



University of  
Massachusetts  
Amherst

## Open for Climate Justice panel

Item Type	event;event
Authors	Asher, Kiran;Richardson, Justin B
DOI	<a href="https://doi.org/10.7275/b3tv-xr07">https://doi.org/10.7275/b3tv-xr07</a>
Download date	2024-08-12 17:57:48
Link to Item	<a href="https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/38507">https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/38507</a>

**Opening Climate  
Justice to  
abolitionist ends**

**Kiran Asher, Ph. D**

University of  
Massachusetts,  
Amherst



# 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](http://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>



- “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