the environment and the culture. Doing this will allow us to respect, love and protect the creatures and the elements that together create life on the planet.

Vaughan's book is a must also for social change activists. After the highly sophisticated theoretical part, it includes concrete suggestions for Gift work, including consciousness raising, raising boys and girls with the maternal model, communities of motherers, Gift Economy and Matriarchal studies, alternative communities with the Gift as final goal and many other things....

Among the most important of Vaughan's insights are that the Gift

paradigm allows us to see mothering as economic, and communication as turntaking unilateral Gift giving. Furthermore, by positing the mother/child dyad as involving two creative, active parties, she changes our perspective on where language comes into being. Language is a satisfaction of cognitive and communicatory needs. Vaughan replaces René Descartes' famous motto, "I think, therefore I am" by "I had a mother, therefore I am." I would add to this, "We live on Mother Earth, therefore we are."

Kaarina Kailo, Ph.D. has held positions as professor or ass. professor of women's and gender studies in Canada (Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Montreal) and Finland (Oulu University). Currently she is active as City Councillor of Oulu while continuing her research on gender and neoliberalism, Finno-Ugric goddess mythologies and the Gift ecology. She has also begun holding exhibitions of her textile art on Finnic deities and traditional ecological knowledge.

PSYCHIATRY AND THE BUSINESS OF MADNESS: AN ETHICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL ACCOUNTING

Bonnie Burstow
London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015

REVIEWED BY SONA KAZEMI

In her new book, *Psychiatry and The Business Of Madness*, Bonnie Burstow raises a series of critical questions for the future of psychiatry as a "legitimate" branch of medicine and as a capitalist industry designed to make profit: How has psychiatry managed to become globalized, and in the process, so completely naturalized that we forget to question its

mere existence, never mind the ways in which it operates? How are we implicated in the process of physical and chemical incarcerations planned and implemented by the business of psychiatry? In answering these questions and a host of others, and in challenging the political economy of madness, Burstow argues for a world without psychiatry geared towards a collective existence with care and cooperation. Burstow prods the belly of the beast and forces him to vomit through the pages of a book that is a passionate indictment of the barbaric nature of psychiatry and simultaneously a celebration of collective care and accountability for each other. Burstow unravels the political nature of patriarchy while rudely undressing the class-based society engaged in the business of producing “madness.”¹ She crafts and historicizes the anti-psychiatry and anti-patriarchy revolutions simultaneously by informing the reader about the operationalization and construction of madness diagnosis and its connection to the historical oppression of women (e.g., witch-hunting). In 1860, for instance, she reveals that women could be admitted to a psychiatric hospital/prison by just a request from their husbands—usually on the grounds of noncompliance. Burstow not only discloses the nature of psychiatry as an established branch of medicine, but also distinguishes between “decisions” and “scientific findings” which is an indicator that science is not neutral but always mediated by social relations of gender, race, sexuality, and class. Her compelling examples include classifications of “mental illnesses” as well as “grounds for diagnosis and admission.”

Psychiatry and the Business of Madness is a significant political and historical contribution to the field of Disability Studies for it

does not fail to shed light on the history/historicity and politics of psychiatry as a business, eugenics as a grease for the wheels of “modern medicine” and the state—beneficiary of it all as a capitalist apparatus. Burstow redefines the word “research” and indicates how “research” has contributed to producing, institutionalizing, and punishing “undesirables”, which include the insane and the disabled.

This book is a blatant declaration of combat against psychiatric assault and patriarchal organization of human thinking and acting. Reading this book, I was gripped by a feeling that it will mark a politically-necessary moment in the history of Women’s and Gender Studies as well as Disability Studies/Mad Studies. Further reading convinced me that this book is certainly a challenge for ahistorical and apolitical reading of radical thinking in Humanities and Social Sciences in general, and adult educational theories concerning women’s liberation and psychiatry’s abolishment in particular. Herein, Burstow dismantles the theories/approaches that consider eugenics (the root of psychiatry) as hopelessly irrelevant to the “new times” and fail to see patriarchy as a political struggle amongst and within classes including “mental health team”/“experts” and patients. Borrowing her methodological and epistemological tools from decades of activism against psychiatry and patriarchy, Bonnie Burstow makes this book enormously useful for feminist projects as well as disability rights movements by clarifying for the reader why critics of psychiatry who do not dismantle gender relations fall abysmally short of a proper scrutinization of capitalist social relations behind psychiatry including gender, race and class. The book is an urgent call to wel-

come pro-diversity feminist therapy in which there is no place for psychiatry.

Burstow’s feminist revolutionary vision in *Psychiatry and the Business of Madness* will not let the reader rest easy after reading this book. Because away from politics of hope, she envisions a society that does not only preclude abolition of psychiatry, but also one with newly defined/transformed social relations that are based on collaboration/accountability. This book is radically different from other critiques of psychiatry that have been published so far in the sense that it offers extensive solutions to the problem. The final chapter, for instance, is a meticulous roadmap for communities to address their differences amongst and within themselves by first eradicating psychiatry and then solving/addressing their individual and collective problems or differences through care, love, cooperation, acceptance, and accountability.

On page 51, for instance, she discusses how violence constructs disorders and this becomes a vicious cycle due to its entrapment in the same procedure to “cure” patients. This is a salient theme running through the literature of Disability Studies, as this is often a commonplace phenomenon in societies. Once they encounter an ill/unruly/messy body, they try to “fix” it or change it to a “normal” state, which is a state of “compliance” as opposed to “healthy.” It should be noted that health per se has social and political determinants/foundations.

Sona Kazemi is a feminist woman of colour, community organizer, human rights activist, trauma counselor in practice, and a doctoral student at OISE/UT in Adult Education and Community Development. Sona’s research interests are Transnational

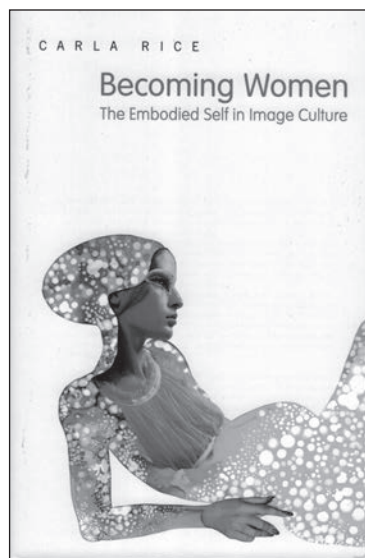
Disability Studies and Critical Race Feminist Theory both framed in the Marxist analysis of political economy of disability and difference. Sona is a therapist specialized in “internalized oppression” and “trauma” in vulnerable yet resistant populations of immigrants and refugees of colour. Sona founded her two community-based projects around acquired disability and marginalized populations’ empowerment in Toronto at the age of 21, and has been a disability-rights advocate since.

BECOMING WOMEN: THE EMBODIED SELF IN IMAGE CULTURE

Carla Rice
Toronto: University of Toronto
Press, 2014

**REVIEWED BY ANNA F.
PEPPARD**

Carla Rice’s book seeks to illuminate and interrogate processes of becoming gendered for a group of Canadian women united by their birth in a certain time period: between the end of the second wave and the beginning of the third wave of North American feminism. As Rice explains, this group of women occupies a unique historical position that has been neglected by feminist scholarship; situated between crests of feminism, many of these women “had little opportunity to take part in second-wave organizing and ... missed out on third-wave media strategies of culture jamming.” Consequently, this group is shaped by intense contradictions, both benefiting, often indirectly, from feminist efforts, while also being increasingly “barraged with hegemonic messages from visual culture.” As her book’s subtitle indicates, Rice is specifically interested in embodied experiences,



exploring how visual culture, whether employed by the state or capitalist markets, shaped—and continues to shape—the bodily contours and perceptions of this particular group of women. Aligning itself with the body becoming theory of Christine Battersby, Elizabeth Grosz, Gail Weiss, and others, Rice’s book aims, in Rice’s own words, to offer “a cultural story of becoming women in an image-saturated world” that “proposes a new critical theory of embodied becoming that challenges conventional theories of human development.”

To achieve this goal, Rice’s book synthesizes analyses of visual culture with personal narratives, interspersing and interconnecting discussions about the representation of gender in television shows, advertising, scientific research, and government policy with data and quotes gleaned from interviews with a sampling of 80 women. Appropriate to her avowed commitment to intersectional feminism, Rice specifically sought interviewees with diverse backgrounds and experiences of embodiment; the specific processes of gendering the racialized body, the disabled body, and the obese body are highlighted throughout the book, whose roughly chronological chapters map the journey to

womanhood, from historical contexts of gender, racial, and ableist discrimination through girlhood, puberty, and beyond.

Rice’s approach highlights women’s varied strategies of negotiating both radical and conformist narratives and images, adding valuable nuance and specificity to the totalizing narratives of female experience that have often been perpetuated by both certain strains of feminism as well as the patriarchal hegemony. Rice’s book is at its best when it uses the voices of the interviewees, which, thankfully, it often does, usually in minimally edited, substantial paragraphs. The chapters that explore intersections of gender, race, and disability within the promotion of Canadian multiculturalism and within Canadian puberty education are particularly strong. In these chapters, Rice uses the situated, diverse voices of her interviewees to highlight and subvert these thoroughly problematic state-sponsored campaigns to define and maintain the “normal,” both strengthening her own critique and helping to fulfill the book’s overarching goal of developing new ways and frameworks for thinking and writing about the body. For the most part, Rice’s analysis stays clear of having any one interviewee stand or speak for any particular demographic group; where Rice does generalize the responses of her interviewees along intersections of race or disability, she generally highlights common themes and pressures while emphasizing a range of responses to those pressures.

Like any ambitious piece of scholarship, Rice’s book has its imperfections. Perhaps the book’s greatest and most obvious weakness is that does not significantly feature the voices of First Nations women; although Rice acknowl-

edges this issue in a footnote early on, the absence is sorely felt given the book's stated mission to provide an intersectional platform for the voices of underrepresented Canadian women. In addition, the book features surprisingly little discussion of diverse sexualities. Overall, the project's primary concern with dominant forms of Western feminism and popular culture does not allow for much consideration of the formative influence of non-Western culture and/or cultural artefacts not aimed primarily at white, straight, cisgendered women.

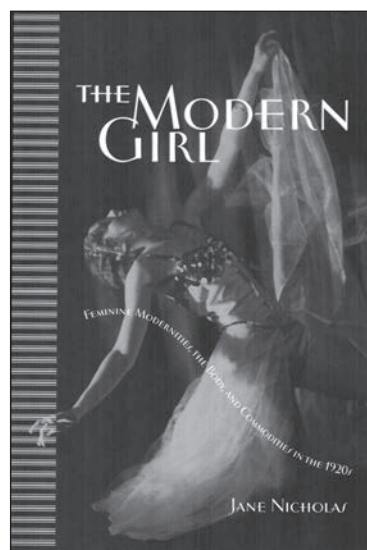
One hopes, however, that these weaknesses could be addressed by future work from Rice, or by scholars building on her work's strong foundation. Ultimately, this should be a useful book for those studying intersections of gender, race, disability, and visual culture, whether in a Canadian context or a broader Western context. More importantly, though, it should be a useful book for the women that it is about—namely, those still struggling to negotiate their embodied identities within an increasingly visual culture in which the ideas and gains of feminism remain both ingrained and controversial.

Anna F. Peppard is a Ph.D. candidate in English at York University, where she researches representations of identity in television, film, genre fiction, and comics. Her work has appeared in the Canadian Review of American Studies and the International Journal of Comic Art.

THE MODERN GIRL: FEMININE MODERNITIES, THE BODY, AND COMMODITIES IN THE 1920s

Jane Nicholas
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015

REVIEWED BY TASIA ALEXOPOULOS



In *The Modern Girl: Feminine Modernities, The Body, and Commodities in the 1920s*, Jane Nicholas examines the centrality of the Modern Girl in 1920s Canada. Nicholas argues that the proliferation of the Modern Girl and the emphasis on her physical appearance was inextricably linked to anxieties over shifts in the social, economic, and cultural landscape of a modern Canada. Nicholas' approach to the topic is multidimensional, employing a range of methodologies from feminist historiography to visual content analysis to explore the complex and fraught place of the Modern Girl in Canada. Nicholas argues that the figure of the Modern Girl was central not only to the construction of gender and femininity in Canada

in the 1920s but was integral to nation building and the formation of a Canadian national identity. *The Modern Girl* is informed by and firmly situated within literature on the body, feminist theory, and art history.

Nicholas frames her discussion of the Modern Girl within modernity, urbanization, the commodification of women's bodies, racialization, and class stratification. Her theoretical framework is built over the first three chapters; the remaining three chapters explore specific facets of 1920s culture: beauty pageants, modern art and the female nude, and automobiles and film projectors. Nicholas's content analysis of advertisements, magazine articles, and newspaper media is enriched by earlier discussions of theory, is very engaging, and provides a balance to the more theoretical chapters.

The Modern Girl is an important contribution to feminist history and historiography. Nicholas firmly positions her book within a wider project of feminist theory that seeks to uncover and re-write the ways in which history has been naturalized as masculine. Nicholas argues that feminine modernities were a noteworthy facet of English-Canadian narratives of modernity, highlighting the centrality of notions of race and racial purity in the perpetuation of the Modern Girl as an ideal of feminine beauty. Nicholas' engagement with the personal politics of the Modern Girl strengthens her argument as she demonstrates how women themselves would have experienced modernity. Women, Nicholas argues, were not simply "victims" of consumer culture but were active in its construction and perpetuation. While Nicholas aptly demonstrates the roles race, racialization, and Orientalism played in the construction of the Modern Girl and in Canadian national identity, the ways in which women of colour,

immigrant, and indigenous women experienced or engaged with the Modern Girl is missing from the narrative. Nevertheless, Nicholas has developed a very strong foundation upon which this project might be built.

While Nicholas is focused on historical context, one of the major strengths of this book are the strong links she draws between consumer culture and processes of disciplining the body, which seem to run parallel to contemporary critiques of consumer culture. Nicholas notes that women's bodies were not only utilized to sell gender-neutral goods but that their bodies were "broken down into small parts in need of specialized care and attention." Advertisers created "problems" for each body part in addition to the product that would "pleasurably resolve" the conflict. Nicholas writes that women's bodies were "potentially hazardous to personal, professional, and even national success unless given a lifetime of care, discipline and maintenance." This mirrors modern day advertising, which suggests that women can do anything (personally and professionally), but only with the right products. Similarly, Carla Rice's recent work on Body Projects explores the contemporary process of breaking women's bodies into recognizable and "fixable" segments. Putting the present and past in conversation utilizing Rice would illuminate the historical continuity of the discourse around the body and advertising and may strengthen Nicholas' arguments about the systemic nature of consumer culture by demonstrating the similarities between historical and contemporary modes of bodily discipline of and by women.

Nicholas concludes with a description of her personal, emotional attachment to the Modern Girl and to performances of femininity.

She discusses her fascination with a 1926 photo of her own grandmother as a Modern Girl and contemplates the balancing act of experiencing pleasure and meaning in performances of femininity while simultaneously being bound by them. This tension is presented throughout the text not as a problem that necessitates resolution, but rather as a contradiction with the potential to open up debate and be productively interrogated. Overall, Nicholas's study is fruitful, thoughtful, and wide-ranging. It is a significant contribution to existing literature and invites further scholarship.

Tasia Alexopoulos is a Ph.D. candidate in Gender, Feminist, and Women's Studies at York University. Her research is on polygamy in Canada and the United States. She currently teaches Women's and Gender Studies at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada.

WOMEN'S LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS IN POST-SOVIET UZBEKISTAN: CEREMONIES OF EMPOWERMENT AND PEACEBUILDING

Zulfiya Tursunova
Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014

REVIEWED BY ELIZABETH COHEN

Joining an expanding literature on women in post-Soviet states, this book about Central Asia uncovers a women's world seldom visible in euro/north American scholarship. The book began as a dissertation completed, far from the author's native Uzbekistan, at the University of Manitoba in the program in peace

and conflict studies. With participant observer and interview-based research in two regions—Khorezm in the west and the Tashkent district in the east—Tursunova focuses on rural women and their livelihoods since independence in 1991. Economies are important, but the author is most interested in the local matrices of social relations and cultural resources that support women's work. Tracing the fine structure of their lives, she attends carefully not only to patterns but also to varieties of individual experience. She also seeks women's own voices in "narratives," although only a few tell stories and many speak in disembodied fragments. Overall, Tursunova develops a nuanced argument that social and cultural practices from an earlier time still underpin the agency of rural women in a contemporary era of rapid transition. Along the way, she invites us to re-examine the universal applicability of some tenets of "first world" feminisms.

Although Tursunova uses the language of patriarchy in characterizing constraints that women face, her principal critical tool is the model of colonization. Calling her subjects, like herself, "indigenous," she writes of mostly Turkic-speaking people whose kin worked these lands prior to the arrival of the heavy-handed Russians, first imperial from the 1860s, and then, after 1917, Soviet. Concerning cultural visions of the past, Tursunova lumps Russian with other European commentators who, in orientaling mode, discounted rural women as backward obstacles to modernization. Yet modernization also had its Uzbeki proponents, the Jadids, who supported Russian-instigated campaigns against veiling and seclusion from the late nineteenth century. From the perspective of rural women, though, the author renders these novelties as foreign

impositions. Nevertheless, without presuming, wrongly, that harem women had no agency, it is hard to imagine twenty-first-century rural women's self-directed strategizing, that the author spotlights, without the colonizers' previous introduction of some "modernizing" changes.

The study offers a useful historical dimension that traces transformations over more than a century. Large political and social forces imposed by the Russians, such as the collectivization of agriculture around a cotton monoculture for export, changed lives again and again. Some Uzbeks, men and women, found advantageous niches for themselves in these developments, but many, especially women, faced shifting hardships. Tursunova's central argument, however, is that, after independence, rural women were again able, drawing on traditional local practices, to engage effectively as agents in shaping their own lives and those of their families. Some women were among those better placed or more skilled at taking advantage of new conditions.

Tursunova pays special attention to ways that customary local practices have worked to mediate the recurrent hardships or to help women exploit emergent opportunities. Valuable for both men and women is the *gap*, an arrangement in which usually one-sex groups gather regularly for sociability and pony up small sums of money into a collective pot; each member then, in turn, gets a chance to use the accumulated sum to advance her economic strategy. In a more cultural vein, the author foregrounds religion and the support rural women continue to draw from traditional female religious leaders (*otin*). The Soviets discouraged Islam more and less strongly at different times, but, when Uzbekistan became an inde-

pendent Muslim state, religion in many forms revived. According to Tursunova, reanimating the moral guidelines and story-telling traditions of a syncretic, old-fashioned version of Islam, women leaders in rural areas teach Qur'an, perform healing rituals, mediate conflicts, and help solve a variety of problems. These services and the female religious assemblies in which they take place provide crucial support.

Tursunova's tone of sincerity and serious professionalism gives force to her book. Choppy organization inside and among chapters, however, impedes the clear delivery of complex arguments about unfamiliar data. This book is probably not the easiest entrée into the gendered experiences of rural Uzbekistan, but it offers a rich account of the texture of village women's lives within a thoughtful framework of broad sociological and political explanation.

Elizabeth S. Cohen is a Professor of History at York University. She teaches and writes about women in early modern Europe, especially working women in Italy. She has recently visited Uzbekistan.

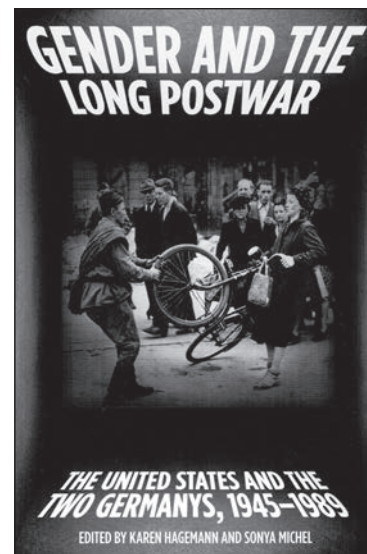
GENDER AND THE LONG POSTWAR: THE UNITED STATES AND THE TWO GERMANYS, 1945-1989

Karen Hagemann and Sonya Michel, Eds.

Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014

REVIEWED BY DEBORAH HERMAN

The authors provide a well-organized overview of postwar politics by using a transnational, comparative approach that includes not only the



"two Germanys" but the influence of the U.S. and Russia as well.

This perspective lays bare the concerted Cold War effort on both sides to put the brakes on progress by returning to prewar sexual and social norms. Such binaries as the male breadwinner/female homemaker, East/West, black/white and the heteronormative/homosexual subject become complicated upon closer inspection. Hagemann and Michel's choice of essays do well to "decouple" and challenge peacetime anxieties, to use their term.

They do this by organizing the book into sections that "gender" the aftermath of war, unpack the changing role of postwar masculinity, examine the new nuclear family under the watchful eye of the state, and finally explore new sexual identities.

"The defeated Germany that the victors encountered in spring 1945 wore a predominantly female face," begins Atina Grossmann, explaining how the GDR (German Democratic Republic) had the Red Army as a rapacious occupying force in the East, while the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) of the West softened their seduction into the slightly more acceptable American G.I. "fraternization" with the local

populace and all of the ambivalent fears and desires inherent in sexual predation, coercion, and prostitution for protection. Several authors also discuss the figure of the *Trümmerfrau*, or “rubble woman,” upon whose shoulders the burden of reconstruction often rested in the absence of a male workforce.

Women in the two Germanys also worked out of necessity, forced into low-paying and unskilled “pink collar” jobs when the war was over, their hard work seen as only a temporary “stopgap” effort, as Rebecca Boehling puts it. Laura McEnaney dismisses the simplistic view of factory girls running off to the comfort of the suburbs by labelling it the “Rosie [the Riveter]-to-June [Cleaver] arc,” arguing instead that “women’s military timelines are not tidy, for women do not march away and then home again, the usual demarcation between war and peace,” as this collection shows.

The overriding theme of this book is the tension between women’s struggle for equality and men’s struggle to recast masculinity, as Hagemann and Michel explain in their introduction. The cover art—a photograph of a uniformed soldier trying to steal a bicycle from a worker woman—says it all. At an impossible impasse, women were subjugated back into the spheres of *Kinder*, *Küche*, and *Kirche* while men adjusted to civilian life at the head of the family.

The new “army family” unit modelled gender relations as well as social norms. While many returning German POWs felt the “abject status” of the vanquished, the experiences of ethnic and sexual minorities also felt the stigma of being marginalized. Angela Tudico describes how war brides and fiancées were treated to the heightened scrutiny of red tape and racial profiling when seeking U.S. citizen-

ship. Likewise, Steve Estes shows how the command to “man the guns” was not only used as a verb but also represented empowerment to black men in service, despite their having to return to the Jim Crow South after the war. What many of the authors of this volume have in common is their exposure of the tacit double standard of educating Germans about democracy in theory while not practicing it at home.

Finally, Robert G. Moeller and Jennifer V. Evans’ closing essays about Paragraph 175, an antiquated sodomy law kept on the books during denazification, show how Big Brother had no place governing the private sphere of the bedroom. The decriminalization of homosexuality proved more progressive on both sides of the wall than the gradual mobilization of political activism stateside, movements that have their roots in the forties as much as the sixties.

Hagemann and Michel’s collection of essays adds to the survey of war literature provided by John Keegan’s *Book of War* (1999) and makes a fine companion text to Elena V. Baraban, Stephan Jaeger, and Adam Muller’s *Fighting Words and Images: Representing War Across the Disciplines* (2012). Of course, only Hagemann and Michel offer a side-by-side commentary of the American geopolitical hypocrisy of bringing democracy to the defeated and the problematic reconstruction of the “two Germanys.”

Deborah Herman is an emerging academic with a doctorate in the Humanities from York University. Her fields of expertise include gender, European history, myth and folktale.

WOMEN’S COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Kristen A. Renn
Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014

REVIEWED BY TRINA DE SOUZA

Women’s education is a complex and urgent matter as it relates to global gender equity and is necessary for improving societies, argues Kristen A. Renn, in her book, *Women’s Colleges & Universities in a Global Context*. Renn investigates the role that women’s colleges and universities play in the twenty-first century, using on-site studies of thirteen schools in ten countries worldwide including Australia, Canada, China, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. In her analysis, Renn identifies five roles that women’s colleges and universities play contemporarily. They are (1) providing access, (2) campus climate, (3) leadership development, (4) gender empowerment, and (5) symbolism and paradox.

Renn utilizes a vertical case study, in which she compiles data from all levels of the institution and provides a variety of methodological approaches including interviews and focus groups with students, faculty, and administration; data such as documents and websites; and informal observations of and participation in campus life. By utilizing this approach, Renn paints a rich picture of women’s colleges and universities globally, engaging in a productive discussion of the commonalities and differences of each role/theme across institutions.

In clear and accessible chapters on each role/theme, Renn success-

fully makes the claim of the importance of women's colleges and universities, as well as the complexities and contradictions that emerge in these spaces. First, she argues that these spaces provide access to women who may not otherwise have a chance to attend school and also provide financial and academic access to certain types of education, for example in fields not typically dominated by women, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Secondly, women's colleges and universities provide welcoming campus climates where students are taken seriously by their teachers, potentially have more space to speak up, and are not minorities in traditionally male-dominated disciplines. In the third role, these spaces provide students with more opportunities for leadership on campus in student governments, publications, sports, and public services in ways that some women may not have access to in co-educational institutions. Renn also argues that women's colleges and universities make intellectual, cultural, and activist contributions to women's movements, which contribute to women's empowerment globally. Her final theme of symbolism and paradox identifies the ways in which these spaces are both progressive and conservative. For example, while a university education for women may be perceived as progressive, it can also reinscribe normative gender ideologies as some respondents note that educated women are seen as better wives and mothers. Additionally, institutions may espouse feminist principles, but still operate within masculinist educational systems.

One of the striking features of the commentary provided by students in the text was the repeated use of the words "feminism" or "feminist" in their discussions. However, al-

though this seemed to be an important theme for students, there is no discussion of the ways in which students engage with feminism in the context of attending a women's only academic institution. The terms "feminism" and "feminist" continue to be contested and have a multiplicity of meanings globally. Thus, understanding what is evoked for students through their use of these terms would be valuable in making connections between women's colleges and universities, student experiences, and discourses of feminism.

Additionally, although Renn mentions briefly that some students interviewed comment on the importance of race, class, caste, and religious differences in structuring their experiences at women's colleges and universities, it is not taken up as a key topic of concern, perhaps due to the wide scope of the research agenda. Renn does acknowledge this in the text using Yuval-Davis' (2011) work on intersectional analyses and with a brief discussion of the impact of class positions in educational institutions in her conclusion. She also concedes that future studies could explore this in more detail, but further exploration throughout the course of the entire book would help to situate the roles of women's colleges and universities in a more nuanced manner.

As Renn has taken up the very ambitious task of investigating thirteen institutions on the topic of women's colleges and universities, there are numerous key points raised, but due to the broad scope of the research, some gaps are present. Renn's work does however point to the continued importance of women's only academic spaces in a cross-cultural analysis and offers useful data for those interested in higher education and women's studies globally.

Trina De Souza is a Ph.D. student in York University's graduate program in Gender, Feminist & Women's Studies. Her research interests include feminism and Women's Studies in higher education, and arts-based pedagogy.

ENGENDERING TRANSNATIONAL VOICES: STUDIES IN FAMILY, WORK AND IDENTITY

Guida Man and Rina Cohen, Eds.
Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University
Press, 2015

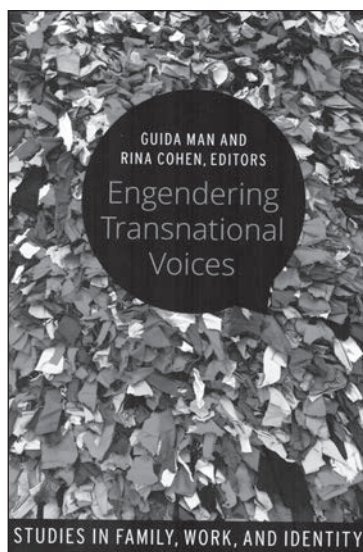
REVIEWED BY JOLIN JOSEPH

Sustained and stretched across time and geographies, transnational families lie at the heart of the migration project. *Engendering Transnational Voices* is a welcome addition to this body of work that takes a nuanced look at the transnationally lived lives of women, youth and the elderly through a feminist intersectional optic. Such a perspective allows for careful consideration of networks, discourses, social spaces, and circuits of care. In mapping distinct configurations of transnational existence, the collection expands current deployments of transnationalism to consider the complex socio-spatiality of migrant experience.

The introductory chapter charts the expansive terrain of transnational migration literature, pointing to the mutually productive relationship between gender, migration and other axes of power. The book is organized along four interrelated thematics, theoretically and empirically traversing questions of identity, power, and processes of globalization, migration, and marginalization that coalesce to differentially impact transmigrants. The

first section follows the (re)configuration of transnational family life via home and host states' influence at the familial scale. Through excerpts from broader studies on twice-migrated South Asian skilled migrants and professional Chinese immigrant women respectively, Das Gupta and Man examine migration to Canada as marked by a fraught history of discriminatory practices that mediate migrants' labour market position, resulting in dramatic deskilling and downward mobility. Hari and Mandel *et al.* further unpack frameworks that circumscribe migrant lives, situating senior migration and co-residence as twin conduits of intergenerational care and financial transfers. Given the structural inequalities and systemic racism in the Canadian context, families mobilize transnational tactics of split families, parenting from afar, networks and/or intergenerational care arrangements to meet productive and reproductive goals.

The subsequent section considers multidirectional, reciprocal and asymmetric circulations of care labour, demonstrating how a receding welfare state offloads costs of child and elder care onto individuals and households, particularly women. In tracing the transnational trajectories of Filipina migrant women, Francisco highlights the ways that transnational families adapt, through redistribution of care provisions and incorporation of kin networks. Elabor-Idemudia discusses how gendered-racialized ideologies script institutional processes that produce migrants' subordinate status while concomitantly benefiting from the developmental impact of remittances. Highlighting the intricacies of caring transnationally, Brigham investigates multiple modes through which migrant mothers negotiate identities, roles and social spaces, as Cohen presents



dynamic strategies of 'cybermothering' and surrogates that support geographically-split families in retaining their sense of collectivity and kinship. While I would have welcomed more detailed engagement with theoretical distinctions between care work, social reproduction, and affective labour, the authors' attention to complex transnational linkages is notable.

Questions of cultural identity and production in diasporic spaces animate the concerns of section three. Taylor and James recount the experiences of 1.5 and 2nd generation migrant university students whose ethnic identities and cultural contexts inflect their future aspirations and career choices. Correspondingly, Samuel foregrounds the function of familial moorings and religious ties in facilitating collective cultural (dis)identification. Coupled with a call to move beyond the conceptual limits of transnationalism, Li's case study of the Asian Canadian movements deftly navigates the construction of hyphenated identity categories through grassroots political engagements and activism.

The final section directs our attention towards critiques of hegemonic discourses and contested transnational social spaces. Kim

posits shifting transnationalism among South Korean communities as contingent on evolving gender ideologies, while Park's incisive critique of the Canadian refugee determination system points to the interaction of gender and age with racial discourses in the designation of victimhood and criminality. The concluding chapters grapple with Bourdieusian concepts of habitus, fields, and the development of transnational habitus, capturing the divergent experiences of specific migrant groups. Through simultaneous engagement with agency/structure and theory/praxis the compilation remains attentive to the daily (dis)locations emanating from transnational mobility.

Among the key strengths of the collection is its wide appeal, given the breadth of work it assembles. Diverse vignettes provide several entry points into the site of gendered migration, allowing us to see transnational processes unfold in global-local settings. These intimate insights carry imprints of transnational lives and journeys, signaling shifts towards inclusive social policy and equitable outcomes. While the book is an important contribution, its role in advancing the field of gender and migration is somewhat limited by its specificity of scope and lack of unified policy objective. In curating works with different emphases, methodologies, and levels of analysis, the volume elides an overarching conceptual thread. Furthermore, despite its objective to amplify how transnationalism reframes socio-economic relations across different transnational spaces, much of the content, contributors, and coverage of the text remain Canada-centric. Nevertheless, the anthology presents a compelling resource for thinking through gendered transnational migration and its discontents.

Jolin Joseph is a Ph.D. candidate and Vanier Scholar in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies at York University. She is interested in questions of (il)legality, precarity, and gendered migration policy in South and West Asia. Her dissertation takes a feminist political economy perspective on Indian migration to Saudi Arabia.

FEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION: GENDER, GOVERNANCE, AND DEMOCRACY IN ONTARIO

Tammy Findlay
Toronto: University of Toronto
Press, 2015

REVIEWED BY ROBERT DRUMMOND

This work could be described simply as a study of the Ontario Women's Directorate from 1985 to 2000. However that description would not do justice to the scope of Professor Findlay's inquiry and argument. Her broader aim is to assess the capacity of feminist theory (and feminist activism) to promote democracy (and an appreciation of the role gender plays in policy) within the ranks of a provincial public bureaucracy. Her assessment pays particular attention to the apparently different gender regimes that characterized the Peterson and Rae governments on the one hand and the Harris government on the other, and while she acknowledges the difference between them, she points as well to their similar failure to fully embrace democracy and feminism. She recognizes the debates within feminist circles about the extent to which the state can ever be expected to alter the gendered power structure of society, but she throws her lot in with the

"femocrats" or "state feminists" who see an opportunity (not to say a duty) to remake the state apparatus to produce more democratic and more gender-sensitive policy. In that sense, while the analysis is highly critical, it is not pessimistic and concludes with a prescription for improvement.

This is a very fine piece of scholarship, both theoretically and empirically. Some readers will no doubt be mildly irritated (as I was) by the terminology commonly employed in critical theory and feminist political economy, but I trust they will acknowledge (as I do) that the problem is our own and not that of the author. Indeed Professor Findlay wields the theory with considerable subtlety and sophistication, and her empirical analysis admirably displays an open mind.

In the prescriptive portion of the work however, Professor Findlay has taken on a formidable task, and it is there that I find an opportunity for more critical comment. She seeks to encourage greater participation by citizens in the making of public policy and, by extension, a more accurately diverse expression of the public will. The practical means by which this encouragement is to take place are however undoubtedly contentious, even within the ranks of those who share her aims.

She argues the necessity of "state feminists"—bureaucrats with feminist ideals—to act as advocates within the public service, accountable not to the government of the day but to the public whom they and the government purportedly serve. The neutrality valued in a Weberian model of bureaucracy she (perhaps realistically) describes as illusory, but also as antithetic to substantive democracy. Some interests appear already to have their internal advocates; those Professor Findlay prefers mainly do not. I suspect she and I prefer many of the

same groups, but I don't know that I could persuade some of my more conservative colleagues that internal advocacy for my preferred interests is democratic while advocacy for theirs is not.

Some of her other prescriptions are, to my mind, more sensible. Reducing hierarchy in the public service in favour of a spokes-in-the-wheel model of collaborative and consultative decision-making would be a long overdue recognition of the interconnectedness of policy fields, as well of the "inter-sectionality" that characterizes citizen clients. Giving better access to marginalized groups can only help to make policy more sensitive to citizen diversity and therefore more effective in the long run. However, there is a degree to which the models of citizen participation Professor Findlay seems to favour are optimistic about the time and energy most people are prepared to devote to political action. Moreover they underestimate the degree to which people may need to be organized in groups with a tendency to oligarchy. We can and should mitigate that tendency, but it would be naïve to ignore it. Finally, Professor Findlay expresses the belief, widespread among democratic reformers, that more respect must be paid to the lived experience of citizens, in contrast to the deference now paid to the views of "experts." Who could disagree with the need to acknowledge that people closest to a problem may best know its shape and weight? But surely Professor Tammy Findlay, Ph.D., is not asserting that expertise is without value?

University Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Public Policy and Administration, Robert Drummond taught at York University for 42 years; former Dean of Arts at York 2001-2009.

STREET SEX WORK AND CANADIAN CITIES: RESISTING A DANGEROUS ORDER

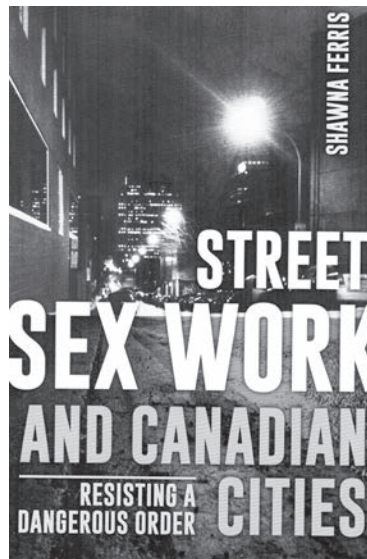
Shawna Ferris

Edmonton: University of Alberta
Press, 2015

REVIEWED BY ELIZABETH
D'ANGELO

In a recent meeting of Amnesty International in Dublin, Ireland, it has been decided that the selling and buying of sex should be decriminalized. Certainly a very contentious decision indeed, but more importantly, the question must be: who will benefit from this proposed legislation? While many countries around the world, including Canada, are steering towards or have already adopted the Nordic Model, which looks to decriminalize the selling of sex and rather goes after those who purchase or otherwise exploit sex workers, Amnesty International has taken a rather provocative stance. As is aptly discussed in Ferris' book, the Nordic Model and Canadian laws in general, are paternalistic and only create an environment in which it is at times even more dangerous for a sex worker to carry out her/his employment.

Shawna Ferris begins her book *Street Sex Work and Canadian Cities: Resisting a Dangerous Order* with an introduction that perfectly describes the climate around discussions of sex work. The forward is written by Amy Lebovitch who says: "I live in a world that either victimizes or vilifies me." Often the research that is conducted on sex work and sex workers erases the fact that there are real people behind the data and that there is no universal experience. There is no such thing as a valid or invalid reason for selling sex, just as there should not be voices that are silenced for



not being the "socially acceptable" prostitute. In part, this is what irks those who veil their feelings of moral superiority in a desire to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. Ferris does not speak over or for sex workers. Rather she includes and discusses real-life experiences. The book discusses Canadian laws surrounding the buying and selling of sex and how this affects sex workers—not as victims or as statistics, but as individuals with varying lives and experiences.

Ferris provides an in depth analysis of what have come to be known as urban cleanup projects in major cities across Canada. The sanitization comes in the form of eliminating or at least diminishing prostitution and street sex work. The author delves into the key elements of understanding sex work as legitimate work and humanizing the individuals behind it. The author juxtaposes moral and cultural attitudes around sex work and the socio-economic realities of marginalized groups living in Canada.

The timeline regarding Canadian legislation that is provided, as an appendix to the text, is very informative and a quick reference guide for students and instructors. This helps to and encourages further re-

search. In addition to this, it would be wonderful to see an appendix of sorts that provides current organizations with web links in order to further one's research or even provide safe-space information for those who want it. *Maggie's* (Toronto Sex Workers Action Project), for example, has a great site that is easily accessible and provides valuable resources. The author does dedicate an entire section to resistance and cyber communities in "Technologies of Resistance: Canadian Sex Worker Activism Online," but for students, a condensed version with actual URLs would be even better.

I am very happy to read Ferris' engagement with the colonial aspects of sex work and the social realities of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Section 4 of the book, "Agency and Aboriginality," deconstructs the intersected realities of Aboriginal women to provide the reader with a more complex understanding of the issues involved and what activism needs to look like.

The Canadian content of the book makes this an excellent text for university students and researchers alike. This is an excellent companion book for upper year Women's and Gender Studies, Sociology and even Labour Studies courses. Many texts are dedicated to global sex work and trafficking, but few deal with Canadian content the way that Ferris does. I highly recommend her book for students and instructors who are new to the topic as well as to the seasoned academic who desires a street-smart analytical perspective on the realities of street sex work in Canada.

Elizabeth D'Angelo is a doctoral candidate at York University in the department of English Literature. She has worked in the Centre for Women's and Gender Studies at Brock University for several years.

WE SHOULD ALL BE FEMINISTS

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
New York: Anchor Books, 2015

REVIEWED BY LAUREN
FORNIER

We Should All Be Feminists is a pocket-sized book by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie that functions as a non-academic defence of feminism. Adichie writes this essay from the perspective of her experience as a woman based out of contemporary Nigeria and America. Following the thesis established by the book's title, the form and the content of this book are intended to make *feminism*—as a term of self-identification and as a social and political movement—accessible to a mass audience. Adichie uses anecdotal evidence to make her argument that gender-based discriminations persist in contemporary life, and that *feminism* is needed to actively face “the problem of gender.” Adichie directly reasons with those who say that feminism is no longer needed today. She chooses examples that resonate with a wide readership; the informal tone and straightforward language suits an audience that might not be accustomed to thinking critically about gender.

While Adichie took up the issue of male violence against women in her 2003 novel *Purple Hibiscus*, the moments of gender-based discrimination that she illustrates in *We Should All Be Feminists* are less explicitly violent and therefore make for a less taxing read. In choosing examples like the socialization of girls and boys into their respective gender roles, and the ways in which women in managerial positions are read as aggressive for the same behaviours that garner a male manager praise as assertive, Adichie

takes on gender oppression while keeping the tone respectfully light. There are moments of humour and self-reflexivity throughout: Adichie recalls how she began to identify as a “Happy African Feminist Who Does Not Hate Men” as a means of anticipating the stereotypes she encountered as a self-identified feminist. Keenly, Adichie emphasizes how men will benefit from feminism just as women do—that the pressures that patriarchy places on the masculine role can be just as detrimental as those placed on women. Hence, the title's argument—*We Should All Be Feminists*—rings true for persons of all genders.

For those familiar with feminist theory, Adichie's title brings to mind bell hooks's *Feminism is for Everybody* (2000). bell hooks structured *Feminism is for Everybody* as an accessible handbook on feminism, which she defines as “a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (1). Both Adichie and hooks are black feminists who attempt to write non-academic primers on feminism as a means of making feminism accessible to non-academic readers; both begin with the premise that feminism is widely misunderstood and negatively stereotyped; both do not formally cite sources besides themselves; both speak in terms of what hooks's calls “Visionary Feminism,” where readers are encouraged to envision a world that is more equitable and joyous for a greater number of people.

When it comes to contemporary feminist and postcolonial scholarship, and whether or not Adichie's text brings something new to the conversation, this text is limited. Adichie takes a heteronormative and cis-gendered approach to feminism: throughout the book, gender is assumed to be a binary in which persons are biologically male or female—no room is made for trans

and other non-binary identities. More consequential to her overall argument is the decision Adichie makes to focus solely on gender, rather than opting for an intersectional approach. Adichie makes the decision to draw her examples from life in contemporary Lagos, defamiliarizing Western readers' stereotypical understandings of Africa just as she defamiliarizes stereotypical understandings of feminism; in the Introduction, Adichie explains that this essay evolved from a talk at TEDxEuston, “a yearly conference focused on Africa” (3). And yet, Adichie seems to disavow an intersectional approach to feminism in this book: she implies that she is not interested in talking about class or race, here — that “...this conversation is about gender” (43-44). To isolate gender from other positionings can perhaps only be done in the abstract. And yet, it is clear that Adichie is doing so in an effort to rhetorically strip down our complicated social realities and make her argument simple: feminism is needed as a means of acknowledging “the specific and particular problem of gender” (41).

Early in the book, Adichie admits “I often make the mistake of thinking that something that is obvious to me is just as obvious to everyone else” (14). What is obvious to Adichie but is not obvious to many of the people in her life is that feminism is still needed in contemporary life. This book takes what seems obvious to Adichie—and other well-read feminists—and effectively breaks it down into the fundamentals for a wider readership.

Lauren Fournier is an artist and PhD student in the Department of English at York University, where she studies contemporary feminist literature, art theory, and performance. She is currently a SSHRC Doctoral-CGS holder.

THE GIRL WHO WAS BORN THAT WAY

Gail Benick

Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education Inc., 2015

REVIEWED BY CAROL LIPSZYC

At the heart of Gail Benick's *The Girl Who was Born that Way* is a double ring of four sisters. On the outer rim move the eldest two, Hetty and Tilya, child survivors of the Lodz Ghetto eager to reinvent themselves in their adopted country; in the inner circle, we greet the younger American-born sisters, the novella's narrator, Linda Sue, and her older sibling, Terry Sue, who was born with Turner's Syndrome. I looked forward to the spirited letters Terry Sue writes at the end of each chapter, letters which lend an epistolary mode to the novella. In spite of her genetic mutation and the physical and mental afflictions she suffers (she becomes anorexic and is hospitalized) Terry Sue's voice remains inquisitive, youthful, and loving.

In turn, Linda is protective and considerate of her sister, at one point buying foam rubber to make falsies for Terry Sue, who does not develop normally. Highly attuned, Linda decodes her child and adolescent world, making sense of her family and of a broken past that imposes without warning like a sinister wind funneling its way into the home. Often that wind is chased away by her father's sense of adventure and her older sisters' desire to regain normalcy, to keep their Jewish identity under the radar, and to integrate with dignity into St. Louis society circa the 1950s-60s. Danger lurks, though, real or otherwise. Linda Sue has internalized some of her mother's palpable fear. At one point, Linda

Sue watches an antique fan turning overhead and conjures up decapitation, imagining her mother's suicide should such a catastrophe befall her. Of course, her family did survive a cataclysm before she was born. In a segment that reminded me of Anne Frank's rules for the Annex, Hetty relays to her younger sisters the Berkowitz Guide to Surviving in the Lodz Ghetto. Her memories here, with credit to Benick, are transplanted onto the page authentically, sparsely, through the eyes of a child. (How the family survived the liquidation of the Lodz Ghetto and deportation to Auschwitz in the summer of 1944 is not dealt with in the back story.)

Along with the sadness, the "shadow of grief" her mother conveys, the narrative moves at a buoyant pace as navigated by Linda Sue, highlighted by flashes of family outings, pubescent dances with boys, and by her interaction with colourful neighbourhood characters whose voices add texture to the novella and perspective to Linda Sue's world view. All this before the novella takes its tragic turn in the untimely death of Terry Sue. At the end of the novella, it is Tilya, renamed Toni, who writes a dissertation in honor of her sister's misunderstood disease and death. In this instance, unlike so many of Linda Sue's questions left unanswered in the novella, Toni's inquiry is a gift of scholarship and commemoration, one that is both fruitful and life-affirming.

Carol Lipszyc's book of short stories, The Saviour Shoes and Other Stories, was published in October 2014 by Inanna Publications, which also released her collection of lyrical poetry, Singing Me Home. Carol has also published on arts-based education in international journals. Earning her doctorate in

education at OISE/UT, Carol is currently an Associate Professor at State University of New York, Plattsburgh teaching English teacher education and writing arts.

THE RIVER

Helen Humphreys

Toronto: ecw Press, 2015

REVIEWED BY RYAN KOELWYN

Helen Humphreys' latest literary achievement, *The River* is a thoughtful rumination on connectivity, people, and place. The inspiration undoubtedly: a section of the Napanee River in Ontario that runs along Humphreys' property. In this triumphantly pensive book, Humphreys explores the ways that the river communicates with us through various accounts of fiction, historical fact, natural history, and visual documentation. In search of a genuine analysis, *The River* is a collection of dichotomous observations. These oppositions—movement and stillness, attract and repel, friend and foe, remembering and forgetting—are reoccurring themes in *The River*.

It is difficult to decipher where a river begins or ends. The river exists in relation to other people, places, and things. Humphreys' acknowledgment of this relation is what makes *The River* an unparalleled object analysis. Humphreys abandons her first attempts to define the river as the beginning of the book, but includes them in the introduction to state a case for the objective of the book: to examine a place without an agenda. Aptly titled, "Anthropocene," the third section refers to the current geological period beginning when human activity significantly altered environmental conditions. The relationship between human beings, and living

organisms and the environment as value-driven is longstanding. Human beings tend to see land in relation to its worth, which is, of course, assigned by us. Renouncing this calculated assumption, Humphreys invites readers to examine a place on its own terms, to be receptive to the “Morphology” of the river.

The river is a channel for a body of water that moves in one general direction; nevertheless, all rivers have bends and turns depending on the geography of the land. In the section “Beginnings,” Humphreys candidly discloses that the distinguishing motion of the river is what makes it impossible to define, as it cannot be contained. The river “can only be met at a particular moment and described for only that moment” (21). The subsequent chapters are various accounts of fleeting moments that embody a broader understanding of the river as a timeless place. Accordingly, *The River* is an illuminating examination of place, where knowledge about the river oscillates between themes of alteration and preservation creating a tension that reveals the complexity of the river as an important habitat to many different types of plants, creatures, human activity, and relationships.

Humphreys’ reverence of the river is also an attempt to draw the reader to reflect on the intention of storytelling and history. Like the river, storytelling and history are abstruse because it is “constantly shifting and altering its landscape depending on who is doing the telling or remembering” (196). Yet, whether the story is about human history, making a living from the land, the life span of flora and fauna, or the cycles of season, “the river just keeps flowing in its channel” (198). There is much depth in the simplicity of this perceptive-

ness. Despite the constant fluctuation around or within, the river itself is not altered and it continues to produce moments that can be described, but not captured. What would it mean to embody the dichotomy of the river when we write about the past? What kind of stories would we tell?

Through compelling prose, Helen Humphreys reminds us of the importance of engaging with a meaningful practice of writing in the construction of both real and fictive stories about place. Narrating many versions of a shared place might develop an honest regard for the spaces we inhabit and are curious to know more about.

Ryan Koelwyn is studying Education at York University. Her research focuses on the roles that digital media and collaborative pedagogies play in fostering education opportunities.

ONLY BY BLOOD

Renate Krakauer
Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education Inc., 2015

REVIEWED BY CAROL LIPSZYC

In Renata Krakauer’s *Only By Blood*, trauma embeds itself across generations in the fabric of lives, whether family members are cognizant of the role the past plays or whether they can only intuit its effect. Krakauer unfolds her narrative on Polish and Canadian soil during World War II and decades afterwards, fueled by the desire of the first generation to *know* and by the reticence of the survivors, both Polish Catholic and Jewish, to *tell*. As the truth is unveiled, this tug-and-pull, back-and-forth motion of the narrative moves deftly across the pages for the reader.

At the core of the novel lives Roza, the character most fully fleshed out through her harrowing ordeals as a young Jewish woman in hiding and through Krakauer’s sensitive and credible depiction of Roza as a widow enduring the physical and mental assaults of aging. As the novel runs its tragic and near-redeeming course, we discover how the fates of Roza, her two daughters, Helen and Mania, and the two Polish Catholic sisters, Irena and Krystyna intertwine as they piece together fragments of memory, move beyond cultural and religious antipathy and mistrust, and unearth secrets they have buried. While we empathically share in their lives across time, we witness the sacrifices of motherhood during war and the courage it takes to love. And here we are further reminded that such love does not come without formidable cost. Selfless and selfish acts under duress become blurred so that the reader is unable to pass judgment on the wartime mothers by the novel’s end.

In an early transitional scene, upon which the novel’s plot will hinge, Krystyna lies on her deathbed calling out feebly to her daughter, Mania, to “find them ... make it right.” While Mania honours her mother’s wishes and solves the mystery of her own heritage, no one and no action can compensate for the injustices inflicted upon these victims of war. Yet Krakauer gives voice to the void which would otherwise emanate if her characters had not discovered the genealogy and humanity they share.

Carol Lipszyc’s book of short stories, The Saviour Shoes, was published in October 2014 by Inanna Publications, which also released her collection of lyrical poetry, Singing Me Home. Carol is currently an Associate Professor at State University of New York, Plattsburgh.

WHAT IS VEILING?

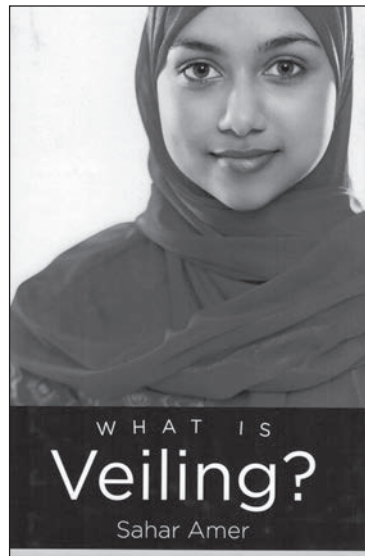
Sahar Amer
Chapel Hill, NC: The University of
North Carolina Press, 2014

REVIEWED BY PATRICIA
KEENEY

I'd like to begin with several images personal to me (a non-Muslim) but also, I think, relevant to anyone who has ever pondered the increasingly vital question "What is Veiling?," so conscientiously and sensibly addressed in this book. The first covered women I encountered were the nuns of my early education who epitomized mystery and severity. They continued to inspire fear and resentment until a couple of them finally humanized through their passion for literature, which became my joy.

As an adult, on the occasion of my first visit to Egypt in the early '90s where the pyramids and the Valley of the Kings left indelible impressions on me, what also struck were certain visuals of veiled women. Admittedly these were not numerous during Mubarak's era, which is why they stood out. I remember being in a taxi, traffic swarming around, when suddenly and imperiously from the car ahead, thrust a black-gloved arm (rings on fingers) indicating a turn. The woman behind the wheel was covered completely in black but her gesture was assertive, a strong combination of aggression and anonymity.

Considering the completeness of her covering, she was probably from Saudi Arabia, Iraq or the one of the Gulf States. Author Sahar Amer supplies a complete glossary of the names of garments worn by Muslims worldwide that runs to 9 pages, attesting to the complexity of this subject that is at once sartorial, cultural, religious, social, historical and artistic.



In 2011, when invited to teach and share my own poetry at Ain Shams University in Egypt, I was intrigued, during a leisurely country house party, to hear an older female academic dressed casually in slacks and a blouse gently chastise her students for wearing hijab, despite the fact that they seemed to compensate with heavy eye make-up and bright colours. The term *hijab*, Amer declares, is "the generic term for veiling used by all Muslims regardless of background." She comments how, when watching Egyptian films from the 1940s to the 1960s, she is struck by the European dress and lifestyle of the women they portray. And how her mother's wedding pictures from the early '60s display the same western influences, this, as she points out, "thirty years before they all began wearing *hijab*."

In Turkey recently I watched a veiled woman at breakfast with her family in an Istanbul hotel. Young daughters and husband enthusiastically tucked into the food while she delicately lifted her face cover and precariously balanced a piece of boiled egg on a spoon in order to get it into her mouth. She looked uncomfortable and sedately resigned.

Amer reminds us that for the democratic reformer, Atatürk in Turkey in the 1920s, *hijab* was an obstacle to progress and secularization.

In the 2014 Anniversary edition of *Canadian Woman Studies*, my own prose poem "Out of Iran" deals with how I felt in 2011 being constrained to wear the headscarf (I have particularly unruly hair) and a myriad number of contradictory impressions around the situation of women and girls in that far-reaching, richly-endowed culture. Again we remember that before the Iranian revolution of 1979, Iran was a largely secular society. After it, "Iranian women who had demonstrated for their right to *choose* to wear the *chador* unexpectedly found themselves *forced* to wear it."

My favourite incident occurred at the end of a course I teach at York University called *Women in Literature*. Several of my students had worn full hijab, that is, complete covering all year. All I ever saw were eyes. At the very last class, they came forward as a unit and removed their veils, smiling, with the words, "We thought you might like to see our faces." We laughed. It was a moment of communion and trust. I felt honoured.

The first sentence in Sahar Amer's book is "Islam did not invent veiling." The thoroughness of her research is evident in the subject matter of each title, such as "Understanding Veiling in Islamic Sacred Texts," or "What Do Progressive Muslims Say About Veiling?" Especially revealing is a chapter called "Veils, Harems and the Mission to Civilize" in which Amer takes us from the erotically charged Orientalist paintings of Delacroix and Ingres to early twentieth century photographs and postcards whose Algerian subjects were often non-Muslim prostitutes or

orphans hired in various states of pornographic (though traditional) undress or chilling anonymity to say “the morality of these woman is compromised; they need to be saved by an altruistic European Christian hand.” Early Hollywood films continue this missionary trend in which Western men from Douglas Fairbanks to Bing Crosby liberate sensual but suppressed Oriental women.

With insight, humour, and a balanced approach, Amer guides us through the victimization of Muslims that occurred after 9/11 and is still going on, a fear mongering that places terrorist explosives under every innocent chador, burqua, niqab or abaya. She navigates us through ramifications of France’s 2004 law that “banned all ostentatious religious signs from French public schools” (to say nothing of similar prohibitions in our own province of Quebec).

The book’s visuals are extremely revealing, from cartoons in which a small child cannot find his mother amidst many covered women, to FIFA’s 2012 lifting of the ban on hijab resulting in an ebullient photo depicting the scarfed, enthusiastic members of the *Carolina Cyclones* soccer team.

Amer’s final chapters on “Veiling Through the Arts”—including stand-up comedy and hip-hop—are spectacular. From young Muslim American poets with lines like: “No I’m not bald under the scarf...No I would not like to defect/I’m already American...Yes I carry explosives/They’re called words/And if you don’t get up/Off your assumptions,/They’re going to blow you away,” to *Self-Portrait or the Virgin Mary* in which the ambivalent woman in white mysteriously raises far more questions than she answers.

Then there is the stunning performance video, *Les Illuminés*

“which takes us literally inside the burqa to film what a woman’s eyes see from behind the [crocheted] face veil that masks [them].” The covered woman sees external reality—often hostile, when people turn to stare—through a cross-hatching as sinister as prison bars. At the same time though, the “faceless, silenced” Muslim woman is the director of this scene, temporarily transforming the veil of oppression into one of power.

Each chapter begins with sharply pertinent quotes. Here is the wife of Turkey’s president setting the tone for “Politics and Sociocultural Practices of Veiling”: “My scarf covers my head not my brain.”

A simple necessary statement, confirming the importance of this book.

Patricia Keeney is an award-winning poet, novelist and cultural critic who is translated and published internationally. Her newest novel One Man Dancing (Inanna Publications) and her latest poetry collection Orpheus In Our World (NeoPoiesis Press) were both published in 2016. Pat’s website can be found at www.wapitiwords.ca

NOT THE WHOLE STORY: CHALLENGING THE SINGLE MOTHER NARRATIVE

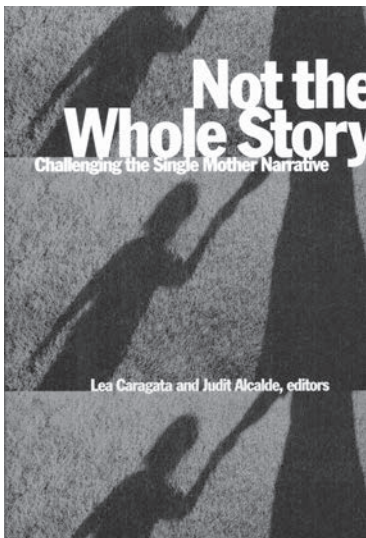
Lea Caragata and Judit Alcade, Eds. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2014

REVIEWED BY JUDITH MINTZ

Not the Whole Story: Challenging the Single Mother Narrative offers its readers an intensive exploration into the gendered discrimination that affects the lives of lone mothers every day. As a single parent, I resonate with the notion of developing

more vocabulary with which to articulate the intersecting factors including race, poverty, age, and ability, that make single mothers’ lives so difficult. Started as a longitudinal social research project titled, “Lone Mothers: Building Social Inclusion” by the book’s editors, Lea Caragata and Judit Alcade, *Not the Whole Story* gives voice to the realities of single mothers whose struggles with education, alcoholism, sexual and domestic violence, and the social assistance system demand our attention. In spite of the women’s horrific experiences that this book describes, it offers insight to multiple readers, from academics and policy makers, to students and general public through the hope and growth inherent in its pages.

Not the Whole Story opens with a compelling introduction that explains the Lone Mothers project from which the 16 stories in the book developed. With the intent to bring critical examination to the subject position of single mothers in Canada, this five-year SSHRC-funded project, began in 2004 as a collective project with single mothers to challenge public discourse about them. The strongest part of the book is this introduction, which offers a social policy and historical context for the stories (Evans 2007; Little, 1998; Vosko 2002). The introduction also briefly explains the ways in which the methodology informs the structure of the book, and the issues that shape poverty, single motherhood, and social status. The evolution of the single mothers telling their stories is fascinatingly informed by Paulo Friere’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Concomitant with feminist participatory action research, the Lone Mothers Project gives voice to marginalized women who, through a guided group process, gain insights into their own situations and thus free themselves



of self-blame discourse and mobilize for positive social change. Each of the women who participated in the Lone Mothers project had the opportunity to tell their personal stories of sole motherhood. It comes as no surprise that systemic and domestic abuse, inequalities in employability and earnings, the virtually non-existent Canadian child care policy, immigration status, racism, and gender inequality all colour the ways in which sole mothers in Canada must navigate their experiences.

Most of the stories offer windows not only into lives of suffering, but also into resilience and strength. As one of the participants reflects, “We want our children to know that we are trying to change things... we have gotten something good out of this mess...” In the chapter entitled, “Making Meaning,” co-editors Caragata and Alcalde offer readers the women’s observations of how Canadian social policy has failed to support families, and also suggest how they could be improved. One of the most salient points here that truly does bust the historical and denigrating myth of the single mother welfare mom is that these mothers are in fact good mothers who have often made painful, difficult choices that put their children’s

needs first. This chapter emphasizes the unfortunate role that abuse plays as it underlies many issues in single mothers’ lives, such as addictions, mental illness and chronic poverty. Interestingly, and perhaps most poignantly, is that Caragata problematizes the notion of freedom of choice, which, she argues can only exist if women are free from abuse and economic deprivation.

While the format of the volume is most quantitatively weighted in favour of the individually-told personal life stories, the book would have been more effective with a structure that offered readers an analytical break between groups of thematically arranged stories. The discussion of the volume’s format is misleading to readers. For example, Caragata says that the book “moves back and forth between amore academically reflective discussion and the at-times earthy and grounded self-storying of the lone-mother authors.” My reading experience was not reflective of this description. Instead, I found an imbalance between the intense and often painful kind of listening that is necessary for reading these women’s stories, and the promise of reflective discussion between the stories. These stories do provide the antidote to the negative social connotations of single motherhood and social assistance. More programs like the one that inspired this book could help policy makers make better informed decisions, and ultimately improve the lives of lone mothers.

Judith Mintz is a Ph.D. Candidate at the School of Gender, Feminist and Women’s Studies at York University. Judith is co-editing a book for Demeter Press called Meditation Mamas: Intersections of Empowered Mothering, Mindfulness and Yoga Practices. Judith is also mother to two daughters.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ARTS IN GLOBAL ASIA: AN ANTHOLOGY

Theodore W. Goossen and Anindo Hazra, Eds.
Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014

REVIEWED BY KATHRYN TRAVIS

“The struggle for a more just and humane world begins with our ability to imagine how others live and how they think.”

All too often, ‘the arts’ become centered as an object of/for analysis within academic writing (albeit an interesting and captivating one). Perhaps due to convention and/or the limitations of structure and word count, artistic creations are often synthesized, cut-down, and paraphrased to be made to fit into the body of academic work. In *Human Rights and the Arts in Global Asia: An Anthology*, a space has been created for the arts within a scholarly context. As a companion volume to the collection of critical essays found in *Human Rights and the Arts: Perspectives on Global Asia* (edited by Susan Henders and Lily Cho), the reader has the opportunity to delve first hand into the “textures of everyday life” that are presented through these literary works. The act and process of translation made it possible for a majority of these works to be presented to an English-reading audience for the first time. Introducing writers from across Asia and the Asian diaspora, this anthology is the living proof of how commitments to ‘the arts’ can play out in academic/scholarly settings.

As a starting off point, Goossen and Hazra have crafted an introduction that offers the reader contextual counter-points to read

alongside each chapter. Many of the literary and poetic pieces collected in this text express experiences living in/with conflict—situations that complicatedly cross social, political, economic, nationalistic, linguistic, and religious lines. This contextual counter-point is an important additional layer of background information for readers who may not be familiar with the contexts, landscapes, and histories being described. Understanding contexts as “socially constructed frame[s] of reference”, the editors state that “a true grasp of context recognizes the interplay between the particular and the universal, and the limitations of viewing human existence through black and white dichotomies.” Whether through the lens of the narrator, the various characters, or the authors/writers themselves, the reader encounters people and events that show the affective side of living; that situations and relations reverberate through the body; and that life ebbs and flows across dis/ease. And, importantly, that daily living with others does not always fit neatly into categories that are used to understand or analyze things.

As each of the ten chapters in the anthology demonstrates, daily life plays out the tension between the particularities of lived experiences and relationships, and the universal ideas and mores professed at a wider level. Family, neighbours, friends, home, and land get caught-up in the whirlpool that can be identity, nation, state, worker, and commodity. To say that contexts are ‘complicated’ does not always do justice to the weight and force of a situation; especially when the particularity of lives are affected by the violence/s of nationalist struggles, colonialism/s and imperialism/s, forced migrations, the natural/ecological

exploitation of resources, and property and ownership rights that are built on mass systemic poverty. The reader experiences how the tune of the tale shifts when ‘modernization’ and ‘progress’ are questions, rather than immutable facts. This anthology demonstrates the power of art and literary mediums to express the personal and intimate in ways that reveal “the paradoxes and ambiguities of life and history.”

As the above quote from Goossen and Hazra’s introduction suggests, part of being able to imagine how others live and think entails being able to compassionately relate-with the everyday realities and experiences that others have. This kind of imagining engages ‘separations’ and ‘distances’ of all different kinds; not only of those marked by the physical parameters of geography or through the passage of time, but as importantly the kinds of separations that happen in the everyday act of living and sharing place with others. In many ways, this imagining begins in self-reflection and by asking questions that can reveal our own hidden assumptions and expectations. By creating a common space through each literary piece, the kind of imaginative work presented in this anthology draws readers into relation with the events, lives, and contexts being described. A relation that ultimately requires readers to extend the movement begun between particularities and universals on the page, to their own lived contexts.

Kathryn Travis is a Ph.D. candidate in Gender, Feminist, and Women’s Studies at York University. Drawing from her field research in France, her research examines how place and identity are constructed through various textual, visual, and auditory mediums that happen in street timespaces.

AFTER DROWNING

Valerie Mills-Milde
Toronto: Inanna Publications, 2015

REVIEWED BY RENATE KRAKAUER

In her debut novel, *After Drowning*, Valerie Mills-Milde, has mined new territory in a Canadian setting we know little about with a cast of characters that will stay with the reader long after finishing the book. We learn about the formerly thriving fishing industry on Lake Erie, now virtually wiped out by zebra mussels, and the impact on the lake and its surrounding villages through the story of one family. Pen and her daughter, Maddie, have returned to Port to stay with her mother and stepfather while Pen sorts out the problems with her marriage. While sunning and playing on the beach with her daughter, she witnesses the drowning of a developmentally challenged young man who is on an outing with a group from his residential treatment centre. This drowning triggers memories, which set Pen on a course of self-examination and ultimately, of release from the constraints and insecurity she has felt all her life.

Pen can trace a marked shift in her life from the day that her adored father drowned on his fishing boat when she was ten. Was it an accident or a suicide? Shortly after that, her older brother, Keaton, also disappeared from her life after a boat he was working on was set on fire. With an alcoholic mother who has taken into her home the man with whom she had been having an affair before her husband’s death, Pen couldn’t wait to escape and escape she did.

Now she is back and has to confront her self-imposed separation from her kind, loving husband Jeff. The death of her father has left a

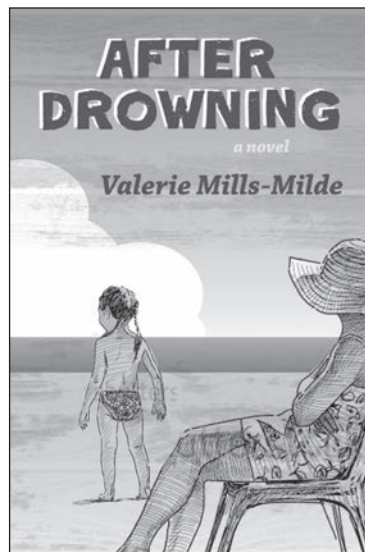
“mark on all of them” but after her brother, Keaton’s, disappearance, it has made her distrust men, including Jeff. She tells Jeff that she doesn’t know “how to be together.” Reuniting with her mother, who is now sober and in a loving relationship with Ed, she can’t let go of her resentment and suspicion that her mother’s changed life is authentic.

Pen begins to change when she sees a local biker detach himself from his gang and dive into the sea, organizing a chain of people to try to rescue the drowning boy. As the character, Tom Valentine, a member of the Bandidos, unfolds through the novel, the reader shares with Pen the realization that even someone who is capable of cold-blooded murder may experience a moment of compassion.

This is one of the novel’s strengths: the sensitive and subtle recognition that people have many sides to them and that sometimes they can change; that they need support to change; and that they have to suffer the consequences of actions and decisions, sometimes not of their own making.

The author depicts with sensitivity the relationship of mothers and children. Pen lacks confidence in her parenting skills because she didn’t get from her mother, Irene, what she needed growing up. Irene, married too young and burdened with children, drowned her misery in alcohol. But Pen’s instincts are good and she is a nurturing mother, recognizing also the bond between Maddie and her father, Jeff, who loves both of them unreservedly. Irene admits that she failed her daughter but years of neglect cannot be forgotten even if the relationship can be mended.

Mills-Milde handles character development with sensitivity and skill. The novel is peopled with unique individuals with inner conflicts, sometimes more inclined to behave well and sometimes not, just as in real life. Her characterization of the



child, Maddie, is delightful, with all the behaviours and language that one would expect from a sensitive four-year-old. Her description of Jeff, Maddie’s father, wiping off the little girl’s face, “with so much delicacy and care, as if he might have been taking dust from a butterfly wing” is very moving. This nuanced development of character is reflected in the description of the setting of a depressed, rundown town on a beautiful lake which used to provide bounty in the form of fish but can turn on a dime into a menacing adversary with a capacity to kill.

Finally, the author has an excellent sense of pacing. What we learn about the past from Pen’s memories and her internal life is inexorably linked with events that roll out to a surprising and satisfying climax. Love and relationships may fail us in life but without them we are set adrift as this author so beautifully demonstrates.

Renate Krakauer began writing fiction after retirement, and she had short stories and essays published in literary magazines, the Globe and Mail, and two anthologies. Her memoir, But I Had a Happy Childhood, was published by the Azrieli Foundation in 2009 and her novel, Only by Blood, was published by Inanna in 2015.

THE DEAD MAN

Nora Gold

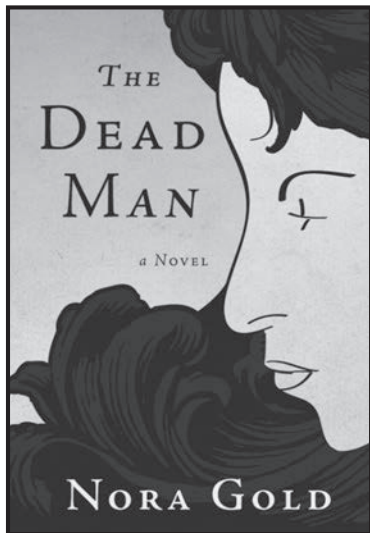
Toronto: Inanna Publications, 2016

REVIEWED BY CAROL
RICKER-WILSON

Nora Gold’s *The Dead Man* is as impressive, as was her first novel, *Fields of Exile*, in its thought-provoking subject matter. In *Fields*, Gold focused on antisemitism in the academy. In *The Dead Man*, she ventures into the literary terrain of women and madness.

Gold exploits the tropes of that most gendered genre, romance (in which the emotional angst of a female protagonist is given primacy, the socio-political world figures largely as the backdrop to an intense and ever-anxious love affair, and a seemingly troubled but fascinating man—somewhat above her in station—is ultimately understood), to write a “horror” story of an inability—or refusal—to overcome an obsession.

Widowed, fiftyish Eve, a music therapist and composer, is the fraught protagonist, who, five years after being unceremoniously dumped by email, perpetually fluctuates between recognizing the gross flaws of her former lover, Jake, and denying their depth and magnitude, as she parses every moment of their past relationship in order to determine if he ever really loved her. The tale presents a litany of her emotional excesses. In the first paragraph she’s contemplating whether to subject Jake to her fortieth or so act of phone harassment. She subsequently recalls her distress, during the relationship, when his attention was temporarily focused on driving or chopping vegetables, rather than on her. She wanted “to lose herself in him, like an infant with a parent” (219). He



remains the constant subject of her major musical compositions.

Women's "madness" in the history of literary texts, be it a real psychic state or a label imposed on them, takes on a host of forms, but is frequently and robustly interpreted by feminist critics to be a *consequence* of their desire for—or acts of—transgression against the dominant socio-sexual order. Simplistically stated, their circumstances have rendered them the victims of patriarchy or masculocentrism. But Gold demonstrates that Eve is largely a victim of her efforts to positively *buttress* traditional social norms about masculinity, despite their detrimental effects, and even as she espouses a counter discourse.

Specifically, at one point, Eve provides for Jake a definition of the recognizably liberal feminism to which she ascribes: "...we believe that women deserve full equality—economically, legally, in every way." She notes the ways in which the dominant structure of the family benefit men, the need for its reorganization, and concludes, "it's a matter of women having self-respect, and not undervaluing themselves. And employers treating women and men as equals." And Jake, hearing (for the first time?) that feminism isn't "anti-men," says he could live with

that. And Eve is momentarily happy with that because it might indicate "not just that he could live with feminism, but whether he could live with her" (79).

As if it's easy to change one's most ingrained desires and behaviours. As if it's easy to find a partner interested in "reorganizing" relationships. In reality, even when experiencing how awful Jake was, Eve repeatedly engages in major work to prop him up. When he mentions pushing his wife into a wall once when he was frustrated, "She nodded. Not saying it was ok he'd hit her, just that she understood his frustration" (216). And she insists on constructing him as a paragon of masculinity. Initially repulsed by Jake's hairless body, "as the mind flips around when you're in love, it went from seeming to her like a defect, to being something desirable, even a sign of his innate superiority.... More spiritual and sensitive. A higher kind of Man" (207).

Gold bleakly articulates what it means to be the fragmented subject of conflicting ideologies: feminism and masculocentrism. Eve more or less uses feminism as a "pull down" menu: I want this and I want that ... but not that." Consequently, her desire for parity and self-respect is continually undermined by her desire for Jake. Through her portrayal of Eve, Gold effectively highlights the psychic consequences when the historically entrenched, culturally tenacious construction of desire is such that straight women, particularly when they possess the social and economic capital to do otherwise, continue to be attracted to the romantic lead of yore: a man with greater such capital, even if the latter, as represented by Jake, demonstrates the personality traits of a psychopath.

At the novel's resolution, Eve declares Jake "dead" to her, but is he? Or will she just keep trying (not) to get over him?

Carol Ricker-Wilson has worked primarily in teacher education, as an English/Literacy consultant at the Toronto District School Board and as a course director and instructional leader at both York University and OISE/UT. In her PhD thesis, she used current literary criticism and critical literacy to examine how women read popular romance and to what purposes.

Heather H. Thomas

Blue Ruby 3

The day ended
in red sky, blue earth
I walked across

a voice that wished
burning the glass
my father drank from

across the blue
a ruby feeling
printed on my brain—

Immunity, I lost you
naming names
as if my parents

did not lie
together and apart
in the small furnace

of my self, as if
the searing healed
my scars, the sound

my own my radiance—
began its walk

Heather H. Thomas is the author of Blue Ruby (FootHills Publishing), Resurrection Papers (Chax Press), and Practicing Amnesia (Singing Horse Press). Her work has been recognized with a Rita Dove Honorable Mention Prize in Poetry, two Gertrude Stein Awards in Innovative American Poetry, and a Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Fellowship.

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