LOOKING BEYOND LINGUISTICS:

A PRAGMATIST-(ECO)FEMINIST FRAMEWORK

FOR DEMOCRATIC DELIBERATION WITH NONHUMAN STAKEHOLDERS

by

CAITLIN TESS VARNER

(Under the Direction of Victoria Davion)

ABSTRACT

In this project, I develop a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework for democratic deliberation, a framework particularly suited for communal inquiry about environmental conflicts. I am critical of what I see to be a prominent, strictly linguistic approach to environmental inquiry in contemporary literature. I suggest that resources can be found in both ecofeminist insights on power and privilege and in John Dewey's concept of the moral imagination for ameliorating environmental conflicts in communities of diverse stakeholders by re-envisioning the ways in which we engage in democratic discourse. I suggest that the best mechanisms for transforming deliberation will be found in educational reforms, where habits of discourse can be modified and different perspectives about the human/nonhuman relationships can be encouraged.

INDEX WORDS: John Dewey, Classical American Pragmatism, Ecofeminism,
                 Environmental Education, Democratic Deliberation

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my parents, Paul and Jeanine Varner, who are a never-ending sources of support and encouragement—academic and otherwise—and who have provided for me in so many ways. I owe everything to the two of you. It is also dedicated to Bart and Polina Varner, whose phone calls and visits sustained me and who have helped me keep perspective on what is most important in life. Finally, it is dedicated to my niece and nephew, Anya Varner and Leo Varner. May the world you grow up in be filled with possibilities for flourishing—and may you be a part of creating the conditions where those possibilities can arise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

In a voiced community, we all flourish. ~ Terry Tempest Williams[1]

In this project, I offer an ecofeminist account of communal inquiry—a kind of democratic deliberation which aims to take into account the voices, metaphorically speaking, of as many members of a given community as possible. Too often, community democratic deliberation is limited, intentionally and unintentionally, to a conventional set of voices—those who articulate their positions in a particular way that is likely to be heard by the other participants. The result is the silencing of the voices of other community stakeholders who cannot or do not represent their interests in the conventionally acceptable or expected way. While this silencing impacts a wide variety of marginalized stakeholders, I am particularly concerned in this project with marginalized nonhuman stakeholders.

For the purposes of this project, I suggest that a nonhuman stakeholder may be any nonhuman life-form that stands to benefit from or be harmed from the shared activities of a collective. Nonhuman stakeholders may include, but are not limited to, the plants and animals of a given biotic community. This claim is intentionally broad, meaning to leave room for the inclusion of all kinds of stakeholders. Any life-form subject to benefit or harm is worthy of consideration as a potential stakeholder. But this does not imply that every life form will be a stakeholder in every situation, nor does it imply that having stakeholder status will ensure equality with other stakeholders. Determining the implications of

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[1] Williams, Terry Tempest. *When Women Were Birds: Fifty-Four Variations on Voice*. New York: Sarah Chrichton Books, 2012. p. 119.

stakeholder status within deliberation will be an ongoing task for the deliberative community. Admittedly, this leaves room for limitless tensions and conflicts. Stakeholders may include life-forms, like viruses, that pose serious danger to society, as well as life-forms that are cherished and valued. The moral considerability of a stakeholder need not mean its interests will prevail, though that may be the implication in some contexts. It merely means that its interests are morally considerable and will be taken into account in responsible deliberation. Throughout the project, I will give examples of how communal inquiry and deliberation can be enriched in order to include nonhuman stakeholders.

In order to demonstrate the role of the nonhuman stakeholder in communal inquiry, I employ a notion of democracy based on the work of John Dewey and expand it using resources of ecofeminist thought. Throughout the project, I recommend and advance what I call a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework of the moral imagination[2], a framework which highlights places of convergence in the Classical American Pragmatist tradition, feminism, and ecofeminism, and which can, I believe, be a useful tool for those concerned with ameliorating environmental conflicts.

I understand Dewey's notion of democracy to be one which is much more than a form of government or a method of political organization. It includes those, to be sure, but it is significantly broader. Democracy is, according to Dewey, "a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience."[3] Dewey's democratic ideal is characterized by a widened conception of the shared interests of those who consent to association. The task

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[2] I mark my ideas with the term (eco)feminist in order to intentionally blur the distinction between different currents in the literature. I draw on feminist and ecofeminist literature, as well as those thinkers who might use different identifiers, like ecological feminism, to represent their work. I acknowledge that these nuances are significant in certain contexts, but for the purposes of this project, I have chosen to draw on the literature broadly and without significant distinction.

[3] Dewey, John. *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education.* New York: W-L-C, 2012. p. 73.

of democracy is to bring diverse voices into conversation with one another in order to break down "those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their action."[4] Democracy, then, begins in conversation. I argue in this project that among those barriers which actively prevent us from "perceiving the full import" of our actions are linguistic barriers—barriers which limit the inclusion of the voices of those who do not represent their interests linguistically. My project examines Dewey's democratic ideal insofar as it may include nonhuman stakeholders in the conversations of democracy.

If we understand community in a broad sense, we must consider that the voices of all those who have a stake in the flourishing[5] and well-being of the community merit our attentive listening. Indeed, I argue, Dewey's transactionalism attests to the importance of understanding nonhuman others *as* stakeholders in a shared community. Our identities are formed and transformed by transactions with others; thus, we should not think of ourselves as merely isolated individuals, but continuous with those whom we encounter. Self and other are mutually constitutive. According to Deweyan transactionalism, the acted and the acted upon are "distinguishable but inseparable."[6] In this view, care for oneself and care

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[4] Regrettably, Dewey uses masculine pronouns throughout his work. For the sake of accuracy, I will retain his language as I quote him in this project, although I acknowledge that this language is now antiquated and problematic.

[5] I use flourishing broadly here to mean something like thriving over a period of time. I acknowledge that this term has a great many possible interpretations and that there is extensive literature offering nuanced accounts of its origins and meanings. In particular, I appreciate Chris. J. Cuomo's understanding of flourishing in *Feminism and Ecological Communities: An Ethic of Flourishing.* Cuomo writes: "An entity is able to flourish when its dynamic charm, through change and readjustments, remains sufficiently integrated and stable—not static—to pereseve and thrive." p. 73.

[6] Pronko and Herman explain Dewey's use of the term *transaction*: "The prefix *trans-* refers to the mutually reciprocal relations that are distinguishable but inseparable aspects of occurrences. The root *action* refers to something taking place, something happening….the term *transaction* was preferred [to interaction] in that it did not detach the transaction from the transactors" (p. 239). Pronko, N.H. and D.T. Herman. "Dewey's Reflex Arc Concept to Transactionalism and Beyond." *Behaviorism.* 10:2 (1982). pp. 229-254.

for another are at least overlapping, if not entangled. Transactionalism, I argue, is one of the most promising features in Dewey's writing making his work suitable for an environmental ethic. Dewey's consistent privileging of the environment, whether natural or constructed, is critical.

In the pursuit of democracy, Dewey posits the concept of the moral imagination as a way to approach the interests of others. While he speaks of the interests of others primarily in terms of transacting *human* others, I suggest that his notion need not necessarily be limited to the human voices within a democratic community. Indeed, it can be extended to apply to the many ways we can be "in conversation" with *nonhuman* others with whom we have transactive relationships. Further, I argue that a feminist critique can enhance a Deweyan notion of the moral imagination through increased emphasis on communication and affect, while introducing an expanding cosmopolitanism. Throughout this project, I argue that the subjects of a given biotic community ought to have their interests represented as voices in the conversation of democracy. The pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework that I develop offers an approach to those interests which will make for richer environmental inquiry.

Ecofeminists have argued that Western cultures have traditionally limited moral personhood to subjects which meet a particular standard of so-called rationality. This has often problematically excluded women, men and women of color, the disabled, and others from civic participation. Yet unlike underrepresented human others, nonhuman stakeholders cannot speak for themselves or represent their own interests in democratic conversation in straightforward ways. Thus, philosophers have through various ways inquired how we can *listen* to the voices of nonhuman others. Catriona Sandilands, for

example, writes: "The expansion of our listening to hear 'other' expressions, and the legitimation of these expressions as aspects of a common world, is a call for reconsideration of who 'we' citizens are."[7] Once we are able to expand our listening, we can begin to uncover the plurality of ways that nonhuman others express their needs, "whether or not they are capable of or disposed to civic rationality."[8] The problem that I take up in this project is that while deep ecologists, transcendentalists, and other philosophers have often asserted the value of listening to these nonhuman voices, the methods through which we can best approach attending to the voices have remained underdeveloped. I contend that we must develop more resources, both physical and conceptual, with which to begin to foster more inclusive communities of inquirers.

It is important to note that here and throughout the project, I use the term *voice* in both literal and metaphorical senses. There are nonhuman others who literally do voice their interests—both in audible languages that humans *do* understand, like the bark of a dog, and in those languages that untrained humans are not disposed to understand, like birdsong. And nonhuman others communicate in myriad other ways, too, using body movement, scent, and other nonverbal means. To think of these various means as language or voice is, of course, to use a very broad understanding of these concepts—and it may, to some extent, risk anthropocentrizing in its imaginative work—but I will maintain that it is a necessary step toward wiser, more inclusive, and more comprehensive environmental inquiry.

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[7] Sandilands, Catriona. "Raising Your Hand in the Council of All Beings: Ecofeminism and Citizenship." *Ethics and the Environment* 4(2):219-233.
[8] Ibid.

One of the guiding ideas in the project is that through the habits of the moral imagination, the interests of nonhuman stakeholders can be voiced in democratic colloquy. I mean here something more radical than concerned humans advocating for the preservation of an endangered species or contested landscape—something we see with frequency. And I mean something less radical than imagining that all species (and the members of the species) can, should, or would be able to articulate a coherent set of aims and desires, if only given the opportunity. Rather, I mean to propose a contemporary Deweyan democratic ideal toward which to strive—a picture of communities working to develop habits of inquiry that actively seek to understand and articulate the plurality of values that exist within them, offering moral consideration to all of the various members, based on creative, experimental exercises in deliberation. Thus, in the project, I use terms like speech, language, voice and communication in intentionally open-ended ways that presume that current trends in deliberation have only scratched the surface of the ways that we can find and express meaning and values within communities. With an aim toward growth and the amelioration of environmental problems, I suggest that we explore these different ways.

The pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework I establish in this project is but one way to approach communal inquiry about environmental problems. I do not wish to suggest that it is the only way, or even that it would always be the best way, to frame an environmental ethic. In fact, I would argue that there may be other, more fitting frameworks with respect to a given environmental conflict. I believe this is in keeping with the contextual and fallible commitments of the pragmatist tradition. In a given context with an experienced environmental conflict, there may well be instances in which more immediate action is

needed or where a different approach would be preferable. The existence of other excellent frameworks, however, does not undermine the importance of a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework. Pragmatism and ecofeminism offer fruitful resources through which to approach current environmental problems in the service of changing current habits and attitudes that are not sustainable.

My motivation for choosing these two traditions as a starting point for ameliorating environmental conflicts deserves acknowledgement. I began my academic study of philosophy with ecofeminism, finding the tradition attractive and illuminating. Ecofeminists' emphasis on the conceptual linkages between various forms of domination resonated with me and revealed ethical, epistemological, and metaphysical implications for human-nonhuman relationships. Yet I struggled with ambiguities surrounding multiple questions about value. What sorts of beings possess intrinsic value? What roles do aesthetic value and economic value play in matters of preservation and conservation? How do we measure value or weigh interests against one another? Whose interests are primary in a given conflict? When I found my way to the Classical American Pragmatists, specifically Dewey, I felt some resolution to these concerns. There are ways to respond to these questions of value without seeking certainty or universality. A pragmatic, contextual response to a given situation allows values to be weighed against one another without cementing the primacy of certain values or interests across circumstances or across time. I am drawn to the experimentalism and fallibility of the pragmatist tradition, which never purports its responses to be exhaustive and which permits constant and continuous reevaluation. This strikes me as being a suitable approach that has traction with our lived experiences—experiences of a world in flux with various actors with overlapping, yet

competing interests. For these reasons and others detailed in the following chapters, I suggest that a framework that includes insights from pragmatism and ecofeminism is promising and powerful.

The project is divided into four chapters. Chapters One and Two offer an account of democratic deliberation and the moral imagination—two ideas emerging out of Deweyan philosophy and which have gathered increasing academic attention in recent years. Chapter One claims that Dewey's concept of the democratic deliberation can and should be expanded to include the voices of nonhuman stakeholders, and Chapter Two suggests that a rich understanding of the moral imagination can help us better approach this task. In Chapter Three, I suggest that bringing feminist and ecofeminist contributions into the discourse provides the conceptual tools necessary to begin the task of including the voices of nonhuman stakeholders in democratic colloquy. In Chapter Four, I apply the pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework developed in the previous chapters to educational contexts, which I argue along with Dewey are uniquely positioned to cultivate and foster habits of widely inclusive democracy. I consider ways that environmental education programs can better engage students in imaginative transactions with nonhuman stakeholders within their communities, ultimately resulting in richer communal inquiry about experienced environmental conflicts. Immediate results of a reinvisioned form of deliberation are hard to imagine in the political sphere or at the level of policy-making. The difficulty of including nonhuman stakeholders in deliberative practices is undoubtedly one of the most important objections in response to this work. I doubt that there is an obvious way to immediately resolve this challenge in political practice. But I suggest that there is potential, through educational means, for the conditions to be created wherein radically

inclusive deliberation may be possible, at present as well as in the future. The development of good habits of democratic inquiry and democratic colloquy—habits critical to biotic citizenship—can begin with education.

In part, I consider this project to be motivated by a direction in environmental philosophy that at once attracts me and concerns me. Many working under the umbrella of environmental pragmatism, like Bryan Norton, seem to me to reinforce problematic dualisms by relying on and seeking to develop a strictly linguistic account of environmental inquiry. While I agree with Norton and others who think that the lack of a shared language poses an impediment to communities of inquirers who wish to employ democratic deliberation for environmental problem-solving, I am concerned that a strictly linguistic account fails to encompass different kinds of values and different kinds of valuers within communities. I believe we can work to develop a more robust picture of democratic deliberation that is ever widening to include the diversity of values and valuing that exists within groups of stakeholders.

Emerging from this project is an approach to environmental inquiry that is widely inclusive, yet accommodates and, in fact, encourages communities of enquirers to acknowledge their social locations and epistemological limitations, while creatively and imaginatively exploring those spaces within which they can stretch in the service of richer social intelligence. When we resist the search for abstract, acontextual justifications for ethical treatment of human and nonhuman stakeholders within communities, we can begin, instead, to rely on lived experience, relationships, and the myriad values of diverse members of communities to guide our inquiry. This is a difficult task which requires context sensitivity, experimentalism, fallibilism, and often wild creativity, but I contend

throughout this project that environmental inquiry approached in this way will open up new possibilities for ameliorating environmental conflicts.

CHAPTER 1

DEMOCRATIC DELIBERATION AND NONHUMAN STAKEHOLDERS

The purpose of this chapter is to examine John Dewey's concept of radically inclusive deliberative democracy as it establishes an expanded view of community—a view of community that has the potential to include nonhuman subjects as members of that community. While my overall project concerns itself with how we may bring pragmatism to bear on problems concerning environmental inquiry, this particular chapter aims to examine democracy as the starting point for transformation within communities. Chapter One is divided into six sections. In these sections, I weave together threads of Dewey's philosophy in order to demonstrate how a Deweyan democratic framework can and should include nonhuman subjects as members of the community. In section I, I examine Dewey's idea of the Great Community, a growth-oriented ideal that Dewey envisioned as the consummation of the democratic "way of life." In section II, I examine Dewey's insistence on the primacy of ordinary experience for philosophy, a theme which many feminists have found promising as they press for women's experiences to be taken seriously in philosophical discourse. I illustrate how Dewey's focus on ordinary experience allows for a privileging of what may be our *most* ordinary experience—our experiences within our biotic communities. Dewey fails to sufficiently recognize this most ordinary feature of our common experience. In section III, I consider Dewey's inclusive notion of a public, inquiring about just how inclusive it can be. While nonhuman subjects were not explicitly

included in Dewey's conception of an inclusive public, I argue that a Deweyan framework

can and should include them. In section IV, I explore Dewey's idea of "conjoint,

communicated experience," a hallmark of democratic growth. Conjoint, communicated

experience is necessary within moral communities aiming to ameliorate experienced

problems taking place within a given context. We must create the conditions where such

communication with and on behalf of nonhuman stakeholders within community is

imaginable. In section V, I put Dewey's holism in conversation with Leopoldian holism.

Although the two thinkers differ greatly with respect to their holistic view, there are also

important points of convergence.[9] Leopoldian holism informs the Deweyan democratic

framework I aim to develop in this project, although I later offer a critique and expansion

of it, as well. In section VI, I evaluate the potential for Dewey's vision of "full and moving

communication" within democratic communities to include those who cannot represent

their interests in a straightforward, linguistic manner. For Dewey, the concept of language

extends well beyond linguistic practices alone, so linguistic barriers, while certainly

complicated, do not prevent the possibility of rich communication across difference or even

across species. These threads of Dewey's work are woven together in my formulation of

a pragmatist-(eco)feminist notion of the moral imagination that can help us to develop the

conditions through which we might begin to ameliorate current environmental problems

through radically inclusive deliberative democracy.

In Western political philosophy, the concept of deliberative democracy has a rich

history. Deliberative democracy, as I employ the term here, is democracy in which

deliberation, rather than coercion, is central to decision-making. Dewey is among many,

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[9] See, for example, Ott, Paul. "Aesthetic Experience and Experiential Unity in Leopold's Conservation Philosophy: A Deweyan Interpretation." *Environmental Philosophy.* 10:2 (2013). pp. 23-52.

including John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas, who have engaged and defended this concept. Although each version is importantly nuanced, their ideas share at least some key features. Sharon Meagher and Ellen Feder articulate three central premises for deliberative democracy:

> First, the legitimacy of democracy ultimately depends on reasoned dialogue and persuasion rather than force or coercion….Second…[A]ll members of democracy should be both prepared and invited to participate in such discussion…Third…[W]hile the process of deliberative democracy is dynamic in the sense that citizens can challenge decisions and continue to make improvements, participants must also honor those decisions that have been rationally justified, until such time that an alternative has been proposed, debated, and accepted, through agreed upon channels and procedures.[10]

These three premises seem to hold, in varying degrees, for many of the major thinkers advocating for deliberative democracy. Although Rawls and Habermas were both publishing decades after Dewey, their positions have been influential in this field, and a few basic features of their accounts deserve mention here, before turning to the development of a Deweyan model of deliberation.

Rawls advocates the use of public reasoning as a means for securing political liberty. In a well-ordered society, naturally pluralistic in character, there must be a way to come to agreement about concerns and, for Rawls, public reasoning is the best means for doing so. Understanding that they do not generally share comprehensive doctrines, citizens may come to shared public reasoning through which to justify political decisions.

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[10] Meagher, Sharon M. and Ellen K. Feder. "The Troubled History of Philosophy and Deliberative Democracy." *The Journal of Public Deliberation.* 6:1 (2010). p. 1-2.

Reasonable citizens should uphold a principle of reciprocity, being willing to put aside their personal commitments for a time, knowing that others must make similar sacrifices: "Citizens are reasonable when, viewing one another as free and equal in a system of social cooperation over generations, they are prepared to offer one another fair terms of cooperation according to what they consider the most reasonable conception of political justice; and when they agree to act upon those terms, even at the cost of their own interests in particular situations, provided that other citizens also accept those terms."[11] The Veil of Ignorance is the paradigmatic example of the principle of reciprocity. Participants are asked to imagine what reasonable principles of justice they would agree to without knowing what role they would play in society. Because individuals would not know if they would have certain privileges and status, they would choose principles that would be most likely to benefit others individuals of all statuses. Public reasoning, then, is a hallmark of democratic deliberation for Rawls, as it is meant to be a means through which a diverse public can secure publicly agreed-upon conditions.

Likewise, Habermas also believes in the deliberative power of reasoning citizens. He advocates for deliberative democracy in response to mainstream liberal and republican views of democracy, both of which he finds to be problematic. The republican view, with its focus on solidarity, risks being hopelessly idealistic. It relies on a presumption that there could exist stable, shared will of the public—a presumption that would be more likely to result in the tyranny of the majority than in democracy. But the liberal view, wishing to avoid that idealism, is concerned with universal standards and tends to secure only negative rights and obligations. This, too, is unsatisfactory. In contrast, Habermas suggests, the

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[11] Rawls, John. "The Idea of Publc Reason Revisited." *The University of Chicago Law Review.* 64:3 (1997). p.770.

focus of a discourse community ought to be creating the conditions for fair and open dialogue, such that decisions based on consensus are possible and able to be institutionalized. The deliberative model, for Habermas, synthesizes important features of liberal and republican democracy, but needs not rely on claims about universal human rights (as in the liberal view) nor the specific ethical claims unique to a community (as in the republican view). Habermas writes, "Discourse theory takes elements from both sides and integrates these in the concept of an ideal procedure for deliberation and decision-making. Weaving together pragmatic considerations, compromises, discourses of self-understanding and justice, this democratic procedure grounds the presumption that reasonable or fair results are obtained."[12] Habermas maintains that the agreements of a discourse community can be institutionalized, thereby weaving together the formal sphere of policy and the informal sphere of ethics.

There are certainly places of convergence among Rawls, Habermas, and Dewey, all three taking communication to be central to democratic life. Yet Rawls and Habermas both have important departures from the view that Dewey espouses. Both Rawls and Habermas require a moral person to meet a certain criterion of reason or enlightenment, necessarily and systematically limiting those who are candidates for deliberation. Furthermore, both rely on the abstract and the transcendent to ground their claims. In contrast, Dewey's understanding of deliberative democracy is one in which social intelligence is harnessed in the service of decision-making. He presents the idea of a Great Community—one in which the interests of the public can be articulated and addressed. The deliberation emerging from such a community will be fallible, experimental, and never

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[12] Ibid., p. 6.

final, but it will provide the possibility for growth, as each member—not only those who meet a certain criterion—is a candidate for participation.

I.   THE GREAT COMMUNITY

Because of looming environmental problems related to global climate change, diminishing natural resources, and rampant consumerism detrimental to the health and vitality of human and nonhuman subjects alike, it is prudent to look at Dewey's vision of a Great Community[13]. The Great Community is a vision for what could emerge from a Great Society, given the proper conditions. Dewey describes the turn from a Great Society to a Great Community in *The Public and Its Problems*:

> We have but touched lightly and in passing upon the conditions which must be fulfilled if the Great Society is to become a Great Community; a society in which the ever-expanding and intricately ramifying consequences of associated activities shall be known in the full sense of that word, so that an organized, articulate Public comes into being. The highest and most difficult kind of inquiry and a subtle, delicate, vivid, and responsive art of communication must take possession of the physical machinery of transmission and breathe life into it.[14]

A cynical response to this vision is understandable. It may seem doubtful that we can even approach such an envisioned transformation—from a Great Society to a Great Community—in the face of these environmental problems, many of which are inextricably tied to human actions and negligence. Yet I argue that Dewey's deep-seated faith in

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[13] Although Dewey develops his own idea of the Great Community, it is clear that he draws upon the work of Josiah Royce. Royce details his own vision in *The Hope of the Great Community.* Royce, Josiah. *The Hope of the Great Community.* New York: MacMillan Company, 1916.

[14] Dewey, John. *The Public and its Problems*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1927. p. 184.

democracy and the creativity and imagination embedded in his melioristic project can be a source of optimism for those who are concerned with our present environmental crises and for those who are concerned with broader philosophical problems regarding the natural world.

In his 1927 work *The Public and its Problems,* Dewey takes up questions of democracy, asking, among other things, whether or not democracy is effective for ameliorating modern problems and what constitutes a public. He insists that we can live in and experience a Great Society—a status the United States has enjoyed for a long time— without being a Great Community. The difference between the two is significant.

One important difference between the two relates to those who hold power. There is a wide gulf between what Dewey identifies as the state—elected elites—and the widely disparate and dissonant public who elect them. The Great *Society* can be a highly functioning political democracy, but the public itself plays a fairly insignificant role in it. For democracy to be effective, the public must play a central role.

From Dewey's vision of democracy emerges an engaged public that deliberates in such a way that consequences and relationships are understood in all their complexity. From an inchoate public, a functioning democracy is achievable, but the task, according to Dewey, is both intellectual and mechanical.

The intellectual task is foremost a communicative task. We must discover by what means a "scattered, mobile, and manifold public may…define and express its interests."[15] Before the machinery of political democracy can be optimally altered or constructed to meet the needs of the public, the public must find a means through which to articulate those

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[15] Ibid., 146.

needs. This entails allowing each member of a group to take part in guiding that group, though "taking part" will, of course, be expressed in many different ways. The mechanical task, which follows from the intellectual task, will be to order the political phase of democracy—the "machinery"—such that the public is "supreme guide…to governmental activity."[16]

The conditions for the Great Community begin to be met when the members of the society come together across difference for problem-solving about shared interests:

> From the point of view of the individual, it [the Great Community] consists in having a responsible share according to capacity in forming and directing the activities of the groups to which one belongs and in participating according to need in the values which the groups sustain. From the standpoint of the groups, it demands liberation of the potentialities of members of a group in harmony with the interests and goods which are common.[17]

Provocatively, Dewey argues that until the public is liberated, in this sense, "it is somewhat futile to consider what political machinery will suit them."[18] The intellectual step of determining how best to articulate the shared and unshared interests of the public is primary.

Phillip Bishop elaborates, claiming that the Deweyan "democratic way of life is one where all the individuals who make up the community in which they are a part feel as if they have a channel toward directing the growth of that community and are not merely

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[16] Ibid., 146.
[17] Ibid., 147.
[18] Ibid., 147.

free-loading from the work of others nor slavishly directed towards the interests of a few."[19] The conditions of the Great Community begin to be met when a heterogeneous public is participatory and communicative, aiming towards growth for all individuals. Democracy is, then, a rich possibility for modernity, Dewey concludes, provided certain environing conditions are met. When those conditions are met, we may come closer to resembling a Great Community.

My suggestion is that our present attempts to articulate the interests of a public through the machinery of democracy fall short. We have a tendency to prioritize the machinery of democracy over the intellectual task Dewey suggests. Perhaps our machinery would be more suitable if more attention were devoted to considering the various ways in which we can make known the "intricately ramifying consequences of associated activities" and liberate "the potentialities of members of a group."[20]

In liberating the potentialities of members of a group, of course, one also unleashes limitless potential for conflict over the plurality of values that exist within groups. This is to be expected and is consistent with pragmatist axiology and Deweyan instrumentalism. Values are myriad, conflicting, contingent, and endless. Values are determined by humans in a particular space and time, not predetermined in any way.[21] They are conditional, rather

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[19] Bishop, Philip. *Dewey's Pragmatism and the Great Community.* Diss. University of South Florida, 2010. p 109.

[20] Dewey, *Public and Its Problems,* p. 147.

[21] See William James' essay "The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life" for an extended discussion of pragmatist axiology. James outlines a metaphysical argument wherein a thing is understood as good or bad only because it has been deemed so, not because of some essential quality about that thing. He explains: "We may now consider that what we distinguished as the metaphysical question in ethical philosophy is sufficiently answered, and that we have learned what the words 'good,' 'bad,' and 'obligation' severally mean. They mean no absolute natures, independent of personal support. They are objects of feeling and desire, which have no foothold or anchorage in Being, apart from the existence of actually living minds**."** James, William. *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy.* 1912. The Floating Press, 2010. p. 220.

than eternal. It is only through intelligence that we can navigate amongst them and only through experimentation that we may test them in the world. Dewey refers to the "endless ends"[22] of human action. Assuming a fixed set of ends—or a set of value judgments assumed to be final—only distracts people from the thorough examination of existing conditions. Empirical verification will be the test of a given value's weight, not its belonging to a predetermined realm of values. Even our most seemingly secure value judgments are only provisional; they must be continually considered and tested.

If we accept this pragmatist axiology, we should not be wary about inviting wider participation from diverse members of the public in the service of forming the Great Community. If the result of inclusivity is that more conflicting values emerge from obscurity, it will only enrich our understanding of the world in which we live and its complexity.

In the following section, I continue my examination of Dewey's vision of an articulated public—a public from which a Great Community may emanate—considering the sorts of stakeholders that might be included.

II.   DEWEY'S FEMINISM AND THE PRIMACY OF ORDINARY EXPERIENCE

If democracy is a form of government, it is so only derivatively, according to Dewey. Rather, democracy is first a social ideal.[23] Democracy is a form of associated living that seeks amelioration for all members of a given society, based on the idea that all

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[22] Dewey qtd. in Guinlock, p. 72.

[23] Visnovsky, Emil. "The Deweyan Conception of Participatory Democracy ." *Americana: E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary*. 3.3 (2007) Web. 12 Oct. 2013. Visnovsky writes: "Democracy is a high cultural, moral, and spiritual ideal first, and a procedure, a method, a technique second. It is a 'way of life' first, and a kind of state second."

members have something to contribute and have shared, if disparate, interests. Dewey frequently emphasizes this inclusion of all members, yet his account offers only a limited assessment of who or what subjects ought to be counted as members of a given society.[24] The purpose of institutions is not to limit but "to set free and to develop the capacities of human individuals without respect to race, sex, class, or economic status."[25] This does not mean that all members' needs will ultimately be met, nor that all needs carry equal weight. But it does imply that we should approach deliberation in a way that doesn't automatically discount certain members' interests as negligible.

This insistence was critical for Dewey, who demonstrated strong commitments to anti-racist and anti-sexist policies and institutions both in his writings and in his personal life. He had a close relationship to philosopher and feminist[26] Jane Addams, a pioneer in the settlement house movement in Chicago in the late nineteenth century. Together they envisioned a democracy thoroughly tied to social justice and wished for this democratic ideal to unseat the mainstream emphasis on the individual in political discourse. Dewey's faith in democracy is tethered to a cosmopolitanism that runs throughout his work, highlighting the importance of communication across difference, giving individuals a chance to take a place of significance in the wider framework of the community in which they find themselves. This cannot be achieved when voices are actively or passively silenced.

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[24] Richard J. Bernstein, for example, claims that this limited assessment is a serious failure of Dewey's work, writing that "Dewey declared that radical liberalism requires a 'social goal based on an inclusive plan.' But Dewey never spelled out the details of such an 'inclusive plan.'" Bernstein, Richard J. "Dewey's Vision of Radical Democracy." *The Cambridge Companion to Dewey.* Molly Cochran, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. p. 305.

[25] Dewey, John. *Reconstruction in Philosophy.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920. eBook. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/40089/40089-h/40089-h.htm>. p. 187.

[26] Widely considered a feminist, Addams herself rejected such a label, though she expressed sympathies with feminist movements.

Gregory Pappas explains that according to Dewey, "The freeness and fullness of communication needed in democracy is not possible when there is intolerance, marginalization, fragmentation, polarization, and segregation. Racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, and all "barriers that divide human beings into sets and cliques, into antagonistic sects and factions' remain culprits in today's environment."[27] Because individual members of society have varied and conflicting interests, Dewey's democratic ideal also contains an important emphasis on empathetic understanding of others. Pappas maintains, "It is only when individuals in communication are able to emotionally and imaginatively take the role of the other, and be willing to be affected by it, that significant learning and shared experience occurs."[28] A participatory democracy, as Dewey envisioned, allows for wide inclusion of previously marginalized members so that the social intelligence needed for deliberation within the community can be maximized. Charlene Haddock Seigfried remarks on the importance of social intelligence for deliberation:

> It is not just morally wrong to refuse to include in deliberations that affect their lives those members of society that are believed to be inferior. It is also an intellectual fallacy to suppose that limiting points of view to those of an intellectual elite would more adequately achieve the objectivity expressed in the resolution of problematic situations than a more inclusive approach would.[29]

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[27] Ibid., p 234.
[28] Ibid., p 235.
[29] Seigfried, Charlene Haddock. "John Dewey's Pragmatist Feminism." In Larry A. Hickman, ed. *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1998. p. 194.

Certainly Dewey did not have nonhuman subjects in mind as contributing members of a participatory, deliberative democracy, even as he emphasized an inclusive approach. Yet I contend that his democratic ideal is sufficiently wide to include them and, indeed, ought to do so. Our deliberations will be more thorough and will be more likely to address social problems at their roots when the various stakeholders involved—even if those stakeholders are plants or animals—are included.

Projects adopting a Deweyan framework to include marginalized others have been underway in feminist scholarship for quite some time, although the emphasis has historically been on women rather than nonhuman subjects. As ecofeminist scholarship gains prominence in philosophical discourse, this primary emphasis on women is expanding to include other marginalized groups, including nonhuman subjects. This shift in emphasis needs to continue, and I locate resources in Dewey to do so.

Dewey claims that philosophy should begin with the everyday experiences of ordinary people with diverse and disparate interests grounded in their own experiences—a radical position setting him apart from much of the canon of Western philosophy. Rather than beginning with abstract theorizing and then making applications to concrete problems, Dewey's project allows the diverse experiences and interests of actual subjects to serve as the material needed for inquiry about how best to solve the concrete problems of lived experience. Pappas explains, "For Dewey, if there is any hope to ameliorate a situation, it must come from within the same indeterminate situation."[30] We ought to look for solutions from those who experience or are impacted by the problem at hand. Responsible inquiry will be inquiry that takes the standpoint of the marginalized seriously.

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[30] Pappas, p 120.

Feminists have found Dewey's emphasis on everyday experience to be particularly promising, as it radically restructures what has commonly been privileged in philosophical attention. Whereas much of Western philosophy has devalued women's work and women's experiences, regarding them as irrelevant to philosophical inquiry, Dewey's restructuring allows concrete, lived experience to take a place of prominence, thereby subverting what is commonly thought to "count" as philosophy.

Everyday experiences are critical for Dewey, and this is a place of departure from much of Western philosophy. Even empirical thinkers have a tendency, according to Dewey, to think of experience as a whole, rather than individual, discrete experiences. But Dewey insists that inquiry should always begin with concrete, lived experiences rather than abstract conceptions or even unifications of experience as a whole.[31] Experiences are guide and method to theory.

Dewey's insistence on starting with experience has been taken up and shared by many feminists. One such philosopher who sees the rich potential of Dewey for feminists is Lisa Heldke. She writes:

> Dewey's philosophical project impels a radical rethinking of the way that philosophical attention has been distributed among human endeavors—a distribution that, since Plato, has tended to privilege "head work" to the exclusion of "hand work," theory making to the exclusion of practice. He presents his readers with motive, means, and opportunity to bring the practical and the everyday into

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[31] Pappas writes: "The practical stance of everyday life has been neglected in philosophy when it should be the primary focal point for philosophical inquiry. The legitimate starting and ending point for any philosophical investigation is our own everyday, concrete experience, that is, nothing more or less than that which appears, rough and tumble as it usually does, in our lives from day to day" (xii).

the scope of philosophy—to make philosophy genuinely address the "common materials" of everyday life.[32]

Women's experiences are among the "common materials at hand" that should be taken seriously in philosophy. Heldke considers this focus of Dewey's work to have transformative and emancipatory power for women and for philosophy at large, though she admits it is underdeveloped in Dewey's own work. While Dewey's theoretical position allows for women's experiences to emerge from obscurity in philosophical theorizing, he offers little to show how changing our philosophical attention in this way actually works.

Heldke writes that she is "seeking something more" from Dewey in his treatment of everyday activities and common materials of experience. Careful not to attribute to Dewey a feminism that he would not have claimed for himself, Heldke and other feminists have used Dewey's inclusivity as a starting point to developing a feminist pragmatism that they believe was latent and never fully realized in Dewey's own work. I suggest that we can go even further with Dewey. In "seeking something more from Dewey," I suggest that we should examine the idea of "common materials" of experience all the way down to the roots.

Throughout this project, I recommend and develop a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework that takes the rich possibilities of Dewey's work and augments them with a feminist critique. First, however, I will establish a fundamental claim necessary for the project—that nonhuman subjects are members of the moral community and ought to be given voice in the conversation of democracy. A Deweyan understanding of deliberative democracy allows for this inclusion, as feminists have shown in projects like Heldke's.

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[32] Heldke, Lisa. "How Practical is John Dewey?" *Feminist Interpretations of John Dewey.* Ed. Charlene Haddock Seigfried. University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State Press, 2002. p. 240.

III.   AN INCLUSIVE NOTION OF THE PUBLIC

Understood in a Deweyan light, democracy—as a way of life, rather than as political democracy alone—consists of habits and dispositions that allow the collective experiences of the public—social intelligence—to provide the necessary material for deliberation. From this understanding, radically inclusive notions of what constitutes a public may emerge.

Craig Browne, in "Pragmatism and Radical Democracy," explains, "For Dewey…democracy enables a greater variety of experience, in the sense of encountering a range of stimuli and a widening of interaction, thereby enhancing the creativity of action in a manner that breaks down the barriers of social exclusion."[33] Clearly, for Dewey, problem-solving is best when the material conditions for it consist of the widest variety of input from, as Dewey himself puts it, "a scattered, mobile, and manifold public."[34] A central question of my project thus arises: what kinds of members make up a public? Dewey clearly holds an inclusive notion of the public, but for how much inclusion can his account allow?

Political theorists have written extensively about increasing diversity in democratic discourse within a society in order to address the needs and interests of all those who have a stake in the decision. The desired inclusion has most frequently focused on women, people of color, and other often-ignored voices—voices that are notably *human* voices. While this inclusion is laudable, it is still limited. I suggest that if we take Dewey's ideas

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[33]Browne, Craig. "Pragmatism and Radical Democracy." *Critical Horizons: A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory.* 10:1 (2009). p. 71.
[34] *Public and its Problems*, p. 146.

seriously, we ought also to aim to include the voices, so to speak,[35] of the nonhuman stakeholders within a given community.

This suggestion is based on two key assumptions: one, that nonhuman subjects are stakeholders—that they are the sorts of subjects that can have interests and that those interests ought to be relevant to the other stakeholders within a society—and, two, that nonhuman subjects can also have varying degrees of social intelligence. Human social intelligence is central to Dewey's idea of deliberative democracy. Because social intelligence is evidenced in plants and animals as well as humans[36], it seems arbitrary to exclude nonhuman social intelligence as one of the diverse kinds of input we should strive for in democratic deliberation. Although it may be hard to discern how to include nonhuman social intelligence in deliberation, it is nonetheless an important task.

These assumptions present difficulties for some, yet I claim that both pragmatist scholarship and feminist scholarship lend support to the claim that deliberative democracy ought to include the voices of nonhuman subjects, as both pragmatism and feminism are traditions that have historically dedicated energies to enlarging the scope of citizenship.

In keeping with pragmatists and many feminists, I argue that we are socially situated, so our moral evaluations should not be merely impartial and abstract, but must be grounded in lived experiences, both our own experiences and the experiences of others, in order to be useful. Impartial and abstract moral claims are not positioned to adequately

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[35] See comments in the introduction about the metaphorical and literal uses of the term *voice.*

[36] It is widely recognized that certain mammals like dolphins, chimpanzees, and elephants, to name just a few examples, have sophisticated social intelligence. Yet other nonhuman subjects, like trees, also have social intelligence. The acacia tree, for example, can recognize when it is under attack and can adjust the tannins in its leaves to produce a substance toxic to some mammals, like antelope. The tree can then emit pheromones to alert other trees to do the same, thus protecting its community from predators and possible extinction. Yam, Phillip. "Acacia Trees Kill Antelope in the Transvaal." *Scientific American.* 263:6 (1990). p. 28.

respond to the complexity of unique situations. Moral evaluations are best when they have traction with the experiences of the agents involved.

Social epistemology, for Dewey, does not amount to substituting one's own knowledge for that of another or for the group but, rather, implies that our best ways of knowing involve both self-knowledge and knowledge of the other. Our lives are enriched and our evaluations wiser when we include diverse experiences. Dewey writes, "To cooperate by giving differences a chance to show themselves because of the belief that the expression of difference is not only a right of the other persons but is a means of enriching one's own life-experience, is inherent in the democratic personal way of life."[37] Great strides have been made in recent decades to widen the scope of citizenship for women, people of color, and other marginalized groups. Their voices are now heard, in varying degrees, as citizens of the moral community representing their own interests and, indeed, sharing interests with non-marginalized peoples. While nonhuman subjects are often considered *in* democratic colloquy, they are rarely considered in democratic colloquy as citizens or stakeholders[38]. Yet we cannot take the silence of nonhuman subjects—their inability to communicate linguistically—to mean that they have nothing to make known. Anthony Weston makes this point emphatically in his work on environmental etiquette. The problem is not that nonhuman subjects are silent, but that we actively silence them:

> Swaggering, talking too loud [sic], not knowing how to listen, this very (often innocent) clumsiness we [may] reconceive as *the* fundamental ethical failure:

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[37] LW 14: CD 228

[38] Many environmental philosophers and activists use the language of citizenship in reference to nonhuman subjects in terms of animal rights. I am less interested here in rights than I am in best practices for democratic colloquy and in a broad conception of a moral community. I find that the idea of citizenship is a useful one nonetheless. For one example of the discussion of animal citizenship, see Kymlika, Will and Sue Donaldson. *Zoopolis: A Political Theory of Animal Rights.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011.

failure to acknowledge and understand ourselves as living in a larger animate universe, and failure too—crucially—to draw out, to co-participate with, that very universe. Instead, we drive it into silence, and then take that silence to confirm our own centrality, as if we really were the only ones with anything to say.[39]

In order to responsibly and ethically approach the interests of diverse others, including nonhuman others, within community in democratic colloquy, we must be willing to be receptive to their voices, however large the interpretive gap. Approaching this task through an environmental pragmatist framework, I claim that we must not stop at acknowledging our social situatedness, but that we also must acknowledge that we are ecologically situated in biotic communities that are inextricably tied to our lived experience.[40] Steven Fesmire, highlighting Dewey's insistence that humans cannot be extracted from their surroundings, writes, "Individuals must be replanted in their social soil."[41] I certainly agree with this metaphor—human experience needs to be grounded in collective experience rather than an artificial individualism. But I would extend this metaphor further; individuals must be replanted in the *actual* soil, a task made possible through recognizing that even our social relations take place in a living environment.

Our biotic communities are part of the "common material of experience"— perhaps the most common experience we all share. No one can extract himself or herself from his or her biotic community, as skilled as we are at pretending we can. Contemporary Western

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[39] Weston, Anthony. "Environmental Ethics as Environmental Etiquette: Toward an Ethics-Based Epistemology." *Environmental Ethics.* Vol. 21. (1999). p. 134.

[40] It will be important here to explore the limits and expanse of the idea of a biotic community. I will address throughout the project whether the moral imagination applies to one large biotic community or many small, overlapping biotic communities.

[41] Fesmire, Steven. *John Dewey and Moral Imagination.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003. p 26.

culture is characterized by an alienation from the natural world. From problematic urbanization to cheap food imports to some kinds of waste removal systems, our culture is set up in many ways to create an artificial distance between what is thought of as people and what is thought of as the natural world. But, of course, we cannot actually separate ourselves from our environing conditions, even though we may find ways to make it appear that we can. We necessarily live in a living, breathing world alongside nonhuman subjects, so we cannot dismiss the natural world as irrelevant to or separate from our democratic concerns. The natural world is necessarily a part of the environing conditions that make up community. And Dewey insists that humans are always in transaction with their environing conditions. Subject and object continually shape and reshape each other. To conceive of them as entirely separate is to misunderstand their continuity. Humans and the natural world are, perhaps, a paradigmatic example of this point. Humans shape their biotic communities and biotic communities shape human. They are continually in transaction with one another.

James Garrison writes that "living creatures cannot be sharply distinguished from their environing conditions. For Dewey, human nature is a part of nature in its wider sense. We live *through* the environment."[42] Thus, our environment is morally relevant. However, although Dewey frequently highlights the importance of transactions between organism and environment, he stops short of articulating an ethic that explicitly addresses the environment itself.

As stakeholders in a society, all members in a given biotic community need to have their interests represented—to have a voice in the conversation of democracy—because we

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[42] Garrison, James W. "John Dewey's Philosophy as Education." *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation.* Ed. Larry Hickman. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. p.65.

all *share* in the interests of the society. If we acknowledge that our political communities are not only socially but also ecologically situated—that we are always in transaction with the natural world and cannot flourish apart from it—it seems that we have a responsibility to represent the interests of nonhuman subjects, ineffable as they may be. Dewey writes that "all those who are affected by social institutions must have a share in producing and managing them,"[43] and he insists that exclusion is also detrimental to the task of democracy:

> The very fact of exclusion from participation is a subtle form of suppression. It gives individuals no opportunity to reflect and decide upon what is good for them. Others who are supposed to be wiser and who in any case have more power decide the question for them and also decide the methods and means by which subjects may arrive at the enjoyment of what is good for them.[44]

It is an important task, then, for those interested in bringing this democratic ideal to bear on present society to inquire about how best to go about including more and more participants in the conversations of democracy, including diverse participants—animals, plants, even watersheds or mountaintops.

Sentient animals, particularly domesticated pets, are the most intuitive example of how to re-envision the types of subjects that can be understood to be stakeholders in the moral community. I maintain that that we must go beyond this limited extension. Cryptobiotic soils make an interesting illustration. Cryptobiotic soils are an amalgam of cyanobacteria, lichens, and mosses that perform a vital ecological function in the desert Southwest. Making up a majority of the living groundcover in arid desert landscapes,

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[43] LW 11: OD 218.
[44] Ibid.

cryptobiotic soil crusts are responsible for increasing the stability of land that is otherwise extremely susceptible to erosion. It is of utmost importance to the sustainability of the biotic community of the desert Southwest that the cryptobiotic soil crusts stay largely intact. We need not rely on intuitions about the intrinsic value or moral agency of the soil crust in order to understand that it is an integral part of the biotic community that merits consideration.

I maintain that Dewey's insistence that individuals are always in transaction with their environments should lead us to conclude that our biotic communities—and those stakeholders that constitute them—are always morally considerable. It is worthwhile to note, however, that simply saying that a stakeholder or group of stakeholders is morally considerable does not guarantee that their interests will prevail over the interests of others. Conflict is inevitable in this context, just as it is in deliberation involving only human stakeholders.

I begin inquiry about Dewey's vision of democratic conversation by raising my concerns about the voices ordinarily left out of the conversation—namely, the voices of the nonhuman stakeholders in a community, from family pets and livestock to cryptobiotic soil crusts. Although Dewey's deliberative democracy does not explicitly incorporate these particular marginalized voices, I believe it is well-situated to do so, since in a Deweyan framework, individuals are never isolated from their environments. In fact, according to Dewey, wider inclusion of this sort has transformative potential to turn a great society into a great community. Dewey's faith in that transformative and ameliorative power is foundational to his democratic vision.

Wider inclusion of voices that share common interests may benefit not only the marginalized members of a given community. Indeed, it has potential to benefit all members of that community, though it certainly does not guarantee this. The task of democracy, Dewey claims, "is forever the creation of a freer and more humane experience in which all share and to which all contribute."[45] The language Dewey uses in these passages is anthropocentric, but the salient idea, I argue, is that all members of a society share interests and share in intellectual and physical resources necessary for deliberation. When democratic deliberation is inclusive and fully communicative, a Great Society comes closer to resembling what Dewey envisions as a Great Community. I suggest that without extending this communication to include nonhuman voices, Dewey's vision falls short. We cannot make sense of the "intricately ramifying consequences of associated activities"[46] if we presume that those activities involve only the human members of a community at a morally significant level. A Deweyan framework that can accommodate nonhuman stakeholders as morally considerable members will begin to approximate the conditions for the emergence of a Great Community.

IV. CONJOINT, COMMUNICATED EXPERIENCE AND RADICALLY INCLUSIVE DELIBERATION

A central recurring tenet of Dewey's philosophy is that conversation is a hallmark of democracy. Yet conversation is not simply a starting point to the democratic ideal, but is itself tethered to the ongoing process of democracy. It is at once both a means to democracy and an end in itself. Conversation, participatory by nature, is how members of a society share in common intelligence for the betterment of both the collective and the

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[45] LW 14: CD 230
[46] *Public and Its Problems,* p. 184.

individuals themselves. Dewey poetically makes this claim in *The Public and Its Problems*: "Democracy will come into its own, for democracy is a name for a life of free and enriching communion. It had its seer in Walt Whitman. It will have its consummation when free social inquiry is indissolubly wedded to the art of full and moving communication."[47]

The centrality of "full and moving" communication for democracy certainly presents difficulties in the inclusion of nonhuman subjects as participants, yet I contend that it is also promising. As we seek amelioration of dire and complicated environmental problems, democratic colloquy that includes nonhuman subjects as members of society may be a space of untapped potentiality. And this should not feel too far-fetched: Dewey's notion of full and moving communication is necessarily creative, imaginative, and artful. It is distributive, meaning that it must include participants beyond elected elites or those in positions of power, but it is a significantly richer notion than that, invoking the combined creativity of varied subjects. Simply because the idea of colloquy that includes nonhuman subjects is nontraditional and hard to envisage should not be a reason to dismiss it, since Dewey insists that the power of communication for democracy is precisely in this creative communication across difference –even, indeed, radical difference.

Critical of liberal notions of autonomy and of democratic structures which offer power only to elected elites, Dewey argues that the democratic ideal is rooted in social intelligence, not in political liberalism which focuses primarily on the autonomous individual. This puts Dewey in contrast with other mainstream political philosophers, for whom individualism and liberalism are primary. Tom Alexander explains, "The moral self, for Dewey, cannot be conceived as some absolutely isolated, unchanging entity, a source

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[47] Ibid.

of propositional attitudes, free actions, emotive ejaculations, or rational commands. It is a process of growth ecologically connected with its biological and cultural world."[48]

In the democratic way of life that Dewey envisions, diverse subjects with disparate and divergent interests come together to express their "conjoint communicated experience."[49] Such communicated experience has rich transformative power as it places all members of the society as potential participants. Members can determine together what counts as the good rather than having it imposed upon them. A salient idea here is that because members share in social resources, they also share, in varying degrees, in their interests. Terry Tempest Williams takes up this idea in her work *The Open Space of Democracy*:

> In the open space of democracy, the health of the environment is seen as the wealth of our communities. We remember that our character has been shaped by the diversity of America's landscapes and it is precisely that character that will protect it....The open space of democracy provides justice for all living things—plants, animals, rocks, and rivers, as well as human beings. It is a landscape that encourages diversity and discourages conformity.[50]

V.   WIDE CITIZENSHIP OF THE WHOLE BIOTA—DEWEYAN AND
        LEOPOLDIAN HOLISM

In this section, I wish to place Dewey in the context of environmental philosophy, revealing a feature of his philosophy which is amenable to an environmental ethic with

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[48] Alexander, Thomas M. "John Dewey and the Moral Imagination: Beyond Putnam and Rorty toward a Postmodern Ethics." *Transactions of the Charles S. Pierce Society*. 29:3 (1993): p. 390.
[49] MW 9: DE 93
[50] Williams, Terry Tempest. *The Open Space of Democracy*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004.

little manipulation. Throughout his body of work, Dewey presents a holism that environmental philosophers should take seriously.

Aldo Leopold, writing contemporaneously with Dewey, has often been given the lofty title of the father of environmental ethics. Though they may seem like strange bedfellows, in many ways, Leopold and Dewey are kindred spirits. I argue that by putting Leopold and Dewey in conversation, we can adapt a version of Deweyan holism suitable for environmental ethics and, indeed, for deliberative democracy.

Leopold, much like Dewey, understands the proper conditions of inquiry to be furnished by everyday, ordinary experience—especially as such knowledge pertains to relations between humans and the natural world.. Leopold writes that "every farm is a textbook on animal ecology; woodsmanship is the translation of the book."[51] An important connection between Dewey and Leopold that merits attention is their emphasis on expanding the circle of the moral community.

Leopold maintains a nuanced holism throughout his work, advocating an understanding of the whole biota, rather than simply focusing on individuals. This is not to denigrate the importance of the individuals, but to realize that individual subjects, human and nonhuman, are interdependent[52]. He writes, "If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand or not. If the biota, in the course of aeons,

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[51] Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac: with Essays on Conservation from Round River.* 1949. New York: Ballantine Books, 1966. p. 84.

[52] Critics of Leopold have claimed that his holism is problematic, disregarding concern for individual subjects. Callicott, J.B. "Can a Theory of Moral Sentiments Support a Genuinely Normative Environmental Ethics" *Beyond the Land Ethic: More Essays in Environmental Philosophy*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1999: p. 79-99. Others, like Bryan G. Norton, have recognized the contextualist and pragmatist values in Leopold, arguing that he never subordinates the importance of the individual to the importance of the group, but rather, that he simply identifies a variety of principles and values, some of which can be in conflict. Norton, Bryan G. *Toward Unity Among Environmentalists*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent thinking."[53] Leopold insists that human beings are part of—not master of—the moral community that includes the nonhuman world. They are, in fact, "plain member and citizen" of the community.[54] Leopold's land ethic radically subverts a traditional understanding of human/nature relations that privilege humans. Intelligence and rationality must not be—and generally are not—criteria for citizenship, but in mainstream environmental philosophy, intelligence and rationality often figure heavily into inquiry about the moral status of nonhuman subjects. In a Leopoldian framework, however, we can maintain that the consideration of nonhuman subjects is justifiable by nature of their participating plainly in the biotic community, rather than participating intelligently or rationally. Plain participation is a form of democratic participation. Zachary Piso suggests, "In order for environmental management to be sound and just, we need a method for participating intelligently *as well as* a method for participating plainly."[55]

Scholars engaging pragmatism and environmental philosophy have identified a similar strand of holism running throughout Dewey's work. Hugh McDonald explains that, while Dewey was not as progressive as some environmental thinkers of his day, he did espouse a thoroughgoing holism and ethical naturalism that can help justify our moral commitments to the natural world without making foundationalist claims about intrinsic value. In fact, McDonald claims that Dewey's naturalism is better suited for environmental

[53]Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac: with Essays on Conservation from Round River.* 1949. New York: Ballantine Books, 1966. P. 190.

[54] Ibid., 240.

[55] Piso, Zachary. 2012, March. "Narrative Ecology as Extending the Community of the Environmental Pragmatist." 41st Annual Meeting of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy. Denver, CO. Emphasis mine.

ethics than any other frameworks that rest on foundationalist claims because "Dewey's holism avoids the problem of grounding environmental ethics in intrinsic value and then backtracking on either the issue of the intrinsic value of individuals or the relation of intrinsic value to moral obligation."[56] If every individual, human or nonhuman, has intrinsic value, then all instrumental relations are problematic. We need not presume that individuals do *not* have intrinsic value, but we must justify our moral obligations on a different basis. For Dewey, that different justification is found in a holistic understanding of the working of the whole biota as having moral significance. McDonald shows that moral obligations to the natural world can be derived through a Deweyan framework: "Clearly, moral considerability is not confined to humans, given Dewey's account of human nature as intimately bound up with a web of environmental relations. Destruction of the environment would have bad consequences for the human organism, which requires it for its life processes."[57] Dewey himself claims this in *Freedom and Culture*: "the facts of man are continuous with the rest of nature and would thereby ally ethics with physics and biology."[58] Dewey and Leopold are both radical in their suggestions that even the smallest organisms and the environment itself have moral significance in a way quite different from the traditional value claims of intrinsic-value environmental philosophers. Although Dewey's understanding of environment here is quite different from Leopold's, I claim that a generous reading allows us to take seriously his claims about the continuity between "the facts of man….[and] the rest of nature."

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[56] McDonald, Hugh. *John Dewey and Environmental Philosophy.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004. p 140.
[57] Ibid., 129.
[58] Dewey, qtd. in McDonald, 129.

In both Leopold and my ecologically oriented reading of Dewey, each part of the biotic community has moral significance. Dewey is less concerned than Leopold with developing this claim as it pertains to nonhuman subjects, but he is nevertheless clear that the moral significance of all subjects is intricately tied to social intelligence and communication. The more material of common experience we can bring into our democratic deliberation, the more likely we are to harness the emancipatory and meliorative power of social intelligence.

VI.   TOWARD FULL AND MOVING COMMUNICATION

If it is the case, as I have argued, that nonhuman subjects ought to be considered members of community and, as such, ought to have their interests represented in participatory democratic colloquy, then we understandably face the problem of how to do so. Indeed, the very idea of communication presents difficulties when we are considering subjects who cannot literally speak for themselves. While communication across difference is often rife with difficulties, communication across this *much* difference seems impossible. For Dewey, however, such tensions in transactions with others are always places for radical growth because they unleash the creative intelligence of a diverse and manifold public. Optimistically, a focus on communication between nonhuman subjects and human subjects might help to dismantle unhealthy power structures and exploitative relationships, yet this envisioned end-in-itself is not the only reason to strive for such communication. For Dewey, such attempts are always ongoing and have no definite end. This is democracy as a process—an active, experimental, and fallible project—aiming to ameliorate current problems as they are experienced. Indeed, it is not obvious or intuitive how to go about including nonhuman subjects in democratic colloquy, but that is why I argue the

importance of stretching creatively to try. To borrow the words of Leopold again, "That the situation is hopeless should not prevent us from doing our best."[59]

Leopold frequently gestures towards this problem of communication with nonhuman members of the moral community. "The chit-chat of the woods is sometimes hard to translate,"[60] he writes, and he laments those who fail to try: "The man failed to sense that here was something more than a bird-call, that here was a secret message, calling not for rendition in counterfeit syllables, but for translation and understanding."[61] For Leopold, perceptivity and receptivity are our tasks as ethical agents and as members of the moral community. Although we certainly cannot easily, or perhaps ever fully, understand the interests or hear the voice of nonhuman subjects, we can better approximate an understanding by being present to our experiences with them. We can expand our listening to hear voices that have previously been unheard, approaching Dewey's vision of full and moving communication. Catriona Sandilands writes: "The expansion of our listening to hear 'other' expressions, and the legitimation of these expressions as aspects of a common world, is a call for reconsideration of who 'we' citizens are."[62] Once we are able to expand our listening, we can begin to uncover the plurality of ways that nonhuman others express their needs, "whether or not they are capable of or disposed to civic rationality."[63]

Expanding our conception of the ways in which we listen can take many different forms. We encounter linguistic barriers as human stakeholders engaging in conversation with other human stakeholders. It is understandably all the more difficult to communicate

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[59] Meine, Curt. *Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988. p. 478.
[60] Leopold, p. 90.
[61] Ibid., p. 170.
[62] Sandilands, Catriona. "Raising Your Hand in the Council of All Beings: Ecofeminism and Citizenship." *Ethics and the Environment* 4(2):219-233. p. 228.
[63] Ibid., p. 228.

across differences when the stakeholders are both human and nonhuman. If we consider

language only as that which occurs linguistically, we likely cannot proceed across species.

But when we adopt a Deweyan understanding of language, a broad concept referring to all

forms of symbolic interaction and meaning-making—and when we find ways, through

imagination, to tap into other possibilities—we can more readily approach the task of trying

to understand the interests of nonhuman subjects in the service of their inclusion as

members of a moral, democratic community.

    The task of evaluating the practical means by which we might work to expand our

listening is arduous, but there are several important thinkers who have not shied away from

it, bringing vastly different perspectives to light. I describe several of these approaches in

what follows.

    Bryan G. Norton develops environmental policy that is responsive to cross-species

communication and relies on intent listening by humans to nonhuman subjects.[64] In his

work in environmental policy, Norton encountered seemingly impassable barriers to

communication across ideological differences. Adaptive Management[65] (AM), he

suggests, may allow us to bypass the ideological, preexperiential commitments of

stakeholders that reinforce a dichotomy between moralism and economism, or, as Norton

puts it, "between doing right and doing well."[66] AM is action-oriented and experimental,

acknowledging that we rarely have enough information to absolutely choose the right

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[64] I find Norton's strictly linguistic account of environmental inquiry to be problematic for reasons which are addressed in Chapter Three, like the lack of attention to the role of the affective, but nevertheless, I think there are interesting, important, and compelling claims to be found in his work on language.

[65] Norton credits the term "Adaptive Management" to ecological theorist C.S. Holling in 1978, but is himself widely credited for developing the philosophy of Adaptive Management. Norton, Bryan G. *Sustainability: A Philosophy of Adaptive Ecosystem Management.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

[66] Ibid., p. x.

course of action in the face of a conflict. AM is, thus, "humble management—not management by experts, but management through political participation and social learning."[67] AM is an experimental method in that it tests itself on actual, existing problems and on case studies, rather than preexperiential ideologies. But while this kind of experimental, fallible deliberation among stakeholders is appealing, it is still incredibly difficult, since various stakeholders represent their needs in different ways. Norton's own experiences in environmental policy reveal that even among the human stakeholders, people are engaging in discourse "hardly noticing that they spoke languages without available translations."[68] Increasing AM practices in response to given environmental problems is one important approach through which we might work to expand our listening.

With respect to the task of expanding our listening, other thinkers like Joanna Macy and John Seed take different approaches—emphasizing the potential for transformative mystical experience with nonhuman others, rather than dealing primarily with matters of policy. What we must seek to understand, through whatever practices we choose, is our interconnectedness with the natural world. Macy writes: "There are, of course, manifold ways of evoking or provoking [a] change in perspective. Methods for inspiring the experience of deep ecology range from prayer to poetry, from wilderness vision quests to the induction of altered states of consciousness."[69] For Macy, an embodied experience is vital for inspiring a change in perspective. As part of her work— "the work that reconnects"—she hosts workshops for environmental activists, utilizing ritual to bring awareness of continuity. Activities range from using a drum to evoke the feeling of a

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[67] Ibid., p. xii.
[68] Ibid., p.5.
[69] Macy, Joanna. "Deep Ecology and the Council of All Beings." *ReVision.* 16:2 (1993). p. 72.

heartbeat (signifying the pulse of life) to having participants in her workshops move their bodies in particular, animal-like ways: "nosing, crawling, wriggling, pushing up, we can begin literally to feel the inner body sense of amphibian and reptile and lower mammal, because these earlier stages of our life are imbedded in our neurological system."[70] The culminating ritual of the experience is called The Council of All Beings, during which participants "formally speak on behalf of these other beings."[71] Eccentric as these practices may seem, Macy insists they are not so unusual. Primal peoples engage in such activities, but so do poets, children, and musicians. She insists: "It is not all that strange to imagine ourselves in nonhuman forms and draw fresh vision from them."[72] Participants in the ritual identify with another life-form, from animals and plants to ecological features like deserts or rivers, and attempt to both embody and voice the experience of the life-form in a shared, communal setting. These are, of course, wildly imaginative exercises, but they exemplify yet another attempt to expand the ways in which we listen to others. Anthony Weston, known for his experimental pedagogy, brings these insights from Macy, Seed, and other deep ecologists into the classroom. Like Macy, Weston invites the sharing of mystical experiences that spur conversations between environmental ethics students and animals in his mini-"Council of All Beings" experiments, where students spend parts of a semester learning to identify with and relate to a specific animal—sometimes understood as a spirit animal—in order to foster awareness of and relationship with other living beings.

A third and final example of various attempts to expand our methods of listening such that the interests of nonhuman others might become more clear on their own terms

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[70] Ibid., 73.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

comes from Freya Mathews. Mathews advocates for behaviors of ethical attentiveness, inspired by thinkers like Simone Weil, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Martin Buber, which she suggests can allow communication to occur, in both literal and figurative senses, among different types of beings. Such communication occurs, she maintains, in face-to-face relationships with particular others:

> Communication in the above sense is possible only with *particular*[73] others. Hence to communicate with the natural world, and thereby come to empathise with it, is to be engaged in ongoing encounters with particular others - where this means, in practice, nature as it is embodied in a particular place. The eco-community will thus be a situated community, tied to place, as deep ecologists, social ecologists and bioregionalists attest.[74]

What these close, extended encounters requires is a willingness to recognize the subjectivity of the animal or plant other through "a process of overture and response."[75]Although we may not have the possibility of knowing the psyche of an other, we can develop more appropriate empathic responses to them when we have developed sufficient rapport to underpin our actions on their behalf. Moral sensibility about others, Mathews suggests, follows open communication.

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[73] Mathews suggests that the impact of the encounter with the particular other does not preclude the possibility of larger scale responsibility. Rather, it motivates it. She writes: "When we have engaged in sustained, face-to face relationships with a range of non-human others, and recognised them as complex and responsive centres of subjectivity, with their own unique and mysterious purposes and imperatives, we shall be much more likely also to take seriously the interests of non-human others who lie beyond our ambit. Thus while eco- community may draw us into emotional and moral involvement with the lives of those in our immediate biotic neighbourhood, it will also tend to awaken in us a more generalised concern for nature." Mathews, Freya. "Community and Ecological Self." *Environmental Poltics.* 4:4 (1995). Reprinted on Freya Mathews' personal website. Freyamathews.net. Accessed 8 April 2016.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

In this chapter, I have shown that there are rich resources in Dewey's democratic ideal for extending deliberation to include nonhuman stakeholders. As evidenced in the three examples above, these moves require a certain amount of invention, novelty, and wildness—features lacking in a good deal of environmental ethics. In order to best take the creative leaps necessary to uncover the manifold ways that nonhuman subjects express their needs, we should employ the moral imagination.

The moral imagination is an important feature of Dewey's ethical theory—it is this idea that can allow us to approach problem-solving within community and within Dewey's envisioned democratic way of life. The moral imagination allows us to take creative steps through working within the problem itself, finding untapped possibilities for resolution. As Dewey explains, the moral imagination "elicits the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the actual."[76] Only through imaginative vision can we push beyond conventional solutions—solutions thus far inadequate to meet the needs of a changing world.

In Chapter Two, I will explore Dewey's notion of the moral imagination, giving a thorough exposition of the idea of the moral imagination as formulated by Dewey himself and by his contemporaries and providing my own perspective on how this notion is applicable to my particular concern about the unheard voices of nonhuman subjects in a participatory, deliberative democracy.

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[76] LW:10:348

CHAPTER 2

THE PROMISE OF MORAL IMAGINATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL INQUIRY

In Chapter One, I examined Dewey's ideal of radical, deliberative democracy, aiming to show that those committed to democratic deliberation can and should work to include the voices of nonhuman stakeholders within community. Admittedly, knowing how to go about this arduous task is daunting, but I claim that there are resources for doing so in Dewey's pivotal idea of the moral imagination. In this chapter, I examine key features of Dewey's notion of the moral imagination, locating in it a wealth of resources for approaching communication across difference, even across differences as significant as those between human and nonhuman subjects. I agree with Dewey that communication across difference leads to richer deliberation within democratic communities, but I extend this claim further, maintaining that deliberation informed by imagination can aid in the amelioration of myriad environmental problems that we currently experience. The responses to experienced environmental problems that have emerged in recent years are presently inadequate. Cultivating the moral imagination is critical for environmental inquiry. "Only imaginative vision elicits the possibilities that are interwoven within the texture of the actual,"[77] Dewey avows.

Dewey's faith in democracy is firmly rooted in the idea that communication across difference can result in the amelioration of experienced problems in actual contexts.

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[77] LW 10:348

Communication harnessing social intelligence of a diverse public allows for more imaginative possibilities than those that emerge from our present status quo deliberation. Larry Hickman explains how Dewey's vision opens up creative space:

> Rooted in the ideals of the Progressive Era of American history and the typically American faith in the ability of communication to achieve consensus, Dewey's vision of community is one in which misunderstandings and even initial intransigence is overcome as parties to conflict come together to recast and reconfigure common problems in ways that lead to novel solutions.[78]

A wide and inclusive public with free and open communication is, in this Deweyan framework, a source of wiser, innovative solutions to problems. But because stakeholders in community often have interests that are in conflict, deliberation requires imagination in order to "recast and reconfigure common problems" in order to reach creative solutions. Major conflicts which often seem to have no feasible solutions, or for which proposed solutions seem irreconcilably at odds, may be recast through imagination, allowing new solutions to emerge. New solutions will not be perfect, and conflicts will sometimes be irreconcilable. This is to be expected in a pluralist society. But through habits of imaginative, communal inquiry, richer possibilities can emerge than are otherwise likely.

In recent decades there has been a resurgence of philosophical attention to Dewey's moral philosophy, including his notion of moral imagination. American philosophy scholars Mark Johnson, Steven Fesmire, Gregory Pappas, and Thomas Alexander, among others, have devoted considerable scholarly treatment to the concept.[79] Yet because

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[78] Hickman, Larry A. *Reading Dewey: Interpretations for a Postmodern Generation.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1998. p. xiii.
[79] I will address their treatments of the moral imagination in more depth in the following chapter.

Dewey's moral philosophy always tethers theory to praxis, I contend that more attention is due to the applications of the moral imagination than has generally been given. Part of this project is to consider more thoroughly how the moral imagination can be employed in actual contexts in order to reach solutions to experienced problems. Methods and rituals such as those suggested by Norton, Macy, and Mathews in the previous chapter are promising starts. In this particular chapter, I offer consideration about how Dewey's notion of the moral imagination can be employed in order to improve deliberation within communities of diverse stakeholders, both human and nonhuman.

Imagination plays a vital role in moral life. Dewey maintains that imagination is crucial for problem-solving within democratic communities, and he proclaims the importance of imagination for growth, both personal and communal. I begin by articulating the Pragmatist case for cultivating imagination in moral deliberation. I then look at features of Dewey's particular understanding of the role of imagination and its promising characteristics, as I consider why environmental discourse in particular could benefit from the turn towards imagination.

I.   MAKING THE CASE FOR IMAGINATION IN MORAL DELIBERATION

The need for the moral imagination in moral deliberation arises out of an experience of dissatisfaction with the readily available solutions to a given problem. When faced with a conflict, like conflicts among stakeholders facing a particular environmental issue, we often find ourselves at an impasse, unable to conceive solutions that might satisfy the diverse stakeholders involved. Dewey was deeply dissatisfied with mainstream ethical theories like deontological ethics and utilitarianism, which he believed to drastically limit the set of appropriate responses towards conflicts to only solutions that meet the criteria of

the rule-based theory. He was hopeful that imagination could, in many cases, circumvent these impasses in moral conflict. Imagination allows us to see possibilities that rule-based theories tend to obscure. Rules and principles are merely tools—useful ones, to be sure—but alone they lack the playfulness that Dewey insists the best decision-making requires. Playfulness is a desirable intellectual attitude, Dewey reveals in his pedagogical writings, not creating things that are *unreal* through the imagination, but uncovering *real* things that might exist. It is "a method of expanding and filling in what is real."[80] This is an important departure from many other moral theorists, for whom playfulness is a distraction from or barrier to proper reasoning. For Dewey, it is an essential *part* of it.

Highlighting the promise of Dewey's moral imagination for a postmodern ethics, Thomas Alexander states:

> For Dewey, we are creatures seeking a kind of dynamic, embodied fulfillment, which goes far beyond generating mere propositional attitudes and other abstract, cognitive needs. As active beings, we are in constant touch with the *possibilities* of our situations. Indeed, this is Dewey's definition of intelligence: to see the actual in light of the possible. This is also his definition of imagination.[81]

The moral imagination is a philosophy of possibility. But, rather than being an unproductive flight of fancy, new ideas, Dewey explains, "are generated out of imagination. But they are not made of imaginary stuff."[82] Instead of being merely fanciful or outlandish, imagination in deliberation, according to Dewey, is a creative endeavor firmly situated within a given context, where possibilities are viewed in light of the lived

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[80] Dewey, *How We Think,* p. 166.
[81] Alexander, Thomas M. "John Dewey and the Moral Imagination: Beyond Putnam and Rorty Towards a Postmodern Ethics." *Transactions of the Charles S. Pierce Society.* 29:9 (1993). p. 384.
[82] LW 9:33

experiences and material conditions at hand. In its context-sensitivity and open-endedness, I argue, Dewey's philosophy of possibility stands starkly in contrast to many mainstream, traditional approaches to ethical inquiry.

In contrast to many traditional ethical theorists, Pragmatists tend to frame ethical problems as open-ended and complex, rather than reducing them to dilemmas with fixed ends which simply await the appropriate judgment of an impartial moral agent. Weston makes a strong case for the importance of imagination in Pragmatist thinking. In traditional ethics, there is a tendency toward what Weston calls "dilemma-ism." The tendency to frame problems in terms of dilemmas with fixed possible responses is, in part, responsible for the persistence of many problematic situations. Pragmatists like Weston are not alone in troubling this tendency. Feminists, particularly those working in the care ethics tradition, have drawn attention to the tremendous limitations of these binary and dualistic ways of thinking.

Carol Gilligan, for example, demonstrates this tendency to limit possible solutions through a case study with two young children, Jake and Amy, who are given Kohlberg's classic "Heinz Dilemma" to process. In this thought experiment, Heinz is a man with little money whose wife is dying and desperately needs a drug, but the druggist will not lower the price. The children are asked whether or not Heinz should steal the drug in order to save his wife. The question, not surprisingly, is initially framed in a dualistic way. Should Heinz steal or not steal? But in her analysis of Jake's and Amy's responses, Gilligan demonstrates that there are multiple modes of processing such a difficult case. Jake thinks mathematically and in legal terms about the case, ultimately determining that Heinz should steal the drug, and assuming that even a judge would understand the logical process driving

Heinz to make this choice to steal. Amy focuses on relationships and communication, determining that Heinz need not be restricted to but two choices – stealing or allowing his wife to die. Instead, she suggests that there are untapped resources that Heinz has perhaps not considered. He could try communicating with the druggist, he could enlist the support of the community, and so forth. Amy sees in the problematic situation "not a math problem with humans but a narrative of relationships that extends over time."[83]

As evidenced in Gilligan's example, Weston contends that the tendency toward dilemma-ism "may unduly confine…our ethical thinking and practice,"[84] dramatically limiting the creativity of potential solutions. When understood as historically entrenched, contextual, complex, and uncertain, problematic situations become, for the Pragmatist, "regions of opportunity"[85] where creativity and innovation can then be engaged to find untapped possibilities for resolution of the situation. Instead of shutting down possibility because a certain proposal does not fit within the constraints of a given ethical theory, the field of possibility is radically opened, "inviting many modes of engagement besides just two."[86] If we hope to find rich solutions to the problems we encounter, we must constantly look for these regions of opportunity and resist the tendency to unduly limit possibilities by working only within rigid ethical frameworks.

The insistence that we must not unduly limit our thinking is trenchant in Pragmatist literature, with one of its earliest iterations appearing in Charles S. Peirce's *First Rule of Logic.* Pierce writes provocatively:

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[83] Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development.* Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982. p. 28.
[84] Weston, Anthony. "For a Meta-Ethics as Good as Our Practice." *New Directions in Adult and Continuing Education.* 123 (2009): p. 12.
[85] Ibid., p. 8.
[86] Ibid., p. 11.

Upon this first, and in one sense, this sole, rule of reason, that in order to learn, you

must desire to learn and in so desiring not be satisfied with what you already incline

to think, there follows one corollary which itself deserves to be inscribed upon

every wall of the city of philosophy: Do not block the way of inquiry.[87]

Peirce's claim here refers broadly to various kinds of thinking, but its application to ethical inquiry is especially relevant. David Hildebrand argues that deliberation "has traditionally meant a mechanical calculation of future pains and pleasures, advantages and disadvantages."[88] Many mainstream ethical theories suggest that moral dilemmas are to be approached with ahistorical, acontextual attitudes aimed at discovering the singular and fixed Truth of a situation. These universal, absolutist attitudes are characteristic of proper reasoning, according to proponents of such ethical theories. In contrast, for Pragmatists—and especially for Dewey—proper reasoning and understanding *are* at work when one is able to acknowledge the complexities of a situation, recognizing that problematic situations do not arise in social vacuums[89], but rather, arise in social contexts and are experienced in rich, complicated, and intersecting ways.

If we begin with the assumption that problematic situations are likely or are necessarily moral dilemmas, we risk missing the potential that arises out of complexity. Weston asks us to consider "whether our ethical values *are* really so sharply opposed in the first place,"[90] and reminds us that Dewey saw ethical values quite differently:

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[87] Peirce, Charles Sanders. *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings, Volume 2*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1998. p. 48

[88] Hildebrand, David. *Dewey: A Beginner's Guide.* Oxford: OneWorld Publications, 2011. EBook.

[89] "It ought not be necessary to say that experience does not occur in a vacuum. There are sources outside an individual which give rise to experience. It is constantly fed from these springs." Dewey, *Experience and Education*, p. 40.

[90] Weston 2009, p. 12.

Dewey argued that ethical problems are more like large, vague regions of tension, not at all distinct or well defined. No closure can really be expected. But ethical problems are also, for just the same reason, regions of opportunity. Constructively engaging the problem, trying to change it into something more manageable, making something of the opportunities, is the most intelligent response—often the *only* intelligent or "mature" response.[91]

Intelligence is distinctly linked to creative and imaginative responses to complex, experienced problems. But again, Dewey's notion of moral imagination is not fantastical, hyper-idealistic, or untethered to reality. Instead, the kind of imagination I wish to employ here is an endeavor firmly grounded in lived experiences and material conditions, opening up actual and practical possibilities for solutions which can be tested in the real world before committing to them. John Kaag highlights the distinction between mere flights of fancy and a Deweyan intelligent imagination. He writes, this "demarcation was important for these American thinkers. Keeping the imagination out of the 'merely fanciful' seems necessary if they are to employ this poetic force as a directing power in moral conduct."[92] For Dewey, there is indeed poetic force in the notion of the imagination. Imagination leads moral agents to develop a wide array of solutions to problematic situations—solutions which are often better suited to ameliorate problems than those solutions which fail to recognize the complexity of our moral values.

Moral deliberation begins when we face an indeterminate or problematic situation, and the aim of inquiry is the amelioration of that situation. There are better and worse habits

[91] Ibid., p. 12.
[92] Kaag, John. "Everyday Ethics: Morality and the Imagination in Classical American Thought." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society.* 46.3 (2010): p. 370

of inquiry, but the best and most logical habits, according to Dewey, are those which allow us to grasp the complexity of the situation and the various factors and values involved, as we aim toward amelioration. He writes: "the word logical is synonymous with wide-awake, thorough, and careful reflection—thought in its best sense. Reflection is turning a topic over in various aspects and in various lights so that nothing significant about it shall be overlooked."[93] Wide-awake inquiry involves cultivating the imagination, because the relevant factors in the topic may not present themselves plainly to the inquirer. Instead, the relevant factors may be hidden, overlapping, and complicated, awaiting the inquirer or inquiring community to skillfully uncover them and determine how those factors stand in relation to one another.

Moral deliberation is always aimed at making a choice—seeking, to borrow Dewey's words, "the emergence of a unified preference out of competing preferences."[94] What we hope for in careful, intelligent moral deliberation is that the best course(s) of action will become evident *through* that engaged and participatory deliberation. In order to uncover the best course(s) of action for an indeterminate situation, we first critically survey the situation from as many perspectives as possible. This act of close observation is scientific, in a holistic, Deweyan sense[95], but it is not a cold, abstract, or detached observation. Rather, it is a fully engaged observation, thoroughly contextual and attentive to our overlapping and often conflicting values. It is reasoning at its best, in the Deweyan sense of reason described earlier. The close observation is, thus, "imaginative and

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[93] Dewey, John. *How We Think.* p. 57
[94] MW 14: 134
[95] Dewey argues: "To grasp the meaning of a thing, an event, or a situation, is to see it in its relations to other things." LW 8:225

emotionally laden.... [Our] final judgment is not merely a deductive derivation from some rule about what makes the road the best road."[96]

Dewey describes the imaginative process in moral deliberation in two formulations which I will describe in the following section. In one formulation, we test out possible solutions to indeterminate situation by way of dramatic rehearsal. In another formulation, we use sympathetic understanding or empathetic projection[97] to take into account the impact of possible solutions on the other actors involved. Combinations of these two different, yet often overlapping, kinds of imagination make for much more robust deliberation than those deliberative practices based on fixed rules and principles. Such deliberation is rich with meliorative power and potential for social approbation.

II. ELEMENTS OF IMAGINATION: DRAMATIC REHEARSAL AND EMPATHETIC PROJECECTION

In order to consider how a Deweyan notion of the moral imagination is applicable to democratic deliberation as it relates to problems that arise in biotic communities, I will focus in this section on the two parts of the imaginative process mentioned above, dramatic rehearsal and empathetic projection. There are, of course, many features of the moral imagination as Dewey envisioned it that may have more relevance to other concerns, but I will focus on the two elements of imagination I find to be most promising for the particular context of this project.

a) DRAMATIC REHEARSAL

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[96] Pappas p. 96.

[97] Note that the term *empathetic projection* is Steven Fesmire's unified term for Dewey's idea. Dewey uses sympathetic understanding and empathy somewhat interchangeably, but Fesmire makes the claim that what is really at work is an imaginative projection of the other.

Dramatic rehearsal is, for Dewey, an imaginative space in which we creatively test out competing options to see which one(s) best fit the problematic situation with which we are engaged. Dramatic rehearsal can be utilized in any form of deliberation (scientific, aesthetic, or moral, for example). I argue that it is particularly relevant to our current discussion of moral deliberation including diverse stakeholders within a given biotic community. Dewey writes:

> Deliberation is a process of active, suppressed, rehearsal; of imaginative dramatic performance of various deeds carrying to their appropriate issues the various tendencies which we feel stirring within us…. We give way, in our mind, to some impulse; we try, in our mind, some plan. Following its career through various steps, we find ourselves in imagination in the presence of the consequences that would follow; and as we then like and approve, or dislike and disapprove, these consequences, we find the original impulse or plan good or bad. Deliberation is dramatic and active, not mathematical and impersonal.[98]

The use of the term *dramatic,* here, is not inconsequential. Dewey looks at life in terms of narrative. Our lives are stories we, the decision-makers, are part of, not separate from, disengaged, and indifferent. When the decision-maker recognizes his or her role in the drama, he or she becomes "co-author to a dramatic story with environing conditions in community with others."[99] When we understand life as a drama or narrative, it becomes evident that merely abstract thinking is insufficient, as it fails to account for our own roles and stakes in the conflict. We see ourselves as participant in the problem itself, as co-

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[98] MW 5:292-293.
[99] Tom Alexander quoted in Fesmire 2003, p. 78.

creator of both the experience itself and of its remedies. Like our lives, deliberation is also dramatic:

> Labeling deliberation dramatic underscores that it is story-structured and that its imaginative phase is not limited to supplementing rule-guided conduct….Just as a character in a drama acts 'in character' and those acts make no sense if taken out of context, moral behavior is intelligible only in the setting of a life-narrative, which of course interplays with other life-narratives. A possible course of action, Dewey observes, would be 'as meaningless in isolation as would be the drama of Hamlet were it confined to a single line or word with no context.'[100]

Dramatic rehearsal puts experiences—our own and those of other relevant stakeholders—at the center of the conflict at hand. Furthermore, through dramatic rehearsal, we are able to engage possible options in an imaginative space which allows for missteps, mistakes, underestimations, and so forth, without the results being fixed in actual experience. Here a lengthy excerpt from Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct* is helpful:

> Deliberation is a dramatic rehearsal (in imagination) of various competing possible lines of action…. Thought runs ahead and foresees outcomes, and thereby avoids having to await the instruction of actual failure and disaster. An act overtly tried out is irrevocable; its consequences cannot be blotted out. An act tried out in imagination is not final or fatal. It is retrievable…. Each conflicting habit and impulse takes its turn in projecting itself upon the screen of imagination. It unrolls a picture of its future history, of the career it would have if it were given head….

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[100] Ibid., p. 79.

Activity does not cease in order to give way to reflection; activity is turned from execution to intra-organic channels, resulting in dramatic rehearsal.[101]

It is clear that, for Dewey, dramatic rehearsal is not a break from the activity of deliberation, but is itself an important component of it. As in the discussions of Dewey's notion of reasoning mentioned earlier, dramatic rehearsal is an act of intelligent deliberation. Stephen Fesmire writes: "Possible avenues for acting are rehearsed before trying them out. Intelligence is abdicated when this process is cut short."[102] Dramatic rehearsal is a crucial part of deliberation because, at its best, it allows those going through the exercise to push past places where conflicts seem irresolvable. Because it is imaginative, it does not carry with it the risks associated with actual testing of proposed solutions. Thus, all proposed solutions are candidates for further exploration through rehearsal. As Fesmire explains, dramatic rehearsal challenges and frustrates our established habits of deliberation and allows for the emergence of new ones: "New habits emerge from formerly satisfying ones, and they incorporate the altered structures of the new environment."[103]

Dewey identifies four distinct ways that people deliberate intelligently—all of which are, by Dewey's standards, forms of dramatic rehearsal. Some people deliberate through dialogue while others independently visualize results of an action. Still others visualize the performance of that action, including their own role in the performance. Yet others visualize the possible criticism that might be levied against the action and the actor. Note that in none of these manners of deliberation are the deliberators merely applying a

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[101] Dewey, John. *Human Nature and Conduct,* p. 191.
[102] Fesmire, 2003. p. 73.
[103] Ibid., p. 78.

fixed rule or principle to a situation. These four types of deliberation are forms of dramatic rehearsal because they block overt action as they test out the actions imaginatively, either through an individual's independent mental faculties or through the give and take of conversation.

Through dramatic rehearsal, deliberators have the opportunity to try out possible solutions without yet facing the consequences of them, thereby significantly lowering the stakes of the choice-making activity. Experimentation and creativity take a place of prominence in the deliberative process in the form of dramatic rehearsal in ways that other deliberative frameworks preclude.

It is helpful to recall that Dewey understands life as a drama or narrative, where agents are co-authors with others with whom they share community. Considering dramatic rehearsal as it applies to democratic deliberation between diverse stakeholders in a given biotic community requires that we begin to think of other subjects, human and nonhuman, as the other co-authors of our ongoing drama or narrative. Imagination at its best is thoroughly consultative. Pappas maintains that imaginative thinking, for Dewey, is "always an internalization of communal dialogue."[104]

Imagination engages as many co-authors to the narrative as it can identify, requiring communication in various forms since life is understood as ever-changing and always experimental. Through deliberation that engages as many subjects involved as possible, "we place ourselves in the emerging drama of others' lives to discover actions that may meaningfully continue their life-stories alongside our own."[105] Placing ourselves in the emerging drama of others' lives is difficult, particularly as we are situated in a Western

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[104] Pappas, p. 99.
[105] Fesmire, 2003. p. 128.

culture which tends to emphasize individualism, competition, and self-interest. For this reason, in order to have robust dramatic rehearsal in deliberation, Dewey insists we must cultivate sympathetic understanding and empathy, sensibilities that Fesmire unifies through the term *empathetic projection*. This is another manifestation of the kind of imagination which Dewey felt had great promise and meliorative power.

b) EMPATHETIC PROJECTION

Empathetic projection is an essential component of robust dramatic rehearsal. It is when one develops empathy for the plight of others and gains an understanding of those others' interests that one can begin intelligently and creatively tapping possibilities embedded in the problematic situation. It is also how Dewey envisions democratic communities being best equipped to approach conflict. He asserts: "The political action of citizens of an organized community will not be morally satisfactory unless they have, individually, sympathetic dispositions." [106] It is important to note that Dewey uses *empathy* and *sympathy* rather interchangeably, in fact, using the term *sympathy* with more frequency. Yet I contend, with many of Dewey's other critics, that the salient idea at work here is, in fact, empathy, not sympathy[107]. Where sympathy may be understood as putting ones*elf* in the place of another, empathy is taking up the place of an *other.* To be empathetic is to consider the perspectives of an *other as* that *other,* as best possible.

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[106] Guinlock, James, ed. *The Moral Writings of John Dewey.* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2002.
[107] See Fesmire and others for further discussion on the distinction between sympathy and empathy. Jiwon Kim, for example, claims, "Considering the differences between the words *sympathy* and *empathy,* what Dewey meant is more like empathy." Kim qtd in Rud, A.G., ed. and Jim Garrison, ed. *John Dewey at 150: Reflections for a New Century.* West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 2009. p.56.

The dissonance of diverse, yet interconnected, voices in community opens space for growth. If we are able to imaginatively take the place of an *other*, as Dewey suggests, we are more likely to respond to the other's specific interests, as well as we can perceive them. Dewey maintains that it is this empathetic projection which "carries thought beyond the self and which extends its scope till it approaches the universal as its limit. It is [empathy] which saves consideration of consequences from degenerating into mere calculation, by rendering the vivid interests of others and urging us to give the same weight as those which touch our own."[108] By understanding ourselves to be in an ongoing life-drama with those with whom we live in community, we can see that our interests—even (and perhaps especially) when they are in tension—are interrelated with the interests of other stakeholders.

Empathetic projection is inextricably tied to imagination and action. Empathy, for Dewey, cannot be passive. Simply feeling the pain of a distant *other* is insufficient, as it cannot effect change in any ethically significant way. For example, I can hurt for a starving child I see on television, but unless I'm moved to act – to see how I can try to effect change—that hurting I feel is not morally significant. Thus, in this manifestation of the moral imagination, one must be able to imagine the potential for effective action, based on an empathetic projection of the plight of an *other*.

Empathetic projection allows us to consider the needs and values of others in ways that mechanistic ethical rules and fixed principles rarely do and, then, allows us to imagine ways to accommodate those needs. Mark Johnson maintains that "taking up the place of another is the most important imaginative exploration we can perform."[109] Pappas, further,

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[108] Dewey qtd. in Rud, p. 56.
[109] Mark Johnson qtd. in Hamington 2010.

affirms this fundamental role of empathy in transactions with others: "To put ourselves in the place of another emotionally is the only way to widen our intellectual horizons in moral situations and to determine effectively what others need and value."[110] Because Dewey's is a thoroughly social ontology, growth is not merely an individual's condition of flourishing, but a condition of individuals flourishing in community. Thus, empathetic projection allows us to see more clearly what actions or attitudes "are conducive to continued growth and what are detrimental."[111] Rather than relying on mechanical calculations, imagination through empathy, as in imagination through dramatic rehearsal, widens the scope of the ethical inquiry in order to admit the complexity of moral problems and the plurality of their solutions. It allows us to engage the numerous values encountered when a diversity of stakeholders is involved, rather than trying to reduce them to a singular, unified value.

Critical, intelligent empathy allows us to assess our own needs and the needs of others with whom we are in community. It allows us to highlight differences and recognize similarities, challenging conventions of understanding and thus opening up space for creative dialogue and, ultimately, growth and change. The critical nature of this empathy sparks the moral imagination.

It is important to acknowledge that in spite of their promise, empathetic caring responses are decidedly tenuous. Extended too far, empathy can be dangerous. Empathy relies on sophistication in the thought processes of the empathizer. The empathizer must interpret the feelings, needs, or interests of the subject of empathy, leaving limitless room

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[110] Pappas, Gregory. "Dewey and Feminism: The Affective and Relationships in Dewey's Ethics." *Hypatia* 8:2 (1993). p. 83.
[111] Dewey, *Experience and Education*, p. 39.

for misinterpretation of the interests of the subject of empathy and requiring that the empathizer have a deep awareness of possible personal limitations in the ability to interpret. Empathetic responses can fall prey to imperialist, racist, and sexist pitfalls common with other responses. Empathy is inevitably fallible. Empathy, as humans have the capacity for it, will never be empathy perfected. Yet, I contend that even this *necessarily* flawed empathy is a vital component in an imaginative approach to deliberation which includes nonhuman others. This is because empathy always points beyond what is immediately present to an individual—that is, it allows experience to go beyond the self in powerful ways. Although we can never adequately know precisely how it feels to be anyone other than ourselves—an attempt made even more difficult as we imagine how it feels to be a suffering animal or an ecosystem in need of water—our responses to these problems are more likely to have meliorative power if approached with careful, critical empathy, rather than with pity, with attitudes of dominion, or with other kinds of problematic responses.

Again, Dewey asserts the importance of the critical nature of empathy. Empathy should not motivate action without an understanding of the action's implications. But what empathy *should* do is enrich the process of inquiry, widening its scope such that the implications for self and other are revealed to be intertwined. Dewey writes: "Regard for self and regard for others should not…be *direct* motives to overt action. They should be forces which lead us to *think* of objects and consequences that would otherwise escape notice."[112] Empathetic projection allows us to put ourselves in the place of an other, and,

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[112] Guinlock, p. 117.

consequently, it allows our communal deliberation to become more robust as more factors are uncovered and illuminated through the work of imagination[113].

c) DRAMATIC REHEARSAL, EMPATHETIC PROJECTION, AND

DELIBERATION AIMED AT GROWTH

As previously discussed, Dewey is skeptical of the potential for traditional ethical theories to adequately resolve the complex ethical problems that communities face. He grants that deontological or utilitarian responses, among others, may be appropriate in given contexts, but he resists the idea that universal rules and principles are sufficient. These kinds of theories are, for him, tools that might be applied when a task calls for such a tool, but are not the only tools we have. Fesmire elaborates:

> Moral principles and rules must be analyzed and justified without assuming an autonomous, detached, dispassionate individual consciousness that reduces ethical decision-making to applying timeless rational principles. Principles and rules can help us to feel and think our way through relational webs, but the standpoint of being situated or placed should be the primary standpoint…rather than standpoints steeped in conceptions of form as timeless being.[114]

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[113] Victoria Davion also highlights the importance of *critical* empathy or care. All kinds of care are not created equal and one must adopt a critical approach toward relationships and projects that might be harmful. Davion explains this approach as an exercise in moral autonomy and moral integrity. The ethical ideal she presents is pluralist; it is an ideal that takes seriously one's relationships to others *as well as* one's responsibility to himself or herself and his or her other ethical commitments. Davion writes: "What is needed is an enrichment of the ideal to reflect not only the positive aspects of the self as one-caring, but also the self as a being with other important ethical commitments that make up its moral identity." Davion, Victoria. "Autonomy, Integrity, and Care." *Social Theory and Practice.* 19:2 (1993). p. 175.
[114] Fesmire, Steven. "Ecological Imagination in Moral Education, East and West." *Contemporary Pragmatism.* 9:1 (2012). p. 216.

Far better than mechanical approaches which aim at discovering the fixed and singular solution that fits the given criteria are approaches which radically incorporate the role of the imagination.

In the face of myriad conflicts over environmental concerns, Dewey's criticism about the limitations of traditional ethical approaches becomes especially relevant. Deontological and utilitarian approaches fail to offer clear solutions to many conflicts concerning the natural world. Because there is no consensus on what our duties are to nonhuman subjects in the natural world, deontological claims often fail to impress upon moral agents the kinds of responsibility which would motivate communities to change policies or behaviors in response to those claims. Because there is tension about whose good is morally relevant, or, at the least, whose good carries moral weight, utilitarian claims are often similarly unhelpful.

The Pragmatist need not say that there are no truths about our duties nor about whose good is morally considerable, but may say that those truths are often inaccessible to us, on some level, or are, at least, indeterminate. From a Pragmatist perspective, to say that absolutist positions fail to generate consensus and fail to motivate changes is to say that they fail to produce growth, which is the goal of moral life for Dewey. The *end* of morality is growth in "ordered richness."[115] Growth arises from whatever actions lead to a richer experience for individual and communal life. Whatever fails to lead to growth of ordered richness ought to be put aside until such time that it might do so.

Instead of generating growth, discussions about environmental concerns which are bound by universal moral principles often reach an impasse and, consequently, progress

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[115] LW:14:229

(by at least some standards) is arrested. The failure of these kinds of debates to generate growth warrants new approaches—approaches we may find through creative and imaginative explorations.

III. MORAL IMAGINATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL INQUIRY

We face unprecedented environmental conflicts, ranging from mountaintop removal and deforestation to global climate change and increasing waterborne disease. It is no wonder, then, that environmental activists and ethicists, philosophers, policymakers, and local stakeholders alike are engaged in ongoing struggles to persuade their communities, both local and global, of the reasons why particular solutions to these problems are fitting. Yet, as we see over and over again, environmental discourse often breaks down when these arguments fail to take into account the plural character of our values and experiences.

Pragmatists, however, have great faith that these ideological impasses need not prevent environmental conflicts from being assuaged. The rhetoric characteristic of environmental discourse causes great dissension amongst stakeholders, but it is, in fact, the conflicting and dissonant voices of stakeholders wherein hope lies for the Pragmatist. Norton expresses this position most forcefully. He argues that ideological environmentalism relies on what he calls "*essentially* contested concepts"[116] and that "failures of communication across incommensurate conceptual frameworks result in social

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[116] Norton, p. xi, emphasis mine.

traps and confusing discourse."[117] Yet incommensurate conceptual frameworks, Norton and other Pragmatist thinkers claim, need not be fatal. [118]

We can focus on environmental goals and policies simultaneously as we consider ideological environmentalism. While ideological debates may be philosophically important, they need not be—and, indeed, I argue *should* not be—foundational to democratic problem-solving. We can put aside the goal of ultimately determining whether or not intrinsic value exists in a landscape or whether a rational human being carries more moral weight than a non-sentient animal and can focus, instead, on promoting the growth of ordered richness that would enhance individual and communal experience—even the experiences of nonhuman stakeholders. Growth is not guaranteed here and conflicts are inevitable, but the potential exists. We can seek growth through democratic deliberation that takes seriously the plurality of values and experiences. When that plurality is invited into deliberation, rather than consciously or unconsciously suppressed, democratic deliberation becomes a radically and powerfully open space. It becomes one of the "regions of opportunity" where we can begin to recast and reconfigure common problems.

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[117] Ibid.

[118] While I am concerned that Norton's emphasis on linguistic reforms is limited, I am heartily in agreement here.

CHAPTER 3

A PRAGMATIST-(ECO)FEMINIST FRAMEWORK FOR DELIBERATION

In Chapter Two, I contended that Dewey-inspired dramatic rehearsals and empathetic understanding can enhance and improve our deliberations by opening up space for creativity and imagination, harnessing the richness of social intelligence—even, or perhaps, especially, including the intelligence of nonhuman subjects. Yet tremendous challenges remain when it comes to implementing these skills in communal deliberation where we encounter radical differences. These differences range from the conflicting values among the human stakeholders to species and individual differences among the recognized stakeholders. Yet while these differences present a challenge to deliberation, they also account for its tremendous potential. Community members share not only space or habitat, but also in the common good. Dewey writes:

> Sharing a good or value in a way which makes it social in quality is not identical with dividing up a material thing into physical parts. To partake is to take part, to play a role. It is something active, something which engages the desires and aims of each contributing member. Its proper analogue is not physical division but taking part in a game, in conversation, in a drama, in family life. It involves diversification, not sameness and repetition. [119]

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[119] Dewey, John. Guinlock, James, ed. *The Moral Writings of John Dewey.* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2002. p. 190.

In the above passage, we see the importance of diversity in life within communities—in what Dewey understands to be democratic life. Conversation and deliberation are hallmarks of the democratic ideal, so it follows that democratic deliberation ought to be characterized by the participation, in various ways, of diverse stakeholders. Nonhuman subjects are among those diverse stakeholders. Ecofeminism offers resources with which to approach the complex task of inviting their participation.

In this chapter, I offer an ecofeminist critique that I believe functions in two important ways as we consider deliberative transactions with nonhuman others. First, an ecofeminist critique reinforces and enriches a central idea presented in Chapter One—that nonhuman stakeholders are part of the moral community whose interests deserve to be voiced in democratic deliberation. Ecofeminist holism attests to this claim, addressing and resolving important objections to it. Second, an ecofeminist critique provides an analysis of asymmetries of power—present, but underdeveloped in Dewey's work—that is necessary as we consider numerous barriers to communication and effective representation across difference.

While I maintain that Deweyan moral imagination and radical deliberative democracy are well-suited for the task of ameliorating many ecological conflicts, I suggest the adoption of a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework for deliberation which incorporates ecofeminist insights that augment Dewey's ideas by offering conceptual tools that the Deweyan framework alone lacks. In order to make the case for the importance of bringing pragmatist thought and ecofeminist thought to bear on one another, I will address some important ways that these two traditions correspond and highlight a democratic impulse that runs throughout both.

A few preliminary remarks about ecofeminism are in order before I offer consideration of what a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework may entail. There is not one singular ecofeminism which we can appropriate for use in this critical approach to Deweyan deliberative democracy. Instead of being a unified theory, ecofeminism is generally understood to be a set of philosophical and practical orientations that highlight mutually reinforcing systemic subordinations. Yet ecofeminisms, in all their diversity, hold that there are noteworthy parallels between the situations of *women* and *nature.*[120] Marti Kheel, for example, explains that ecofeminists largely converge in the criticism of the "shared ideologies that support multiple forms of domination, including those based on race, class, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation."[121] Ecofeminists suggest that the ideologies that support and reinforce the subordination of women to men and the subordination of people of color to whites are the same ideologies that form the basis for the subordination of nonhuman nature to human culture. Thus, for example, the ideology that keeps patriarchy thriving in the 21st century is similar to the ideology that keeps rampant consumerism thriving, even in the face of global climate crisis.

I contend that many of these ideologies that ecofeminists so skillfully point out are the same ideologies which are at work in community deliberations about environmental concerns. In decision-making processes, the interests of nonhuman subjects in a community are, more often than not, subordinated to the human interests, in part because human interests are [often] articulable. But that an endangered animal or a watershed does not verbally articulate its interests in terms humans readily understand is not a sufficient

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[120] Emphasis mine, indicating the problematic vagueness and connotations of these terms.
[121] Kheel, Marti. *Nature Ethics: An Ecofeminist Perspective.* Lanham, MA: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008. p. 208.

reason for those interests to be neglected or subordinated. An ecofeminist criticism can bring to Deweyan deliberative democracy the tools necessary to identify and to dismantle the oppressive structures that allow some voices to be heard while others are intentionally and unintentionally ignored.

I.   UNDERDEVELOPED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ECOFEMINISTS AND PRAGMATISTS

Ecofeminists and pragmatists have regrettably spent little time engaging in dialogue with one another. It is my contention that this is an important opportunity missed as, among other common interests, the two traditions share radically democratic, communicative visions of life together. Although pragmatism emerged as a philosophical discipline several decades before ecofeminism did, they have had similar trajectories, experiencing both seasons of prominence and seasons of relative obscurity, yet always remaining marginalized areas of philosophical discourse. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the two have often run parallel to one another but have intersected in academic study infrequently, apart from a few noteworthy thinkers like Erin McKenna and Lori Gruen.[122] Sociologist Mary Jo Deegan refers to the emergence of "ecofeminist pragmatism"[123] as "a major intellectual enterprise about women, the self, and community,"[124] but the dearth of

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[122] For a few examples of where the two disciplines have been put into conversation, see the following: Gruen, Lori. *Ethics and Animals: An Introduction.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011. Deegan, Mary Jo and Christopher W. Podeschi. "The Ecofeminist Pragmatism of Charlotte Perkins-Gilman." *Environmental Ethics.* 23:1 (2001). p. 19-36 and Rynbrandt, Linda J. and Mary Jo Deegan. "The Ecofeminist Pragmatism of Caroline Bartlett Crane." *The American Sociologist.* 33:3 (2002). pp. 58-68, as well as Mckenna, Erin and Andrew Light. *Animal Pragmatism: Rethinking Human-nonhuman Relationships.* Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2004.
[123] Deegan, p. 23.
[124] Ibid., p. 23.

literature to that effect suggests that ecofeminist pragmatism has, unfortunately, not emerged in a significant way.

Putting ecofeminism and pragmatism into dialogue with one another now, in the early decades of the 21st century, I will argue, reveals not only important commonalities between the two philosophical and practical frameworks, but also a space in which to form important coalitions toward social change. I mean here only to claim that ecofeminism and pragmatism have overlapping projects in many ways, despite having places where they diverge in significant and often conflicting ways. Jeffery A. Lockwood argues, for example, that many ecofeminists fail to take seriously fallibilism in the way that is critical to pragmatism. He writes: "Perhaps the one element of pragmatism least evident in ecofeminism is that of fallibilism—that no belief or thesis is beyond critique and doubt, including the intrinsic value of nature, the virtue of non-rational approaches, the condemnation of dualism and domination, and the absence of universal, essential qualities."[125] Yet in spite of some important deviations, there is a great deal of convergence, much of which I think is pertinent to the present project of ameliorating problems that arise in human-nonhuman transactions. Chris J. Cuomo highlights a critical place of convergence:

> As Dewey's claim about the relationship between theory and practice suggests, ethical theory enables us to live better lives only when it informs and is informed by the decisions real people make in their lives—about how to interact with each other, how to act as members of groups, how to live respectfully even when conflict

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[125] Lockwood, Jeffery A. "Unwrapping the Enigma of Ecofeminism: A Solution to the Illusion of Incoherence." *Ecofeminism and Rhetoric: Critical Perspectives on Sex, Technology, and Discourse.* Douglas A. Vakoch, ed. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011. p. 169.

seems inevitable. Ecological feminist ethical theory, which is born out of the difficulty of solving real, complex, ethical problems, as well as frustration with the inadequacies of traditional ethical theories, must maintain its connection to real ethical dilemmas and those who must solve them.[126]

Attention to context and lived experience is critical for both the Pragmatist and the ecofeminist ethicist.[127] And, further, appropriate, ethical attention to lived experience must take seriously the experiences of the actual agents or subjects in question. In his essay "Feminism and Pragmatism," Richard Rorty pulls together the work of John Dewey and Catherine MacKinnon, claiming that both argue that moral progress depends on expanding the limited logical space that philosophers have claimed is accessible for moral deliberation. In ecofeminist terminology, the expanded logical space for which Dewey advocates is usually referred to as "discursive space"—that is, room for conversation where the standpoint of women, the environment, and other marginalized subjects is given a place of privilege. Indeed, this "discursive space" is reminiscent of Aldo Leopold's "enlarged boundaries" and "extension of ethics" espoused in *The Land Ethic*.

In order to truly ameliorate problems of all kinds, the scope of our view must be expanded. It is evident, and is becoming more so, that we have been shortsighted in our approaches to navigating the human relationship to the natural world. Pragmatists and ecofeminists both engage in expanding and changing the dominant logical framework characteristic of traditional phallocentric philosophy and ethics. I argue that the approaches

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[126] Cuomo, Chris J. *Feminism and Ecological Communities: An Ethic of Flourishing.* New York: Routledge, 1998. p.145.

[127] Piers H.G. Stephens also highlights important connections between pragmatists and ecofeminists, drawing on the work of William James and Val Plumwood. Stephens, Piers H.G. "Plumwood, Property, Selfhood, and Sustainability." *Ethics and the Environment.* 14:2 (2009). pp. 66-67.

taken by ecofeminists and pragmatists toward social change are not in opposition to one another, but rather, are complementary. From their union may emerge the kinds of solutions that, according to Anthony Weston, "call upon humans to embrace the richness and diversity of our actual values in order to open up a new sense of practical action."[128]

The democratic vision shared by ecofeminists and pragmatists can forge a space for more robust, liberative, and politically motivated solutions to persisting ecological problems through enriched and expanded democratic deliberation. An important first move for ecofeminists, however, is to move away from a reliance on identity politics that has been characteristic of the tradition. Radically inclusive democracy may emerge when we begin to think about our moral obligations as deriving from our transactive relationships, rather than from categories of identification.

Democratic theorist and ecofeminist Catriona Sandilands claims that the promise of ecofeminism lies not in the identity politics for which it is often known and for which it has been duly criticized, but rather, in its democratic impulse—an impulse she recognizes throughout ecofeminism's diverse expressions and manifestations. This democratic impulse holds tremendous promise for social transformation and for the amelioration of current ecological problems as it promotes an inclusive notion of the public—one which includes nonhuman others as subjects of democratic life and one which aims to invite such a radically re-envisioned public into democratic colloquy. Sandilands writes that ecofeminism needs to be

> involved in a more strongly radical democratic project. Identity and the belief in its
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> truthfulness, solidity, presociality, and completion is a barrier to this involvement.

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[128] Weston, Anthony. *The Incompleat Eco-Philosopher: Essays from the Edges of Environmental Ethics.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009. p. 3.

> What should replace identity is the democratic openness that comes with a recognition of the impossibility of identity. Such openness is better for women, as gender can then be subjected to question as part of a political strategy; it is better for nature, as its enigmatic presence can then be shown to appear in politics without the essentializing and anthropocentric tendencies of identification; it is better for democracy, as it requires not only that we converse but invite new conversations.[129]

The democratic project that ecofeminist political philosophers envision is one in which we encounter each *other,* including nonhuman *others,* on "mutual, dialogical terms."[130]

A robust participatory democracy has the potential to secure better lives for its participants when those who have a stake in the community are able to actively engage with others in seeking together their common good. Craig Browne explains that "for Dewey…democracy enables a greater variety of experience, in the sense of encountering a range of stimuli and a widening of interaction, thereby enhancing the creativity of action in a manner that breaks down the barriers of social exclusion."[131] Thus, I argue, the democratic project for the Deweyan pragmatist rests on a democratic impulse that elegantly corresponds with the democratic impulse Sandilands sees as holding promise for a revitalized ecofeminism. In both traditions, we see the impulse to include "each contributing member" into the deliberations that concern community life.

Adopting a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework for deliberation may make possible a more inclusive democratic colloquy which includes nonhuman stakeholders.

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[129] Sandilands, p. 84.
[130] Mallory, Chaone. "What is Ecofeminist Political Philosophy? Gender, Nature, and the Political." *Environmental Ethics.* 32:3, (2010). p. 305.
[131] Browne, Craig. "Pragmatism and Radical Democracy." *Critical Horizons: A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory.* 10:1 (2009). p. 71.

Deliberative democracy, understood through the Deweyan democratic ideal, merits an ecofeminist critique. In the following sections, I offer an account of the salient features of ecofeminism I find to be relevant to the present discussion. Ecofeminist thought can strengthen Dewey's notion of deliberative democracy by reinforcing, critiquing, and then amending a holistic vision of community life and by addressing asymmetries of power that I identify as manifesting in four ways: through linguistic privilege, through the problem of speaking for others, through an entrenched notion of human exceptionalism, and through the valorization of reason over the affective dimensions of ethical life. Harnessing the power of Dewey's moral imagination, a pragmatist-(eco)feminist account of deliberative democracy better addresses and actively works to ameliorate ecological conflicts in community life.

II.   ECOFEMINIST HOLISM: COMMUNITIES, CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS, AND COMMON GOOD

Dewey had great faith that when deliberation is informed by the rich social intelligence of diverse, heterogeneous community members, the range of solutions to experienced problems is dramatically widened through the imaginative faculties of the participants. But in the context of environmental concerns, Dewey's development of this deliberative ideal falls short. Dewey's conception of deliberative democracy *is,* I argue, one which affirms a broad notion of the public—one that insists upon the contribution and participation of all sorts of members of a community. In the epigraph of this chapter, Dewey makes clear that "each contributing member" ought to actively share in the common good. Yet, I maintain that he never adequately develops this political conception of the public to extend beyond the human, even though there is ample room in his account for

doing so. He is adamant that the transactions between humans and their environments are critical—politically, ethically, and aesthetically—yet in his written work he does not recognize the environments themselves as playing an active role in deliberation.

Ecofeminist political philosophy has consistently challenged the Western tendency to use political terms exclusively to apply to human subjects. Chaone Mallory raises a critical question for the present concern about deliberative democracy: "Can 'traditional' political concepts, categories, and values—e.g., freedom, democracy, speech, solidarity, participation, subjectivity, the notion of the public sphere—that is, the languages through which we articulate the political, be applied to the more than human world?"[132] Indeed, they can, she argues: "The political is not limited to the human. The more-than-human world too is capable of political agency, action, and speech, and can assert claims that human beings are capable of recognizing, and are thus under a moral obligation to do so."[133] In my view, this tripartite claim—that the more-than-human world contains political subjects capable of participation, that humans have the capacity to recognize those claims, and that humans ought to recognize those claims—is the vital ecofeminist contribution that can serve to augment the Deweyan ideal of deliberative democracy guided by the moral imagination. Gruen explains that we must not only develop the skills necessary to understand the interests of nonhuman others, but also must develop the skills necessary to "situate those experiences in the larger social, political, and economic context."[134]

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[132] Mallory. Chaone. "Val Plumwood and Ecofeminist Political Solidarity: Standing with the Natural Other." *Ethics and the Environment.* 14:2 (2009). p. 4.
[133] Mallory, Chaone. "What is Ecofeminist Political Philosophy? Gender, Nature, and the Political." *Environmental Ethics.* 32:3 (2010). p. 7.
[134] Gruen, p. 38.

William Caspary emphasizes that Dewey's inspiring ideal for a deliberative democracy is one in which "citizens of every social class, educational level, and cultural background can participate effectively."[135] But because Dewey never explicitly gives an adequate account of who these citizens are that are to be involved and because he doesn't fully develop a theory of power structures, we need to do further work to develop the ideal into a real possibility that might be able to extend beyond human citizens. Ecofeminists have made great strides toward that effect and, thus, are an excellent resource for pragmatists who share similar aims.

The defining characteristic of deliberative democracy is its radical openness, not only permitting but actively inviting previously unheard voices into conversation. Alison Kadlec writes:

> For a deliberative context to be considered democratic, it must reflect commitments to inclusion and free communication among diverse groups of individuals who come to the table with a wide range of viewpoints and from a variety of starting points. Further, well-crafted deliberative forums should be animated by the conscious desire to give voice and opportunity for dialogue to marginalized stakeholders in particular, and to begin with the concrete experiences and diverse viewpoints of these individuals. Therefore, properly democratic deliberative contexts must be designed to begin with and give priority to the inclusion of the perspectives of ordinary citizens who have little or no experience with the often

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[135] Caspary, William. "On Dewey, Habermas, and Deliberative Democracy." *Journal of Public Deliberation.* 4:1 (2008). p. 2.

impoverished and exclusionary examples of what passes for public dialogue today.[136]

Since we are granting, at this point in the project, that nonhuman subjects, from domestic and wild animals and insects to trees and even water, may be among the marginalized stakeholders of a community which must be given voice in order for deliberation to be radically democratic, we must begin to consider how to give priority to their inclusion. I argue that nonhuman stakeholders are among the "ordinary citizens" toward whom public dialogue today is exclusionary, and, as such, the voices of nonhuman subjects ought to be welcomed and invited into a richly participatory democratic colloquy.

Informed by holistic environmental philosophy and a claim that Dewey's own philosophy is a nuanced holism, I made the claim in Chapter One that Dewey's idea of an inclusive public can and should be broadened to include the nonhuman subjects of a given biotic community. When we consider that human lives are inextricable from the natural world, we more clearly see that the interests of nonhuman stakeholders are of critical importance—for their own sake and for the sake of human lives which are always in ongoing transaction with their environment, and for the good of the biotic community itself. The claim that the interests of nonhuman stakeholders ought to be invited in good faith into the processes of deliberative democracy rests, in part, on a holistic understanding of interconnectedness. Yet what holism doesn't clearly bring to the case of deliberative democracy is a way to understand the heterogeneity that exists within groups and species. Although holists recognize the significance of collectives that together form a whole, they don't clearly tell us how to understand the diverse members that comprise those

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[136] Kadlec, Alison. "Deliberative Democracy and the Problem of Power." *Journal of Public Deliberation.* 3:1 (2007). p. 10.

collectives—members with which we have all different kinds of relationships. A radically deliberative democracy must be able to take seriously both the common good and the good of the individuals who constitute it.

Traditional holistic views maintain that large, often abstract, concepts like "the land," "the environment," or "the ecosystem" have moral significance and argue that humans should see themselves as "part of the larger matrix of nature."[137] Holism challenges atomistic and anthropocentric Western philosophy in a significant way by attesting to the interdependence of humans and nature—understanding the biotic community to be an interconnected web. I contend that acknowledging the interconnectedness of this sort is absolutely critical in the face of the ecological devastation we are experiencing and increasingly foresee. But holism is not beyond criticism. Our lived experience entails both our membership in social wholes—like the biotic community—and our individual interests. The kind of holism that would be fitting for a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework for deliberation is one that will take both goods into account.

Many ecofeminist thinkers have demonstrated variations of holism that I believe can bolster Dewey's own (albeit underdeveloped) holism. An ecofeminist holism is, as Mark Fellenz understands, "a holism without hierarchy." Marti Kheel's ecofeminist holism, in particular, merits attention. Kheel offers an ecofeminist critique of traditional manifestations of ecological holism, identifying in them an underlying masculinist orientation which devalues our empathetic impulses to care for individual animals rather than exclusively for species. Kheel aptly describes this masculinist orientation:

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[137] Kheel, Marti. *Nature Ethics: An Ecofeminist Perspective.* Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008. p. 2.

Despite temporal and geographic variations, masculinist traits are characteristically opposed to traits commonly perceived as female. In addition, they are assessed by their (superior) relation to the larger natural world, which they symbolically transcend. In the modern era, the traits most commonly associated with masculinity are: 1) rationality, 2) universality, and 3) autonomy. These traits are counterposed to: 1) nonrationality (or emotionalism), 2) particularity, and 3) relation and dependence. [138]

Through her criticism, Kheel offers a reconceived holism which emphasizes the importance of both individuals and wholes, thus affirming the significance of both reason and emotion in our decision-making processes. A pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework for deliberation ought to adopt a holism of Kheel's variety.

Kheel's criticism of mainstream forms of holism, as evidenced through thinkers like Leopold, Theodore Roosevelt, Holmes Rolston III, and Warwick Fox, is that they valorize nature as a whole, but fail to recognize the moral significance of individual animals. Traditional holistic views depart from individualism by understanding the biotic community to be an interconnected web. The good of the whole is prioritized over the individuals that comprise it.

Instead of a complete rejection of holism in favor of ethical individualism which cannot encompass our experiences of being relational selves, Kheel believes that we can take seriously features of both. We can build coalitions between the two ethical frameworks through an ecofeminist holism. Her task is to reclaim holism "from those for whom it signifies a new form of hierarchy (namely, the valuing of the whole over the

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[138] Kheel, Marti. "Liberation of Nature: A Circular Affair." *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics.* Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams, eds. New York: Columbia UP, 2007. p. 3.

individual)."[139] Holism, like individualism, she argues, falls prey to dualist and hierarchical thinking that ecofeminists work to dismantle. This is not only theoretically problematic; it also runs contrary to our common experiences. For the pragmatist, the test of truth is whether it aligns with experience. Our experience is not simply of a whole but of a whole comprised of parts which we value in different, sometimes conflicting, ways. The task is not to dismiss our inclinations to value the parts of the whole, but to rethink how we understand our valuing.

If the test of ethical action or justice is the flourishing of the biotic community as a whole, a hierarchical system is generated which ranks certain species higher than others. For example, rare and endangered species are ranked significantly higher than domestic animals, which are not only abundant, but also "very frequently contribute to the erosion of the integrity, beauty, and stability of the biotic communities"[140] of which they are a part. These arguments, then, rest on rationality in order to adjudicate which species and which animals are given preference. Kheel's task is to move away from the reliance on a masculinist rationality that devalues the myriad other values that enter into our ethical deliberations.

In her reconceived ecofeminist holism, Kheel makes such a departure in several ways. By her own account, she offers a perspective informed by (1) an ethical orientation that emphasizes the centrality of feelings of attachment and care; (2) a view of human maturity that entails deepening, not transcending, these feelings; (3) a vision of a post-

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[139] Ibid., p. 44.
[140] J. Baird Callicott qtd. in Kheel, Marti. "Liberation of Nature: A Circular Affair." *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics.* Josephine Donovan and Carol J. Adams, eds. New York: Columbia UP, 2007. p. 41

patriarchal world that affirms diversity, not dualism; (4) an affirmation of the individual integrity of other-than-humans.[141]

The pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework of deliberation for which I advocate affirms social ontology by recognizing the importance of the flourishing of the biotic community as a whole, yet it does so without devaluing the feelings of care that we have toward individuals with whom we interact, both human and nonhuman. Furthermore, by acknowledging our feelings of care and attachment toward individual subjects, we recognize that our responsibilities may vary from individual to individual and from species to species. There is no clear, fixed method by which we can determine our responsibilities for a given species or even an individual in the abstract. Our ethical responsibilities must be grounded in actual experiences. The pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework will facilitate the sort of deliberation that can make this possible.

This is not to say all members' experiences within a community will ultimately be attributed equal weight, nor does it suggest that the interests of all members can be accommodated. A pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework for deliberation is not utopian in its inclusive vision. There will often be conflicting and irreconcilable interests within a community. I argue, however, that the boundaries ought not be drawn at listening. Boundaries—or the decision to exclude—should not occur in the deliberation phase, but in the application phase. As Gruen explains: "All moral patients, human or non-human, cognitively able or cognitively impaired, have interests that deserve our moral attention. But that does not ensure that their interests will always win out when there are conflicts of

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[141] Kheel, *Nature Ethics.* p. 15.

interest, just as in the case when conflicts between persons occur and everyone's interests cannot be simultaneously satisfied."[142]

Kheel's approach, I argue, is one that is appropriate for the pragmatist-(eco)feminist to adopt because it is context-sensitive, experiential, and experimental. It defers not to abstract principles and rules, but instead, to an ongoing reflexive process based on our lived experiences—experiences which include skills of reasoning as well as attunement to emotions and relationships. Kheel writes: "This is, perhaps, the most practical implication…: that we must involve ourselves as directly as possible in the *whole* process of our moral decisions. We must make our moral choices a circular affair."[143] This kind of holism is circular, according to Kheel, because it requires the moral agent to test the morality of his or her choices against experience. She explains:

> Emotion easily divides from reason when we are divorced from the immediate impact of our moral decisions. A possible step, therefore, in striving to fuse these divisions is to experience directly the full impact of our moral decisions….When we are physically removed from the direct impact of our moral decisions—that is, when we cannot see, smell, or hear their results—we deprive ourselves of important sensory stimuli, which may be important in guiding us in our ethical choices.[144]

Hearkening back to Carol Gilligan's "ethic of care" and the idea of "attentive love" conceived by Simone Weil and secularized by Iris Murdoch, Kheel posits her own contextualized philosophy of care. In Kheel's theory, care and justice are not antithetical

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[142] Gruen, p. 75.
[143] Kheel. "Liberation." p. 49.
[144] Ibid., p. 49.

to one another. Rather, care is a prerequisite to justice. As Virginia Held claims: "there can be care without justice…[but] there can be no justice without care."[145]

The unification of justice and care is a critical move in dismantling problematic dualisms. And, significantly, it affirms the importance of democratic deliberation. I can make ethical claims based on my own caring relationships with various stakeholders within communities. Yet that I do not know or care for all stakeholders does not excuse me from making ethical claims on behalf of others. Rather, it requires that I listen carefully to others who *do* have those caring relationships. Those of us who are in positions of power and influence need not eschew the commitments and responsibilities we have to distant others, in this view, but it does require that we actively seek and include the input of others who do have direct experience with those others. It requires an acknowledgement of the limits of our own epistemological standpoint.

Furthermore, the emphasis on direct experiences of care does not excuse me from listening to the claims of those for whom few have caring relationships. In such a case, abstract claims of justice may be rendered useful—filling a role which care cannot. Neither systems and individuals nor care and justice should be placed in hierarchical relationships with one another. Instead, they should be understood as different elements—elements which are often in tension or conflict—in a process of ethical decision-making. Rich, radically democratic deliberation can make use of all of these elements, taking seriously both abstract claims of justice alongside ethical claims derived from the caring relationships of a diverse populace.

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[145] Virgina Held qtd. in Hamington, Maurice. "Learning Ethics from Our Relationships with Animals: Moral Imagination." *International Journal for Applied Philosophy.* 22.2 (2008). p. 179.

Deliberation will improve when the good of the whole and the good of individuals are understood to be morally considerable. Yet there still remain asymmetries of power that reinforce the subordination of nonhuman stakeholders and allow their voices to continue to be contested. I continue the ecofeminist critique in the next section through an examination of the ways that power and privilege keep certain stakeholders marginalized.

III.   ECOFEMINIST INSIGHTS ON POWER AND PRIVILEGE

At the crux of Val Plumwood's ecofeminist philosophy, on which my own view draws heavily, is the contention that Western culture is characterized by the privileging of certain groups over others in an interlocking structure she calls "the logic of domination."[146] The logic of domination functions in and through dualisms. Hyperseparations like the reason/emotion dualism described above, along with others like culture/nature, male/female, mind/body, and master/slave, are pervasive and, indeed, insidious. It is not of the act of making distinctions itself, but the necessary inferiorizing of one side of the dualism in order to situate the other side as superior, toward which Plumwood is critical. Dualisms, she claims, are identity-forming. In a hierarchical relationship, it is the very presence of the inferior side that gives meaning and identity to the side understood to be superior. The inferior side is defined as *other*. Plumwood explains that "by means of dualism, the colonized are appropriated, incorporated, into the selfhood and culture of the master, which forms their identity."[147] As briefly noted in the previous section, these theories hold that women are defined as *other* in relation to men. Blacks are defined as *other* in relation to whites. Slaves are defined as *other* in relation to the Master.

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[146] Plumwood, Val. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature.* London: Routledge, 1993.
[147] Ibid., p. 41.

The dualisms are problematically rooted in Cartesian conceptions of reason. In the dualistic pairs, Plumwood shows, "almost everything on the superior side can be represented as forms of reason, and virtually everything on the underside can be represented as forms of nature."[148] Thus, the dualisms, collectively, are used to inferiorize nature and anything associated with nature. Whatever is associated with nature is *other.* As a result, nature—or the designation I prefer, nonhuman stakeholders—is systematically excluded from the realm of democracy, since it is considered to be inferior to those participants who are characterized by the features that are valorized—particularly reason and language.

Bringing ecofeminist insights about dualistic tendencies to bear on the subject of deliberative democracy is not to say that Dewey was unaware of or untroubled by this entrenched problem. Indeed, Dewey was critical of dualisms and actively involved in dismantling them, though his concerns were not specifically with the dualisms that I am pointing out in this project. His focus was directed toward dichotomies like theory/praxis, subject/environment, and leisure/labor. I have already treated the former two dualisms in earlier sections, but the leisure/labor distinction is particularly relevant here. Kadlec explains:

> Arguing that the reason/experience split was passed to us in the form of the leisure/labor and thinking/doing dichotomies, Dewey argues that a democracy cannot thrive under such debilitating constructs. In fact, he says "the price the democratic societies will have to pay for their continuing health is the elimination of an oligarchy that attempts to monopolize the benefits of intelligence and of the best methods for the profit of a few privileged ones." Refusing to accept the

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[148] Ibid., p. 44.

dichotomies which pit reason against experience, and thought against action puts us on the right path in this battle, because a reconstruction of experience is an integral component of democratic struggle.[149]

From this critical stance, Dewey emphasizes that democracy belongs to all members of society, not simply to elites. The labor class is alienated, even if inadvertently, from the possibility of its meaningful contribution to political society. Caspary elaborates: "The leisure class has power over resources, disproportionate influence in government, power over communications and media, and power over social capital, as well….Ideas and learning—theory—are linked to leisure and monopolized by the leisure class. Practice is cut off from theory, debased, mechanized, and linked to the laboring class"[150].

Dewey's notion of social intelligence and his thoroughly anti-hegemonic ideas about democracy aim to subvert these deeply entrenched and problematic power relations, which privilege those with time and resources—and, critically, the right language—to assert influence and marginalize those who do not. Dismantling these insidious power asymmetries is an important task for pragmatists and feminists alike. Contrary to many of his critics, who argue that an account is missing entirely, Dewey does address disparities of power. Yet in light of ever-changing power relationships, and for the purpose of this environmental project, looking at disparities of power through an ecofeminist lens can help us to address them more clearly and explicitly and begin to consider ways to challenge them. In the next four subsections, I highlight prevalent dualisms and explain a few of the ways that power operates to subordinate nonhuman stakeholders.

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[149] Kadlec, Alison. *Dewey's Critical Pragmatism.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007. p. 42.
[150] Caspary, p. 2.

a.) SUBVERTING LINGUISTIC PRIVILEGE

One of the most evident barriers to the inclusion of nonhuman subjects in deliberation is the assumption that they do not—or cannot—communicate their interests. I find this claim to be troubling, although I am sympathetic to it. Listening to a Bonobo chimpanzee or a Sagebrush plant or an Orca whale and expecting to get a clear answer to a proposed question seems, to many, like a stretch—tasks for either highly specialized biologists or New Age eccentrics. But, if we take seriously Dewey's challenge to seek "full and moving communication" in democratic conversation, we must consider that that nonhuman subjects may have something to say. Making a similar claim, Sandilands invokes literary critic Tzvetan Todorov, who argues that "there exist two major forms of communication, one between [people] and [people], the other between [people] and the world."[151] It strikes me that those of us in Western cultures have not considered the latter forms thoroughly enough. For this reason, the pragmatist-(eco)feminist must work to change the deeply engrained habits that continue to contest the availability and legitimacy of the voices of nonhuman stakeholders.

With only rare exceptions, we are conditioned to hear only the voices that sound like ours and that speak in our language. Yet, joining other philosophical traditions like deconstruction and semiotics, feminists and ecofeminists have marked this conditioning as linguistic privilege. Like the logic of domination, linguistic privilege is thoroughly entrenched in human culture. Linguistic privilege is the systematic privileging of particular kinds of speech and communication. I claim, in the good company of feminists like bell hooks, Audre Lorde, María Lugones, Elizabeth Spelman, and others, that examining

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[151] Sandilands, p. 228.

difference—whether across gender, across culture, or, as I particularly argue here, across species—through only one lens is problematic.

Lugones and Spelman write: "Feminism is, among other things, a response to the fact that women have either been left out of, or included in demeaning and disfiguring ways in what has been almost an exclusively male account of the world."[152] They continue to argue that what feminists insist upon is the opportunity for women to give their own accounts of their experiences, on and *in* their own terms. I turn here to consider feminist reflections on communication across difference before applying these to cross-species communication and the ways we have been operating through an almost exclusively human account of the world.

The privileging of certain kinds of speech—and, indeed, the privileging of speech itself[153]—over others not only limits the potential for rich communication across difference, but also has racist, sexist, and imperialist implications. Feminists claim that those who speak in the dominant language and modes of speaking have power over those who do not. The English language, as the paramount example, is privileged over other languages, and certain English dialects are privileged over others. Masculine speaking styles, often identified as "logical," are even further privileged. Those who are not native speakers or those who are not endowed with these communicative modes at an early age are disadvantaged. And those who cannot or who are unwilling to adopt them stand at an even greater disadvantage. They are asked to navigate the world in these unfamiliar and

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[152] Lugones, María and Elizabeth Spelman. "Have We Got a Theory for You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism, and the Demand for 'The Woman's Voice'." *Women's Studies International Forum.* 6:6 (1987). p. 573.

[153] Speech is only one of the many ways in which we and others convey meaning and values, so we must be careful not to marginalize other forms of communication and thereby limit the amount of input we allow into inquiry.

un-instinctual terms. Institutions are set up in these dominant modes. One can expect that formal documents, street signs, news media, and educational materials, among other things, will take on the dominant language. Dominant modes of speech are social capital.

When one kind of speech is privileged, others are compelled to assimilate to it. Thus, in order to be heard, marginalized individuals are asked to speak in the language of their oppressor. All kinds of speech other than the dominant one(s) are delegitimized. And in assimilating to the dominant mode(s) of communication, the marginalized speaker often loses features of his or her experience. Feminist philosophy of language aims to deconstruct and even subvert linguistic privilege. Audre Lorde claims: "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never allow us to bring about genuine change."[154] The undeserved (and generally unacknowledged) privilege of the dominant group(s) is reproduced in other power relations, including those between differently situated women. Lorde points out, in reference to white privilege, that "as white women ignore their built-in privilege of whiteness and define *woman* in terms of their own experience alone, then women of Color become 'other,' the outsider whose experience and tradition is too 'alien' to comprehend."[155] Linguistic privilege analogously makes *other* any agent whose experiences are not or cannot be voiced in the dominant mode(s). Thus, marginalized voices are dismissed as "too alien to comprehend." Genuine change, Lorde suggests, arises when the concerns of the marginalized cease to be subordinated to the "master's" concerns.

Democracy, in the way Dewey and many feminists envision it—as a way of life rather than simply a form of government—is stunted by the failure of individuals and of

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[154] Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outside: Essays and Speeches.* New York: Random House, 1984. p. 112
[155] Ibid., p. 117.

public and private   institutions to recognize diverse voices and different forms of communication. What is required is, of course, not fluency in all other languages and forms of communication, but a willingness to try to transcend linguistic barriers. The communication barriers across racial, class, and gendered lines are not impenetrable. We are conditioned to recognize only certain voices, but we can make strategic efforts to dismantle that conditioning by harnessing scientific knowledge and the moral imagination.

These accounts of linguistic privilege are significant contributions of feminist scholarship and, I claim, offer insight to my concerns about the exclusivity of democratic deliberation toward marginalized nonhuman stakeholders. Like the barriers encountered by individuals with non-dominant modes of speech, nonhuman stakeholders are dismissed and devalued by virtue of their lack of speech. Yet, as noted in Chapter One, for Dewey, language is not limited to linguistic practices. Rather, it includes speech, signs, and all kinds of symbolic interactions and meaning-making. This Deweyan notion of language leaves room for the amazingly diverse ways that nonhuman stakeholders communicate. The task, then, is to begin to discover how to understand those modes of communication. Just as feminists challenge patriarchal institutions to work to hear and understand the voices of women and as people of color ask the same, so, too, can those concerned with the marginalized voices of the more-than-human world endeavor to listen. Understanding democratic communities to be multispecies communities requires that we broaden our conception of language to include more than simply the dominant mode(s) of speech.

Cynthia Willett develops a similar claim in a recent work, *Interspecies Ethics*: "The unquestioned assumption that language and reason mark humans as the moral animal or superior species blocks serious attention to animal agency, social intelligence, and

community life that shapes them and us together."[156] Offering a wealth of examples of the different modes of communication of nonhuman animals, Willett argues that many species very clearly *do* communicate, not only with members of their own species but across species lines as well. With that in mind, she asks:

> Why should one species, the human, serve as the standard for measuring the capacities or determining the moral worth for all other species? Are the species with alternative communication technologies or cognitive processes to be ranked higher or lower by the standards of some favored philosophical tradition of moral thought? Should we not instead recognize them and ourselves as diverse contributors to the complex biosocial communities of ethical life?[157]

In developing her claims about interspecies ethics, Willett draws here on Jacques Derrida's notion of *carnophallogocentrism.* In Derrida's deconstruction project, he adds the prefix "carno" to the concept of phallogocentrism in order to indicate how mastery of nature/carnivorism functions in similar ways as phallus/masculinity and reason/speech/logos do in relation to signification of power. Just as Dewey points out through the dualism of theory/praxis and as Plumwood identifies in various manifestations of the logic of domination, Willett, drawing on Derrida, recognizes the systematic devaluing of nonhuman animals through the privileging of language. Willett charges us to recall that "experience occurs not primarily through the cognitive or linguistic capacities that set humans apart from other animals but through bodily and sensory immersion in a partly shared world."[158] Moreover, she insists on "the need for engaging those who are far

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[156] Willett, Cynthia. *Interspecies Ethics.* New York: Columbia UP, 2014. p. 7.
[157] Ibid., p. 8.
[158] Ibid., p. 12.

removed from ourselves in their sensibilities and biocultures and who may initially strike us as not only strange or inconsequential, but as disgusting or ridiculous and as ready targets of deadly neglect or annihilation."[159]

Feminist philosophy of language that addresses barriers to communication across genders and cultures offers insights to the somewhat analogous problem of linguistic privilege that humans have over nonverbal, nonhuman stakeholders. But that we do not speak the same language need not prevent us from attempting to communicate and understand communication in all of its various forms.

b.) ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF SPEAKING FOR OTHERS

The motivation for this project—the desire for nonhuman stakeholders within a community to be given voice in democratic deliberations—is based on two contentions: first, that all stakeholders within a problematic situation deserve consideration, and, second, that problematic situations can be resolved more creatively, intelligently, and ethically when diverse stakeholders are involved in deliberation. I've argued, with others, that nonhuman stakeholders have interests and are able to communicate those interests in various ways, and that humans are, in many cases, able to recognize these claims, although we are often unskilled at doing so. Even when we can recognize the claims of others through creative, skilled listening and attention, we will still face the problem of how to represent those claims. Although the problem of speaking for nonhuman others poses some unique challenges, I argue that it is importantly analogous to other ways that we encounter the problem of speaking for others—a problem with which feminists have grappled. My own conception of these analogous problems draws on this literature.

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[159] Ibid., p. 13.

In "The Problem of Speaking for Others," Linda Martín Alcoff wrestles with the different ethical challenges encountered as we try to determine how, when, and if it is appropriate to speak for others, particularly marginalized others. It is clearly problematic for the privileged speaker to assume epistemic justification for speaking for any and all others without risking what Alcoff identifies as "discursive coercion and even…violence."[160] In many cases, she argues, speaking for marginalized others serves primarily to reinforce the marginalization of those who are being spoken for.

In response, some feminists have suggested that it is only appropriate to speak for others with whom one shares group membership. The claim of these thinkers is as follows: Because I cannot transcend my social location as a speaker, I can only be justified in speaking for those with whom I share that social location. Yet this claim fails to acknowledge intersectionality. We are all members of multiple and overlapping groups, and these groups cannot be clearly separated and categorized. Alcoff explains: "This [response] does not tell us how groups themselves should be delimited. For example, can a white woman speak for all women simply by virtue of being a woman? If not, how narrowly should we draw these categories? The complexity and multiplicity of group identifications could result in 'communities' composed of single individuals."[161] This kind of prohibition on speaking for anyone other than oneself arrests the possibility of speaking out about injustices of any kind, except those that one has experienced firsthand as the victim. This is both unsatisfactory and morally irresponsible, Alcoff claims, as the very

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[160] Alcoff, Linda Martín. "The Problem of Speaking for Others." *Cultural Critique.* No.20, 1992. p. 7.
[161] Ibid. p. 8.

fact of one's privilege incurs for him or her the responsibility to respond to oppression and because political effectivity requires the possibility of speaking for others.[162]

Speaking for others is and always will be a problematic endeavor, yet we can approach the task in better and worse ways. Both arguing that we can always speak for others and arguing that we can never speak for others are unsatisfying at best and dangerous at worst. Rather than adopting universal claims of these sorts, Alcoff offers a context-sensitive approach that is appropriate for the pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework. A critical first move for feminists, Alcoff insists, is to "strive to create wherever possible the conditions for dialogue and the practice of speaking *with* and *to* rather than speaking *for* others."[163] Speaking for marginalized others ought not be the first resort. Yet, it will at times be necessary, so Alcoff suggests the following four guidelines. First, we ought to resist the impetus to speak for others. Alcoff explains that, in many cases, the desire to speak for others is a thinly veiled desire for domination and mastery, rather than benevolence and assistance: "One should resist [the impulse to speak for] long enough to interrogate it carefully."[164] Second, the privileged speaker must critically assess and explicitly acknowledge how his or her own social location bears on what he or she is saying. Such disclaimers serve to admit to the audience that the speaker—who speaks from a "specified, embodied location"—has no claim to "a transcendental truth."[165] Third, speakers should be open to criticism by being held accountable to and responsible for their speech. Fourth, speaking for should be an ongoing process. A speaker must analyze the results of his or her speech carefully, looking at "where the speech goes and what it does

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[162] Ibid. p. 11.
[163] Ibid., emphasis mine. p. 23.
[164] Ibid. p. 24.
[165] Ibid. p. 25.

there."[166] Alcoff acknowledges that many of the effects of our speech cannot be predicted or known in totality. Yet, she argues, "We can know some of the effects our speech generates….By learning as much as possible about the context of reception, I can increase my ability to discern at least some of the possible effects. This mandates incorporating a more dialogic approach to speaking, that would include learning from and about the domains of discourse my words will affect."[167]

Alcoff's approach to representation reinforces pragmatist commitments by emphasizing sensitivity to context, fallibilism, and experimentalism and by eschewing universal truth claims:

> The meaning of any discursive event will be shifting and plural, fragmented and even inconsistent. As it ranges over diverse spaces and transforms in the mind of its recipients according to their different horizons of interpretation, the effective control of the speaker over the meanings which she puts in motion may seem negligible. However, a partial loss of control does not entail a complete loss of accountability. And moreover, the better we understand the trajectories by which meanings proliferate, the more likely we can increase, though always only partially, our ability to direct the interpretations and transformations our speech undergoes. When I acknowledge that the listener's social location will affect the meaning of my words, I can more effectively generate the meaning I intend.[168]

When we resist the immediate impulse to speak for marginalized others until we have attempted to listen to and speak with them and when we speak for others only when

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[166] Ibid. p. 26.
[167] This quotation is taken from an updated version of Alcoff's original publication. Alcoff, Linda Martín. "The Problem of Speaking for Others." http://www.alcoff.com/content/speaothers.html
[168] Ibid.

necessary and, even then, only under certain carefully crafted conditions, we can begin to communicate more effectively across difference in a critical, conscientious manner. Alcoff's fourfold guideline for speaking for the other is concerned with dialogical exchanges among diverse humans, yet her claims are analogous to the exchanges among human and nonhuman others as well. Because methods of communication and meaning-making, both linguistic and non-linguistic, are manifold, we must challenge and reshape the habits that lead us to assume that the forms of communication that constitute the dominant discourse are exhaustive. Rather, we ought to carefully work to uncover other forms of communication and meaning-making in order to reveal places where conversations (literal or metaphorical) can go further.

Alcoff resists the suggestion that we can never appropriately and ethically speak for others and argues, instead, that humans can skillfully improve their practices of speaking on behalf of others in certain contexts. This claim extends to nonhuman others. We cannot transcend our social location as privileged human speakers with certain linguistic capacities absent in nonhuman others. Yet we can nevertheless make efforts to improve our communication with them through skillful listening, dramatic rehearsals, and critical reflection.

c.) CHALLENGING HUMAN EXCEPTIONALISM

In addition to troubling linguistic privilege and offering a nuanced account of the problem of speaking with and for others, ecofeminist literature helps to challenge the prevalent and insidious Western notion of human exceptionalism that allows the exclusion of nonhuman stakeholders to persist. Plumwood offers an account of the pervasive doctrine of human exceptionalism:

Arguably, the distinguishing feature of western culture, and perhaps also the chief mark of its ecological failure, is the idea that humankind is radically different and apart from the rest of nature and from other animals. This idea, sometimes called Human Exceptionalism, has allowed us to exploit nature and people more ruthlessly (some would say more efficiently) than other cultures, and our high-powered, destructive forms of life dominate the planet. Exceptionalism seeks unlimited power over nature, but sometimes having power is not good for you, especially if you do not really know what is going on or what keeps it all together.[169]

The doctrine of human exceptionalism is another important barrier to the inclusion of nonhuman subjects in participatory democratic colloquy. Dewey's deliberative ideal for communities requires that participation be free and fair, full and moving. And multi-species participation cannot be free and fair, of course, if we presume that only human interests can be voiced in democratic colloquy or that only certain voices merit our attention. This broadened understanding of deliberative democracy is only possible when we reconsider critical assumptions about what we mean by conversation, what we mean by voice, and what we mean by participation. Plumwood and others go a considerable distance in providing the resources which may enable us to make these moves.

Plumwood claims that human exceptionalism is deeply embedded in Western culture, constantly serving to inferiorize nonhuman nature based on those subjects' perceived lack of cognition. But grounded in her rejection of Cartesian rationalism is Plumwood's radical account of agency. She claims that agency need not depend on self-

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[169] Plumwood, Val. "Human Exceptionalism and the Limitation of Animals: A Review of Raimond Gaita's *The Philosopher's Dog.*" *Australian Humanities Review.* 42 (2007). Online. http://www.australianhumanitiesreview.org/archive/Issue-August-2007/EcoHumanities/Plumwood.html

conscious cognition, reflection, or sentience, but rather, should turn on "active intentionality." Her concern is about the tendency to over-emphasize intellect, which we often take to be restricted to humans or, in some cases, the human-like:

> Many philosophers try to impose consciousness as a condition of agency (and indeed any mentalistic concept)—thus confining agency to the human, as well as imposing unnecessarily high meta-level requirements and demanding unnecessarily consciousness-based language, a strategy I have identified as over-intellectualizing. Over-intellectualizing is linked with an analysis of agency that splits the act into a separate, conscious decision process followed by a material action, the whole making up agency.[170]

Plumwood describes this understanding of agency as having its roots in a thoroughly entrenched monological framework—a story told about human and nonhuman interactions which always identifies one creative actor acting upon an "inert, passive field treated as instrument."[171] Willett makes a similar point: "Nonhuman animals are assumed not only in Western myth but also in our science and philosophy to be above all else inferior to humans, having been constructed as passive, ahistorical, unfeeling, or unthinking, but inevitably lacking Western, colonial, or more recently, neoliberal virtues."[172]

This thoroughly engrained monological framework can be contrasted with a dialogical framework—the framework for which Plumwood advocates—which understands humans and nonhumans as active, collaborative, and interactive. Neither the

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[170] Plumwood, Val. "The Concept of a Cultural Landscape: Nature, Culture, and Agency in the Land." *Ethics and the Environment.* 11.2 (2006) p. 124.
[171] Ibid., p. 125
[172] Willett, p. 30

land nor humans are singular actors, but instead, are, as we see in Dewey, always in transaction with one another.

Plumwood explains that "focusing exclusively on the human element as creative, as in stressing the human-surrogate 'cultural,' has the effect of disappearing the other, frequently much older and more important, form of agency or creativity, the work of the earth, of the natural world, of nature, in forming the land, also the agency of the earth itself, the biosphere, the other species present in and formative of the land."[173] According to Plumwood, the other-than-human elements of the world—plants, animals, the land itself— should not be thought to lack agency simply because they [in some cases] lack self-consciousness, reflection, or other characteristics we attribute to humans or the human-like. Instead, she understands agency to be "active intentionality." All the various inhabitants of the world act in and upon the world. The world's species, only one of which is the human, all actively "influence and maintain the land."[174] Because few of these species act in ways that meet the dominant Western framework's criterion of rationality, rationality is an insufficient measure by which to justify indifference to the importance of their activities: "The outcome of any given landscape is at minimum biocultural, a collaborative product that its multiple species and creative elements must be credited for."[175]

At worst, linguistic privilege and a perceived lack of agency are two concepts that might be used justify the oppression and marginalization of nonhuman others. At best, they serve to justify the dismissal of the voices of nonhuman subjects in deliberative democracy.

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[173] Plumwood, p. 125
[174] Ibid., p. 125
[175] Ibid., p. 125

Yet, in addition to being philosophically problematic, as Plumwood and others have pointed out, they are also scientifically short-sighted.

It seems intuitive that communication is not limited only to exchanges among humans. Companion animals are a good illustration. Communication clearly occurs between companion animals and humans all the time. While they do not speak the same language, the shared modes of communication work well in most cases. And while, indeed, humans temporarily impose their own language on companion animals in order to name the animals' interests—food, water, security, attention—those are only symbols used to guide our interactions. They do not require the companion animal speak the language of their masters.[176]

Many plants and animals and other living things have rich languages and rich emotional lives and form goals and intentions.[177] A few other examples of communication, both within and across species, are illustrative of this point. Scientific studies over the last several decades have shown various ways that plants communicate with one another. Acacia trees communicate with one another and across species in order to warn against predators. When a giraffe or kudu begins to eat the leaves of an acacia tree, the tree begins to emit tannins that change the taste of their leaves, making them bitter.[178] This not only protects the individual tree currently being grazed, but also passes to the other trees of the same species, so that they can protect themselves. And these signals do not only pass

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[176] I use the term "master" here only to be analogous with Lorde's claim about the master's tools dismantling the master's house. It is not meant to denote a master/slave relationship with companion animals.

[177] Karban, Richard and Louie H. Yang and Kyle F. Edwards. "Volatile Communication Between Plants That Affects Herbivory." *Ecology Letters*. 7:1 (2013). p. 44.

between trees of the same species. Researchers have seen these chemical communications pass between plants of different species as well. And, further, the predators are attuned to these signals. Predators respond to the messages by leaving the tree for a better tasting meal or, in some cases, respond by knocking down the tree, perhaps as a symbol of anger or frustration. While these kinds of communication are, of course, nonverbal, they are nonetheless forms of deliberate communication, intended to warn and protect others in the area and to fend off the attackers themselves. Some scientists even suggest such communicative behaviors indicate a sort of altruism—of plant neighbor helping plant neighbor.

In addition to warning neighboring plants about attacks with chemical alarms, researchers suggest that some plants may send messages ultrasonically by clicking their roots underground. It is not clear whether or not other plants have the sound receptors to apprehend those ultrasonic cues, but it is an interesting case, nonetheless, of the possibilities of communication that may stretch far beyond our typical, bounded conceptions. Another and more familiar example of communication across difference is seen in Orca whales, which have both rhythmic patterns and deep bellowing that can convey messages, such as a simple identifications about location and warnings about approaching danger. Jim Nollman has recorded the rhythmic patterns using an underwater speaker system and has engaged, along with other musicians, in call-and-response, improvisational jam sessions with their own instruments and the Orcas in a playful, interspecies communication.[179]

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[179] Cheney, Jim and Anthony Weston. "Environmental Etiquette." *Environmental Ethics.* 21:2 (1999).

Part of the challenge to humans is to learn how to understand the nonhuman stakeholders' languages, goals, and intentions—but it is also important that we recognize and respect that there are elements of the *other* that may be beyond the scope of our understanding. Yet that we cannot easily or fully interpret the languages or understand the intentionality of some nonhuman stakeholders does not mean we can rightfully ignore their active roles in our communities. And, in fact, to do so is not only to miss an opportunity or fail in our obligation to do justice to the nonhuman *other,* but also may be to miss opportunities for enriching cross-species engagement. Willett writes: "If we listen to nature's rustling, we hear not just the mute animal's silent complaint, not even an animal that on occasion says 'No' with a nod of a head or an assertion of a tusk, but a creature who can laugh and play."[180]

Our task, I suggest, is to think more broadly about citizenship and our ways of interacting with the nonhuman stakeholders within our community with the intention of learning more about their various modes of communication and the practices that allow them to flourish or that interfere with that flourishing. A pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework for deliberation which resists human exceptionalism, guided by the workings of moral imagination, can allow us to better pursue and direct those interactions.

d.) ASSERTING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AFFECTIVE

As I described in Chapter Two, Dewey offers an account of empathetic understanding that is critical to his notion of the moral imagination. A condition for the emergence of creative solutions to problematic situations is the ability to step outside our own experiences and imagine the experiences of others who are also impacted by the problem

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[180] Willett, p. 48.

at hand. The affective— particularly the role of empathy—deserves a place of prominence in ethical theory and praxis that it has not historically enjoyed, and Dewey is right to emphasize this need.

In many mainstream ethical frameworks, from Peter Singer's utilitarian ethics to Tom Regan's rights-based accounts, the role of the affective in environmental inquiry is trivialized, if not entirely devalued. Many of these frameworks seek to explain our moral obligations to nonhuman others with an abstract, detached, and disinterested account. Paul Taylor, for example, explicitly says that in developing his ethical orientation, he strives for "intellectual detachment and emotional neutrality."[181] Rules and principles, he argues, should be sufficient to guide our ethical activity without taking emotions and intuitions into account. But recall that, for Dewey, rules and principles are merely useful ethical tools. They are useful in certain cases, but they aren't the only means—or even the primary means—we have for going about ethical inquiry and deliberation. In fact, we must not assume the detached, dispassionate, autonomous perspective for inquiry (beyond the use-value of the exercise, perhaps) because it is contrary to our actual, lived experience. Thus, we ought to take seriously our affinities, emotions, and intuitions.

Yet while Dewey does insist on the importance of the affective, he doesn't provide a satisfactory enough account of its role for us to determine how to incorporate it into particularly complex problems, including those involving nonhuman stakeholders. Ecofeminists offer nuanced accounts of empathy which, I argue, are useful as we consider how to cultivate the moral imagination for deliberative contexts.

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[181] Taylor, Paul. *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics.* Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986/2011.

As I noted in Chapter One, Dewey uses the terms sympathy and empathy somewhat interchangeably. Deweyan pragmatists Steven Fesmire and Gregory Pappas, among others, have explored and expanded on Dewey's understanding in helpful ways. Fesmire adopts the term empathetic projection, which he thinks is closer to what Dewey intended. Pappas invokes feminist care ethics, claiming that, like Dewey, the tradition synthetizes the need for a blending of reason and emotion rather than understanding them as isolated experiences. Pappas writes:

> Dewey would welcome the emphasis that many feminists put on sympathy and care. Care that is rightly fused with other traits of character does not fall into the kind of harmful care that stultifies the growth of those being cared for. What we must make room for in morality is not just the altruistic emotions but the organic interaction between them and other virtues of character.[182]

Like Dewey and the feminists I've been drawing upon, care ethicists emphasize the importance of troubling fixed distinctions and dualisms such as rationality and emotion. They advocate a more balanced approach where emotions and rationality are not distinct but intertwined and complementary. The development of the ideal moral character involves "a complex array of habits that allow one to sense, explore, and find the right course of action in a situation."[183]

Ecofeminists have also struggled with and argued about the meanings of contested terms such as empathy, sympathy, and compassion. Josephine Donovan and Deane Curtin, in particular, make useful distinctions in thinking about our emotions and critical responses to them. They offer compelling explorations of the role of the affective and its complexities

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[182] Pappas, p. 207.
[183] Pappas, p. 208.

that are useful in the construction of a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework. Although the accounts take different approaches, they share common commitments: both are anti-reductionist and anti-hierarchical, and both affirm the significance of the affective in moral decision-making. Taking these perspectives into account is useful for the pragmatist-(eco)feminist who desires a richer account of the complex relationships between human and nonhuman stakeholders.

Josephine Donovan's account of sympathetic caring emerges from a participatory "subject-subject" epistemology in contrast to traditional "subject-object" epistemology. Sympathy, Donovan argues, is "the root praxis in ecofeminist care theory."[184] Echoing Mallory, she claims that nonhuman subjects—particularly animals, in her account—"are subjects whose ethical voice is available and understandable, were humans to take the trouble to hear it."[185] In order to do so, we must begin to reject a subject-object epistemology that has served to inferiorize and justify the exploitation of animals. Ethical responses to animals, Donovan explains, emerge from experiences—specifically communicative experiences—between subjects. Hers is a dialogical theory insisting that communication occurs by virtue of shared encounters. Our encounters with animals, she argues, reveal to us "that they do not want to be slaughtered, eaten, tortured, exploited, or otherwise harmfully interfered with."[186] Dialogue is not limited to human linguistic interaction in this account. There are mental and emotional means of dialogue that do not depend on a shared spoken language.

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[184] Donovan, Josephine. "Participatory Epistemology, Sympathy, and Animal Ethics." *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth.* Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen, eds. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2014. p. 76.
[185] Ibid., p. 76.
[186] Ibid., p. 77.

As we see in Dewey's transactionalism and in the developments in the quantum physics which guide her theory, Donovan understands the self and the other to be fully intertwined: "The observer cannot…be…separated from the object being investigated."[187] Thus, knowledge only emerges for the observer when he or she recognizes his or her participation in what is being observed. Reality is co-created in connection and through communication.

An implication of Donovan's claim is that appropriate ethical responses emerge from intimate, not abstract, knowledge of the other: "ethical awareness *inheres in*, *emerges from*, a subject's experience" [188] of the other subject. Donovan offers an example of the whine of a dog indicating pain: "The physical basis for the dog's pain exists in and of itself,…but its emotional expression—the whine—emerges as ethically actionable in the encounter with a registering subject of consciousness through the medium of sympathy."[189] In this case, the person hearing the dog's whine is moved to act based on the experience of hearing the whine—"it is a matter of experiencing the feeling *with* the other subject."[190] Thus, sympathy emerges out of the shared experience; it is a form of communication itself.

In addition to being a communicative experience, sympathy is also a way of knowing. Donovan calls these kinds of experiences "feeling-with"[191] and argues that the experience is, itself, a kind of ethical understanding or knowledge: "Communicating with animals requires this kind of 'participatory epistemology,' a kind of sympathetic caring alertness or attentiveness to the signs that are being communicated."[192] Sympathetic care,

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[187] de Quincey qtd. in Donovan. "Participatory Epistemology." p. 78.
[188] Donovan. "Participatory Epistemology." p. 81.
[189] Ibid., p. 81.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Ibid., p. 82.
[192] Ibid.

then, allows us to see the subjectivity of animals and other living things. They are subjects with whom we are in ongoing transaction and with whom we are co-creating our own experiences and knowledge.

Donovan insists that emotions play a vital role in knowing. Knowledge is not simply intellectual. It is "intellectual, emotional, visceral—a shared participatory knowledge stemming from the fact that both observer and observed are living beings who operate within the same communicative medium and can therefore connect and exchange information on that basis."[193]

Like Donovan, Curtin contests the tendency of mainstream ethics to hold rights as more fundamental than care. An abstract concepts of rights can be useful, but it is secondary to compassion, he argues. Arguing against both Aristotle and Descartes, in particular, Curtin claims that empathy is a defining human characteristic—one which "exposes our interconnections to other beings."[194] For Curtin, who draws on Buddhist teachings, compassion is a more appropriate term than empathy. Where empathy is a natural capacity, compassion—what he defines as "the cultivated aspiration to benefit other beings"— is a "developed moral capability."[195] Empathy is required for compassion, but compassion goes beyond empathy. An ethics of compassion is a relational ethic which acknowledges that our fundamental experience is one that is shared with others, an understanding that reinforces that both ecofeminist holism and Dewey's understanding of the transactional self.

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[193] Donovan. "Participatory Epistemology." p. 86.
[194] Curtin. "Compassion." p. 43.
[195] Ibid., p. 40.

An ethic of rights rests on the presence of certain pre-determined capacities in the subject in question—often criteria such as rationality, self-determination, consciousness, and sentience. Reason and rationality allow us to determine, based on these criteria, whether or not the subject is morally considerable. Thus, rights-based approaches are often hierarchical and exclusive, leaving out many animals and most of the physical environment.

An ethic of compassion, on the contrary, can be extended to those who do not possess a certain set of pre-determined capacities. It rests on neither abstract, acontextual reasoning, nor on feelings of affection. Because compassion is, on Curtin's account, a developed capacity—a unification of emotion and reason—it does not require feelings of affection or attachment to the subject in the way that empathy does. Developed habits of compassion can extend far beyond those subjects to whom we have close ties.

Curtin explains that compassion "is a place where how we feel, how we think, and how we act come together. In other words, compassion is a cultivated *practice,* not an isolated, rational judgment about the world. It is a deep, ongoing pattern of engagement."[196] This nuanced account of the role of the affective neither elevates emotion above reason nor devalues it. It does, however, require us to take our emotional responses seriously as a significant and motivating factor of our experience. Emotions feature heavily in our moral decision-making. Instead of trying to escape that tendency, an ethic of compassion allows us to work carefully with it, cultivating reflective habits that benefit ourselves, other beings, and the collective community. An ethic of compassion is appropriate for the pragmatist-(eco)feminist who acknowledges that we are always in transaction with our environment

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[196] Curtin. "Compassion." p. 46.

because "it begins with thorough engagement in a common physical and social world. Compassion grows out of insight into the connectedness of self and others. It is not, originally, directed exclusively toward humans, but toward all the co-inhabitants of the social world."[197]

In keeping with Donovan and Curtin, Gruen understands the role of the affective as being critical to understanding our moral responsibilities to others, but also as being critical to our own epistemological understanding of ourselves: "If we can begin to see other animals as making claims upon us, can make those claims intelligible to ourselves and to others, and can respond in the right ways to those claims, we will become better ethical agents and more robust selves, with a more compassionate—and, I would say—accurate—sense of our place in the animal kingdom."[198]

In the sections above, I have considered how ecofeminist insights can augment Deweyan understandings of democratic deliberation and moral imagination in two ways: a). by offering an account of holism that honors our capacities for both reason and care and b.) by addressing how power and privilege operate to marginalize others and by considering how we can address and subvert these asymmetries. In this chapter's final section, I consider what I take to be the pragmatist-(eco)feminist ideal—an interspecies cosmopolitanism.

IV.   THE PRAGMATIST-(ECO)FEMINIST FRAMEWORK: TOWARD AN INTERSPECIES COSMOPOLITANISM

Part of the project for which I advocate, inspired by intersecting threads of ecofeminism and pragmatism, turns on an insistence that heterogeneity among members of

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197 Ibid., p. 54.
198 Gruen, p. 43.

a given community should not simply be tolerated, but should be celebrated and taken seriously as primary sources of growth. A widened cosmopolitan ideal is particularly apt in this context. While cosmopolitan discourse is primarily utilized by social and political philosophers in anthropocentric contexts, it can be appropriated to biocentric contexts as well. Cosmopolitanism, typically defined as something like "world-citizenship," [199] derives from the Greek word *kosmopolitês* and generally refers to a range of social and political philosophies which share a view that all human beings, irrespective of political, religious, national or other affiliation, can understand themselves to be a single community—a community of humankind. Kwame Anthony Appiah describes the cosmopolitan project as having two distinct, yet interwoven strands: "One is the idea that we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kin, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship. The other is that we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance."[200] Of course, Appiah's concern, like main currents in cosmopolitan scholarship, is about human lives. But there is a growing body of literature dedicated to environmental cosmopolitanism that takes these ideas and extends the idea of world-citizenship beyond the human realm; interspecies cosmopolitanism is bio-citizenship.

Appiah contends that we have exaggerated the importance of kinship and similarity, failing to recognize that the "strangeness of strangers" is part of what characterizes our shared existence in the world. Appiah claims that our global kinship is often obscured by

[199] Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmpolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers.* NY: WW Norton and Company, 2006. p. xv
[200] Ibid.

our tendency to associate primarily with those to whom we are similar. Appiah's cosmopolitanism suggests that relationships can and should be formed across and through difference, recognizing and respecting those inevitable differences as *part of* what makes us similar to one another. We, indeed, live in distinct and bounded zones of activity, but those bounds are, to some extent, imaginary. The boundaries of nation and state, while significant politically and practically, are morally irrelevant. The outcome of this awareness should not be the rejection or dismissal of our affinities for our close relations. Cosmopolitanism admits and accommodates partiality, but is critical of a notion that partiality can itself tell us enough about our moral obligations to others. We are members of our own communities as well as a global community with moral obligations that emerge from both memberships.

In an interspecies cosmopolitanism, the distinctions of nation and state are challenged, but so too are the problematically dualistic distinctions between the human and the nonhuman. Instead of characterizing humans subjectively as agents acting upon the passive objects of nature, humans and nonhumans within interspecies cosmopolitanism are both understood to be agents in transaction with one another. Interspecies cosmopolitanism rethinks modernist frameworks "in which humans are seen as animated by culture (a structure of signifying representations) in order to apprehend and act in nature (an inanimate universe of biophysical materiality)"[201]. Just as Leopold's land ethic enlarges the boundary of who belongs to community, placing humans in the role of "plain member and citizen" alongside other members and citizens which may be soils, waters, plants, and animals, or, collectively, the land, an interspecies cosmopolitanism understands humans to

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[201] Campbell, Ben. "Environmental Cosmopolitans: Introduction." *Nature and Culture.* 3:1 (2008). p. 15.

be *among* the actors in a field of experience, not the only ones. In order to approach Dewey's democratic ideal—associated living characterized by "free and enriching communion….indissolubly wedded to the art of full and moving communication"— we must abjure our tendency to cling to linguistic privilege, challenge our engrained assumptions about human exceptionalism, and reevaluate what it means to be a world-citizen.

Throughout this and the preceding chapters, I have attempted to draw out important elements of pragmatist and feminist thought that, woven together, develop a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework for deliberative democracy. Such a framework can be employed in attempts to incorporate the voices of nonhuman stakeholders into deliberative democracy. Creative and imaginative approaches to navigating the vast differences among the human and nonhuman stakeholders must rely on moral imagination in efforts to bridge the physical and epistemological gaps between us. A pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework can take up the important but underemphasized features of Dewey's ideal and appropriate them for use in this broader understanding of deliberative democracy.

Although I have established the importance of the interests of nonhuman stakeholders to democratic life and having identified many of the conceptual and practical barriers that prevent deliberative communities from taking the interests of nonhuman stakeholders seriously, questions still remain about how to institutionalize their inclusion. In the political sphere, how do nonhuman interests gain adequate representation? This is a question for which there is no simple answer. Robert Goodin affirms this struggle: "We cannot literally enfranchise nature and let it tend its interests for itself politically. A direct democracy of birds and bees and boulders is simply not on the cards. But the reason is

much the same as that a direct democracy of all generations is not on the cards, or that direct democratic democratic representation of infants and mentally incompetents is not on the cards."[202] But just because direct democratic representation is not on the cards, Goodin insists, does not mean that representation cannot occur. If the imperative to include nonhuman stakeholders in democratic deliberation is taken strictly literally, it will not occur. But it is to be taken as an ideal toward which to strive, and toward which to lend resources and energies through which more practical mechanisms might emerge. One suggestion Goodin offers is particularly interesting and, I believe, has interesting intersections with care ethics. He suggests an "incorporated interests" model of representation wherein the stakeholder who cannot articulate its interests on its own terms has its interests subsumed into the interests of a stakeholder who can. It is a guardian mechanism that works, at its best, to honor the interests of the dependent stakeholder. Like we see in criticisms of care ethics, this model has been taken up in problematic ways, from slavery to abusive parenting. It is not an ideal model. But Goodin suggests that it may be a powerful one in spite of its potential for harm, because it is a) largely inevitable and b) it is better than risking the interests being altogether ignored.

Goodin's suggestion, which I believe echoes Mallory's claims about the political sphere, is that we are not limited to the ways in which we use political terms and political practices. Considering how interests might be represented in democratic colloquy does not necessarily entail outlandish and incomprehsible practices like animals voting. Rather, it entails that we consider the limits of our present practices with an eye toward imaginative extensions and revisions.

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[202] Goodin, Robert. "Enfranchising the Earth and Its Alternatives." *Political Studies.* 44:5 (1996). p. 841.

If there is a hopeful place for these imaginative revisions, it is in educational practices. In the following chapter, I suggest that educational institutions are uniquely positioned to be transformative. It is through the development of new habits, practices, and rituals that the political and social sphere might be transformed in a way that aids in ameliorating present environmental problems.

CHAPTER 4

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND THE HABITS OF THE MORAL

IMAGINATION

In previous chapters, I have argued that a pragmatist-(eco)feminist democratic framework can help communities develop habits of deliberation informed by the moral imagination, which, in turn, promote more ethical interactions with nonhuman stakeholders within communities. Such a framework is one way of opening the possibility of the transformation from a Great Society into a Great Community—"a society in which the ever-expanding and intricately ramifying consequences of associated activities shall be known in the full sense of that word, so that an organized, articulate public comes into being."[203] In Chapter Four, I return to a pragmatist commitment espoused earlier in the project—the commitment that theory and practice are inseparable. Theory must never remain divorced from practice. Thus, a robust account of the role of moral imagination in environmental inquiry must extend beyond theory, putting theory into action. It is not enough to suggest that these habits of the moral imagination ought to be cultivated; we must also consider *how* they may be cultivated within actual contexts and given our actual resources.

To be sure, there are countless ways that a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework might begin to be implemented, but in this chapter, I will focus on the potential for primary

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[203] Dewey, *The Public and its Problems*, p. 184.

and secondary education to foster and cultivate the habits of moral imagination that could result in better—and specifically more empathetic—relationships among community stakeholders, both human and nonhuman. Dewey maintains that educational institutions are unique in their capacity to mold individuals into engaged, imaginative, and active inquirers—citizens who, utilizing habits of moral imagination, have tremendous meliorative power and potential for social change. He writes: "In directing the activities of the young, society determines its own future….Since the young at a given time will at some later date compose the society of that period, the latter's nature will largely turn upon the direction children's activities were given at an earlier period. The cumulative movement of action toward a later result is what is meant by growth."[204]

If education is to be aimed at social change, as Dewey rightly suggests that it is, then what is needed is not simply more information, but a radical re-making of "what has previously been a matter of course."[205] In the face of global and local environmental problems, we can and should re-think how environmental education, in particular, is positioned to contribute to the transformation from a Great Society into a Great Community.

I begin this chapter by reflecting on Dewey's commitment to progressive education, particularly in its emphasis on nature study and experiential learning in the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago. The Laboratory School was a progressive, experimental school where Dewey tested his own philosophy of education. He envisioned the school not merely as an opportunity to put his ideas into the public sphere, but an experiment in student-driven learning:

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[204] Dewey, *Democracy and Education,* p. 38.
[205] Ibid., p. 174.

Dewey envisioned his school as a scientific "laboratory" staffed with college trained teachers and devoted to research, experiment, and educational innovation….He expected his school—as part of the University's Department of Education—to perform two functions: first, to test and evaluate his theories about schooling and teaching and, second, to appraise the findings of these studies and work out subject matters and teaching methods for a curriculum that did not focus on books and recitations but on children and activities. The ultimate aim Dewey strived for with his experimental school was laying the foundation for a reform which would revolutionize the educational system and, over time, transform the society into a great democratic community.[206]

Dewey's commitment to progressive education, I believe, reveals his faith in the promise of educational institutions to cultivate the moral imagination with social transformation as the end-in-view.[207] Correspondingly, I consider how many mainstream approaches to environmental education fail to cultivate the moral imagination in significant ways. Next, I detail an environmental education program, The Cottonwood Institute, based in Boulder, Colorado, which I believe, to a great degree, exemplifies Deweyan moral imagination in practice and cultivates citizens well equipped to participate in dramatically inclusive deliberative democracy. Yet while I think this program is exemplary, I think that my ecofeminist critique of Dewey's account of deliberative democracy in Chapter Three holds true for the program as well. Thus, to conclude the chapter, I begin to consider how an environmental education program might embody both the Deweyan commitments and

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[206] Knoll, Michael. "Laboratory School, University of Chicago." *Encyclopedia of Educational Theory and Philosophy,* ed. D.C. Phillips. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 2014. Vol. 2. p. 455.

[207] See also Pamental, Matthew. "A Trans-actional Approach to Moral Development." *Ethics and Education.* 5:1 (2010). pp. 15-26.

ecofeminist commitments, with healthier transactions with nonhuman stakeholders as ends-in-view.

I.   DEWEY'S LABORATORY SCHOOL: CULTIVATING HABITS OF IMAGINATIVE INQUIRERS

In previous chapters, I have claimed that Dewey fails to recognize the significance of nonhuman stakeholders in his insistence on an inclusive notion of a public. While I maintain that, indeed, Dewey pays insufficient attention to the importance of the nonhuman members of publics, it is not the case that Dewey is wholly unconcerned with the nonhuman world. To the contrary, he does nod in the direction of the importance of experience in and with the nonhuman world in primary and secondary education. This is evident through his emphasis on nature study in the Laboratory School, but, I argue, the implications of these ideas for democratic communities remain regrettably underdeveloped.

While Dewey never weaves this early emphasis on nature study more fully into his account of deliberative democracy, I maintain that the centrality of nature study in Dewey's pedagogical models has great significance. In this section, I will look at nature study in the Laboratory School and its relationship to broader ideas of democratic citizenship. Dewey's democratic ideal depends on "human intelligence and…the power of pooled and cooperative experience,"[208] and it is the task of educational institutions, among other social institutions, to create the conditions that make the democratic ideal possible.

As I return to the guiding question of this project—the role of nonhuman subjects in deliberative democracy—I will consider how Dewey's philosophy of education can

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[208] LW:11: OD:219

inform richer and more robust environmental educational programs with the development of active and engaged democratic citizens as a primary goal.

In 1896, already well known for his educational philosophy, Dewey began an experimental school with support from the University of Chicago's Philosophy, Psychology, and Pedagogy Department, where he had recently come to serve as Department Head. The aim of the school was to test the principles and methods of Dewey's educational theories. He had long been promoting education reform, and the Laboratory School was his attempt to put his reform practices to the test in a systematic way. Because Dewey's pragmatism actively resists the chasm between theory and practice, the Laboratory School was one way to embody this commitment—"by trying, by doing—not alone by discussing and theorizing—whether these problems may be worked out, and *how* they may be worked out."[209]

The traditional curriculum of mainstream schools at the time, Dewey believed, insufficiently prepared students to engage with the world. While he acknowledged that skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic were critically important for young students, he felt that the singular focus on the mastery of these skills failed to invigorate students to interact with the world on their own terms. A goal of the Laboratory School's curriculum was to develop in each student the "capacity to express himself [or herself]"[210] in a variety of ways within society. Educational institutions, Dewey believed, were uniquely positioned for this task: "The formation of the attitudes…is the work and responsibility of the school more than of any other single institution."[211] But while the capacity of schools to produce

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[209] Dewey, *School and Society*, p. 61.
[210] Ibid., p. 68.
[211] Qtd. in "John Dewey as Environmental Educator," p. 1.

social change exists, they were—and certainly are still today—failing to fulfill that capacity in important ways.

One significant problem Dewey saw in traditional educative practices is the significant gap between the content of coursework and the skills desired for active lives within democratic society. Strongly critical of lessons that had little or no traction with students' daily lives, he believes that the promise of progressive education lay in its potential to "affiliate with life itself, to become the child's habitat, where he (sic) learns through directed living; instead of only being a place to learn lessons having an abstract and remote reference to some possible living to be done in the future."[212] Thus, Dewey's radically re-envisioned education aims to embody habits of democracy even in its youngest students. He argues that the isolated and highly individualized character of modern schooling was in tension with the habits of collaboration, deliberation, and cooperation that societies attest to desire.[213] He imagines, instead, that the school should embody "embryonic community life, active with the types of occupations that reflect the life of the larger society, and permeated throughout with the spirit of art, history, and science."[214]

Because educational institutions ought to be instruments of social transformation and should be aimed at growth rather than a pre-determined end (i.e., a fixed set of

[212] Dewey, *School and Society*. p. 32.
[213] Iris Marion Young makes an important argument along similar lines, claiming that what is needed in community dialogues like these I describe is not consensus or agreement, but "an openness to unassimilated others." In the classroom, as in other institutions, an aim should be "bringing differently identified groups together without suppressing or subsuming the differences." Young, Iris Marion. "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference." *Social Theory and Practice.* 12:1 (1986). pp. 22-23. John Trimbur describes Young's argument further: "By organizing students non-hierarchically so that all discursive roles are available to all the participants in a group, collaborative learning can do more than model or represent the normal workings of discourse communities. Students' experience of non-domination in the collaborative classroom can offer them a critical measure to understand the distortions of communication and the plays of power in normal discourse. See Trimbur, John. "Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning." *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader.* Victor Villanueva, ed. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers in English, 2011. p. 476.
[214] Dewey, *School and Society*, p. 44.

information understood to be "knowledge"), the habits taught in school ought to be the desired habits for citizenship. For Dewey, these desired habits are what make possible the social intelligence—the pooled, cooperative experience—that allows democratic society to flourish.

The emphasis on individualism that is so prevalent in traditional schooling both in Dewey's time and now—where collaboration is often viewed as academic dishonesty—inhibits the possibility for social intelligence to develop. Dewey writes:

Mutual assistance, instead of being the most natural form of cooperation and association, becomes a clandestine effort to relieve one's neighbor of his proper duties. Where active work is going on all this is changed. Helping others, instead of being a form of charity which impoverishes the recipient, is simply an aid in setting free the powers and furthering the impulse of the one helped. A spirit of free communication, of interchange of ideas, suggestions, results, both successes and failure of previous experiences, becomes the dominating note….The school life organizes itself on a social basis.[215]

Dewey imagined educational practices that encourage—rather than disparage or even forbid—mutual assistance. When students are gently and intelligently guided through the development of cooperative learning skills, they develop habits that are fitting for participation in democratic society, as they grow individually through processing the experiences, successes, and failures of themselves or others. He saw the isolated nature of students' school activities as "the tragic weakness of the present school."[216] He writes: "It endeavors to prepare future members of the social order in a medium where the conditions

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[215] *School and Society*, p. 30.
[216] Ibid., p. 28.

of the social spirit are eminently wanting."[217] The highly individualized nature of modern schooling is antithetical to future participation in social life which requires cooperation and mutual assistance. For Dewey, the medium *is* the message, whether it is intended or not. Thus, new mediums—new methods of growing students—are urgently needed.

In addition to the emphasis on mutual assistance, Dewey's educational ideal—like his philosophy writ large—tethers theory to praxis all the way through. A lesson not readily applicable to lived experience, in Dewey's view, is not yet a useful lesson. As Dewey echoes throughout his philosophy, the starting place for inquiry ought to be from the problem itself. So, in Dewey's educational vision, students discover their own problems, and education unfolds from there. It is a bottom-up model of learning rather than a top-down model. Counter to a traditional model where an instructor teaches a lesson and hopes that a student can apply it appropriately, making it vital and relevant, in Dewey's curriculum, students first discover what they feel to be vital and relevant to their lives and then, with guidance, follow out these impulses to the desired end of gaining knowledge. In this model, activity precedes information.

This is the most organic and natural form of education, according to Dewey: "The child is already intensely active, and the question of education is the question of taking hold of his (sic) activities, of giving them direction. Through direction, through organized use, they tend toward valuable results, instead of scattering or being left to merely impulsive expression."[218] Students interested in an activity ought to be encouraged to pursue it and explore it, discovering all that is involved with the activity. Of course, this sort of method is not without challenges. Students often need direct guidance and, in cases,

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[217] Ibid., p. 28.
[218] *School and Society*, p. 54.

a more firm hand to ensure that they receive the education they need, irrespective of whether it aligns with their interests. This is, indeed, a challenge. But, for Dewey, the challenge—the problem itself—is always the proper starting place for theorizing. Although there may be a need for mixed methods in many educational contexts, the driving idea, I believe, is that the student should be encouraged to take an active role in his or her own learning. The student should be understood as the central active figure in the process of education, not merely the passive recipient.[219]

Dewey offers many examples of ways to encourage students' natural impulses and interests to develop into constructive lessons with educative import. Students interested in cooking alongside their parent can, for example, follow that impulse beyond the activity itself to learn about chemistry, biology, history, and so forth. It is important to recall that, for Dewey, the activity alone is not what is educative but the ways in which the activity is developed:

> For the child simply to desire to cook an egg, and accordingly drop it in water for three minutes, and take it out when he is told, is not educative. But for the child to realize his own impulse by recognizing the facts, materials, and conditions involved, and then to regulate his impulse through that recognition, is educative. This is the difference, upon which I wish to insist, between exciting or indulging an interest and realizing it through its direction.[220]

For my current project, a useful example of these directed impulses and their educative and transformative power is found in Dewey's comments about nature study and

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[219] For a compelling but, I believe ultimately unconvincing, criticism of Deweyan education, see Edmondson, Henry. *John Dewey and the Decline of American Education: How the Patron Saint of Schools Has Corrupted Teaching and Learning.* Wilmington: ISI Books, 2006.

[220] *School and Society*, p. 57.

the Laboratory School. Nature study was a significant element of the science curriculum of the Laboratory School. Dewey had been critical of nature study in other educational programs, claiming that their sterility stunted the imagination. As he had criticized other disciplinary studies for their abstraction and seeming irrelevance to daily life, so too did he criticize mainstream science curricula for failing to thoroughly embed students in their natural environments in order to follow their own impulses to learn. He saw in traditional nature study "an inevitable deadness of topics…which are so isolated that they do not feed the imagination."[221] Yet these topics are not dead, Dewey knew well. Children's own experiences in the natural world often feed their desires to learn, and so these experiences are prime opportunities for growth through education.

Nature study was woven throughout not only the curriculum of the Laboratory School, but also its very architecture. Gardens, fields, and woods surrounded the built structure of the school itself with the express intention of bridging the gap between schooling and daily life: "The school building has about it a natural environment. It ought to be in a garden, and the children from the garden would be led on to surrounding fields, and then into the wider country, with all its facts and forces."[222] For Dewey, education was to be unifying, rather than isolating and fragmenting. Schooling ought not be something separate from daily life but an informing element of daily life—"keeping alive the ordinary bonds of relation."[223] Because life outside the schoolhouse necessarily involves connection to the natural world, the school itself ought to be thoroughly engaged with those connections.

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[221] Dennis, Lawrence J. "John Dewey as Environmental Educator." *Journal of Environmental Education.* 28:2 (1997). Online.

[222] *School and Society*, p. 89.

[223] Ibid., p. 91.

The nature study component of the curriculum of the Laboratory School included students' hands-on, active engagement with their surroundings. Students collected and observed natural artifacts from the school grounds, nurtured seedlings, and watched the changing of the seasons, all while being encouraged to inquire about their interests and dig deeper for more information, independently and collectively. According to Dewey, even these most basic scientific observations allow students to connect their lived experience in the world with the knowledge necessary for transforming their world. Through nature study, Dewey's holistic philosophy[224] emerges. In school as in the world, scientific knowledge, lived experience, and emotional dispositions are unified, rather than kept separate. In our life's drama, "action, feeling, and meaning are one."[225]

A task of the educator is to direct the students' observations in ways that make them useful in daily life:

> The pedagogical problem is to direct the child's power of observation, to nurture his (sic) sympathetic interest in characteristic traits of the world in which he lives, to afford interpreting material for later more special studies, and yet to supply a carrying medium for the variety of facts and ideas through the dominant spontaneous emotions and thoughts of the child. Hence their association with human life.[226]

Certainly the concerns we face about sustainability are markedly different today than at the time of Dewey's writing, yet it is evident that he was keenly aware that

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[224] Recall that Dewey's holism, described in more depth in Chapter Two, rests on the claim that there is no fixed or clear distinction between a subject and its environment. Likewise, in educational contexts, knowledge and experience are not understood to be discrete but are, rather, unified.
[225] *Art as Experience,* p. 15.
[226] Qtd in Dennis, p. 5.

increasing urbanization in the United States was to have a deleterious impact on the natural world. Dewey acknowledged that "we have much less accessibility of natural resources….we failed to conserve it, thinking that our opportunities would remain boundless."[227] Although he was aware of the inevitability of looming environmental problems, such concerns do not appear to have been at the forefront of the social problems Dewey believed educational institutions were positioned to ameliorate. Nevertheless, he had great faith that education could give students the resources to address social problems of any scale.

Turning now to consider the possibility of the amelioration of contemporary environmental issues, the scale of which is enormous and often overwhelming, I look to another educational resource which gives insight to problems associated with teaching sustainability and which may help us construct more robust and transformative responses to social problems through educative practices. Current teaching about sustainability may not be sustainable.

II.   SUSTAINABLY TEACHING SUSTAINABILITY: AIMING EDUCATION AT FUTURE CHALLENGES

Recall that of central importance in Dewey's philosophy of education is a twofold claim—that education ought to be aimed at social change and that social change can, in part, be brought about by the development of habits that aid in ameliorating social problems. This claim is particularly relevant in light of current insidious environmental problems and troubled relationships between human and nonhuman stakeholders within communities, whose interests and values are often at odds and or in tension.

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[227] Qtd. in Dennis, p. 3

If education ought to be aimed at ameliorating social problems, then certainly among those are environmental problems. Indeed, contemporary education in the United States is now beginning to take environmental problems seriously, educating students about current crises like global climate change, diminishing species, and scarcity of resources. Yet even with increasing emphasis on environmental education in the last several decades, it is evident that this particular set of social problems is not being addressed efficiently enough for current methods to be sustainable. Part of the problem, I suggest, is that we are failing to teach sustainability[228] in a sustainable way. That is, as Dewey consistently emphasizes, there is not enough traction between the education offered and the experiences students have and will continue to have. We must find ways to unify experience and education.

Concerns about the potential for education to be socially transformative are directly applicable to contemporary environmental education. Theory, for the pragmatist, must always be tethered to practice. But all too often in the classroom, information is distributed in an abstract and acontextual way, wholly separate from practice and untethered to students' actual experiences. In a traditional classroom setting, students often learn different theoretical frameworks and positions and potential responses to

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[228] Sustainability is, of course, a contested term, meaning that, to borrow Bryan Norton's words, "because of [its] vagueness and ambiguitiy, can be claimed by many movements and by diverse actors, each one interpreting [it] differently."p.xi. Norton offers a thorough account of the term and its complexities in *Sustainability: A Philosophy of Adaptive Ecosystem Management.* I use the term in this section of the project intentionally broadly in order to envelop a variety of projects aimed at long-term viability and endurance of biological systems. I appreciate and adopt Bruce Hull's understanding here: "I can't define sustainability because sustainability must be defined locally: by a people, in a place, at a time. What is deemed sustainable for one group of people in one place at one time probably won't be sustainable for different people in a different place. Moreover, it probably won't be sustainable for the same people in the same place at a different time." Hull, Bruce R. "View from the Lectern: How to Define Sustainability." *Getting to Greenr.* Apr 26, 2011. Accessed Feb 12, 2016. http://resources.gale.com/gettingtogreenr/view-from-the-lectern/defining-sustainability-view-from-the-lectern/

environmental problems, but fail to develop the desired dispositions and habits of responsible and sustainable environmental behaviors. There is a distinct disconnect between what students attest to being philosophically committed to and what they are committed to practically in the real world. Certainly, there are myriad reasons for this disconnect. But at least some of students' inertia, I argue, is tied to the problematic manner—what I consider to be an unsustainable manner—in which information is distributed in traditional educational methods.

I turn now to an important, yet underappreciated, text in the philosophy of education that I believe addresses the educational disconnect described above and suggests a provocative solution that suitably corresponds with the pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework I am developing. In their 1970 work *Teaching as a Subversive Activity,* Charles Weingartner and Neil Postman echo Dewey's vision that educational institutions ought to be instruments of social change. Emphasizing this transformative function of education, they ask: "What is the business of the schools? To create eager consumers? To transmit…dead ideas, values, metaphors, and information…? To create smoothly functioning bureaucrats? These aims…undermine our chances of surviving as a viable, democratic society."[229] Schools should not produce and reproduce the status quo. Instead, Postman and Weingartner argue, the role of educational institutions is to embolden students to respond wisely and creatively to an ever-changing world. Teaching is educative when it works to subvert attitudes and beliefs that are creating societal problems or allow them to persist. Weingartner and Postman's subversive education project is a distinctly pragmatic

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[229] Postman, Neil and Charles Weingartner. *Teaching as a Subversive Activity.* New York: Delta Books, 1969. p. 14.

one which directly ties to sustainability. Their claims rest on two presumptions: First, "that…society is threatened by an increasing number of unprecedented problems," and, second, "that something can be done to improve the situation."[230] Their hope in the meliorative power of education echoes Dewey's similar faith. We fail to teach sustainability and to teach sustainably when we fail to harness the meliorative power that allows citizens to imagine that the situation can become better.

One barrier to effective and sustainable teaching, Weingartner and Postman claim, is the distinction that traditional teaching often makes between content and method. In many mainstream teaching environments, content is primary and method is, at best, secondary and, at worst, inconsequential. If content is passed from teacher to student, education is understood to have occurred. Of course, this presumes a number of things: that there is a certain set of knowledge that is to be disseminated, that the instructor is the possessor of knowledge, and that the students are the recipients of knowledge. This passive reception of knowledge is troubling, as it fails to engage students as active participants in their own learning and inadequately situates them to respond to problems as they discover them.

One result of content-driven models of education is that students find themselves unprepared for the world they will encounter. Postman and Weingartner call this "future shock":

Future shock occurs when you are confronted by the fact that the world you were educated to believe in doesn't exist….There are several ways of responding to such a

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[230] Ibid., p. 14.

condition, one of which is to withdraw and allow oneself to be overcome by a sense of impotence. More commonly, one continues to act *as if* [his or her] apparitions were substantial, relentlessly pursuing a course of action [he or she] knows will fail.[231]

Many traditional models of education—and, I suggest, specifically environmental education—set students up for future shock by their very structure. This is evidenced by myriad studies about the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of increased environmental literacy.[232] Often, even when students become more informed about environmental issues, they still feel inadequately prepared to do anything about them. They are overwhelmed by the scope of the problems and disheartened by a perceived inability to impact change. Future shock is often characterized by apathy, ambivalence, anxiety, and stunted creativity. But future shock can be mitigated by allowing students to realize that they have the power and resources to address some problems using the skills, interests, and social capital that they possess. If their moral obligations are understood to be relative to their own resources, they can understand the potential to effect change very differently. The scope of our problems is, indeed, significant, and we cannot each, individually, bear the brunt of those burdens. But neither should we be apathetic about our potential to impact change. We should, instead, take stock of our own resources and those around us and work to ameliorate specific problems using the collective social intelligence and skills of diverse stakeholders.

In the context of environmental education, content-driven pedagogical models

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[231] Postman and Weingartner, p. 14.

[232] See, for example, "Eight Surprising, Depressing, and Hopeful Findings from Global Survey of Environmental Attitudes"(http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/09/140926-greendex-national-geographic-survey-environmental-attitudes/) and "The Environment: Public Attitudes and Individual Behaviors: A Twenty Year Evolution" (http://www.scjohnson.com/Libraries/Download_Documents/SCJ_and_GfK_Roper_Green_Gauge.sflb.ashx.).

which assume a fixed body of knowledge are markedly insufficient, since the circumstances are rapidly changing. To avoid future shock and to prepare students to effectively respond to the constantly in-flux environmental crises, we need to radically reconsider our approaches to teaching. A pedagogical model that places the instructor in the role of ultimate knower and students in the role of recipients-of-knowledge cannot produce citizens equipped to respond to an ever-changing world. Dewey knew this well. Dewey-inspired pedagogical models for environmental education contain tremendous resources and possibilities for developing innovative, imaginative students—citizens empowered and motivated to respond to their world and its problems.

III.   UNHARNESSED TRANSFORMATIVE POWER IN MAINSTREAM
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Currently in the United States, there exist hundreds of thousands of environmental education programs. These programs range from primary, secondary, and post-secondary programs in both public and private schools to adult education programs and non-profit extracurricular programs. It is evident that educators and administrators are beginning to see the importance of environmental education, and these programs are slowly becoming more mainstream. Most programs, however, struggle with the same recurring limitations— inadequate funding, legal restrictions and liabilities for travel and field work, and, perhaps most importantly, the persistent marginalization of the field. Because state and federal standardized tests do not typically cover the content of environmental education courses, instructors' energies are focused elsewhere as they strive to meet testing standards, often in order to maintain their own employment.

There are obvious and well-documented criticisms of the ineffectiveness—and arguably even insidiousness—of standardized testing and Common Core Standards.[233] But because these practices and policies are unlikely to dramatically change immediately or unilaterally, we must consider ways to ensure that environmental education does not fall into the margins. When environmental education is considered to be supplemental to students' studies rather than a significant feature in its own right, it is understandable that it fails to take a place of prominence in the curriculum. Instructors are now expected to "teach to the test," covering large amounts of material mostly comprised of discrete facts with little room for exploring, questioning, and theorizing.

Environmental education programs are often conducted in this same way. Students are expected to improve in environmental literacy by learning sets of discrete facts through the lenses of biology, natural history, geography, and other distinct and often disconnected disciplines. The facts they learn are related only loosely, if at all, to students' lived experience in their own communities, in favor of a larger global picture. Even when specific environmental issues—global climate change or scarcity of natural resources, for example—are addressed, they are often approached in a fixed, abstract manner untethered to students' own experiences. A better method, I argue, is one which prioritizes students' own experiences, yet understands those experiences in a broad, holistic manner. Concerns that have both local and global impacts—like climate change,[234] for example—can be tethered to experience first and then abstracted from in order to show the significance and

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[233] See, for example, the report, "A Progress Report on the Common Core," from the Brookings Institute. (http://www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2014/03/18-common-core-loveless)

[234] For another interesting argument about the imperative of institutions to reevaluate how climate change is addressed intergenerationally, see the following: Gardiner, Stephen M. *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011.

scope of the problem more broadly. Students can discover the impact of climate change on their own community, for example, or can consider why their own community is less susceptible than others, like lower income communities, to such environmental impacts. This is an ideal place for discussions to go well beyond where they might if they both begin and end with abstraction.

Content-driven pedagogical models, where instructors are viewed as the possessors of knowledge and students are understood as recipients of that knowledge, are precisely the sorts of models of which Dewey and others, like Postman and Weingartner, are critical. Although these top-down models are a significant improvement over former curricula that largely ignored environmental concerns altogether, they are simply unsustainable. If schools are to be instruments of social change, and if we agree that social change is radically needed in the face of environmental crises, we must teach sustainability much more sustainably. The Dewey-inspired pedagogical model I offer is more sustainable because it emboldens students to meet new and ever-changing challenges as they encounter them.

Deweyan models of environmental education make several important departures from top-down, content-driven models—departures which I believe lead to more sustainable education about sustainability as it also develops students into responsible democratic citizens. In contrast to many traditional pedagogical models like those described above, a student-centered, problem-oriented Deweyan model allows students the room and flexibility to follow out their own impulses and affinities, actively learning through their own experiences, with guidance, as well as creating them and finding their own places to contribute within the learning community. Furthermore, the primary task is

developing habits of inquiry and problem-solving, rather than memorizing discrete facts—facts which, in the context of environmental crises, are constantly in flux.

IV.   THE COTTONWOOD INSTITUTE: AN EXEMPLAR OF DEWEYAN PEDAGOGICAL COMMITMENTS

Although I maintain that many environmental education programs insufficiently prepare students to engage in their world in a way that fosters habits of democratic citizenship, preparing them to be active agents of change equipped and motivated to handle new and changing social challenges, there are exemplary programs that are doing so. The Cottonwood Institute is one exemplar of a program which engages the moral imagination by fostering habits of inquiry, mutual assistance, and active occupation with the environment, broadly construed. I believe it is worth detailing here, in order to highlight some of the actual practices and behaviors that exemplify habits of the moral imagination in the service of more rich and robust environmental inquiry.

The Cottonwood Institute, based in Denver, Colorado, is a 501(c)3 non-profit educational program that provides environmental education to middle school and high school students from underserved populations. The program began in 2003 when its director, Ford Church, developed the program as the culminating project of his master's program in Adventure Education Program Management from Prescott College. Seeing a need for a more unified approach to environmental education, Church aimed to develop a program that would fuse elements of outdoor adventure, service-learning, and academic study—areas which he saw being addressed independently elsewhere, but rarely, if ever, effectively combined.

Partnering with public and private schools, The Cottonwood Institute provides a number of programs which give students the opportunity to do participatory research in both urban settings and wilderness areas in order to promote civic engagement and environmental awareness. Currently, the Cottonwood Institute's programs are tailored specifically to each school with which they are affiliated, responding to the dispositions of the students, faculty, and administration and the mission of each school and working in accordance with the resources each school has. While Church is considering the possibility of developing a more structured curriculum that other schools can adopt, he takes pride in the relationships that Cottonwood currently has with each school that allow the curriculum to be tailored to its respective needs.

One school with which Cottonwood has a long standing relationship is New Vista High School in Boulder, Colorado—an innovative charter school whose vision statement embodies Deweyan ideals: "New Vista's vision is to create a better world by inspiring students to become lifelong learners who actively participate in their education and community, while passionately pursuing their individual paths."[235] Two distinct Cottonwood programs, the Community Adventure Program (CAP) and the Earth Task Force (ETF), are in place at New Vista, both of which students can enroll in for academic credit. Although these classes are distinct from students' other classes, because the

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[235] Furthermore, the vision statement includes the following values: "a commitment to progressive education through innovation and revision, a safe, supportive and trusting environment where all voices are valued, excitement for learning, a collaborative culture based on respect for individual differences, building meaningful relationships, interdisciplinary teaching and partnerships across the curriculum, a rigorous curriculum built around critical thinking, environmental stewardship, social justice through equity, cultural diversity and inclusion, community partnerships through volunteerism and outreach, broad participation in the arts, and inter and intrapersonal growth." The entirety of New Vista High School's vision statement, mission statement, and goals can be found at
http://schools.bvsd.org/p12/nvhs/about_new_vista/Pages/whoarewe.aspx.

Cottonwood staff are present on campus as adjunct faculty members and are engaged with the students regularly, their program weaves relatively seamlessly into the regular curriculum, unlike many other extracurricular programs which reinforce the fragmentation so typical of modern education.

The "Community Adventure Program" (CAP) is a semester-long course in which students learn basic outdoor survival skills, go on overnight camping trips and day hikes, and learn about their local ecosystem, while practicing sustainability and collecting data in citizen-science projects. Acquainting students with the environmental issues of their region by physically immersing them in the natural environment, the CAP program encourages students to see their community more broadly, extending it to include the entirety of the biotic community with whom they are in ongoing transactions. The Earth Task Force (ETF) program is a student-driven environmental action course where participants collectively select a local environmental issue to tackle during the term. Students work together to research the issue, find resources with which to address it, and recruit students, faculty, and community members to participate. This inquiry-based model here closely reflects Dewey's Laboratory School model. The ETF course culminates with the community project itself, almost entirely student-developed and student-run. Past projects have included nearby river clean-ups, campus recycling initiatives, and encouraging and facilitating New Vista's switch to solar power. The ETF program is highly collaborative and democratic, with students working together to identify their individual gifts and aptitudes which they can contribute to the project. Cottonwood's curriculum centers on the following formula: "Gift + Issue = Change."[236] Change is possible when

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[236] See Cottonwood's website under the section "Why We're Different":
http://www.cottonwoodinstitute.org/who-we-are/about-us/

students recognize their roles within their community: "Every student has a gift and when they apply it to an issue they are passionate about, they will change themselves. That change will ripple out to their friends and family; their schools and communities; the environment; and the world."[237] Here, too, we see Dewey's commitment to social intelligence reflected—every member of community is understood to have something valuable to contribute to discourse.

Based on Cottonwood's understanding—that students are agents of change and are (co)creators of their own knowledge—it follows that students are also responsible, collectively, for the trajectory of the coursework. In the ETF program, the teacher serves a mentoring role rather than a leadership role, allowing the students to take ownership of the project. The faculty mentor guides students toward projects that are manageable[238] and helps acquire financial and material resources that require the presence of an adult, but largely plays only a supportive role while the students direct their own course of action. Students are provided with resources and suggestions for democratic deliberation that allow them work together and challenge each other within a supportive climate.

Of critical importance to Church in establishing The Cottonwood Institute was to fill a void that he saw in other outdoor education programs. While there is some overlap in activities and skills acquisition with other programs, like Outward Bound™, for example, Cottonwood's holistic teaching approach is unique with respect to its embrace of and

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[237] Ibid.

[238] For example, one semester, the students wanted to focus on overpopulation, a task which the faculty mentor helped them realize was too large of an issue to tackle in one term. Although the students did not pursue this issue as their semester project, it did open up room for important discussions about resources and creative possibilities for social impact.

correspondence to Deweyan philosophical and pedagogical commitments, particularly those commitments which foster students' moral imaginations.

An express aim of Cottonwood's curriculum is to inspire students to become 21st century leaders and take action within their local communities, based on their own interests and propensities. Rather than simply teaching outdoor skills or raising awareness about environmental issues, the program is focused on developing in students the habits and dispositions of democratic citizens through hands-on, project-based learning. Each element of the curriculum contributes to this aim, from the emphasis on outdoor and survival skills, which empower students to act in the world safely and responsibly, to citizen-science projects, which give students tools to engage academically and experimentally with their surroundings, to a robust emphasis on democratic deliberation in the classroom, which fosters in students habits of creative and critical inquiry.

V.   THE ENGAGED IMAGINATION IN COTTONWOOD'S
       CURRICULUM

Cottonwood's curriculum has myriad strengths, but distinctive among them are the ways in which it fosters the moral imagination in very intentional and particular methods. When learning is constructed not simply as passive acquisition of a fixed body of information, but as an ongoing experience of "action, feeling, and meaning" bound together, the imagination becomes engaged. Unlike the nature study programs about which Dewey was critical—those which he saw as having "an inevitable deadness of topics"[239]—Cottonwood's curriculum feeds the imaginative habits of democratic citizenship.

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[239] Dennis, Lawrence. Online.

Recall that the Deweyan formula of the moral imagination that I am employing is manifest in two formulations, sympathetic understanding and dramatic rehearsals. Cottonwood's curriculum skillfully employs both formulations.

Social relationships, broadly speaking, are reciprocal relationships.[240] The kind of reciprocity I refer to here merits a nuanced understanding. Reciprocity, in this sense, is understood as mutuality or exchange, though the exchanges are not necessarily—or are not even likely to be equal, immediate, or direct between individuals. Individuals are in reciprocal relationships with one another, but also with the rest of the social environment itself. Sympathetic understanding grows out of practices of generalized reciprocity between those in relationship. Through activities that immerse students in the land itself during extended excursions in nature, Cottonwood's curriculum enhances the development of students' understandings of reciprocity and of sympathy. Each student invests himself or herself into nature fully—physically, spiritually, economically—and incorporates nonhuman entities, from animals and plants to the land itself, into his or her most fundamental lived experiences, as nature, broadly understood, reciprocates by providing what he or she needs to flourish.

In this reciprocity, students begin to see that both humans and the land are active agents in the relationship. They see others, human and nonhuman, as part of their own life's narrative. In the course, students learn to live off and with the land. They create friction fires, learn how to identify edible plants, treat their own drinking water, and sustainably

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[240] There is rich literature in the philosophical canon to draw on about reciprocity, dating back to the ancients. I wish to draw a distinction here between basic one-to-one forms of reciprocity, like give-and-take or the *lex talionis,* and a more complex or generalized reciprocity. My understanding here draws on Jane Addams. Addams, who was tremendously influential on Dewey, writes: "The dependence of classes on each other is reciprocal….The social relation is essentially a reciprocal relation." Addams, Jane. *Twenty Years at Hull House.* Norwood, MA: Norwood Press, 1910. p.91.

dispose of their own waste. In addition to feeling more comfortable with their own survival skills, students who completed a CAP course for academic credit reported feeling more connected to the natural world and more able to effect change in their local communities.[241] Wilderness excursions and skills are a significant part of the CAP course, but students' experiences in and with nature are not restricted to wild spaces.[242] Students also engage with the natural world locally, in classroom gardens and composting piles, in the greening of the school grounds themselves, and through projects in the local community, which include diverse stakeholders, both human and nonhuman. A result of these active engagements in the environment, for many students, is an awareness of the deep interconnectedness between humans and the natural world—an awareness which breeds sympathetic understanding. In the classroom, diverse participants recognize that they each contribute to the success of the course. Likewise, in their experiences in the natural world, students begin to understand an analogous lesson—that each is only one of many members of the moral community, all of whom contribute in various ways and with various gifts to the flourishing of the community.

The second of Dewey's formulations of the moral imagination, dramatic rehearsal, is also embodied in Cottonwood's curriculum. Dramatic rehearsals require active engagement—rather than passive speculation about the problem at hand—in an ongoing cycle of experimentation and revision. The CAP program allows students to combine scientific learning with activism, exercise, exploration, and even survival, approaching the different problems they encounter with creativity, testing out possible solutions and drawing from multiple and varied resources, including their fellow classmates. The Earth

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[242] Understandably, a contested term.

Task Force program is similarly experimental and collaborative. Students approach the problem at hand with multiple and varied perspectives, challenging each other and testing out solutions in the classroom before they enact their plans in the broader community. Even after the projects are complete, students reflect on the successes, failures, and limitations, helping develop an understanding of their own fallibilism alongside skills of revision.

Students' written reports shift from field reports about biology or botany into narratives that include widely varied members of a biotic community as characters of their experience, highlighting the transactions among them. Through hands-on engagement, rather than distant and abstract observation, students discover that their environment is a part of their lived experience and that they are part of its experience. They begin to understand that they are always in transaction with their environment.

Cottonwood's curriculum fosters the moral imagination by helping students take their places as democratic citizens who can effect change in the world. As students come to understand that they are the (co)creators of the societies they do and will live in, they ideally begin to realize the value of the diversity of the members of society. It is then, and with the meliorative power of pooled, collective experiences, that transformation can occur—including the transformation from a Great Society to a Great Community.

Democratic, inquiry-based pedagogical models like Dewey's Laboratory School and The Cottonwood Institute engage the moral imagination. Gregory Pappas explains how the fully-engaged imagination can help broaden the scope of inquiry in important ways that lead toward transformation, growth, and the amelioration of social problems:

> Recall that for Dewey one does not fully examine the relations of an act unless one
> engages in inquiry as an imaginative process….In this process, relations with past

experience, present events, and possible consequences are explored. One can do this better or worse according to whether one has a vivid imagination, but a more important determinant of one's success in inquiry is the breadth, width, and flexibility of one's imaginative field.[243]

Inquiry about best courses of action is better when it is broad, when it includes a diversity of subjects, and when it acknowledges the interconnectedness of all stakeholders. In the context of environmental education, we would do best to begin acknowledging a much wider spectrum of stakeholders, looking carefully for those who/which are conventionally trivialized, easily dismissed, and often ignored.

If indeed we believe that better democracy requires including underrepresented voices in democratic discourse, then programs such as The Cottonwood Institute are important steps forward. By broadening the scope of inquiry with the flexibility of one's imaginative field, more stakeholders' interests can be represented. And, by admitting fallibility and committing to experimentalism, when it becomes clear that stakeholders' interests are not being adequately represented, we are free and flexible enough to intelligently and creatively change practices to better do so.

VI.   ECOFEMINIST PEDAGOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

I find Cottonwood's programs to be incredibly promising examples of ways that the moral imagination can be fostered within educational contexts. Cottonwood's curricula provide pedagogical tools and hospitable environments for inquiry-based learning that can give students the necessary resources to be active, engaged citizens, well equipped and motivated for social change in their local and global communities. Students are given voice

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[243] Pappas 2008, p. 175.

and empowered through the culture of student-led, democratic discourse in which they engage, while at the same time learning to recognize, respect, and be sensitive to the other voices within the discourse.

Yet while Cottonwood's curricula are excellent exemplars of Deweyan moral imagination and Deweyan democratic discourse, they, too, merit an ecofeminist criticism like the one I provided in Chapter Three. In Chapter Three, I brought attention to asymmetries of power that Dewey's account fails to address in a substantive way. Democratic deliberation in its truest sense will not occur when certain voices are marginalized or silenced, and an ecofeminist critique can provide insight about how to best incorporate and invite diverse voices into community inquiry, particularly in the context of community environmental concerns.

While Cottonwood students are encouraged to voice their own concerns and interests, attend to the concerns and interests of others, and invite widely varying perspectives into conversation, there remain power dynamics that need to be addressed in a more explicit and intentional manner, if we wish to disrupt the pernicious cycle which uncritically privileges some voices at the expense of others. Incorporating ecofeminist ideas into the curriculum will require students to take seriously ideas of power and privilege that tend to go unnoticed in certain contexts. It will require students to ask critical political and epistemological questions about listening to and speaking for others. It will also allow, I argue, the contexts of listening and speaking to extend beyond human others to nonhuman others in a significant way. In what follows, I explore and develop resources of ecofeminist pedagogy that I think would be useful to incorporate into programs like Cottonwood in addition to the conceptual tools offered in Chapter Three. A pragmatist-(eco)feminist

framework for environmental inquiry must combine both theory and praxis, so these pedagogical tools described below are offered in the service of that commitment. Zoe Weil describes ecofeminist pedagogy as "a perspective which challenges the domination and hierarchical systems of oppression that underlie the patriarchal structures and philosophies of the dominant culture, and a methodology which attempts to untangle and disarm patriarchal indoctrination as it relates to various aspects of our life-styles, beliefs, ideas, and behaviors." [244] It is my contention that such a critical perspective is necessary for environmental education programs that wish to transform communities in lasting ways that do not reproduce systems of oppression. The pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework, in its application to pedagogy, will be explicit in its aim of bringing a sociopolitical awareness into the classroom. Its intention is to disrupt the logic of domination and foster habits in students that resist, rather than reinforce, that logic, by

> accepting students' experiences as real knowledge, encouraging student discussion, and by bringing a social-political agenda into the classroom. The social-political agenda is concerned with equality and change in social, political, and religious systems, with gender as the key for analysis.[245]

In what follows, I describe below several methods curricula can employ in order to help students intentionally develop skills of critical reflection necessary for radical deliberation.

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[244] Houde, p.150.

[245] Martin, Elaine Luna. "An Ecofeminist Approach to Teaching Botany at the College Level." *Education.* 132:1 (2011) p. 227.

a) UNDERSTANDING POWER THROUGH SELF-REFLECTION

In order for students to begin to learn to deliberate in radically democratic ways that incorporate diverse, often marginalized voices, it is critical for them to be able to reflect on their own social location—the power they hold, the ways that their voices, too, may be marginalized. Encouraging critical reflection and creating the conditions where such reflection can be engaged in honestly ought to be an important task within pragmatist-(eco)feminist pedagogy.

Peta White suggests autoethnographical self-study as an ecofeminist pedagogical tool. I think this tool may be particularly useful in the context of programs like Cottonwood which strongly emphasize an explicit aim of social transformation within local communities. For students' work to be transformative, it must transform not only the outside world, but also themselves, since (in the pragmatist and ecofeminist holistic view) there is no fixed distinction between the two. In authoethnography, students engage in self-reflection about their own research. Concurrent with the sorts of theories, values, and skills that they would be learning in the context of their coursework, students would reflect on their own experience of learning in order to discover, as White says, how to "critically read the range of socio-ecological, lifestyle, and education discourses operating on [them] and how these disciplined [their] choices."[246] In such reflection, power dynamics are brought to light in critical ways that are not understood as separate from students' own experience and influence.

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[246] White, Peta. "Walking my Talk as an Intentional, Embodied, (Co)Constructed Environmental Educator." *Environmental Education Research.* 21:1 (2015). p. 147.

b) UNDERSTANDING POWER THROUGH CRITICAL-RELATIONAL

    FEMINIST DIALOGICS

Cottonwood students are encouraged collectively to consider their community widely and the stakeholders that environmental conflicts impact. They are encouraged to engage in inquiry that identifies stakeholders, gifts, and resources in creative and innovative ways. But the curriculum could benefit from more intentional ways of de-centering dominant discourses and allowing marginalized or often unheard discourses to emerge—ways that I argue can be employed in a pedagogical application of the pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework.

Linda Martín Alcoff's work on listening to others, described in detail in Chapter Three, suggests that we need not assume that we cannot ever speak for marginalized others, but instead, ought to think critically about the ways in which speaking for, choosing not to speak for, and withholding speaking for can all be viable ethical responses to marginalized stakeholders in particular contexts. Where the self-reflective practices described in the section above allow students to think critically and reflexively about their own experiences, dialogic approaches with other students can help them to de-center their own experience and resist the arrogance and egoism that can be common in self-reflection.

Open dialogue with other students, facilitated in such a way that it is constructive and supportive,[247] can help students develop "a critical-relational consciousness" in order to "continue to search for counter ideologies and alternatives" to their own perspectives.[248] An ecofeminist approach may also take this critical-relational consciousness further,

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[247] For examples of ways to facilitate such supportive communities, see Ralston, Shane. "Deliberating with Critical Friends: A Strategy for Teaching Deliberative Democracy" *Teaching Philosophy* 34:4 (2011). p. 398.
[248] Houde, p. 153.

extending it to non-speaking stakeholders by practicing critical-relational listening or other kinds of dramatic interaction, drawing on, but extending, Deweyan dramatic rehearsals. According to Houde and Bullis, "[feminist] dialogics de-center an arrogant humanism in the class by refusing to speak for another and actively participating in a mutual conversation with partners for change….A dialogical process juxtaposes identities, representations, values, and cultures, by their incongruities and "marks the silences, voids, and avoidances" in each location."[249] The dialogical exercise will focus on "either decentering authority or on placing marginalized groups at the center of authority."[250] Because educational contexts are often characterized by a relative lack of diversity, such dialogical processes encourage students collectively to think beyond the classroom and their classmates, encountering a wider range of perspectives, challenging fixed beliefs, and directing inquiry toward growth and creativity.

Feminist dialogics also resist the argumentative style of communication typical of much deliberation, particularly in the classroom, and work to unsettle the commonly held educational model which situates teacher-as-primary-knower and students as recipients of knowledge. Growth for all participants, not merely persuasion, is the aim of the dialogical exercise. "Within dialogic engagements," Houde and Bullis write, "it is important to note that rather than using an argumentative style attempting to win students over to a position and cause, this critical pedagogy invites discussion among and between teacher/learners and students."[251]

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[249] Ibid., p. 153-154.
[250] Berila, Beth. "Environmental Justice and Feminist Pedagogy: A Conclusion." *Feminist Teacher.* 16:2 (2006). p. 133.
[251] Ibid., p. 154.

When the feminist dialogical method is incorporated into classroom deliberation, it can serve to unsettle dominant discourses that tend to obscure or occlude others. Transformation—and even consensus—can occur when deliberators are challenged to listen to and represent alternate positions, rather than simply submitting uncritically to the dominant discourse. "Interrupting hegemonic power relations and encouraging critical-relational consciousness,"[252] the dialogical method, used concurrently with exercises of self-reflexivity, can be a transformative pedagogical tool for environmental education. Students should be challenged to reflect on their power and privilege and, also, in appropriate instances, to work to resist or disavow it, offering and inviting others to share power or joining others in their subordinated positions.

The Cottonwood Institute, as I have suggested throughout this chapter, is an encouraging example of the ways that the Deweyan democratic ideal, which has as components robust democratic deliberation guided by habits of moral imagination, can be enacted in an environmental education context. Incorporating a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework into the curriculum will further increase the possibility of truly transformative inquiry and social change. Turning environmental inquiry away from methods that allow—and often even encourage—the logic of domination to persist and continue to silence or leave unheard the voices of stakeholders who are, indeed, among the "contributing members" who share in the common good, the pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework opens up dialogue, creatively resists fixed and limited expectations, and enriches the possibility for meaningful transactions among diverse stakeholders, human and nonhuman alike.

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[252] Ibid., p. 143.

Programs such as Cottonwood offer excellent opportunities to incorporate both pragmatist and ecofeminist insights into practices which can ultimately create the conditions through which young people can develop habits of citizenship necessary to transition from a Great Society to a Great Community. This society, recall, is one in which

> the ever-expanding and intricately ramifying consequences of associated activities shall be known in the full sense of that word, so that an organized, articulate Public comes into being. The highest and most difficult kind of inquiry and a subtle, delicate, vivid, and responsive art of communication must take possession of the physical machinery of transmission and breathe life into it. [253]

If educational institutions are uniquely positioned to contribute to social change[254]—

if, indeed, this is a primary and explicit purpose of educational instititions—then environmental education is a great place to begin working for such social change. Given current pressing environmental concerns that threaten both local and global communities, this is an important place toward which we should direct our energies.

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[253] Dewey, John. *The Public and its Problems*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1927. p. 184.
[254] I argue with Dewey that they are.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this project has been to begin to develop a pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework for democratic deliberation which includes nonhuman stakeholders. This framework is useful, I argue, in considering ways communities can better address environmental conflicts. The pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework highlights places of convergence in the Classical American Pragmatist tradition, feminism, and ecofeminism. I claim that in taking seriously John Dewey's challenge to seek "full and moving communication"[255] in democratic conversation, we must consider that nonhuman stakeholders may have valuable input to contribute to communal life. In this project, I have shown how a strictly linguistic account of environmental inquiry is inadequate, failing to take seriously myriad other ways that values are transmitted within multispecies communities. I suggest that in the intersection of pragmatism and ecofeminism are resources which allow us to move beyond strictly linguistic approaches to environmental inquiry and towards more robust methods of inquiry that include human and nonhuman stakeholders alike, with all their varied interests and means of communicating such interests.

In Chapter One, I presented a Deweyan conception of democracy and showed how it can and should be understood to extend beyond the human, including nonhuman others as stakeholders within communities. This account rests on a nuanced holism that refuses

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[255] Dewey, John. *The Public and its Problems.* Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1927. p. 184.

to separate subjects from their environment in a morally significant way. In Chapter Two, I suggested that Dewey's concept of the moral imagination is a vital tool with which to approach the task of extending democratic deliberation to include nonhuman stakeholders. Because nonhuman stakeholders do not communicate their interests in the ways typically recognized in democratic deliberation, including their voices is a creative and experimental endeavor that requires the imagination. In Chapter Three, I offered an ecofeminist critique of Dewey, highlighting barriers to effective and ethical deliberation that will persist unless certain power asymmetries are addressed. Ecofeminism, I argued, provides many conceptual tools necessary to avoid problems with communication across difference, particularly in multispecies communities. In Chapter Four, I applied the pragmatist-(eco)feminist framework developed throughout the project to educational contexts. Dewey argues that educational contexts are uniquely positioned to effect social transformation and ameliorate social problems. In light of the environmental crises we currently face, educational institutions ought to be about the task of cultivating citizen-inquirers with robust moral imagination that they can bring into democratic colloquy. I offered The Cottonwood Institute, an environmental education nonprofit out of Boulder, Colorado, as an example of a program which works to help students become better equipped to transform their communities through rich deliberation and creativity. I showed how this program, like Dewey's own concept of democratic deliberation, could be enhanced through an ecofeminist critique.

Democratic deliberation, as it is conventionally performed, is a linguistic affair where interests and positions are represented by select citizens in positions of relative power. But if we are to understand democracy as Dewey does—as a form of associated

living rather than a form of government—we must reconsider how we deliberate. Pragmatism and ecofeminism offer practical and conceptual tools that can allow us to better include the diversity of values and valuing that exist within groups of stakeholders—all those who share in the common good.

Endeavors to expand conversation and deliberation beyond the human realm are not novel. Great poets and literary figures have long ruminated about the voices of nonhuman others. Aldo Leopold writes that "the chit-chat of the woods is hard to translate."[256] Mary Oliver laments, "If you can hear the trees in their easy hours, of course you can hear them later, crying out at the sawmill."[257] Thomas Merton observes: "What a thing it is to sit absolutely alone, in the forest, at night, cherished by this wonderful, unintelligible, perfectly innocent speech, the most comforting speech in the world, the talk that rain makes by itself all over the ridges, and the talk of the watercourses everywhere in the hollows."[258] The voices of nonhuman others certainly lend themselves well to be discussed metaphorically. Yet I do not want these metaphors to belong exclusively to the domain of the poet. Philosophers, too, should take up the task of exploring the ways that nonhuman others express themselves and consider what obligations follow from the recognition of those ways.

Admittedly, this is a difficult task and this dissertation is only the beginning of the project. There are questions that remain unanswered and relevant impediments to be addressed. For example, although the pragmatist will never rest on one-size-fits all solutions, it might be desirable to have certain mechanisms in place—flexible as they

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[256] Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac: with Essays on Conservation from Round River.* 1949. New York: Ballantine Books, 1966. p. 90.
[257] Oliver, Mary. *Felicity: Poems.* New York: Penguin Press, 2015.
[258] Merton, Thomas. *When the Trees Say Nothing.* Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2003. p. 140.

would have to be—by which to begin the task of adjudicating competing moral claims if the scope of moral considerability is significantly widened. If we take seriously the idea that all members who have a stake in the flourishing of a community should be a part of the deliberative process, this leaves us open to having the claims of viruses or invasive species in competition with the claims of human stakeholders. This should be understood as a challenge, not as a blockade, but it is a serious one nevertheless. I have expressed that while I think animals are the most intuitive example of a nonhuman stakeholder who should be included in the deliberative process, I do not think inclusion should be limited to animals. Plants and other life-forms also take part in the associated activities of life and should not be relegated to the backdrop of such activities. Although I believe that to be true, there are important counter objections, from concerns about agency to doubts about the possibility for relationship, which merit further attention. A space for further work and attention will be in considering if or how a deliberative framework can accommodate animals, plants, and other life forms—particularly ecological features like rivers or swamps—in different ways. Many philosophers have been about this task, making distinctions between the political significance of different kinds of living beings, but there is considerably more work to be done.

My own contribution to this exploration has been to highlight the significance of listening to diverse voices—even and, perhaps especially, nonhuman voices—within communities of subjects sharing an interest in the common good. I argue that there are ontological, ethical, and political, as well as practical, justifications for doing so. If we understand ourselves to be "plain member and citizen"[259] in biotic communities we share

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[259] Leopold, p. 240.

with others, we should also try to find rich ways to re-imagine how we interact with those others, including in deliberation. What I offer throughout this project is an approach to this crucial task of re-imagining, using pragmatist and ecofeminist tools to enrich our relationships with other stakeholders with whom we share our communities. The political domain does not belong exclusively to humans, and neither does the domain of discourse. Although it is a creative endeavor to navigate terms such as speech, representation, and interests beyond the human connotations they so commonly hold, we ought to make such an attempt. The possibility of full and moving communication requires we do just so.

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