

Environmental Education and Ecofeminist Pedagogy: Bridging the Environmental and the Social

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Abstract:

This paper begins by suggesting that issues of social and ecological justice are not mutually exclusive. They are tied together through the logic of domination which is, in turn, sustained by oppositional value dualisms such as man/woman, human/nature, and white/non-white. As such, we suggest that environmental education must deal with the shared logic of domination as opposed to any individual dualism. The body of this paper attempts to respond to this challenge through an exploration of ecofeminism and then an expansion of several components of what might be included in an ecofeminist pedagogy. This exploration focuses on three potential areas of change for environmental education—relationship, structure, and practice—by examining the more concrete aspects of dialogue, ecological design theory, the Earth Charter, and assessment.

Résumé

Le présent article postule pour commencer que les questions de justice sociale et écologique ne sont pas mutuellement exclusives. Elles sont liées par la logique de la domination, qui est, à son tour, entretenue par des dualismes dont les valeurs sont opposées, tels que les dualismes homme/femme, humain/nature et Blanc/non-Blanc. Nous avançons ainsi que l'éducation environnementale doit se pencher sur la logique partagée de la domination, et non sur un dualisme individuel quelconque. Nous tentons dans le corps de l'article de relever ce défi en examinant l'écoféminisme puis en analysant plusieurs éléments pouvant faire partie d'une pédagogie écoféministe. Cet examen est principalement orienté vers trois domaines de changement possibles dans l'éducation environnementale – la relation, la structure et la pratique – et suit l'étude d'aspects plus concrets du dialogue, de la théorie de la conception écologique, de la Charte de la Terre et de l'évaluation.

Keywords: ecofeminism, social justice, environmental education

Too often ignored in education...is the fact that culture and environment, or humans and nature, are inextricably connected and that our educational policies, structures, theories, traditions, and academic journals continue to operate as if this were not the case. (Gruenewald, 2006, p. 206)

Introduction

How might environmental education address the linkage between social justice and sustainable, mutually healthy, human relations with the rest of nature? In this paper we suggest that the answer is not to take bits and pieces of social justice and anti-oppression education and insert them, unexamined, into an environmental education framework, but to find theory which itself conceptualizes this connection. As a result, our focus is to explore ecofeminism and propose it as a potential framework capable of holding the linkage between social and environment justice in an educational context.

Beginning almost 40 years ago with the Tbilisi Declaration, environmental education has been understood by some to be the form of education most likely to change society's attitude towards nature, encouraging future generations to adopt more ecologically sustainable lives (Gruenewald, 2004; Hopkins, 2009; Smyth, 2006; Stevenson, 2007). Today, it is apparent that this has not occurred, at least not in a substantial enough way to halt the ecological crisis. Meanwhile, although the influence of the social justice movement has improved access to education, and subsequent material and social security for some marginalized populations, there is still much work to be done in terms of working against racism, classism, sexism, and ableism in the educational context (Kumashiro, 2000). Especially relevant to ecofeminist pedagogy, given its starting point "that the dominations of women, other human Others, and nonhuman nature are interconnected, are wrong, and ought to be eliminated" (Warren, 2000, p. 155), is that the progress made in terms of social justice has been achieved while situated in an anthropocentric paradigm, with a focus on school achievement and economic well-being, and employing the narratives of the Western Enlightenment tradition (Furman & Gruenewald, 2004). These narratives, or root metaphors as Bowers (2001) calls them, contribute to a worldview that nurtures ecologically destructive behaviour and work in opposition to a more ecologically just perspective. The result, following Bowers, is that although social justice discourse is calling for individuals to experience greater social and economic equality, because it is taking place within the confines of these restrictive and problematic educational practices, it inadvertently contributes to furthering ecological destruction and by extension environmental injustice. Gruenewald (2004) argues that the disciplining power of the dominant discourses around environmental education may be making it difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to effectively meet those original goals of environmental education. The strong link between science education and environmental education provides one such

example. By uncritically linking scientific or purely technical approaches related to, for example, the efficient management of and restoration of ecosystems, without having students explore the deep cultural assumptions (root metaphors) that have led to environmentally destructive ways of thinking and acting, educators may find themselves in what Bowers (2004) describes as a “double bind.” When this happens, educators are unconsciously furthering the degradation, anthropocentrism, or resourcism they are seeking to change.

Feminist perspectives in environmental education have contributed to addressing some of these double binds, especially patriarchy and its tendency to universalize subjects. Feminist research (in environmental education and otherwise) sees gender as the central organizing idea of our lives and therefore of key importance for those wishing to change social conditions. Many environmental education researchers still operate within the traditional epistemological frameworks of scientific research, which exclude women as agents of knowledge (Gough & Whitehouse, 2003). Gough (in press) summarizes the work of feminists in environmental education over the last three decades and concludes that there is still a distinct lack of feminist research in environmental education (Gough & Whitehouse, 2003). Feminist critique of environmental education focuses, in part, on deconstructing the “texts, myths and meanings of our culture and our relationships with nature” (Gough, in press) so that alternative discourses can be developed. In this manner, feminist critique has the same goals as Bowers (2004) with his focus on discovering and changing the root metaphors of Western culture. Ecofeminism and post-structuralism (feminist and otherwise) concentrate, in part, on language and metaphors investigating how they affect our ontological and epistemological understandings, and our relationships to power (Barrett, 2005; Gough & Whitehouse, 2003; Kheel, 1993). Ecofeminism is one framework from which an educator can disrupt dominant discourses and root metaphors while working to change social conditions and ecological relationships.

Ecofeminism

Why choose ecofeminism as a theoretical framework for this study when there are other very good options, such as place-based education (Gruenewald, 2003), peace education (Hargraves, 1999; Wenden, 2004), humane education (Selby, 1995; Weil, 2004), ecojustice pedagogy (Bowers, 2001) and/or total liberation pedagogy (Kahn & Humes, 2009), all of which already propose a bringing together of social and ecological justice? First, ecofeminism is largely compatible with all of these approaches to education, and brings valuable insights that strengthen each of them. Second, ecofeminism resonates with our own experience. Third, there is empirical evidence that it is women and children of all races who suffer the most from poverty, human rights violations, and environmental destruction, making an ecofeminist approach to these issues very relevant (Merchant, 2005;

Sydee & Beder, 2001; Warren, 2000). The material effects of climate change and environmental destruction, for instance, affect women disproportionately to men. Fourth, some argue that every site of social change is also a site for struggles over gender relations (Harding, 1998; hooks, 1989). As Warren (2000) argues, “the promise and power of ecological feminism is that *it provides a distinctive framework for both reconceiving feminism and for developing an environmental ethic which takes seriously connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature*” (p. 325, italics in original). Furthering this, Sturgeon (1997) believes that ecofeminism’s most radical potential is found in this linking of dominations through a critique “of the ways in which various raced and gendered concepts of ‘nature’ naturalize social inequalities and ecological crisis” (p. 19). Fifth, ecofeminism links social injustice and the ecological crisis and offers insight into, and a means for overcoming, current and seemingly unsuccessful approaches to education. Sixth, despite a growing recognition that gender is an important consideration in education, it has remained marginalized within environmental education (Gough, in press). Finally, we chose ecofeminism as a theoretical framework because it has not been applied as an educational response in any substantial way, at least as evidenced by the lack of published research (Gough, in press).

Ecofeminism is a diverse field of study and a complete survey is beyond the purview of this paper. However, within the field of ecofeminism, there are some shared key themes. These include a belief that social transformation is necessary for ecological survival, that dominant conceptual patterns must be transformed to better reflect nondualistic and nonhierarchical systems of relations (Howell, 1997), that biological and cultural diversity are valuable and necessary, that we acknowledge our interdependence with, and dependence upon, each other and nature (Howell, 1997; King, 1989; Warren, 2000), that there is “special strength and integrity of every living thing” (Mies & Shiva, 1993, p. 14), and that there are connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature. Ecofeminists also highlight the role of metaphors, language, and images of nature and how they function to strengthen the logic of domination (Kheel, 1993). As a result of these themes, ecofeminists set themselves two principal tasks: to expose this logic of domination and to seek alternatives that replace destructive ways of relating to each other and nature (Hallen, 2000). Ecofeminists make personal and political action a key part of their goal of a more democratic future for all (Gough, in press). This project includes working for nonhierarchical relationships that recognize our interdependency, a commitment to cultural and biological diversity, a desire to end oppression of any kind, and a willingness to analyze the logic of domination and its material and behavioural effects on human relationships and human interactions with the more-than-human world. Simply put, ecofeminism aims for ecosocial justice.¹

According to ecofeminism, the illusion that we can dominate nature is a major contributor to environmental degradation, and the compulsion to domi-

nate is one of the hallmarks of patriarchy (Hallen, 2000; Warren, 1993). The resulting focus of ecofeminism falls on anthropocentrism and androcentrism as the main root metaphors responsible for creating conditions where the mutual oppression of women, other marginalized populations, and nature occur (Plumwood, 1993; Warren, 2000). This logic of domination is structured so that, “For any X and Y, if X is morally superior to Y, then X is morally justified in subordinating it” (Warren, 1993, p. 488). For example, if X = men and Y = women, then men are morally superior to women and thus justified in subordinating them (androcentrism). The same then follows if we replace Y with nature and X with human (anthropocentrism), or non-Europeans as Y and Europeans as X (Eurocentrism, racism). Warren argues that a conceptual framework such as anthropocentrism “is a set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions which shape and reflect how one views oneself and the world” (2000, p. 46). For Warren, there are five common features of oppressive conceptual frameworks: they value hierarchical thinking, encourage oppositional value dualisms, see *power over* relationships as necessary and positive, create and maintain the practice of privilege for those at the top of the hierarchy, and sanction a logic of domination that justifies subordination of those lower down in the hierarchy. The logic of domination and its oppressive conceptual frameworks have created a situation where women, non-European races, children, the elderly, and nature are considered inferior, available for exploitation, and in need of management and care.

Within ecofeminism there is significant concern about how the logic of domination affects human relationships with other animals. Adams (2003) demonstrates the clear linkages between the oppression of women and animals in patriarchal societies, where both are conceptualized as objects to be used by men. Ecofeminists also argue that to use the category “nature” essentializes plants and animals into one cohesive whole in the same way the category “woman” creates an essentialized Other that can then more easily be objectified through abstraction and detachment (Kheel, 1993). Taking this to heart, ecofeminists add speciesism to the list of isms that are usually saved for human oppressions (ageism, ableism, racism, sexism, classism, etc.). In the educational context, environmental education has been nurturing a growing concern with social justice and anthropocentrism, but the issue of nonhuman animals and speciesism has not been substantially addressed (Kahn & Humes, 2009).

At the core of the ecofeminist challenge, then, is to understand, then overcome, the logic of domination which is supported by these oppositional value-dualisms. These value-dualisms create a sharp, ontological break, or discontinuity, between the group identified as the privileged centre, and those groups that are subordinated. This puts an all-powerful and important subject at the centre, and constructs Others as inferior and powerless (Plumwood, 2002). When nature (or women, or children, or colonized people) is backgrounded in this way,

it becomes seen as inessential, lacking in agency, and can then be systematically omitted from consideration in decision-making (Plumwood, 1996). Backgrounding nature means humans ignore our dependency on it, and consequently, view it as having no agency or autonomy of its own--a resource without limits. It is a denial of mutuality, interdependency, and symbiotic relationships, and is key to the process of anthropocentrism, the conviction that humans are superior to nature (Russell & Bell, 1996). Thus, Plumwood (1993) argues, anthropocentrism plays an analogous role in ecological philosophy to that of androcentrism in feminist theory, and similarly, ethnocentrism in anti-racist theory. It is with this theoretical background in mind, along with an urge to respond to the challenge of overcoming these centrisms, that we turn to a discussion of ecofeminist pedagogy.

Towards an Ecofeminist Pedagogy

In light of the logic of domination, the oppression of humans, and the destruction of ecosystems, what do ecofeminists suggest we, as educators, do? How might we dismantle the social and conceptual structures that support the logic of domination and its unjust outcomes? Pedagogy, argues Gore (2002), is the enactment of power relations. A central claim of ecofeminism is that if we are to behave in an intelligent, logical, and caring way towards each other and more-than-human nature, we need to overcome our ethos of domination. In order to overcome this need to dominate, Gardner and Riley (2007) believe that ecofeminist pedagogy must eschew traditional formats, pedagogies, and hierarchical classroom structures, many of which duplicate the logic of domination. There are many possible ways to move away from traditional formats, pedagogies, and structures in education. Everything from relationship (e.g., between students, student/teacher, school/community, human/more-than-human) to structure (e.g., external/physical structures of buildings, classroom set-up, sites of learning and internal/cultural structures such as governance, school policies and norms, funding issues, processes of decision-making) and on to practice (e.g., pedagogy, curriculum materials, assessment strategies) are suspect and in need of revisioning. As Fawcett (2000) writes, "How our bodies are taught and learn how to sense nature certainly makes a difference to how we know nature" (p. 139). Ultimately, eventually, the whole notion of school needs to be questioned.

As an initial step of this revisioning, the following sections of this paper will offer a potential response to the challenges associated with changing the relationships, structures (external and internal), and practices within the current educational paradigm. There will also be an initial foray attempting to draw all three together in an educational example that tries to work towards *power with* relationships with students within a pluralistic ethos that recognizes the knowledge of students as valuable. Embedded within the *power with* approach will be a simultaneous questioning of how humans relate with the rest of nature.

Relationship – Aiming for Dialogue

Those advocating for ecofeminist pedagogy emphasize the role of dialogue in enacting new relationships between humans, and between humans and more-than-human nature (Gardner & Riley, 2007; Houde & Bullis, 1999; Li, 2007). Genuine dialogue, according to Buber (1965), is like an embrace, a moment when two come together and, without loss of self, are able to hold each other simultaneously with an open heart and mind. It is built on respect and a deep sense of the intrinsic value of the other being. This is a relation of the both/and, an acknowledgment of the immediate presence of both deep interdependence and the unique autonomy of each being. This is a relationship held together by humility. Blenkinsop (2005) proposes that a teacher who is prepared to engage in dialogue with students will push, support, and challenge students in whatever direction he/she feels will be most helpful for the student, while at the same time acknowledging that students respond out of their own free will. When ecofeminists speak of transformed relationships, they are presupposing that these relationships are based on an acknowledgement of human interdependence with each other and the rest of nature (Merchant, 2005; Warren, 2000). Kheel (1993) suggests that disengaging from patriarchal discourse allows us to hear fuller stories as we listen to nature, hearing voices that have been muted under patriarchy. Ecofeminists seek, in Buber's language, for authentic dialogue based on respect for, and communion with, other beings.

Clearly an ecofeminist pedagogy calls for a radical relational shift in education: a shift towards something that is more dialogical, where the human (teacher and student), the community, and the more-than-human come together and engage with each other in more robust and equitable ways than is currently the norm. This is a pedagogy where learning takes place in a more expanded, including outdoor, environment in which students can experience relationship and build community between themselves, their locale, and the rest of nature. This shift in both the place of education and the definition of and relationship between teacher and learner allows the natural world space to play the more prominent role of active dialoguer, even co-teacher, in an educational practice that is in, for, and through relationship. This notion of authentic dialogue, along with both a growing implicit thread of experiential education, and a critical philosophical stance, are three key components of an ecofeminist pedagogy.

External Structure – Ecological Design Theory

The design of school buildings is thought to have little impact on learning, but in reality it reflects an underlying hidden curriculum that influences the learning process (Orr, 2002). At the very least, students receive the message that learning only happens inside a lifeless square room with four walls, away from any contact with more-than-human nature (Louv, 2005). However, we believe this hidden curriculum goes much deeper. For example, the wasteful use of energy

communicates that energy is cheap and abundant. Further, if all that students see are buildings designed for the efficient education of as many students as possible (with no concern for the environmental cost), then no matter how frequently teachers might talk about ecological sustainability, the real message students get is that environmental concerns are not a priority. These institutional buildings do not communicate care for either humans or the rest of nature. Just as assessment plays a key role in shaping what kinds of knowledge are prioritized, the building itself—its design, site, and use—and the accompanying soup of constantly signalling messages in which students are immersed every day, shapes how learners come to understand their world, their place, and the place of others within it.

Internal Structure – Governance – The Earth Charter as Framework Document

All cultural systems require fairly comprehensive and consistent internal structures to act as guidelines to, touchstones for, and foundations of a particular way of being and understanding. Often these structures are made manifest in foundational documents of some kind and, as history has shown, these documents carry with them powerful metaphors for shaping concepts such as governance, as the cultural system moves forward. Traditionally education for social justice has based its theory and practice on anthropocentric ideas such as those evidenced in anti-oppression movements (e.g., the civil rights movement) and documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Gruenewald, 2004; Hardiman & Jackson, 2007). We believe that ecofeminist pedagogy might find the Earth Charter (2002) a more appropriate choice when educating for ecosocial justice. The Declaration of Human Rights is problematic because it has been “thoroughly dismantled as a very historically specific relic of Enlightenment modernity” (Wolfe, 2003, p. 192). It ignores developments in cognitive science, ethnology, and other fields that have given us reason to question the distinction between *Homo sapiens* and other species (Wolfe, 2003). The Earth Charter, on the other hand, is post-humanist in nature and advocates for all species, not just humans. Unlike the Declaration of Human Rights, the Earth Charter was created outside an intergovernmental context in a consensual manner, with input from experts, government and civil society leaders, students, indigenous peoples, and grassroots communities (Blenkinsop & Beeman, 2008). Furthermore, as Corcoran (2004) argues, educators need to pay attention to the Earth Charter because it provides an integrated vision of social justice, peace, and ecological sustainability. The Charter is an ecosocial framework in part, because it “views ecological problems as a result of local and global economic development patterns that are also at the root of injustice, poverty, violence, and oppression” (Gruenewald, 2004, p. 96). Like ecofeminism, it links ecological and social justice issues, recognizes the intrinsic worth of all species and people, and celebrates both cultural and biological diversity. The Charter thus becomes a potential foundation from which a more ecosocial educational practice might grow.

Practice – Assessment

As suggested above, an environmental education situated in ecofeminism would likely need to carefully reconsider all current educational practice; however, here we simply offer a minute discussion of assessment. To do justice to assessment from an ecofeminist perspective would require significantly more space than is available in this paper. Suffice it to say that, as assessment is commonly understood and practiced upon children, it is a significant barrier to our proposed project. Hierarchized, competitive, and built on an epistemological metaphor that understands knowledge to be held in particular places or by particular individuals, transferred successfully in whole or in part, and returnable and examinable for its specificity and completeness, this traditional understanding of assessment is deeply unjust, both socially and ecologically. But, how does one assess in an equitable, ecosocially just manner? What is the role of assessment in education and how might it be understood differently? The first obvious response is that ecofeminist pedagogical theory must ask educators to critique assessment policies and practices. Assessment practices epitomize *power over* relations between teacher and student, and it is here that students' relative powerlessness seems most evident. One way to break this pattern might be to involve students in the pedagogical process, including assessment. A place to start is perhaps with the question, "Is this particular assessment practice compatible with ecosocial justice, or does it reinforce the logic of domination and the structures and concepts that flow from that logic?" Or perhaps, "How has the work by this student, or group of students, helped to support the particular flourishing of each member involved and the direct community, while simultaneously not impeding the possibilities of any other?" However, it is likely that much more creativity is needed. If part of the goal of education is to achieve a level of connection to others, a desire for mutual flourishing, and an embedded sense of belonging, then assessment might become more dynamic based on long-term shared projects (even apprenticeships), coupled with a search for mastery, while simultaneously being embedded in, understood by, and shared with the community.

An Ecofeminist Learning Village

Looking to the future, how might we use the ideas of the Earth Charter, dialogue, assessment, and ecological design theory to build an ecofeminist school? Perhaps it would be best to leave the notion of school behind and aim for a new paradigm. Instead, the concept of a "learning village" might provide a philosophical and practical place to implement an ecofeminist pedagogy, without the baggage of school and schooling looming over the project. What might this learning village look like?

In keeping with the Earth Charter and an ecosocial, ecofeminist framework, the learning village would be built with attention to both ecological and social

justice. Materials for the actual buildings would be sourced from ecologically sustainable locations and resources. The buildings themselves would require full upstream and downstream eco-accounting practices, and fair working conditions for the people constructing the village would be expected. The learners could be part of the building process, with curriculum being integrated around this process. Studying what materials are best used, and why they are the best, while also gathering a complete sense of place with an eye (and ear) to the needs of the greater community, could be an integrated study that focuses upon the ecological and social issues surrounding buildings. Ecological design theory would be a key framework for this part of the project.

Assessment practices could follow an apprenticeship model with mastery, not grades, being the goal. Learners would be given as many opportunities as they needed to master skills and knowledge set out in the curriculum. Instead of simply parroting back disconnected bits of high-status knowledge to teachers, learners would be active participants in their own assessment and would be applying knowledge to real-life situations and developing skills that help the community, while simultaneously understanding themselves as agents in, of, and for that community. This could include growing and preparing food, building the village, engaging in municipal government, acting to change larger social structures, restoring and protecting ecosystems, and engaging in issues of global health. Knowledge we currently share with students could be integrated into all the above-mentioned skills but in ways that are meaningful, connected, and useful. Assessment in this context is not about grades and getting into university, it is about applying what you know to real life and contributing to community. It is asking how what you have learned is helping others (human and more-than-human) flourish in ecosocially just ways.

Embedded in these ideas of an ecofeminist learning village is the notion of authentic dialogue, based on the deep understanding of human interdependence with each other and the rest of nature. This presupposes a relationship built on respect and understanding, of trying to understand what the other needs and wants while still maintaining one's uniqueness and autonomy. It requires that we listen deeply and with an open heart to each other and to more-than-human nature. Listening deeply involves notions of quiet communion, but also knowledge of the other. In terms of more-than-human nature, we need scientific knowledge combined with deep respect in order to hear what nature is saying. While we have not spent much time discussing the multicultural aspect of an ecofeminist pedagogy, suffice to say that aiming for authentic dialogue across cultures is an important part of this framework and is an area for more in-depth consideration.

In ecofeminist pedagogy, and within the learning village, relationships built on respect, understanding, interdependence, and autonomy require paying special attention to all the animals participating in the life and learning of the village. Working towards authentic dialogue with other animals would be an

important part of an ecofeminist learning village. While authentic dialogue with nonhuman animals may seem an illusory goal, Donovan (2009) suggests that we can start by directing our attention to what animals are telling us about themselves, instead of relying on what other humans are telling us about them. Listening with humility is an important part of authentic dialogue, and so we need to mindfully, with humility, pay attention to the body language, emotional expression, and vocalizations (for example) of nonhuman animals as we begin to discover how to dialogue with them (Donovan, 2009). In opposition to this attitude of humility, current educational practice sees animals and animal parts regularly dissected in the name of education. The notion that animals must be used for research and food is generally accepted in society, and this attitude extends into educational contexts (Weil, 2004). The question of animal rights, factory farming, vegetarianism, and veganism, would be taken seriously within an ecofeminist learning village. Would the chickens and other animals that live in the village be treated as objects of study, sources of food, recyclers of human waste, or as autonomous beings with whom we dialogue and have respectful relationships? These are complex questions, and ecofeminists themselves disagree on the answers. An ecofeminist learning village would be a place where serious engagement with such questions takes place, with practical application of the answers that village participants (human and other animals) come up with as they dialogue and learn together.

Haraway (2008), in her study of human-animal relationships, finds that respect, curiosity, and knowledge spring from animal-human associations and work powerfully to combat speciesism and anthropocentrism. While there are no guarantees of clear answers when it comes to human relationships with other animals, Haraway (2008) concludes that we can at least hope to meet each other with some grace. Perhaps Buber's (1965) notion of genuine dialogue can be of help with this meeting. How can we work towards hearing, with students, the voices of animals as their lives parallel our own? Fawcett (2000) suggests that we would do well to nurture our imaginations and those of our students "so that we don't reduce the unknown subjectivity of an 'other' being to the limited range of our own experiences" (p. 140). The use of metaphor and narrative may help in developing an ethic that is more situated, and values perceptions and emotions over abstracted reason (Fawcett, 2000). Where feminism has argued that women can be agents of knowledge, ecofeminism extends that to include animals as "knowers" and storytellers (Fawcett, 2000; Gough, 2003). Perhaps through the use of metaphor, narrative, imagination, and a sense that other beings are autonomous agents of knowledge, we can inch closer to meeting each other with grace.

Conclusion

All education, including environmental, stands at a crossroads. Will we rise to the challenge of social justice and environmental degradation with radical theory and practice, or continue to educate as if these problems are not urgent and/or are mutually exclusive? As educators, we must be part of the solution. To address these two complex and interlinked issues we need a new framework for our pedagogy. This paper has offered ecofeminism as one possible framework for radical educational change, and invites you to imagine what an ecofeminist school or learning village might look like. In this article we have only touched on a few possible ways to change practice to make it more ecofeminist in nature, but there are endless possibilities that await our imagination and political will.

Notes

- ¹ There are several terms which encompass social and ecological justice (e.g., ecojustice (Bowers, 2001), socioecological justice (Furman & Gruenewald, 2004)). We prefer the term “ecosocial justice” because it puts the eco first, symbolizing how the social is embedded in the eco, and so justice for humans must take place in conjunction with justice for more-than-human nature. As Shiva (2005) argues, “Restraint on resource use and living within nature’s limits are preconditions for social justice” (p. 50). Our interpretation of ecosocial justice is based on the declarations of the Earth Charter (2000) and encompasses notions of social and ecological justice in the spirit of respect, compassion, peace, and democracy. It includes the understanding that humans are part of nature, and in a relationship of interdependence and partnership with more-than-human nature and with other humans (Earth Charter, 2000).

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