Supremacist Philosophy:

Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion in the Academy

Emma Gjullin
University of Montana, Missoula
Environmental Philosophy Civic Engagement Project

Introduction

Systemic racism and other forms of violent discrimination have harmed, and continue to harm, our social and physical environment. It is necessary for those working at the intersection of social and environmental interests to determine the ways in which their work perpetuates the oppression of historically and systematically excluded people. This civic engagement project is intended to help promote justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) within the philosophy department at the University of Montana. One aim of this project is to develop a deliberate justice, equity, diversity and inclusion plan for the department. There are three goals for this plan. First, it articulates the motivations for engaging with JEDI to ensure appropriate intentions as well as to ensure long-term, sustained commitment. Second, it serves as a record of the department's JEDI efforts, providing a clear sense for the level of engagement over time. And third, it outlines and monitors progress towards increased justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. This JEDI Plan is a living document that will change over time. The hope is that this plan will support a concerted and consistent department-wide effort to improve and expand JEDI efforts within the department, and the university. While the JEDI plan will eventually have wide-spread effect, for now, it only involves faculty of the philosophy department. In order to expand the scope of the project outside the philosophy department, this civic engagement project coordinated a public lecture focused on philosophy, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Background

This civic engagement project mimicked my internship experience with Heart of the Rockies (HOTR), a land trust partnership working in the high divide region of North America. One of my responsibilities as an intern was to support continued organizational justice, equity, and inclusion work. Heart of the Rockies recognizes that environmental problems are necessarily social problems, thus conservation efforts must include the perspectives and interests of historically and systematically excluded people. Historically and systematically excluded people are individuals who have experienced, and who continue to experience, interpersonal and systemic inequality and discrimination due to economic status, educational status, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, neurodivergence, etc..

During my internship, Heart of the Rockies staff concentrated on how race operates within conservation. I was principally involved in two projects: an anti-racism reading group, and the development of a JEDI plan. HOTR staff participated in 'circle way' discussions of Layla F Saad's *Me and White Supremacy.* This book consists of race-related topic entries. Each entry defines the topic, explains how the topic manifests, and provides reflective questions for the topic. Entries include such topics as white fragility, tokenism, white saviorism, optical allyship, being called in/out, and racial stereotypes. After participating in this reading group, HOTR staff began developing a JEDI plan to reimagine the conservation movement so it truly benefits all people and all future generations. HOTR looked to other conservation organizations for inspiration, as well as relied on JEDI trainings to identify a framework for their JEDI plan. Ultimately, HOTR settled on a three part framework: 1) motivations for engaging with JEDI, 2)

current and ongoing JEDI commitments, and 3) JEDI priorities for the future. The Heart of the Rockies JEDI plan documents staff efforts to learn about justice, equity, and inclusion, as well as outlines strategies to confront and attempt to dismantle the ways in which HOTR staff individually and organizationally perpetuate injustice. This civic engagement project incorporated both components of this internship experience: an anti-racist reading group, and the development of a JEDI plan.

Though not directly facilitative of crafting a JEDI plan, the *Me and White Supremacy* reading group provided an important intellectual and emotional foundation for engaging with justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The book provides a comprehensive and thorough education on race-related topics. It also provides a shared platform for people with different backgrounds and familiarity with JEDI to engage meaningfully with the material and each other. Further, it serves as a springboard to identify, understand, and address other forms of discrimination such as gender, economic status, educational status, disability, and neurodivergence. On account of the reading group having been such a success with the Heart of the Rockies staff, it also became an important element for the civic engagement project as a way to guide the development of a JEDI plan.

Looking to other university philosophy departments' justice, equity, diversity, and/or inclusion statements, many share the same essential features of the JEDI plan framework HOTR chose to follow. First, there is an initial statement acknowledging social injustice, the need for deliberate JEDI work, and describing the specific importance of departmental engagement with JEDI. Second, there is a description of the actions that have been and are being taken to promote JEDI. Finally, there is often a resources section, and some schools have a section explaining how

to express concerns, and provide feedback to the department. The UM philosophy department JEDI plan abides by a similar framework as HOTR and other schools' statements.

One way this civic engagement project is unique is the inclusion of the "priorities for the future" section. This section is a vital component of the JEDI plan as it engenders sustained commitment over time, and establishes a system of accountability and transparency in setting and pursuing goals. Another way this civic engagement project is unique is the explicit acknowledgement that the JEDI plan is a living document that changes over time. Content included in the "priorities for the future" section in this current iteration of the plan should eventually move to the "current and ongoing commitments section". Thus, an investigation of how the JEDI plan changes over time will reveal how the department has upheld its commitments.

The objective for the JEDI plan was to develop a draft that each professor would be willing to endorse. Though this objective wasn't accomplished, securing each professor's endorsement is an important aspect of the plan as it helps generate a concerted effort. A concerted effort is important for two reasons. First, the JEDI plan cannot rely on a select individual or subgroup of students or professors since students graduate and professors retire. Second, engaging the entire department promotes better idea exchange, which can improve, as well as quicken the pace of, JEDI work.

In addition to the JEDI plan, as part of this project, I worked with another environmental philosophy student to organize a public lecture. The objective in organizing a public lecture on philosophy, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion was to expand the scope of the project outside the philosophy department. Early in the semester we researched and secured a speaker.

Throughout mid-semester, we coordinated the online logistics and promoted the event. Finally, toward the end of the semester, we held the event and managed technology during the talk.

With a deliberate and concerted effort, the hope is that this department can reduce the risk of harming historically and systematically excluded students and professors, as well as make the discipline as a whole more welcoming to historically and systematically excluded students and professors. Environmental philosophy offers substantive and pragmatic insights into the world's environmental issues, which becomes all the more necessary as climate change continues to threaten the safety and health of Earth's inhabitants, and audacious new technologies are conceived to "fix" the planet. The environmental challenges of this moment affect all humans, so all humans should have the opportunity to develop substantive and pragmatic insights into the issues we face.

Theoretical Applications

Each theoretical application identifies a topic from one of the core environmental philosophy seminars, and investigates how that topic interacts with justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Topics in Environmental Philosophy

"Topics in Environmental Philosophy" was entirely focused on Thoreau's *Walden*. While taking this class, I went to a talk during which one of the panelists said "don't teach Muir". Well, if we shouldn't be teaching Muir, then we likely shouldn't be teaching Thoreau either. Yet this class dedicated an entire semester to exclusively study *Walden*. To understand the environmental movement in the United States, it seems essential to study Thoreau and Muir. The evolution of the movement in the U.S. has been, and still is, impacted by these early environmentalists. However, the injustices perpetrated by Thoreau, Muir, and their contemporaries against Native Americans and other historically and systemically excluded people provide strong motivations to keep them out of the classroom. Teaching these authors can conceal the violent past of the United States as well as overrepresent environmentalists from the dominant culture. Philosophy needs to contend with this overrepresentation.

In *Walden,* Thoreau makes racist, sexist, and elitist comments. And as Daniel Noisecat points out, Thoreau's treatment of Native Americans is particularly troubling. In his essay "Walking" Thoreau writes "I think that the farmer displaces the Indian even because he redeems

the meadow, and so makes himself stronger and in some respects more natural" (Noisecat, 2019, para. 4). Noisecat (2019) further points out that Muir viewed Native Americans as dirty, hideous, and deserving of no place on the landscape, a perspective which justified the violent displacement and erasure of Native Americans from specific areas (para 5.). DeLuca and Demos (2005) captured the words of Yosemite advocate Samuel Bowles '"We know they are not our equals ... we know that our right to the soil, as a race capable of its superior improvement, is above theirs...Let us say to [the Indian]...you are our ward, our child, the victim of our destiny, ours to displace, ours to protect."' (p. 544). Thoreau and Muir both viewed Native Americans in such a way that their violent displacement and erasure were justified for the sake of environmental values.

When Muir and Thoreau are still taught, this erasure is perpetuated in the present-day curriculum, which not only obfuscates the violent past of the United States, but also fails to share with students additional perspectives that ought to be included in the discipline. Teaching Thoreau without acknowledging additional perspectives can create a pedagogical environment in which students for whom Thoreau does not resonate won't see themselves represented in the discipline. This lack of representation might discourage these students from pursuing further studies in that discipline. Thoreau's conception of the environment was rooted in his own epistemic location of being white, male, and affluent during the 19th century. It's not surprising then that his conception of nature was a place where one could shirk off the mundane trivialities of society and experience the sublime, transcendent and pristine. In contrast, Carolyn Finney (2014) describes in *Black Faces, White Spaces* that nature can be a place of fear "born out of the memory of other black individuals who had been hunted down and lynched, or forced to hide in the woods" (143). Finney (2014) further points out the problem of erasure and homogenization:

"...it is Thoreau's depiction of wilderness that has the greater influence on how mainstream environmentalists and environmental organizations shape their practices" (143). Advancing Thoreau's environmental philosophy can often be at odds with, and often harmful to, historically and systematically excluded communities. Without nondominant voices in the curriculum, students graduating from environmental philosophy are at risk of continuing Thoreau's harmful legacy.

The panelist at the talk I attended insinuated that Muir, perhaps along with Thoreau and other early environmentalists from the United States, be removed from the curriculum entirely. After this very brief discussion of some of Thoreau's and Muir's problematic environmental philosophies, eliminating these authors seems appropriate. However, many environmentalists and academics resist the complete elimination of these authors. Rebecca Kneale Gould (2017) writes that these authors cannot be dismissed:

> "...how do we...stay attuned to dynamics of power and oppression in the work we are drawn to study, without dismissing completely those writers and thinkers whose privilege we need to attend to, reflect on and question, but whose lives and work we still may choose to love? I certainly do not have all the answers, but to my mind (and heart) staying committed to asking these *questions* is part of what it means to live deliberately" (pp. 180-181).

Thoreau resonates with many American environmentalists; his impact on the movement is part of the story. As such, it might be reasonable to insist Thoreau shouldn't be entirely dismissed. What seems to be at conflict in teaching Muir, Thoreau, and other early western environmental philosophers, is the demand to teach students the canon of the discipline, and the problem that the canon consists predominantly of members from the dominant culture, who obscure important aspects of US environmentalism, and have demonstrated abject discrimination in their work. Perhaps integrating more nondominant voices could help acknowledge and contend with a

violent past, and create a more inclusive academic discipline, though there remain challenges with this strategy.

Issues in the Anthropocene

"Issues in the Anthropocene" was concerned with the philosophical implications of the Anthropocene: a new epoch distinguished by the global traces of human activity embedded in the geologic record. The class investigated philosophical tools for navigating this new age, and one such tool was offered by Robin Wall Kimmerer in *Braiding Sweetgrass.* This text wasn't classified as philosophy, and wasn't written by a professional philosopher. As such, it wasn't surprising to hear students comment "this isn't philosophy". "Philosophy", they said, "is about making good arguments". Evidently, according to these students, this is not what Kimmerer did in this book. However, there are few female philosophers and philosophers of color. It is a discipline consisting predominantly of white, western males. Even if it is the case that Kimmerer, by the current standards, isn't a philosopher, and perhaps doesn't *do* philosophy, she certainly *has* a philosophy which offers much to those who think deeply about humans, nonhuman animals, and the environment. It is the responsibility of the discipline to acknowledge and welcome such perspectives into the canon.

In her book, Kimmerer offers an experience she had while pursuing professional botany. She writes "I told him [an academic advisor] that I chose botany because I wanted to learn about why asters and goldenrods looked so beautiful together... 'Miss Wall," he said, fixing me with a disappointed smile, 'I must tell you that *that* is not science. That is not at all the sort of thing with which botanists concern themselves with"' (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 40). In much the same way, the

nature of Kimmerer's inquiries, and her approach to investigating those inquiries weren't considered properly philosophical by my peers. Philosophy is a distinct academic discipline with distinct directions of inquiry and distinct protocols of investigation. L.K. McPherson explains that this rigidity can pose a problem for black philosophers, though it seems his explanation could apply to all philosophers outside the dominant culture. He writes "There is a willful, not necessarily a conscious, preference among many members of the philosophy profession largely to maintain the status quo in terms of... the areas and questions deemed properly or deeply 'philosophical'" (McPherson, 2011, para. 1). McPherson (2011) goes on to explain that "Addressing the gross underrepresentation of blacks in philosophy would require a sincere effort to hire and retain us, in visible places. This would involve recognizing that we might often be driven by questions (whether or not about race) on the margins of mainstream debates" (para 9). Kimmerer's inquiry on Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge, and the teaching of plants wasn't considered properly philosophical. This seems a mistake. Philosophy must legitimize Native American perspectives, increase non-dominant representation in the discipline, as well as acknowledge the tools Kimmerer offers.

If environmental philosophy is in part intended to help humans understand the world and our place in it, then Kimmerer certainly offers a useful tool to accomplish this aim. She offers a relational ontology in which inhabitants of a system are bound together through reciprocity. Each inhabitant shares their gifts with all those whom they are in relation. Kimmerer suggests humans can share their gift of storytelling. Importantly, storytelling can shift the way humans view and interact with the world. For example, integrating an indigenous perspective on reciprocity can reinforce the relationship between the knowledge of science and an ethic of responsibility. Given a long history of environmental degradation that is fast approaching climate catastrophe with

little evidence to suggest that governments and corporations will act responsibly on the available scientific knowledge to address that crisis, it seems reciprocity does indeed offer something important for navigating the current epoch. Thus, nondominant voices who may or may not be 'properly' philosophical, but who have something beneficial to say about the environment, ought to be recognized in the canon.

Critical Animal Studies

"Critical Animal Studies" looked at the complexity and diversity of animal minds, emotions, cultures, and relationships, as well as critiqued analytic approaches to studying animals. Much of the material studied in the course subscribed in some way to advancing the status of animals in the human world. A common maneuver to achieve that aim is to compare animal suffering to human suffering so as to stoke human sympathy for animals. However, making such a comparison can be problematic according to the values of social justice. For example, in the novella, *Lives of Animals*, Elizabeth Costello compares factory farming to the Holocaust. Costello compares the number of murders between the Holocaust and factory farming, the response from citizens who willfully ignore the atrocities, and most directly, she states "The crime of the Third Reich, says the voice of accusation, was to treat people like animals"' (Coetzee, 1999, p. 20). In what follows, I will discuss three reasons this comparison can be problematic, and emphasize the importance of acknowledging these problems.

First, this comparison can use one atrocity to elevate another, instrumentalizing genocide, which does not justly treat people or their experiences. Costello leverages the Holocaust to make a point about animal suffering. She uses the Holocaust as a foothold to raise the issue of factory

farming to the same level as the Holocaust. In fact, Costello uses the Holocaust as a foothold to raise the issue of factory farming *above* the Holocuast: "'...we are surrounded by an enterprise of degradation, cruelty, and killing which rivals anything that the Third Reich was capable of, indeed dwarfs it, in that ours is an enterprise without end, self-regenerating, bringing rabbits, rats, poultry, livestock ceaselessly into the world for the purpose of killing them" (Coetzee, 1999, p. 21). In her paper "Can Nonhumans Be Victims of Genoicide" Waldkoenig (2019) notes that "Even when they share attributes, genocides cannot be folded into one because of each genocide's distinctive events, violence, and horror" (p. 10). When Costello neglects to give proper treatment to the Holocaust by only using it as a foothold, she fails to acknowledge the distinct horror of that genocide.

Second, elevating one atrocity above another insinuates that atrocities can be ranked. Because Costello elevates factory farming, she implies that factory farming is in some way worse than the Holocaust. This ranking can impose a sense of what constitutes the "worse atrocity", and the worse atrocity demands a greater amount of our moral attention. In this way, ranking reinforces the belief that there isn't enough moral energy for both factory farming and the Holocaust (Waldkoenig, 2019, p. 10). Or there isn't enough moral energy to devote to both humans and nonhuman animals. However, animal welfare must include human welfare.

Third, direct comparisons between humans and nonhuman animals can dehumanize people, which can rationalize the unjust treatment of humans. Indeed, dehumanizaion was one such tool used to justify abhorrent actions against Jewish people during the Holocaust. Costello declared that the crime of the Holocaust was to treat people like animals (Coetzee, 1999, p. 20), which directly compares humans to nonhuman animals. Nonhuman animals are often excluded from the moral community simply on account of their not being human. Because they are

excluded from the moral community, they aren't afforded the same kind of considerations as humans, like the right not to be treated unjustly. Thus, when humans are compared to animals, they are pushed out of the moral community, and it's no longer immoral to treat humans unjustly.

In *Lives of Animals,* a 1999 novella, Costello acknowledges that her comparison between the Holocaust and factory farming was cheap. The issues with such comparisons aren't unknown within the field. Yet, there are recent examples of animal welfare groups using these kinds of comparisons to advance their agendas. PETA has made this same comparison between the Holocaust and factory farming, and they have also compared animal slaughter to the lynching of Black people in the United States (Harper, 2021). Critical animal studies is a growing field, and an important component of the environmental philosophy program at UM. As students study this area, and prepare for careers in related fields, it's important that their education provides them this context so they are not at risk of perpetuating unjust comparisons.

Philosophical Foundations of Ecology

"Philosophical Foundations of Ecology" assessed, in a philosophical manner, the scientific foundations of ecological concepts such as the balance of nature, biodiversity, and invasive species. In addition, one inquiry of the course was how social values are linked with scientific investigation and applied science. A controversial applied science in which science and values interact is geoengineering: large-scale, high-risk climate intervention. Geoengineering is intended to prevent catastrophic consequences posed by climate change. However, some geoengineering techniques themselves could cause catastrophic harm. Thus, conversations on the topic can swing from absolute condemnation to urgent pleas for its research and implementation.

In what follows, I will discuss one motivation for a specific type of geoengineering, as well as discuss a dissenting view that can be raised against that motivation. This discussion reveals the position for philosophers to help parse out legitimate and illegitimate social values in scientific endeavors.

Stratospheric aerosol injection (SAI) is one geoengineering technique that attempts to slow or halt rising global temperatures. In this technique, a chemical mixture is sprayed into the atmosphere, the particles of which reflect sunlight, and thus reduce heat on the planet. It's important to note that stratospheric aerosol injection is riddled with uncertainty and risk, the consequences of which could be catastrophic. Despite such risk, in their paper "Solar Geoengineering and Obligations to the Global Poor" Keith and Horton contend that SAI could help those most at risk of climate catastrophe in the near term: the global poor. Horton and Keith explain that the poor are already bearing the effects of climate change as temperatures increase and habitats are destroyed. They further explain that poorer nations cannot afford necessary protections, or the funds to relocate. They argue that richer nations hold more culpability for climate change. Given this, they write, "Intuition tells us that the requirements of justice are violated when an activity benefits wealthy countries at the expense of poorer ones. In such cases, there would seem to be an obligation to, at a minimum, take steps to reduce harms falling on the most vulnerable nations" (Horton, Keith, 2016, p. 80). It's clear that the global poor ought to be helped. However, De Melo-Martín and Intemann raise suspicion against Horton and Keith's motivations.

De Melo-Martín and Intemann raise a concern about

> "...the ways in which scientific practices and institutions have failed to sustain and have actively eroded the trust of particular communities. Scientific communities have treated women and minority groups unjustly, science has been used to impose differential risks

> on these groups and maintain harmful gender and racial stereotypes, and research agendas have often ignored topics of importance to them" (2018, p. 96).

This lack of trust has generated a tenuous relationship between the scientific community and communities of historically and systematically excluded people, and makes necessary the reconciliation relationships. Part of healing these relationships would involve transparency and inclusion. Historically and systematically excluded people must be involved in making decisions about SAI. Yet, it's difficult to know how these particular communities are responding to Keith's research. This might be in part due to Keith's public engagement strategy, which reads: "I work to communicate my with diverse audiences. I wrote a book that aims to introduce the topic to a non-specialist audience. My 2007TED talk has been widely viewed, see also a 2009 debate at the Royal Geographical Society an op-ed in the New York Times, and interview in November 2011 on BBC's HARDtalk. For a more whimsical take see our 2013 Scientific American article (#116)" (2021, para.3). Typos notwithstanding, Keith's public engagement strategy does not clearly indicate how he directly engages with historically and systematically excluded communities, and the global poor in particular. Even if unlike many academics Keith has a public engagement strategy, minimal and generic public engagement demonstrates optical allyship, which doesn't satisfy the demands of social justice.

Further, the extent of this public engagement is in no way proportional to the impact SAI would have. The effects of SAI would be felt across the entire planet. As such, it is incumbent on those who would research and implement the technology to invest much in understanding how the public perceives SAI. The resources necessary to complete this task would likely nullify the primary push of researching and implementing SAI: efficiency. Moving forward with the tech without first attending to the social tasks would be a mistake. In this case, Keith could fall prey to what Raymond Pierrehumbert would classify as a "Greenfinger" scenario, in which "...a

well-meaning, wealthy individual decides to save the world on his own, but with possibly disastrous unintended consequences" (2017, para. 26). Unintended, disastrous ecological consequences, as well as unintended, disastrous social consequences.

Perhaps the global poor would be well served by infrastructure interventions, reduction of global pollution, as well as access to clean water, adequate nutrition, sanitation, and medicine (De Melo-Martín, Intemann, 2018, p. 100). In addition, perhaps it is the responsibility of wealthy nations to afford less risky but more expensive climate interventions while it is perhaps the responsibility of the engineers to devote their skills and training to making the safer and more socially just techniques less expensive. Perhaps these are the challenges toward which philosophers should steer the engineers.

Philosophy of Technology

"Philosophy of Technology" investigated how disorientation in space and place impedes global justice in the face of climate change. While it's not difficult to know that climate change is a morally urgent issue that requires urgent action, disorientation makes it difficult to identify and pursue a course of action to address the crisis. Heidegger, one author we read, suggests that the technological lens is responsible for this disorientation, and is even responsible for the crisis in which we currently find ourselves. According to Heidegger, technology offers a lens through which the world and everything in it is perceived as resources, positioned in a standing reserve, waiting to be arranged and rearranged as it is necessary to achieve certain outcomes. The technological lens prevents humans from seeing the world and everything in it as they truly are - much more than just standing reserve. The danger of the technological lens is that it allows

humans to perceive all they encounter *only* as resources to arrange and rearrange, which enables the unjust exploitation of the world and everything in it. Escaping the lens of technology, its devotion to production and consumption, would reveal a course of action that could successfully and justly lead us out from the climate crisis. Applying Heidegger's view to geoengineering reveals limitations of escaping and abstaining from the technological lens. Philosophers can help identify compromise between unwanted technologies, and the demands of the climate crisis.

To gain a better understanding of the technological lens, consider that through this lens, land is not perceived as land, but only as coal reserve; soil is not perceived as soil but only as an ore depository (Heidegger, 2012, p. 26). Further, a dam is a manifestation of the technological lens while a bridge is not, as the bridge allows the river to be itself while the dam does not (Blitz, 2014, para. 28). Geoengineering could certainly be considered a manifestation of the technological lens. There are two major types of geoengineering: carbon dioxide removal (CDR) and solar radiation management (SRM). CDR aims to sequester carbon while SRM attempts to slow or halt rising global temperatures. In CDR, carbon could be seen as that which can be arranged and rearranged. Carbon is expelled into the atmosphere, re-gathered, transformed, and then placed in a new standing reserve. In SRM, planetary albedo itself is a resource that can be rearranged for particular outcomes. In this way, geoengineering techniques can prevent the perception of carbon as carbon, and planetary albedo as planetary albedo, thus demonstrating the technological lens.

In his article "Understanding Heidegger on Technology", Mark Blitz points out a problem that can arise with this Heideggerian perspective. According to Heidegger, "...agriculture is now a mechanized food industry, in essence the same as the production of corpses in the gas chambers and extermination camps, the same as the blockading and starving of

countries, the same as the production of hydrogen bombs" (2012, p. 27). A mechanized food industry does relegate the natural resources of the world as standing reserve, just as genocide relegates humans as standing reserve. However, while a mechanized food industry and genocide do relegate natural resources and humans as standing reserves, feeding better food to more people does not seem to compare well with murder.[1] Blitz writes

> "Whatever the full and subtle meaning of 'in essence the same' is, Heidegger fails to address the difference in ethical weight between the two phenomena he compares, or to show a path for just political choice. While Heidegger purports to attend to concrete, ordinary experience, he does not consider serious justice and injustice as fundamental aspects of this experience" (2014, para. 20).

Heidegger could make a similar comparison between genocide and anything that demonstrates the technological lens, anything that positions something as standing reserve. For example, he could make a similar comparison between geoengineering and genocide. Just as geoengineering relegates natural resources as standing reserve, genocide relegates humans to standing reserve. In this way, under the Heideggerian perspective, geoengineering could be considered "in essence the same" as directly and intentionally killing people for particular outcomes. But, as Blitz points out, it might be necessary to generate a more nuanced perspective between these phenomena. Just as there are significant benefits to, and socially just motivations for, a mechanized food industry, there could be significant benefits to, and socially just motivations for, geoengineering. The ethical weight between genocide and a mechanized food industry or geoengineering seem quite different.

Recall the previous discussion on the humanitarian motivations for geoengineering. While Horton and Keith's motivations for the research and implementation of SAI are dubious, this is not to say that there aren't valid humanitarian motivations for researching and

[1] Not all industrialized food systems feed better food to more people, but some amount of industrialized agriculture is an important aspect of ensuring people don't starve.

implementing other geoengineering techniques. Indeed, according to the Paris agreement, it's unclear that the climate crisis can be successfully and justly addressed without some forms of geoengineering (Preston, 2018, p. 139). The concern here is that Heidegger's perspective is missing context, and doesn't provide a means by which to evaluate the difference between genocide and certain geoengineering technologies that could produce significant social and ecological benefits.

The constitution of the world today requires the implementation of some technologies that manipulate the true nature of a thing, technologies that demonstrate the technological lens. It seems the problem with the technological lens hinges on *only* perceiving the world and everything in it as standing reserve, which might create some space for the appropriate application of the technologies that demonstrate the technological lens. Consider Holly Buck's proposal that we need "...to ensure geoengineering technologies are assessed not just on the merits of costs versus benefits, effectiveness and risks, but also within a socio-ecological framework, according to their co-benefits and potential for transformative change" (2012, para. 39). Co-benefits and potential for transformative change could help protect against *only* perceiving the world as resources. Philosophers can tease out the limitations of certain viewpoints, and offer new ways of thinking that can help justly address the challenges we face.

Actions Taken

During the fall of 2020, my initial proposal suggested that the civic engagement project would consist only of an anti-racist reading group for Dr. Preston, Dr. Le Bihan, and myself. However, that proposal did not meet the engagement expectations for the project. Over the course of the 2020 fall semester, I worked with Dr. Preston to expand this proposal to include a wider scope of engagement. We decided developing a JEDI plan for the philosophy department met the project expectations, and would be manageable within the timeframe. We decided to read *Me and White Supremacy* to support the development of the JEDI plan. In addition, the project included the organization of a public lecture on philosophy, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion to expand the scope of the project outside the philosophy department.

To complete this project over the course of the spring semester, a subcommittee of philosophy professors and I met consistently throughout the term to discuss topics from this book, as well as develop a draft of the department's JEDI plan. Working through a subcommittee better facilitated the collaborative writing process of the JEDI plan. Given the timeline, we did not read the entirety of *Me and White Supremacy* together. Rather, we read selections to foster shared language and galvanize our thinking. We read “Week 1: The Basics” to guide us as we developed the first section of the JEDI plan. We read “Week 3: Allyship” and “Week 4: Power, Relationships, and Commitments” to guide us as we developed the third section of the JEDI plan. The second section of the JEDI plan simply required documenting current and ongoing JEDI commitments.

Process - how we met, and how we engaged with the material and each other - was a priority for the meetings. An important aspect of the process was the use of a meeting facilitator. I served as the facilitator for these meetings. My responsibilities included developing and enforcing engagement protocols, designing discussion flows, monitoring participation, and synthesizing discussions. Before each meeting, I reviewed the readings, selected reflection questions, generated additional questions, and identified necessary objectives for the meeting. During the meeting, I prompted conversations to bring the discussion deeper. After each meeting, I synthesized discussions to identify topics from our *Me and White Supremacy* discussions that could constitute content for the JEDI plan document, and I drafted the JEDI plan document.

Every several meetings, I submitted a draft of the JEDI plan to the subcommittee to review and provide feedback. After several weeks of meetings, we had developed a basic draft of the JEDI plan. I then worked with the subcommittee to introduce the plan to the rest of the philosophy department. First, I drafted an opening to the other professors. In this opening, I introduced myself as well as explained the project. The professors were receptive to the opening, and I was then able to meet with each philosophy professor one-on-one. During these meetings, we discussed the benefit of a JEDI plan, and we also discussed specific feedback on the first draft of the JEDI document. It was important to meet one-on-one to develop a strong working relationship, and to foster a secure atmosphere. The philosophy professors were responsive to the project and affirmed that it would be a beneficial exercise for the department. After the one-on-one meetings, I edited the first draft based on their initial feedback. Toward the end of the semester, I attended a staff meeting to confirm department-wide interest and discuss endorsement of the document.

While we were unable to meet the project objective - to secure an endorsement from each professor on the JEDI plan - we were able to write a draft of a JEDI plan to which all the professors were receptive. Engaging with justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion can itself be a slow process. Further, coordinating one-on-one meetings, and allotting time during staff meetings to discuss the JEDI document was logistically challenging due to the obligations of the department toward the end of the spring 2021 semester. However, the faculty are interested in continuing to work toward the endorsement of the JEDI plan in the coming 2021 fall semester. In the next iteration of the department's JEDI plan, the development of feedback loops open to students, staff, and community members would be a beneficial addition to the document.

In addition to developing a draft of the JEDI plan, I worked with another environmental philosophy graduate student, Anna Reely, to coordinate a speaker on behalf of the philosophy department on philosophy, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The talk was graciously sponsored by the Borgmann Fund for Environmental Philosophy. Given the constraints of the coronavirus pandemic, this event took the form of a virtual lecture.

In thinking about a topic that would be philosophically interesting, environmentally interesting, as well as interesting to other members of the UM community, we landed on animals and food. After much research, we invited Dr. Breeze Harper to speak on the following subject: how race operates within the vegan foodscape. Dr. Harper's academic pursuits include an exploration of peoples unique relationships to food and ethical consumption, and how these relationships are impacted by race, socio-economic class, gender, sexuality and physical abilities.

After much back and forth with Dr. Harper, we were able to coordinate a lecture for mid-April. Anna and I promoted the event. We created a virtual poster that was sent out via email to the College of Humanities and Science, relevant departments, and the Humanities Institute. In

addition, the event was shared on the philosophy Facebook page, the Grizhub calendar, as well as shared to student groups. We gained about 50 registrants for the event. While gaining this many registrants did achieve the objective of increasing the scope of this civic engagement project, it would be beneficial in the future to collect additional information about the registrants regarding their academic disciple, and/or career field to gain a more granular understanding of the reach of the project across the University community.

The day of the talk, Anna and I helped facilitate the lecture. We crafted an introduction to acknowledge our sponsor, as well as to present Dr. Harper. During the lecture, we helped manage Zoom technology and we monitored questions received through the chat box. Following the lecture, we sent a thank you note to Dr. Harper appreciating the time she spent preparing for and delivering the talk.

Accomplishments

One accomplishment of this project was the successful public lecture given by Dr. Breeze Harper. During the Zoom event, we consistently had about 40 participants. Another accomplishment of this civic engagement project was the development of a ***draft*** JEDI plan, featured below.

University of Montana Philosophy Department
Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Plan
2021

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to communicate a deliberate justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) plan for the philosophy department at the University of Montana. This JEDI Plan is a living document that will change over time.

There are three primary goals for this plan. First, it articulates the motivations for engaging with JEDI to ensure appropriate intentions as well as to ensure long-term, sustained commitment. Second, it serves as a record of the department's JEDI efforts to provide a clear sense for the level of engagement over time. And third, it outlines and monitors progress towards future priorities.

Motivation

We acknowledge that racism and other form of violent discrimination are examples of deep, systemic issues that affect every sector of society. It is our intention to address elements of the systemic problems that appear within the department and within our academic institution. We appreciate the unique, significant platform we are afforded as educators. Crafting syllabi, managing class environments, and engaging with students all provide an opportunity to either uphold or begin the work of dismantling unjust systems. We are committed to dismantling them.

Current and Ongoing Commitments

Efforts to address JEDI topics and issues are currently happening on an individual level within the department. Instructors are integrating classes specifically addressing injustice, integrating non-dominant authors into their syllabi, as well as fostering inclusive classroom environments. In addition, faculty members are educating themselves individually on JEDI issues. We would like to continue this work, and to share with each other the progress and challenges we have faced in this work.

Priorities for the Future

<u>Syllabi</u>

- Philosophy courses are intended to be a survey of prominent authors in the discipline, which for philosophy, are predominantly members of the dominant culture. If this model persists, philosophy courses run the risk of teaching voices only from dominant social groups. The problem with this is that students outside these groups won't see themselves represented in the discipline, discouraging them from pursuing further studies in philosophy. However, there is a concern that if traditional materials aren't covered, students will be left unfamiliar with the discipline's canon. So how can philosophy syllabi integrate nondominant voices while maintaining the thread of the discipline's canon?
- Consider the following questions, concerns, and/or strategies:
    - The lack of resources available to professors to become familiar and competent teaching non-dominant material.
    - The lack of resources necessary to aid professors in undertaking the development of new syllabi and courses.

<u>Class Environments</u>

- Philosophy often covers difficult content, which can create emotionally, politically, and culturally charged class environments. As such, it's important to ensure, to the extent possible, that class environments feel welcoming and safe, so students feel empowered to fully engage with course content. Further, course content might directly relate to the traumatic experiences of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students, female or gender non-conforming students, students of religious minorities, etc.. Covering such content could stir up their traumatic experiences, so it's especially important to ensure, to the extent possible, that these students feel welcome and safe in class environments. How can instructors promote welcoming and safe class environments?

- Consider the following questions, concerns, and/or strategies:
    - Include pronouns, cultural leave, land acknowledgements on syllabi.
    - Establish guidelines for student engagement and class interaction, and develop policies to address violated guidelines.
    - Acknowledge the realities of classroom circumstances, e.g., white professors teaching about racism
    - Represent BIPOC students in office spaces

Evaluations

- Traditional academic grading and award systems are often based solely on student GPAs, or other performance markers, which doesn't necessarily capture the bigger picture of student achievement. Not all students experience higher education from the same circumstances. Privileges of certain students allow them to perform better, while circumstances of others obscure their achievements. The intention behind awards is to recognize students, as well as to bolster their prospects for scholarships, continued education, or careers. Are there ways to evaluate and recognize students that better capture their overall achievements?
- Consider the following questions, concerns, and/or strategies:
    - Establish achievement, as opposed to performance, based award systems.
    - Enhance professor-student mentorship, coupled with adjusting professor evaluations.
    - Create meaningful opportunities for student feedback.

Prepared By

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Resources

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Diversity & Inclusion. The University of Arizona Department of Philosophy. https://philosophy.arizona.edu/diversity

Diversity and Inclusion. The University of Chicago Department of Philosophy. https://philosophy.uchicago.edu/about/who-we-are/diversity-and-inclusion.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement. Grand Canyon Trust. https://www.grandcanyontrust.org/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-statement

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Western University Department of Philosophy. https://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/about/diversity.html

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