



Open for Climate Justice panel

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**Opening Climate
Justice to
abolitionist ends**

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Some parameters of my definition of Climate Justice

- deep analytical, ethical and political commitments to more just “natural-cultural worlds”
- Informed by, and in critical solidarity with a range of radical political traditions (feminist, black, queer, indigenous, anti-colonial are some names)
- transnational sensibilities and alliances with movements for self-determination, land reform, and social and reproductive justice.

ASSESS OPEN ACCESS resources for Climate Justice

- An ACTIVE PROCESS
- Avoid predatory publishers
- Be attentive to feminist and abolitionist ends
- Read Critically

So

THIS ...

- <https://centerclimatejustice.universityofcalifornia.edu/what-is-climate-justice/>

BUT NOT THIS

- <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/08/what-is-climate-justice/>

HOW TO ASSESS the difference?

Some writing/reading

- Asher, K. 2017. Thinking Fragments: [Adisciplinary reflections on Feminism and Environmental Justice](#). *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 3(2): 1-28. This is an easily accessible piece that traces my trajectory from wildlife ecology and field biology to feminist theory, and shows how they are deeply connected.
- Asher, K. 2014. [The Doers and the Done For: Interrogating the Subjects and Objects of Engaged Political Ecology](#). *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographers* 13 (4): 489-496. A short piece arguing that “theory vs. practice” is a false and problematic binary.
- Asher, Kiran. 2021. Thinking Nature-cultures beyond Green Goddesses and Cyborg Saviors, in Asher, Kiran, Mel Y. Chen, Kareem Khubchandani, Eli Nelson, and Banu Subramaniam, eds. “Cyborgs Unbound: Feminist STS, Interdisciplinarity, and Graduate Education.” *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 7 (1): 1–34.
<https://catalystjournal.org/index.php/catalyst/article/view/34995/27733>
This is a report on feminist lab meeting contains my reflections (pages 10-15) on some preliminary fieldwork with and on an ATREE project.

Feminist research on science and knowledge production

- Question the positivist, empiricist nature of Sciences and their technical, apolitical, and ahistorical approaches
- attention on the partial nature of evidence, and the unpredictable and contingent nature of research
- Contest the masculinist and essentialist assumptions pervading fields from anthropology to zoology
- Opens up conversations about the meanings, production, affects, and effects of scientific knowledge
- Assert that all knowledge is political

Feminist insights on disciplines: Some examples

- ...ethnography and cartography assume that “cultures” and “fields” exist *a priori*, rather than as products of uneven relations between peoples and places.
- academic disciplines’ links to the military, and the territorial and imperialist imperatives of states.
- ... the uneven relations of capitalist production piggyback on patriarchal, racist and imperialist structures, and how social production necessarily but silently depends on social reproduction

Feminist (along with post-colonial, transnational, “of color,” black, queer, decolonial, post-humanist, and other critical perspectives) **research**

- **Questions** foundational categories (culture, politics, space) of disciplines
- Notes that **dualisms** of the Enlightenment science (nature-culture, object-subject, feminine-masculine, sex-gender, colony-nation, knowledge-praxis, and more) are **constituted** as a result of power, representation, and political economy
- **reframes** debates about science, the nature of subjectivity, domination, and resistance; and posits new forms of radical politics

Websites: I find these sites useful but don't necessarily endorse

- Antipode Online, a great companion to the journal of radical geography <https://antipodeonline.org/>
- <https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/index>
- <https://climateandcapitalism.com/> (an ecosocialist website - Ian Angus has a rather narrow view of the Left so read with a critical eye)
- Capitalism, Nature, Socialism (another Leftist/socialist journal) <http://www.cnsjournal.org/>
- An excellent open access Feminist STS journal <https://catalystjournal.org/index.php/catalyst>
- A great site for work on environmental and social justice <http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/>
- <http://dollarsandsense.org/index.html>

- Fantastic critical work on peace, population and the environment. This one is truly feminist!
<https://sites.hampshire.edu/popdev/> Now here:
<https://collectivepowerj.org/>
- A critical/militant Marxist research collective:
<https://www.viewpointmag.com/>
- Addressing development and justice issues in/from Asia
<http://www.focusweb.org>
- <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/>
- An Open Access Environmental Humanities Journal
<http://environmentalhumanities.org/>
- Feminist and Anti Colonial Science:
<https://civiclaboratory.nl/2017/12/29/feminist-anti-colonial-science/>
- A good portal for Indigenous Environmental Justice from York University in Canada <http://iejproject.info.yorku.ca/research/>

- Great resource on food and development policy to address hunger: <https://foodfirst.org/>
- <https://ejatlas.org/> A Global Atlas of Environmental Justice
- <http://ej4all.org/>
- <https://feralatlas.org/>
- A California-based site with a focus on urban sustainable development in and beyond California: <https://critical-sustainabilities.ucsc.edu/>
- Another open access journal on autonomous politics, avant-garde aesthetics, and an everyday life: <https://www.minorcompositions.info/>

- <https://www.societyandspace.org> A free digital magazine featuring interdisciplinary debates related to social, political, and environmental issues. The editor, Kate Derickson, is an UMass alumna.
- Somatosphere.net A collaborative website covering the intersections of medical anthropology, science and technology studies, cultural psychiatry, psychology and bioethics
- <https://nycstandswithstandingrock.wordpress.com/standingrocksyllabus/>
- <https://undisciplinedenvironments.org/> (great collectively sourced **political ecology** site)
- <https://undark.org/>
- <http://unevenearth.org/https://www.williamcronon.net/links.html>

What happens in practice?

Lessons from research and work at Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

8 reasons why gender matters to people and forests

1 Livelihoods
People often assume that women are the main collectors and gatherers of forest products. Yet a global comparative study found that men play a much more important and diverse role in the contribution of forests for livelihoods than previously reported, with strong differences across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

2 Tenure
In Nicaragua, national laws promote gender equity, but they do not extend to forests because they are still seen as men's area. While in Uganda where there are efforts to include women in forest management, women are still shut out of decision-making and rarely have ownership of land or resources.

3 Governance
Across the world, education, inclusive institutions and lower income inequality helps increase women's participation in forestry institutions. Where women's participation was higher institutions had less conflict. However more involvement of women did not lead to much change in user groups' perceptions of fairness of the rules and penalties.

4 Migration
In Nepal, the impact of male out-migration on women who are being left behind can be dramatically different depending on what forest management institutions and social structures they have in their communities.

5 Conservation
A global study found that where women are the majority, forest management institutions have stronger implementation of rules. This has an impact on the forests, as institutions where women had a majority also had forests with higher density of trees remaining.

6 Climate change adaptation
In Mali, male out-migration was a strategy to adapt to the changing climate. But this left women less able to adapt—as women lacked secure tenure and command over financial resources. Women's workloads also increased significantly in male absence.

7 Climate change mitigation
Research in 77 villages, 20 REDD+ sites across six countries found participation of women in REDD+ processes is often nominal and limited. However, pushing for increased participation of women in REDD+ is not enough to protect women's interests and needs.

8 Land investments
Though a major driver of deforestation, the social and economic benefits of oil palm investments in Indonesia is real. But only certain social groups benefit. Landless women are particularly worse off as they are only able to get work in plantations with low wages, job insecurity and poor working conditions.

cifor.org/gender

CGIAR **IFAD** **IFPRI** **IRRI** **ILRI** **ICRAF** **WFP** **FAO** **IFC** **UNEP** **UN Women** **World Bank** **World Health Organization** **World Trade Organization** **World Food Programme** **World Bank** **World Health Organization** **World Trade Organization**

- “Gender” researchers draw on sex-disaggregated data and qualitative methods
- Operationalize “gender” = “women” or relations between women and men at a particular site (see Asher and Varley 2018)
- Make visible women’s key roles and responsibilities in using and managing forests for food, fuel, and fodder. women and men’s differential access to land including forests
- Acknowledge that gender inequities affect not just women but also efforts to improve positive outcomes food security and forest management.

Gender inequities/violence:

- interpreted as a consequence of traditional power relations between women and men at a particular site and/or the outcomes of skewed or absent public policies
- rhetorically linked to “power” and “intersectionality”
- addressed through public policies to educate and empower women (men) to participate in market-based development and green growth

The “mad libs” of Scientific research on gender, the environment and sustainability

- repeatedly acknowledge “gender inequality”
- Pay some attention to “intersecting” social factors (race, location, age, sexuality, etc.)
- makes calls to collect sex-disaggregated data
- Propose pragmatic and depoliticized actions to “empower women” and promote gender equality within standard development models

Gender Mad Libs...

Women's empowerment and gender equality are key/instrumental to achieving:

- food security
- climate change adaptation
- forest/natural resource/biodiversity goals
- Social and environmental justice
- peace, and
- sustainable development

Lost in translation/Slippages

- Little or no analysis of power and the heterogeneity and complexities of gendered social relations and vulnerabilities
- Attention to structural factors (capitalism, racism, heterosexism, etc.) that shape uneven development associated within the imperatives of neoliberal economic development and the forms of governance forms associated with it.
- apolitical policy options undermine public action for social and environmental justice.

Learn before applying . . .

- History of development/science
- Gender/feminisms/sexualities
- Women, “poor” and marginalized are heterogeneous and complex entities
- Recognize their knowledge without romanticizing or demonizing;
- Change is a not technical but a political process. So participation is not just workshops. It is the slow, unguaranteed labor and long term work with social movements of all kinds
- Hone democratic and coalitional reflexes all around