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Community Engagement Project Portfolio

CEP – Introduction

The inspiration for my CEP stems from two interlocking outlooks on the state of the earth and human societies. Namely, I find the times we're living in to be characterized by environmental destruction, vast social inequality, and an underlying sense of unease around these twin issues. Thus, on the one hand, I'm giving serious consideration to the existential and urgent nature of climate chaos, ecocide and habitat loss, the 6th mass extinction event we are entering, pollution, and sociopolitical impacts from extreme weather. On the other hand, I'm importing my desires for social justice; free and equitable societies that care for the land and its non-human inhabitants; lifestyle shifts towards living with less energy; and non-hierarchical systems of mutual aid between people, which are based on solidarity and need.

These concerns are stirring me to make three video series, each with multiple sub-parts, which aim to do two things. They describe key concepts in environmental ethics – such as care ethics, or the moral status of non-human animals – and they cover ecologically regenerative alternatives to current damaging environmental practices. I will be surveying Missoula high school English teachers to gauge their interest in this material, and then sending my videos out with the goal of spurring curricular change. Since I value and give consideration to social justice issues in my project, my videos strive to be intersectional and grapple with the social dimensions of environmental ills. For example, I cover the treatment of industrial animal farm employees, alongside a larger analysis of the farm animals'

treatment; and in a section on environmental care ethics, I describe the ecofeminist position that social and ecological injustices are interconnected and mutually constituted.

The alternatives that I propose seek to highlight social benefits as well – such as the enriched life experience of people who engage rewilding projects and interact with re-introduced animals; or the joy of starting community gardens that practice agroecology techniques; or the positive change-making and relieving of suffering that people can enact in their community through mutual aid networks.

Furthermore, my last video series addresses the unease, grief, and despair around our existentially challenging times, and examines questions of hope and what it means to live well in the 21st century.

One of my project's key goals is to search for practices which engage both social and ecological justice, and this is inspired by ecofeminist theory. Ecofeminists note the interconnections between diverse and seemingly separate systems of oppression, such as class, race, gender, and speciesism. This is the “diagnosis” side of the coin. On the flipside of the coin is positively constructing new practices and relationships, both interpersonal and interspecies, that weave together caring relations among people, and between people and non-human life, or, the natural world. My final video series on hope and virtue ethics, attempts to cohere what philosophers call “the good life” -- or, human flourishing – with socially and ecologically caring practices. In other words, I explore whether a person alive today can live well and find meaning by engaging these practices of care for others. One might ask, can living well be aligned with positive change-making, rather than the change-making being viewed as self-sacrifice that detracts from the good life?

My survey will pave the way not only for my video series, but also a compilation of climate fiction materials which I'll offer to these teachers. This 13-page brief of selected cli-fi readings and digital media also attempts to be intersectional, as it considers both social and ecological consequences of climate change in the near-future.

I have multiple goals with my CEP. First and most broadly, I hope to create curricular change and initiate consideration of environmental concepts among younger students, given its relevance today. The scale of environmental destruction and its implications for humans and non-human life, means that these topics deserve considerable weight in our education system. Younger people will be living with these issues and crises for the longest, and this will be the case for each new generation of high school students, and so they would highly benefit from receiving adequate preparation in environmental ethics and sense-making.

Second and relatedly, many people are in despair over the state of the world and its possible future trajectories, and their life prospects. My conviction is that many of us yearn for a new story for how to live in a way that materializes caring and just social relations, and ecologically resilient and thriving places. Third, given the environmental culture in Missoula specifically, it's quite possible that a portion of these students will pursue careers in land management, recreation and conservation, regenerative agriculture, ecosystem restoration, environmental economics, or other environmental fields. Hence, they can benefit from new lenses to conceptualize our relationship to the non-human natural world.

Finally, the video series portion of my project serves a dual purpose of personal preparation for, and practice in, podcasting and video-making. Upon graduation from the Environmental Philosophy M.A. program, I hope to engage the public on the ethics of these social and ecological issues, through articles, podcasts, and in-person speaking opportunities. My goal with this is to make such education both free, and accessible or comprehensible to a layperson audience, with the conviction that such frameworks of sense-making can help us lead more engaged, caring, and fulfilling lives.

In this section I'll expand on the context for why I find it important that high school education include environmental ethics. Then, I'll outline in detail my plan for creating the survey, the list of climate fiction resources, and the video series. To start, note that it is highly unusual for high schools to teach philosophy courses. For example, the publication "Education Week" includes a list of open positions across 25+ areas of teaching, none of which are philosophy. Typically, philosophy education in high school may only arise through an extracurricular student-led Philosophy Club; as critical thinking skills taught in English, science, or social studies; as part of the "Theory of Knowledge" course for the International Baccalaureate program, which spans the final two years of high school and combines advance placement courses; or as part of a dual enrollment course with a local college.

The typical high school curriculum rarely features environmental ethics. English classes often feature books focused on the humanities that are only tangentially environmentally themed. Biology courses lack a section on animal ethics as they teach about the anatomy and physiology of humans or non-human animals. Earth Sciences courses may teach about nitrogen, carbon, or water cycle, but do not include environmental ethics regarding how to relate to the non-human natural world.

Consider that positive changes in society can come via a three-pronged approach: an awareness of a set of issues, understanding how power and hegemony perpetuates the status quo and resists systemic changes, and imagining alternatives and practicing them into existence. While the Missoula school system appears better than most in that their sciences teach on climate change, it appears that students are left without resources in ethics. Hence, they're not receiving education into new ways of relating to non-human nature that would rejuvenate, rather than extract from and drain, the earth and human spirit.

The effect, I think, is a psychological and emotional marooning. Young people are increasingly barraged with messages of a barely livable future – from blurbs of IPCC findings to popular movies like

Don't Look Up – which paint apocalypse without offering models of regenerative living. This awareness of “doom and gloom,” alongside little formal education into ways of making sense of these issues and viable alternatives, can leave people of all ages feeling lost and hopeless. However, considering that young folks will live with most of the impacts of climate chaos – which we're cognizant of – I think that this awareness of environmental destruction coupled with an ignorance of restorative practices, is at least partly responsible for the epidemic of depression seen in young people. According to Mental Health America's 2022 findings: “over 1 in 10 youth in the U.S. are experiencing depression that is severely impairing their ability to function at school or work, at home, with family, or in their social life. 16.39% of youth (age 12-17) report suffering from at least one major depressive episode (MDE) in the past year. 11.5% of youth (over 2.7 million youth) are experiencing severe major depression.”

Therefore, there appears to be a yawning gap between what is currently offered by most high school curricula, and what could be offered to adequately prepare young people with the critical thinking skills needed to address these issues that will bear on their lives. My CEP's climate fiction resource list, and video series, are an attempt to change this dynamic, by helping high school English teachers in Missoula to incorporate environmental ethics into their course materials.

Initially then, my plan began by surveying teachers at Big Sky, Sentinel, and Hellgate high schools. To do this, I collaborated with Jeff Ross – the director of UM's English Teaching M.A. Program – who had contacts with local high school teachers. Both Jeff and my Environmental Philosophy advisor, Christopher Preston, offered feedback on drafts of my survey. After making revisions, I'll sent the survey out. In the survey, I introduced myself, the goals of my CEP and a brief rationale for why this education matters, and the topics featured in the video series. I also notified them of my forthcoming compilation of climate fiction resources that cover these themes, and I proposed that this literature could be accompanied by my video series to help students identify underlying themes in environmental ethics that are present within Cli-Fi. I gauged the teacher's interest in collaboration and incorporating this

material into their curriculum – such as whether it’s complementary with their teaching standards – and how it might get implemented. Additionally, I asked about the current status of eco-criticism in their classrooms, so as to help myself get clear on how my offerings might fit into their present curriculum.

Next, Jeff lent me the book ‘Teaching Climate Change to Adolescents – Reading, Writing, and Making a Difference’, which helped guide the development of my Cli-Fi materials. Specifically, it had informative chapters on “creating a climate change curriculum,” “literature and the cli-fi imagination,” and “interdisciplinary teaching about climate change.” These chapters helped me frame the environmental ethics video material in a way accessible to high school students. Moreover, the climate fiction resources consisted of novels, short stories, poems, and documentaries. They covered the following four areas: Indigenous and Postcolonial perspectives; Capitalism and Consumerism; Environmental Literature / Ecocritical Teaching; and Systems Impacting Climate Change. Each section included discussion questions recommended by the authors, which they’ve used in their high school English classrooms while teaching this literature.

Additionally, I briefly worked with Dr. Louise Economides in the English department to compile cli-fi resources. She sent me several anthologies of short climate fiction stories which make use of the concepts and distinctions in environmental ethics that I’m highlighting. These anthologies included *Loosed Upon the World* and *I’m with the Bears: Short Stories from a Damaged Planet*. She also forwarded the syllabi for her course LIT 491 (Climate Change and Literature), which had a number of books already mentioned in ‘Teaching Climate Change to Adolescents – Reading, Writing, and Making a Difference’, as well as several new ones that I added to the list.

Lastly, my three video series consisted of the following: first, Animal Ethics and Moral Status; Rewilding; Industrial Animal Farms, Care Ethics, and the Ethics of Meat-Eating. The second series covered Agroecology; Mutual Aid; Community Gardens; Economic Degrowth; and Environmental Care

Ethics. The third series looked at the Problem of Inconsequentialism; Why Grieving Matters to Acting Hopefully; and Environmental Virtue Ethics. Producing these videos entailed reviewing course materials and notes from the Philosophy and Animals class, Issues in the Anthropocene class, Environmental Philosophy class, and other articles/videos outside of the program that discuss this content. Overall, I wrote 67 pages of scripts for the video series, which I recorded at the UM Mansfield Library's OneButton audio recording studio.

My goal for the cli-fi resources and video series was to lay the groundwork for teachers to feel comfortable implementing the material on their own. This meant crafting a thorough and clearly comprehensible set of videos, as well as talking with the teachers about the content and ensuring they would feel comfortable teaching this information. That way, all that is left for them would be to implement any of the suggested cli-fi readings and/or my video series into their curriculums. Ideally, after conversing with me and viewing my video series, they should feel comfortable finalizing the curricular change and teaching the material.

Finally, I coordinated a time and place during the end of the semester to share about my CEP – it took place in the Philosophy Colloquium, in the Liberal Arts building, at 6:00pm on Wednesday May the 3rd. I shared about my CEP's goals, context for why I think it matters, the work I carried out, and what I learned along the way.

CEP – Theoretical Applications I – Philosophy and Animals

The core graduate seminar 'Philosophy and Animals' provides theoretical grounds for the section of my CEP regarding the moral attitudes toward and treatment of non-human animals. I'll first share how act-utilitarianism, animal rights theory, and care ethics, all think about the moral status of non-human animals. That is, what makes an organism worthy of moral consideration? As I go, I'll offer

shortcomings and critiques, to illustrate one theory's weakness that another can fulfill. Then, I'll examine the question of how to ethically relate to domesticated farm animals in particular.

Broadly, our human lives are entangled with non-human animals, through the food we eat, the cosmetics or medicine we buy – which have been tested on animals – and the fact that we're entering a 6th mass extinction event, caused by our own polluting practices and industries. Hence, given other animals' constant proximity to our lives, it's important that we don't turn a blind eye, but instead examine what our moral responsibility to them may be. Note that the ethical systems I'll share are all attempting to counter speciesism – a bias or prejudice in favor of one's own species, such as homo sapiens, over another species, in the absence of morally relevant differences. Differential moral treatment can be justified if there really are legitimate moral differences between species – but the ethics to follow are aiming to show that there are not morally relevant differences between humans and non-human animals. In other words, they try to show that any characteristics or features that confer moral status for humans, or seem to make us special, are also shared by non-human animals.

First, Peter Singer's act-utilitarianism draws the circle of moral status around an organism or being, if it possesses sentience – the ability to feel pleasure and pain. If an animal is sentient, then it has its own interests, such as self-preservation and carrying out its life in its species-specific way. Singer then claims that we should give equal consideration to these interests and preferences, across species. This means that regardless of your species – whether you're human, a zebra, or a snail – that so long as you're sentient and have interests, then these interests should be given equal moral weight when considered in ethical dilemmas. However, this doesn't mean that each different species is treated identically, since the needs, desires, and goods will vary from one species to the next. Per the act-utilitarianism that Singer follows, the morally correct action requires us to maximize pleasure, and minimize pain or suffering, for the greatest number of relevant individuals in any given situation, even if this pleasure-maximization entails harm to a minority, such as sacrificing one individual.

A key issue that emerges from Singer's account is this: while his focus on sentience was helpful by moving the criteria for moral consideration beyond species membership – in which, crudely, members of homo sapiens count morally, while those outside our species do not – he nonetheless opened the door for ableism. A baby, comatose person, or highly cognitively handicapped person may not be sentient and therefore lack the interests to be equally considered, by Singer's account. Thus, it's implied that judgments of mental complexity, and differences in cognitive abilities, do indeed result in a different moral status. Yet, discounting the moral status of a baby or handicapped person, and perhaps even offering them in a hypothetical scenario – to maximize pleasure for a group of people or non-human animals – clearly seems intuitively wrong. In other words, act-utilitarianism's sole focus on the consequences of an action – and whether pleasure is maximized and pain is minimized – allows for violations of basic rights.

This is where Animal Rights Theory (ART) steps in, by asserting the Principle of Inviolability: all beings with a subjective experience – in which “somebody's home” inwardly -- should be viewed as the subjects of justice, and as the bearers of inviolable rights. With inviolable rights, an individual's most basic interests – such as their right to life and living free of suffering for as much as is possible – cannot be sacrificed for the greater good of others, no matter the benefit others would receive from a rights violation. The Principle of Inviolability draws a moral circle around an individual, and grants them basic negative rights. Whereas positive rights are *freedom to* something, negative rights are *freedom from* fundamental harms like killing, slavery, torture, forced separation from family and homeland, confinement, etc.

Therefore, with inviolable rights in mind, something called the Argument from Marginal Cases (AMC) arises. The AMC says: there are cognitively disabled people, as well as phases in all our lives during which we lack sentience, rationality, complex cognition, or autonomy. For example, these occur during infancy, elderhood, illnesses like dementia, or a lack of education or social services. And yet,

these phases, conditions, or experiences do not detract from our basic inviolable negative rights, as we're all beings with subjective experience. The AMC continues: since we shouldn't act immorally or cruelly to humans in these circumstances, it shows that degrees of sentience, cognitive ability, rationality, or whether one possesses complex interests, do not equate to a difference in moral status. Thus, the AMC claims we cannot justify the differential treatment of non-human animals along these lines of cognitive complexity.

However, while negative rights (of humans and non-humans) cannot be violated due to one's lack of sentience, lower cognitive ability, or having simple rather than complex interests, these features can nonetheless allow differences in positive rights across species membership. ART says that just because animals hold inviolable rights, does not necessitate that they have the same rights as humans – such as a right to education and healthcare. After all, even among humans, rights are distributed differently on the basis of capacities and interests – such as between citizen and tourist, or adult and child. Thus, equal inviolability of negative rights *is* compatible with different positive rights in social, civil, and political realms among people, and so is equally true among animals.

In other words, all humans and non-human animals have negative rights, but positive rights differ among people, they differ between humans and non-humans, and they differ between various non-human species. Accordingly, ART grants the following basic positive rights to non-human animals: food, water, medical care, a healthy environment or intact habitat, companionship and interaction with con-specifics, exercising species-typical behaviors, having movement, and feeling sensations.

So far, I've described Singer's focus on sentience, and his giving equal consideration to interests across species, as a way of expanding the circle of moral consideration to include non-human animals. Since the criterion of sentience influences the moral status of both humans and non-humans, I've highlighted its major flaw – ableism among people. I then showed how ART responds with their focus on

inviolable basic rights. ART makes the Argument from Marginal Cases, which demonstrates that Singer's focus on sentience, as well as other possible criteria for moral status – rationality, impressive cognitive abilities, or having complex interests – are not legitimate reasons for an organism to count morally. These are not adequate criteria for recognizing moral status in an organism; these may be lacking, while that organism may still deserve moral consideration. Thus, at this point, ART appears to be the sounder ethical system for recognizing the moral status of non-human animals. Next, I'll discuss Care Ethics, as a separate ethical framework that effectively makes sense of non-human animals' moral worth, and our moral responsibilities to them.

Care Ethics emphasizes relationships and interdependencies. In this ethical system, responsibilities or duties of care toward others arise when they're dependent on us to some degree for their survival, functioning, and well-being. For example, amongst people, we've relied on the care of others – like family, teachers, or healthcare workers – to survive and flourish while we're young, elderly, ill, or otherwise vulnerable. Since we've required and indeed received care from others during our times of vulnerability, Care Ethics claims that when we're in a position capable of providing care to others in need, we have a responsibility to offer such care. When we do so, we're contributing to a web of reciprocal care, since these interdependent networks of giving and receiving care are the conditions of our very survival and functioning.

Next, care ethicist Daniel Engster notes that the stronger the relationship of dependency – with the extreme being that the vulnerable self cannot even survive without receiving care – the stronger our duty is to care for them. The one notable exception to caring for a human or non-human animal, is if there's a conflict with an already existing responsibility to care for another, which takes priority. That is, we have a stronger relationship with our child than with a stranger's child, or with a farm animal who is in need, and hence, in a scenario where only one can be cared for, Care Ethics justifies caring for your own child first.

When making sense of our moral responsibility to care for non-human animals, Engster says that it must be our human action that creates the relationship of dependency. That is, we're not morally obliged to care for an "opportunist" animal, or parasite, that initiated a dependency upon us for its survival – such as a mouse that lives in our house. Moreover, the goals of caring are to help others meet their basic needs, facilitate the development of their capabilities so they can meet their own needs themselves, and so they're equipped to pursue their subjective good. Additionally, proper caring means we should not obstruct them from achieving these goods themselves.

Wild animals do not depend upon us for their survival and functioning, as they lead lives independent of human care. As such, care ethicists such as Lori Gruen suggest a weaker responsibility of showing them moral sympathy, rather than offering full care as we would for a dependent. The argument is as follows: wild animals share many of the same needs and capabilities as humans. Since humans value meeting our needs and fulfilling our capabilities, there's no reason to not extend such care towards them, and so we should help wild animals meet their needs when they lack the option to do it themselves, and when it wouldn't obstruct our other caring responsibilities.

Domesticated farm animals, on the other hand, do depend upon us for their survival and well-being, as we've selectively bred them in ways which have undermined their ability to live wholly independently from us, in less humanized ecosystems. A central question is, what should we do about the injustices of current human-to-farm-animal interactions, such as in industrial factory farms? Given the brutal history of domestication – in which humans abducted these animals from their wild habitats and subjected them to our will, so that docility, fertility, and other desirable traits were selectively transferred to their offspring – some Animal Rights theorists believe that domesticated farm animal's ongoing dependency on humans means that we'll necessarily and inevitably exploit them.

Animal ethicist Gary Francione is a strong voice behind this strategy; for him, mistreatment and abuse is inherent to the idea of domestication. He sees any human-to-domesticated-animal interaction as ultimately leading to a domination-subordination relationship. Therefore, himself and others within ART propose that we should abolish relations of ownership, control, and dominion over farm animals. However, their strategy is dubious: they claim that we ought to care for existing farm animals until they die of natural causes, but systematically sterilize them to ensure no more are born – in effect, bringing about their extinction. They do not consider other possibilities for ending the dynamic of viewing farm animals as our fungible private property, where we can instrumentalize them as a mere means for meat consumption and industry profits.

Yet, to respond to the challenge of how to justly treat domesticated farm animals with a proposed systematic sterilization and forced extinction, only abdicates our responsibility to care for farm animals and re-imagine positive relationships. Such a response would compound the historical injustice of domestication, and current injustice of industrial animal farms, with a further injustice of enforced extinction. Responding to mass suffering within factory farms with enforced extinction seems a supreme irony; it treats one harm with an even greater harm. Indeed, multi-species ethnographer Deborah Bird Rose, calls extinction a “double-death” because it erases a single member of a species, and the entire species, thereby nullifying future opportunities for unborn individuals of that species to ever exist.

Further, we would seriously object to the eugenics of severely disabled people who require a caregiver to simply survive. Preventing domesticated farm animal’s reproduction, or forcibly sterilizing them, to achieve their ‘phased-out existence’ would be to coerce and confine these animals in ways that ART considers violations of basic inviolable rights. In this way, these voices within ART would contradict themselves. Further, some Animal Rights theorists support this strategy by arguing that it’s unnatural for human and non-human animals to associate. Yet, it’s not just that humans have sought out relations with other animals, but that they’ve also sought relations with us. Even without human action, non-

human life dislikes a vacuum, and other animals inevitably gravitate towards human settlements to explore new niches. Consider, for example, rats making a home in cities, or crows picking through and feasting on our trash.

Therefore, it's false that farm animal's dependency upon us for meeting their basic needs strips them of their dignity. Interdependency is inescapable for us all and is a precondition for individuals of any species to develop their capacities and decision-making agency. What matters is that we treat farm animals in a caring manner and help them to mature into these species-specific capacities. Since factory farms violate animals' negative rights through the active infliction of intense pain, neglect, and cruelty – and certainly do not facilitate their positive rights to a good life – care ethics asserts a strong moral obligation to abolish factory farming, a refusal on the part of citizens to purchase its animal products, as well as asserting that we should advocate for its legal abolition.

Moreover, philosopher David DeGrazia notes an additional reason to abolish industrial animal farming: the toll it exacts on human health. This manifests in various ways. Meat consumption is linked with higher levels of heart disease, obesity, stroke, and more; factory farms have put 3 million family farms out of business since WW2; employees are subjected to extreme work pressures and health hazards; and de-regulation of the meat industry from the early 1980s onwards, combined with fast production lines, makes it extremely difficult to ensure safe meat. Industrial animal farms also excessively consume energy; erode topsoil, lead to habitat destruction, and deforestation on-site (and off-site where grains are grown for feedlots); and pollute water with high concentrations of manure, pesticides and other chemicals.

However, a question remains of whether care ethics permits raising animals for meat consumption on organic farms, where animals' negative rights are upheld and their positive rights facilitated, and they lead a pleasant existence up until their end. This gets at the question of whether

slaughter is a moral harm – since the common, overlapping feature between industrial animal farms and organic farms that raise animals for meat, is that a premature death remains part of the practice. Some relevant ethical questions include: is it possible to care for an animal that you'll eventually kill? Or does the intention of raising the animal for ultimate slaughter prevent a certain level of caring? Does it matter that the animal received care prior to its slaughter and premature death? Further, a more basic question alongside that of slaughter or a premature end, is: can death itself be called a harm, if the dying process is painless and absent of suffering?

One perspective is that death can be considered a moral harm because it entails the irreversible loss of future opportunities for finding pleasure, meaning, or pursuing one's subjective good. In this sense, a premature death by deliberate slaughter – if even done in as painless a way as possible – would represent a moral harm. If so, then even organic animal farms would include this moral harm. A care ethicist could argue that raising animals with the intention of slaughter, and killing them at a younger age than they would otherwise live to reach, is an uncaring act.

However, a care theorist could equally argue that if the farm animals are treated in a caring manner and lead fulfilling, happy lives up until the moment of slaughter – which is unforeseen by them, quick, and would be made painless through anesthesia – then the harm of death pales in comparison to the goods they achieved throughout life. On this view, death is still a moral harm, but it's small compared to the pleasurable and full life these animals lived, up until their slaughter. Therefore, this view says, farm animals belong on organic farms that treat these animals in a caring manner, not in industrial factory farms.

Moreover, farm animals can help compost food and plant scraps, and create nutrient-rich manure that can boost soil health. Also, grassland ecosystems co-evolved with grazing animals, meaning that grasslands require some degree of grazing pressure to mow them back down and restart the

ecological succession. Rotational grazing moves dense herds of grazers from one small enclosure to the next, with long rest periods for the grass to re-grow, between grazing cycles. This style of grazing leads to more robust grasslands, with deeper roots below ground, and leads to topsoil creation, improved soil nutrient cycling, and carbon sequestration. Of course, one could partner with grazing animals, like cows or bison, to do this ecosystem restoration work, without the additional meat consumption.

Where does this leave us then, with regards to the most ethical treatment of farm animals?

Well, since farm animals are dependent upon our care, since industrial animal farms are morally abhorrent and commit vast suffering, and since releasing these animals into the wild would likely result in their own extinction as well as wreak ecosystem havoc, the two best options appear to be placing these animals in farm sanctuaries and/or organic farms that treat animals well. Farm sanctuaries are simply places that allow farm animals to lead good lives and die of natural causes, without being raised for meat, and with people around to assist with their care. The choice between farm sanctuary and organic farm, then, relies on one's assessment of the morality of slaughter and a premature death. In both cases, the goal should be to create enabling conditions which enrich both their and our lives through the inter-species relationships of care that are formed. In conclusion then, the common denominator is that we must institute caring relations with farm animals, and abolish those cruel and uncaring relations.

The issues examined in this piece – the moral status of non-human animals, and the proper ethical treatment of farm animals – were highly pertinent to the goals of my CEP. One such goal was to shine a light on a number of key environmental problems, and propose ethical alternatives to them. Here that took the shape of comparing industrial animal farms to organic farms and farm sanctuaries; elsewhere in my CEP it was industrial food-production juxtaposed with agroecology food systems, and community gardens; and still elsewhere it was a despair and hopelessness that leads to inaction in making positive changes, being remedied by grief work, active hope, and virtue ethics.

The Philosophy and Animals class helped me meet a second goal of my CEP, as it spurred me to explore concrete habits, practices, and a lifestyle that doesn't participate in social and ecological harm, but instead contributes to socioecological regeneration. In other words, this goal of my CEP asks the question, how can we live well in the challenging times we find ourselves in, while avoiding complicity in its ills, and instead coalesce the good life with socially and ecologically beneficial habits and practices? Becoming vegetarian or vegan, or at least only eating meat from animals raised on organic farms that are as local as possible, are practical lifestyle changes that can align one's life with doing no harm to others.

Finally, high school curricula rarely cover the ethics of human-to-non-human interactions, or take seriously the well-being of non-human animals. For example, through a lack of education and conversation into animals ethics, many people become vulnerable to marketing forces by food companies that sell meat. Or, English classes often feature books based directly in the humanities, while Biology classes may examine the anatomy and physiology of other organisms, without concomitant coverage of animal ethics. Thus, my CEP was an attempt to change these currents, as one of my three video series covers animal ethics, and these videos were sent to high school English teachers, as well as a board member of the Montana Environmental Education Association.

CEP – Theoretical Applications II – Issues in the Anthropocene

Holly Jean Buck describes how the Anthropocene has become a collection of horror stories – narratives both graphic and scientific – whose grip on the social imagination leads to practices and technologies of control. These include tightened borders and anti-immigration discourse, policing, military presence in ensuring national security, citizen surveillance, land grabs, hyper-managerial technologies such as geoengineering and synthetic biology, etc. The Anthropocene stories that

undergird this cultural fear may be familiar to you: hundreds of millions of displaced climate refugees (both within and between countries), political turmoil and social unrest, and the risk of authoritarian politics; drought and water shortages, farmland salinization, and food shortages; increased natural disasters and toxic pollution; the decline of fossil fuels and minerals, and ensuing geopolitical “resource wars”; ocean acidification, habitat destruction, mass extinction and biodiversity loss, etc. Buck asks, how could these stories be re-told to include possibilities of “a charming Anthropocene”?

She proposes that we need to rekindle a sense of “enchantment” in the world in order to re-spin the cultural stories through which we make sense of our times. Enchantment is defined as a sensuous experience of awe, wonder, and humility at the liveliness and diversity in our surroundings. Due to the speciesism and naturism that humans have imposed on the web of life in the Anthropocene, there’s a collective sense that the world is now disenchanting, or no longer magical, after our industries have tainted all water, soil, and sky. Yet Buck resists a return to a Nature Romanticization that repeats the mechanistic worldview of seeing the living world as a passive object. What is needed then, she says, is specifically to re-enchant humans-in-nature, by reviving and creating relationships between humans, local environments, and the nonhuman beings that reside there.

The process of enchantment includes a linguistic element – the production of words, images, and other media – and an element of practice, ritual, or performance. Relevant to the production of re-enchanting language, is what Indigenous scientist and environmental thinker Robin Wall Kimmerer calls a “grammar of animacy.” Language affects how we think and does so in ways often beneath our conscious awareness. This is because a substantial amount of our thinking is lingual, and words carry implicit connotations which we may be ignorant of; phrases may be presented in either/or binaries that limit our sense of possibility; or a language may be more noun-based than verb-based, where nouns can depict a world of fixed and separate entities and verbs can depict process, emergence, unfolding, or ongoing renewal. For Kimmerer, a grammar of animacy is a style of speaking that gives agency to the

nonhuman beings and entities that surround us, so that we view living organisms as subjects rather than objects, as a nonhuman person with their own point of view, interests, way of engaging the world, and form of intelligence.

For example, we might describe a maple tree or a Canadian goose with the pronoun “it,” such as in sentences like, “look its leaves are rustling in the wind!” or “look it’s flying!” We often use “it” to connote inanimate and inert objects, like a tea kettle or water bottle, and yet as Kimmerer says, we would never use “it” to describe, say, our grandparent walking around. We wouldn’t say, “it’s walking!” Hence, she asks, why do we use “it” to describe nonhuman beings who are very much alive? There’s an underlying question of animism and whether that ought to be extended from animals to plants to entities that a Western worldview understands to be inanimate, like rocks, water, wind, or sunlight. However, at the very least, it seems feasible for a Western worldview to begin describing other animals with a grammar of animacy. Whereas it’s difficult to feel moral responsibility to lifeless, mechanical, inert objects – and it’s easier to exploit them – one is more likely to show moral care to nonhuman beings when their personhood and subjectivity is acknowledged and honored, and this is what a grammar of animacy conveys.

Next, Buck suggests we engage in relational practices of interacting with nonhuman nature in an immediate, non-mediated, and intimate manner, in order to re-enchant places with meaning for their human inhabitants or visitors. In our current society, much of daily life is hyper-mediated by a tool or larger structure – we learn about the news through phones, computers, or TVs; we buy clothes or food through complex, multi-leveled supply chains that obscure the origins of the product’s raw materials, who gathered or extracted them, where they were sent for processing, the work conditions of those employees, and so on. The impact that a product’s history has on both the environment and worker is hidden, and the supply chains we remain dependent upon keep us at a distance from the world – it is an experience of alienation in which we’re made a passive observer, and not active participant.

Hence, we need to engage in practices that connect us to our direct surroundings in a multi-sensory and embodied way, so that the number of degrees of removal between ourselves and the world are narrowed. This is moving towards immediacy. Intimacy, on the other hand, is taken to mean those practices which open and expand, rather than diminish and close, relationships with nonhuman others. This in turn can engender a care ethic for these places, it can create cultural landscapes whose well-being we value. She notes that while re-enchanting humans-in-nature enables socioecological transformation, it is not a complete substitute for systemic and political change, and that re-enchanted spaces themselves will be contested political grounds. What are some examples of enchantment?

Rewilding is the first I'll discuss. Rewilding is a re-spinning of the Anthropocene, from humans as the agents of other species' extinctions, to humans as helpers in other species' rebounding population numbers, as they return from the brink of extinction and move towards flourishing. This is done through the deliberate and carefully observed reintroduction of animals and plants, especially high-impact and keystone species, who are locally extinct from places they traditionally lived. One rather ambitious example is the '2005 Pleistocene Rewilding Plan,' which proposes the return of wild horses, lions, cheetahs, camels, giant tortoises, and elephants to the North American continent. Of course, it's far more likely that animals who are not large predators capable of posing a threat to humans would be introduced first. Or, that potentially dangerous megafauna would not be reintroduced at all. For example, beavers are harmless and are key ecosystem engineers, whose dams benefit aquatic habitat, groundwater tables, and enact flood mitigation.

Further, any animal recovery – even if not initiated by humans doing rewilding projects – can be celebrated as a re-animating process that adds diversity and complexity to the world. Importantly, whether animals recover autonomously and independent of human's influence, or through our rewilding projects and aid, in either case we must end our ecologically destructive resource-extraction industries, if their rebounding populations is to be sustained.

Andrea Gammon adds the following characteristics to rewilding: it aims to restore damaged ecosystems to a state of self-sustained and dynamic functionality in which human management becomes increasingly unnecessary; it is defended by trophic cascade theory; it often includes removing impediments to migratory patterns, such as dismantling dams and fences; it re-imagines relations between humans and nonhumans, as what matters most isn't the relatively small degree of human oversight, but the growing autonomy of nonhuman beings; and it is process-oriented and future-focused, rather than looking to achieve a specific result or past ecosystem. However, historic baselines can be considered in planning which species to reintroduce.

Of course, ethical issues abound concerning the politics and justice of rewilding, and I'll discuss a handful of these now. There remains the risk of instrumentalizing these animals in a problematic way – such that we're employing them simply as a tool to clean up the ecological mess we've created – and therefore it's critical to tell narratives of these animals as partners in a shared vision of multi-species flourishing. Honor, respect, gratitude, care, and even a sense of awe or wonder, for these animals should be central to the narratives of rewilding projects. Those who advocate for multispecies justice would argue that we benefit from conceiving of human flourishing in terms that entails the well-being of nonhuman life. It's not merely that when nonhuman beings and ecosystems are thriving, human existence and survival is more likely to be guaranteed; rather, it's that our life experience is enriched by interacting with a greater diversity of life forms and landscapes.

Importantly, one question is whose land is used for rewilding, and what are the varying power balances and interests among the stakeholders? Are the benefits of rewilding equally distributed among people, and does anyone become disadvantaged, such as farmers whose herds now face increased predation? A related issue that Gammon raises is, what will happen to those cultural and human-built places that our society holds dear? Is it justified to demolish an old church or convert a cherished park for rewilding? Further, how can we rewild suburban and urban areas in which most people live?

Another ethical question in rewilding projects is: what level of human involvement are we comfortable with in the process? Say, initial catalyzation followed by a hands-off approach, or is ongoing intervention permissible? Would the latter contradict the 'wildness' -- or self-willed-ness -- and autonomy of the reintroduced animals, and thereby detract their value? This question crops up as some environmentalists believe that with too much intervention or management into wilderness and wildlife, that these places and organisms become more akin to zoos and zoo animals.

This school of thought views human-made places and human-managed animals as less valuable than those places and nonhuman beings which arise and function independent of human activities. However, perhaps what's ethically relevant here isn't the sheer act of interacting with nonhuman beings, but rather, the *type* of human intervention. After all, human-led deforestation and reforestation are both interventions in a landscape, but are quite different in character. We can ask then whether positive changes in ecological function resulted from the rewilding.

In any case, rewilding projects can re-enchant humans-in-nature through active involvement. This includes connecting to the past through learning the ecological history of a landscape, and which animals used to live there; it connects people to each other as stakeholders in the future of that place; and it allows relationships and experiences of awe to arise between people and the reintroduced animals. Rewilding represents a scaling back of human dominion, it's the intentional ceding of power to animals who have been historically disenfranchised through hunting, trapping, habitat loss, and the like. There appears potential for rewilded landscapes to simultaneously be cultural landscapes, whose meaning to humans is derived from the multispecies relationships that emerge between us and them.

Agroecology is the second practice of enchantment that I'll share. It's a style of food production and land-tending that is inclusive of, but extends beyond, the canon of organic farming practices. It includes such things as: perennial plants, including fruit and nut trees; rainwater harvesting via rain

barrels, swales, and ponds, which can also be used for aquaculture; plant biodiversity, cover crops, and maintaining living roots in the soil year-round; the integration of animals through rotational grazing and silvopasture; edible windbreaks and food forests; and a view of the garden/farm as a holistic nutrient-cycling system. Agroecology and agroforestry landscapes that involve people – from U-picks and meeting local farmers, to deeper changes such as equitable access to land, free education into agroecology skills, and community farms – have the potential for a rich participatory approach to acquiring food, compared to the alienated experience of a grocery store aisle and unknown supply chains.

In this way, agroecology facilitates what Bruno Latour calls ‘explication.’ This is firstly the foregrounding of our dependency on, and entanglement with, clean air, water, soil microbial communities, pollinators, etc. for food production, which gets obscured in the alienated experience of acquiring food via grocery stores. And secondly, it’s a heightened awareness that ecological decline spells trouble for ourselves. This in turn can engender an ethic of care for, and taking pride in, the ecological function of one’s local surroundings. In this vein, it can encourage people to undergo restoration, rewilding, or agroecology projects.

The agroecological garden or foodshed can and should be expanded into all places – transforming the rural “sacrifice zones” of industrial monoculture farming; enlivening the suburbs through the lawn, a cultural site that holds the possibility of widespread positive ecological change, led by everyday people; and enriching cities, by converting vacant lots and unused spaces into community gardens, which connect urbanites to the outrageously pleasant humdrum of insects and birds, the vivid colors and scents of plants. This is within the realm of possibility, if our collective values sufficiently align in this direction, and it is at least a nourishing vision to help guide positive ecological changes.

Therefore, agroecology re-envisioned the use and appearance of all landscapes, upsetting current spatial arrangements and divisions. Buck describes how an expansion of agroecology “goes beyond the pastoral ideal, loosening those binaries of rural-urban, civilization-wilderness, and simplicity-sophistication” (375). As Emma Marris describes, agroecology creates the world as a “half-wild, rambunctious garden” -- a multi-species flourishing that makes space for our nonhuman companions while doubling as foodscapes, whose immersion is a multi-sensory experience that awakens our embodied selves.

To transition now, note that one of the overarching goals of my CEP was to show alternatives to how we currently treat other animals and non-human nature, and highlight shifts from a culture of social and environmental degradation to one of socioecological regeneration. I especially wanted to make this clear to high school students and younger people, who are becoming aware of the extent of ecocide but aren't privy to these exciting remedies. Therefore, enchantment, rewilding, and agroecology, practically informed the content of my CEP's video series, as I aimed to help high school students and young people explore life-paths and practices that strive for joint human and nonhuman flourishing.

Pertinent video sections that were undergirded by this theoretical background, include: agroecology as a shift in food-production – that intersection between human health and the well-being of nonhuman life – which, especially when practiced in community gardens, can involve people in ecologically sane and aesthetically pleasing forms of engagement with the natural world; and a section on the potential of rewilding to change the role of humans within the 6th mass extinction.

This background also informed my video series covering questions of hope, despair, and grief within these existentially challenging times. How the future of the Anthropocene will unfold is uncertain, and since people grasp to fill in these blanks with the aid of story and narrative, it's critical to share

visions of how matters could go right. That is, how they could unfold pleasantly, rather than perpetuating the collection of horror stories mentioned at this paper's start. In this video series, I highlighted Joanna Macy's concept of active hope as a response to suffering and the future's uncertainty. Active hope is a verb rather than a noun: it's not something you have, but something you do – it's an activity, practice, or process that aligns with your values and strives to create the more just world we desire. Enchantment, rewilding, and agroecology, then, are practices that I've compiled as an offering for those wishing to enact active hope.

If people are unaware of a positive alternative to how socioecological systems could be arranged differently, they likely won't find it appetizing to bask in the doom-and-gloom portrayal, and they'll turn their eyes from the issue. Not only does this induce a complacency that ironically reinforces the status quo systems that degrade the natural world, but it creates a burden of guilt, anxiety, and despair that weighs on people's mental well-being. Becoming aware of positive socioecological alternatives, and making sense of their strengths and weaknesses, can be difficult in a post-truth era of fabricated realities, and in a media-saturated environment of competing narratives. Indeed, the collective social imagination is contested political terrain, with corporate-controlled media disseminating content, interpretations, and making deliberate omissions, which function to preserve the status quo. Discussions of positive responses to ecocide, such as those I've highlighted, are typically absent altogether from the mainstream media. When environmental crises do receive the limelight, they're often fear-framed within a doom-and-gloom narrative without accompanying remedies, and this only leads to paralysis, apathy, and inaction.

Therefore, enchantment, rewilding, and agroecology, are together deep acts of resistance and creative renewal, and they possess symbolic value as well as practical worth. They matter symbolically because they stretch the social imagination to entertain possibilities of beauty and multi-species flourishing. It's easy to feel glum and disempowered in society today, and so the paradigm shifts

required for a more just world, must in the process create cheerful and thriving people, community, and joy. Enchantment, rewilding, and agroecology, I believe, can deliver on this.

Humans have “always already” interacted with a landscape, wherever we go – sometimes for the better, other times for the worst. Imagine then that our species are gardeners, ecosystem-influencers – we’re just failing at it in the Anthropocene. Rewilding as a means of correcting power imbalances between ourselves and nonhuman relatives, and agroecology as immediate embodied engagement with the ecology of a place, are twin antidotes to our fractured relationship with the nonhuman world. Through these practices we heal a wound in our own soul, which desires connections with nonhuman beings, our surroundings, and a sense of emplacement, belonging, and home.

CEP – Theoretical Applications III – Environmental- Virtue and Care Ethics

When environmental thinkers seek to remedy the horrors of Anthropocene ecocide, it's not uncommon to find suggestions of ethical responses, orientations, and lifestyles that are riddled with narratives of self-sacrifice. There's a strong current of thought which says, in order to counter environmental destruction, individuals and communities must end all consumption, and undergo material depravity, some degree of hardship, and suffering, for the sake of the natural world. If we do not constrain our desires for excess consumption, material accumulation, and an affluent lifestyle, the line goes, then we'll never relieve the oversized burden placed on earth systems by economic activity, and ecocide will continue.

Indeed, people can be acutely aware of a crisis or emergency, but without an awareness of viable alternatives, they're likely to remain complicit in bolstering the problem. For most people, the depiction of self-sacrifice that's conveyed by this line of environmentalism – in which human and more-than-human interests are dualistically opposed, and we must either choose between improving our own

good or selflessly helping non-human others – is not an attractive alternative. Often, this dualism manifests as “the economy against the nonhuman world” – such that we must choose between economic interests or the natural world. Since we rely on supply chains for our survival, a person might even care about preserving non-human life, but not want to sacrifice their own well-being for the good of non-human others, and so remain complicit in contributing to ecological degradation.

Therefore, what’s needed between these extremes of ecocide-by-indulging-affluence, and a materially deprived self-sacrifice, is a middle road that aligns human and more-than-human interests. Basically, a “win-win” situation. Hence, we can pose the question: how can we frame human flourishing in a way that is mutually constituted by the flourishing of other non-human individuals, species, and ecosystems? And regarding the question of choosing the welfare of either the economy or natural world – as if it had to be an either/or framing – we can ask: how can we reframe this disjunction so that our economics is in equilibrium with both human and more-than-human interests?

Is there a middle road where we lessen current levels of economic production and consumption, but pursue appropriate technology that facilitates human and more-than-human flourishing, without sinking into material hardship? That is, without entering material depravity, poverty, and suffering? The middle road is simply a request for restraint, so that our economic activity doesn’t annihilate the planet. I’ll now attempt to address these dilemmas by describing environmental- virtue and care ethics. Finally, I’ll illuminate how these relate to the goal of my CEP’s video series.

Philip Cafaro reviewed environmental virtues displayed by Henry David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson, and found five common themes. First, a wish to reframe economic activity from a machine that drives unending extraction, production, and acquisition, to a tool placed in support of allowing comfortable human lives. Indeed, Thoreau’s voluntary simplicity and frugality represents a disillusionment with the overwork he perceived in society, and a framing of human flourishing, or the

good life, as stemming from experiences and relationships rather than from material accumulation. Thoreau believed that practicing simplicity and limiting one's use of external items could reduce our footprint on the land, allow one to be cognizant of the ecological consequences of their actions, and lead to greater freedom to develop ourselves, pursue knowledge of ourselves, and of the natural world. Simplicity promotes freedom because by spending less money and being materially frugal, a person can reduce the hours in their lives that they exchange for an income at the workplace, which often comes on the employer's terms and can even stunt rather than encourage personal development.

Furthermore, Leopold believed that wealthy Americans couldn't improve their quality of life by increasing their wealth – they had reached a threshold at which any higher enjoyment in life would come from non-material areas. Leopold advocated becoming perceptive, observant, and knowledgeable of one's surroundings and its ecological history, as a way of enhancing our lives while preserving wild nature intact. Note that another environmental thinker, Rosalind Hursthouse, also values frugality and contentment with simplicity, since many environmental harms derive from the production of luxury goods that are not deeply fulfilling or meaningful. These harms emanate from the extraction of raw materials, their transport, manufacturing, and eventual waste disposal. She also warns against the vices of greed and excess – or what could be called “mad emperor's disease” -- the drive for ever-more material accumulation, private ownership, and the power that wealth delivers.

Second, Cafaro identifies among these thinkers an embrace of the naturalist disposition. For example, Leopold advocates using careful observation and science as a way of knowing the nonhuman world. This naturalist approach is carried out while resisting a sterile and distant objectivity, and while supplementing science with appreciation, celebration, and personal relationship with the nonhuman world. In this way, gratitude and an aesthetic attunement can establish strong connections with a particular piece of land, and this can engender a desire to ensure that place's well-being.

Third, they share a commitment to non-anthropocentrism – gaining perspective by (at least temporarily) displacing our human goals and purposes to place attention on the lived realities and experiences of nonhuman beings, which can allow us to grasp their inherent worth. This commitment is accompanied by an acceptance of limits. Thoreau urges us to use only what we need from the surrounding ecosystem, leave a fair share for other organisms, and practice gratitude for us all meeting our needs. For Leopold, we must transition from conqueror of the ecological community to plain citizen of it. And Carson says that the times we're living in challenge our maturity to master ourselves, rather than mastering and consolidating our control over nonhuman nature.

Fourth, they share a desire to know, experience, and appreciate wild nature, and support the protection of wild places both near and far from home. Carson thinks wild nature facilitates the expansion of our imagination and teaches humility, while Leopold thinks wilderness can teach lessons about freedom and self-management.

Fifth and finally, the three believe that life is fundamentally good, for both humans and nonhumans. Carson believes that preserving wild nature leads to well-being and flourishing in our lives. She recounts joyful stories from interacting with birds and asks, "Can anyone imagine anything so cheerless and dreary as a springtime without a robin's song?" Leopold thought that when a biotic community maintains its integrity, stability, and beauty, it generates virtue in nonhuman individuals and species, as well as within us. Therefore, he invites us to frame human flourishing in terms that maintain these qualities of a biotic community, of which we're also a member.

I'll now share some other environmental virtues identified by virtue ethicists. For example, Thomas Hill Jr. thinks that understanding our place within the biosphere engenders a humility at the insignificance of our daily human lives, which can also lead to a respect for non-sentient nature as possessing intrinsic value, and not being a mere resource to be instrumentalized for human ends. Then,

he says the virtue of self-acceptance entails grasping the commonalities and shared traits between humans, nonhuman animals, and non-sentient nature, and subsequently acting admirably towards these others. Ronald Sandler argues that recognizing the inherent value of nonhuman nature is itself a virtue, because it develops one's ethical outlook and ability to reflect on the value of others outside of oneself.

Hursthouse suggests the virtue of prudence – overcoming shortsightedness and short-term thinking, and instead considering how to achieve over the long haul those human goods that matter most. Indeed, change can come from including in our moral consideration those who we could easily exclude from a solely self-interested point of view. One such group that could easily be excluded by those alive today, are those unborn people of the future. Since future generations fundamentally lack a voice in today's political participation, we must be proactive about representing their interests, welfare, and rights. She also encourages that we cultivate awe and wonder for the natural environment, because this emotional state can motivate respect, honor, admiration, curiosity, and care for nonhuman others.

I now want to add three virtues that also seem highly valuable for the times we're living in. First, a willingness to reflect on, deconstruct, unlearn, and let go of habits, attitudes, and lifestyle practices that are harmful or uncaring towards other people and nonhuman others. This virtue could be humility, or recognition of fallibility. Pertinent to a North American reader, this virtue means: first, a willingness to admit that how most people in affluent nations are living, has harmful socioecological repercussions – it's an honesty around where we've gone wrong. Second, this virtue means to then embrace humility and uncertainty as we apprentice ourselves to a different lifestyle that's harmonious with the natural world and other people. In this way, one is living their life by the open and exploratory question: what is the proper human role as a member of a wider ecological community?

Second, the following cluster of virtues: empathy and having an open heart to other's suffering, emotional awareness, and a willingness to grieve. This is because the pain we feel for the suffering of other people or nonhuman beings is precisely what connects us to them. If we close our hearts and become numb to some crisis, such as the 6th mass extinction, then we're more likely to remain complicit in contributing to the problem, and we don't act to alleviate suffering. Conversely, if we open our hearts and allow ourselves to feel pain on the behalf of another's plight, and if we release this pain through grieving with the support of other caring people, then we're more likely to metamorphose and begin acting toward alleviating that suffering.

Third, I would also add the virtue of imagination. As we age and gradually leave childhood this faculty gets ignored, receives little praise or conversation in homes and schools, or is dissuaded against in implicit or explicit ways while our faculty of reason is instead promoted. However, cultivating a rich imagination is a useful tool for envisioning other socioecological possibilities and forms of arranging daily society. This is especially pertinent because the reproduction of daily life under global capitalism – whose industries and excessive use of the natural world spews great harm – appears to us as natural, inevitable, final, fixed, and unchanging. Imagination can shine through this cloak of inevitability and reveal that we don't have to be living in a way that perpetrates socioecological degradation.

On the other hand, environmental care ethicists share much in common with environmental virtue ethics. This is because care ethicists emphasize virtues such as kindness and generosity, compassion and the consideration of others with whom we relate to, and they encourage us to build habits and engage in practices that promote these virtues. Such virtues of care and compassion logically flow from care ethicist's emphasis on relationality and inter-being, and their analysis of the ontology of the self, personhood, and identity. They refute the idea that we're a conglomeration of fundamentally separate, disjointed individuals who only associate with each other either accidentally, or for our own purposes of self-gain and accumulation. In fact, they say it is this atomized self which is most egoistic,

competitive, greedy, concerned with their own image, status, and power at the expense of others, and is willing to instrumentalize others as a mere means in order to maximize their self-interest.

Rather, care ethicists view the individual as fundamentally interdependent with other individuals – they highlight the communities, networks, and cultures in which we’re embedded. We necessarily engage in and are comprised by our multiple relations with others; and we rely on the care of others to develop and maintain our capacities. These “others” include family, friends, teachers, lovers, and the broad cultural sphere. These “others” also include the non-human organisms and entities which oxygenate the biosphere, filter water, photosynthesize and support the soil food webs upon which our food depends, connect us to our capacity for empathy and aesthetic delight, and more. Hence, environmental care ethics recognizes the interdependent web of life and encourages care for both human and nonhuman individuals and communities.

Put differently, care ethics understands the self, our individual personhood, to be fundamentally a self-in-relation; our relationships to others, human and nonhuman, comprise who we are, and have inherent rather than instrumental value. Relationships matter not because of what they achieve for the individuals in the relationship – as is the case for an impersonal transaction – but rather, they matter for their own sake because relationality with others, and giving and receiving care, are basic parts of our humanity. How we relate to others is a part of our identity and informs who we are.

Notice that interdependence allows a humility in which we approach the Other with respect, as we negotiate how to interact with, rather than use, the Other in a compassionate, non-exploitative way. Helping others altruistically can only be seen as self-sacrifice if one is operating under a mindset of the isolated and self-interested individual that strives to maximize their own good at the expense of others. On the other hand, if we’re fundamentally connected to and reliant on each other, even while maintaining our unique differences, then helping another person is to feed into the web of reciprocity

that is the foundation of our own being. Since our daily functioning relies on the caring actions of others, to care for another is to support the conditions on which our shared existence is predicated.

Whereas justice- and rights-based ethics focus on universal moral duties to an abstract individual bearer of rights, an ethics of care accounts for the special relationships that we actually have with other people and nonhumans, in which we rely on each other's caregiving to survive and function. These relationships – whether between parents and children, community members, your pet, or a forest you frequently visit – are viewed as ethically significant. In other words, it's the specific relationships we have with others, human and nonhuman, that generate moral responsibilities. Hence, to care for another is to enact moral responsibilities and virtues that promote and maintain healthy relationships between the moral agents embedded in a network. Creating and preserving healthy relationships of care allows for (inter)personal development, social cooperation, and the maintenance or regeneration of ecosystems, rather than their degradation.

Care ethics also highlights the unique and contextual needs and concerns of those people receiving care, who we are in relationships with. Care ethics is attentive to how individuals are emplaced in the world – their intersectional identity and position in society, the power dynamics that they confront, and their resulting lived experiences. In this way, care ethics approaches ethical dilemmas with a focus on the particular facts that are relevant in a case – at the level of the individual, household, community, culture, institutions, and law – rather than applying pre-given principles that ought to be used universally for any bearer of rights or recipient of justice.

Care ethics also emphasizes the role of emotion to be just as important as rationality in the process of moral decision-making. Hence, concern for other's welfare, compassion, empathy, and care, are all emotive orientations that inform one's ethical approach. Since we experience the world as both rational and emotional beings in daily life, care ethics appears the most fitted than any other ethical

system to our actual lived realities. Insofar as we live in the world and not an abstract vacuum, we need ethics that help us navigate daily life.

We may now ask, why does care ethics even matter? This is the question I seek to address in my video series, upon laying out the ethical framework. Care ethics matters because we're always already interdependent with each other, and yet we're not acting like this is true. Epidemics of loneliness indicate that we're alienated and atomized, and one need only examine massive wealth inequality to grasp that many people are not cared for, are excluded and marginalized.

Care ethics' emphasis on the value of interconnections and interdependencies of all kinds, including between human and nonhuman beings, reveals the flaws in paradigms and world-orders that deny humanity's embeddedness in and dependence on the ecological world. Indeed, care ethicists understand ecocide to be a result of moral disregard for and a severance of our caring ties with nonhuman life. And how we treat each other – interpersonally, culturally, and institutionally – is mutually constitutive of how we treat the more-than-human world. The exploitation of other animals or plants, our neglecting to extend moral care towards these deserving others, and the abuse of ecosystems, can continue so long as we also fail to treat people in caring ways.

Care ethics also matters because the effects of greenhouse gas release and pollution extend forward into the future, even if we were to hypothetically cut emissions and pollution to zero by tomorrow. Thus, while mitigating climate chaos must continue to be pursued with urgency – since mitigation will lessen the severity of those effects that become baked into the future – adaptation efforts can strongly benefit from practicing care ethics. A basic prediction might be that those communities who enact care for each other, their local land, and its nonhuman species, through mutual aid support and relief networks, will be more resilient to and less shook by the impacts of climate chaos,

fossil fuel decline, economic instability, etc., than those communities in which individuals remain isolated and do not cooperate.

My conviction is that most people are not currently living well, parallel to the ongoing loss and erasure of species and ecosystems, and that this dual degradation presents an opportunity for precisely the contrary: narratives of joint human and more-than-human flourishing. Indeed, I asked at the outset, “how can we frame human flourishing in a way that is mutually constituted by the flourishing of other non-human individuals, species, and ecosystems?” The Environmental Philosophy course helped me see a path through the dilemma between self-interest and environmental concern, between ecocide and material depravity, between either human well-being or non-human well-being. Both environmental care ethics and environmental virtue ethics have the potential to chart such paths, because their ethical orientations can cohere, rather than compartmentalize, questions of ecological justice, social justice, and the good life or human flourishing.

Environmental care ethics highlights how humans are interdependent not only with other people, but with non-human others too, and this inter-species relationality can serve as the foundation for a virtue ethics that frames human flourishing in terms that require non-human flourishing. The contexts for acting virtuously and caringly are pluralistic and intersectional, and this is needed because the paradigm shift from cultures of socioecological degradation to cultures of socioecological renewal, cannot afford to selectively confront some injustices while leaving others unattended. The paradigm shifts we need must be mutually beneficial for all members of the web of life. By focusing on our interdependencies and interrelations with human and non-human others, and showing care for them, we can lead fulfilling social and psychological lives, while consuming fewer economic services and acquiring fewer material items.

My CEP aimed to provide environmental ethics resources for high school students, which include examples of concrete practices exhibiting care for human and non-human others. These practices allow us to restrain our degree of economic activity – putting it in its proper place of supporting decent human lives without degrading ecosystems – while moving toward multi-species flourishing. For example, in one of my video series, I described environmental care ethics similarly to how I did above, and then dove into multiple practices that embody the ethic. These included agroecology community gardens and farms as a system of food-growing and land-tending, which cares for human communities, the land, and nonhuman beings. I also described mutual aid networks as a means of alleviating suffering through social cooperation, sharing, and collectivizing resource-use; and I described economic de-growth as an alternative economics that recalibrates the economy's role in supporting human and more-than-human flourishing. In these three ways – agroecology, mutual aid, and economic de-growth – I demonstrated to high school students multiple systems-level transformations that enact an ethic of caring for human and nonhuman communities, which are so desperately needed in our age of socioecological suffering.

CEP – Actions Taken

In this section I'll describe the actions I took to create my survey, climate fiction resource compilation, and three video series, which together comprised my CEP. First, I had heard from another English professor, Dr. Louise Economides, with whom I was taking a class at the time, that Jeff Ross – the director of the English Teaching M.A. program – was working with Montana state-wide high school education boards, to attempt to incorporate climate fiction and environmental humanities materials into English classrooms. Since one of my project's goals was to bring environmental ethics to high school English curriculums, I introduced myself, my personal interests, and my project, and a few emails later

we had a meeting set up. During this meeting, as well as a second shortly afterwards, we discussed my ideas for the videos that I would make in environmental ethics.

During the first meeting, he lent me the book “Teaching Climate Change to Adolescents: Reading, Writing, and Making a Difference”, which I used to form my list of cli-fi materials; and we also discussed educational outreach possibilities, such as his connections on education boards and in Missoula high school English classrooms. After talking with him and my philosophy advisor, Christopher Preston, it was decided that I’d make a survey to gauge high school English teacher’s interest in my project, and then send it to them through Jeff’s contacts.

Jeff Ross and Christopher Preston gave me feedback on my survey drafts and upon making edits I emailed it out to the English department chairs at Big Sky, Sentinel, and Hellgate high schools. Jeff had a contact at one school, but I called the administrative office for the other two schools to find their English chair. In addition to gauging teacher’s interest in my offerings, I notified them of the available cli-fi resources and multiple video series; I also asked whether their teaching standards could accommodate this, and how students are currently being prepared in environmental ethics and humanities, if at all.

My cli-fi resource compilation was formed after a close reading and detailed notetaking of three chapters from Jeff’s book that I had borrowed. It wound up being a 13-page document that featured cli-fi novels and young-adult novels, short stories, poems, testimonies, picture books, documentaries, and short films. As recommended by the three high school English teachers who authored this book, my resources were structured into four teaching sections: “Indigenous and Postcolonial perspectives,” “Capitalism and Consumerism,” “Environmental Literature / Ecocritical Teaching,” and “Systems Impacting Climate Change.”

These authors had written reading-comprehension and thought-provoking questions for each section, which I also included in my compilation. Lastly, I shared these author’s words on the impetus for

why teaching climate fiction matters, from their section, “Literature and the Cli-Fi Imagination.” As these authors were experienced English teachers who thought this material was significant and worthwhile to teach, I wanted the teachers I was contacting to hear the justification from someone in their position, alongside my own reasons that I had offered in the survey. For example, these authors valued the ability of climate fiction to present speculative futures of how climate change could unfold if our current trajectory remains untouched. These near-future scenarios depict the implications of climate change in language that is graphic, gritty, and heartfelt, as opposed to the language in scientific reports that is too often dry, mechanical, and unlively. In this way, climate fiction encourages greater engagement with these crises and issues.

Meanwhile, Jeff had sent a message about my project to two board members of the Montana Environmental Education Association (MEEA), as well as its President, Rose Vallor, who works at Montana State University. Rose Vallor then sent the inquiry to 3 board members in the Missoula area. Shortly afterwards, Jeff forwarded me an email from Naomi Alhadeff, who had responded to Jeff’s message with interest in my project. She’s a MEEA board member, Montana Education Manager, and “Project Wet” Regional Coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation. I then emailed her several times and sent over the survey and cli-fi compilation.

I also received a message from Rhian Clark, an English teacher at Hellgate high school, and one of four International Baccalaureate (IB) teachers working there. The IB program combines advance placement courses for students in their junior and senior years and is common throughout European school systems. Rhian told me that the IB teachers currently cover social justice issues – such as those related to race, sex, and class – but that they don’t cover climate change. However, she had talked with the other IB teachers and they agreed that climate fiction and environmental ethics would be a welcome perspective. She asked to see the cli-fi resources, and I sent them over.

I also offered to do a guest lecture for her students, on one of the videos I was developing. She responded that it wouldn't logically fit into the current readings, but that this upcoming fall of 2023 could possibly work. I replied with enthusiasm and am attempting to plan this with her during the summer prior to the fall semester. I genuinely would like environmental ethics to reach young people, and look forward to leading a class discussion in the fall. I imagine that such planning will involve examining her intended course material, and seeing which of my various topics could be complementary, and then setting a time.

Next, my three video series each feature multiple sub-sections, and included the following topics. Video Series 1 examined Animal Ethics and Moral Status; Rewilding; and Industrial Animal Farms, Care Ethics, and the Ethics of Meat-Eating. Video Series 2 explored Agroecology; Mutual Aid; Community Gardens; Economic Degrowth; and Environmental Care Ethics. Video Series 3 covered the Problem of Inconsequentialism; Why Grieving Matters to Acting Hopefully; and Environmental Virtue Ethics. Video Series 3 featured an introduction that I titled 'A Basic Dilemma,' and the middle section – which discussed Active Hope and Grief Work – was split into two parts, due to its length. Overall then there were 13 videos, which spanned 67 pages of scripts (double-spaced).

Some of the sections were drawn from prior courses in the Environmental Philosophy M.A. program, where I consulted class notes and assigned readings; other sections included content that I've researched in the past, and could draw on prior knowledge of, parallel to a slight degree of refreshing myself; other sections I researched more heavily, as I previously had only limited immersion in the material.

To record the videos, I would reserve the University of Montana Mansfield Library's OneButton Studio, where I spent about three hours a session, on four different occasions. I had to re-record parts of my first and third series, especially. Some of the struggles and learning curves included: finding that I

had to warm up my voice to prevent it from cracking; tripping over words; realizing upon watching the footage later that I didn't place sufficient emphasis on key parts of a sentence, or make a voice inflection to indicate important points; and realizing that I looked too serious, or even glum, to appeal much to an audience, especially that of high schoolers. Indeed, my main concern was whether the material was too advanced for high school students, but I tried to speak slowly and explain a new idea from multiple angles.

I would often re-record segments of a video for all of these reasons, and I would raise my hand in the air to signal to myself that the prior sections needed to be deleted, during the editing process. One of the larger challenges was that I couldn't possibly memorize all the lines, given the high volume of material, and so most often I couldn't make direct eye contact with the camera while speaking. I feel that looking slightly downward at my scripts wasn't ideal, and so occasionally I would memorize several lines at a time, to at least offer brief periods of more connective speaking. The recording process itself was simple however – I used the library's flash drive and just pressed an on/off button to record. Additionally, I would rearrange plants behind me for the visual effect.

My editing process was fairly simple but lengthy. It involved viewing each of my videos on QuickTime Player and cropping out those sections, as indicated by my hand gesture, where I tripped over words or was dissatisfied with my reading and had to re-record. I simply clicked 'View: Show Clips' and then 'Edit: Split Clip' and continued to split clips at intervals around the section I was deleting. I would then re-play the video from a slightly earlier spot, to confirm that my cropping was successful and that the gap between two consecutive clips was limited to 1-2 seconds. Thus, I wove together the satisfactory readings to form a seamless continuity.

I then posted all my materials to the website I developed: the survey, cli-fi resource compilation, video series and accompanying written scripts, and the remaining documents of my CEP portfolio. On

May 3rd I presented my CEP in colloquium to my professors – both within the Philosophy department and in others where I took classes, such as Environmental Studies and Sciences, English, and Natural Resource Science and Management – and to classmates, and other friends.

Finally, I want to note that I had to adapt slightly along the way. Admittedly, the response from English teachers to my survey was underwhelming and disappointing, and so I did two things. First, I emailed the teachers who had responded with an offer to deliver a class discussion or guest lecture. As noted earlier, only Rhian responded to this offer, and it might happen in the fall semester, but not this spring. Relatedly, I started sharing some of the ideas in my videos at “Word Dog,” which is a community open-mic and reading event that meets weekly in Missoula. Around 12 people can sign up and read something they wrote, or the words of another that they found inspiring, and there’s music in between readings. Typically, there are 15-40 people in attendance, and this was a space to try out my ideas. Reading at these events helped me gain confidence in public speaking – as well as learn about how to present the material in an engaging way – and over time I observed myself no longer feeling nervous or having an elevated heart rate prior to speaking.

Second, I tweaked the framing of my project to include how it is serving as preparation for the writing and podcasting – that is, researching and producing content – that I intend to do upon graduation. This was already hovering in the background as an additional perk of my CEP, but I decided to elaborate on the project’s usefulness in this area. Overall, while I’m a bit dismayed that more teachers did not respond to my survey with interest, I hope to impact those who did, and I feel really positive about the materials I developed.

In this section I'll share what I achieved, what I am most satisfied with, and reflect on my project's challenges – including what I didn't accomplish, and how the project could've been improved. First, as noted in the prior section, I created a 2-pg survey, 13-pg climate fiction resource compilation, and three video series which were recorded from 67 pages of scripts that I researched and wrote. Jeff Ross helped my survey reach Rose Vallor, President of the Montana Environmental Education Association (MEEA), who forwarded it to three board members in Missoula. Board member Naomi Alhadeff – as well as an International Baccalaureate English teacher at Hellgate high school, who received the survey from the department chair that I had emailed – contacted me for more information. Naomi, Rhian from Hellgate, and Rose have received my cli-fi resources and video series. Otherwise, there are tentative plans for me to lead a class discussion for one of Rhian's English classes in the fall.

I am most proud of my video series. I began by entertaining various arguments and qualifying criteria for the moral status of non-human animals; I described rewilding as a practice that can allow animal recoveries while turning the role of humans from dominator to partner in their flourishing; and I considered how a care ethics perspective asserts that animals do not belong in industrial animal farms, but in farm sanctuaries or organic farms, depending on how the ethics of premature slaughter is resolved.

Next, I illuminated agroecology as a model of food production that restores topsoil, holds water on-site, creates habitat for insects and animals, and more; I detailed how mutual aid networks can be formed at any time to alleviate suffering in one's community, without waiting for actions by governments or corporations; I noted the social and ecological benefits of community gardens; I shared how economic degrowth reframes the place of economics in our lives, and strives for a post-extraction, steady-state equilibrium that does not deplete the Earth; and I illustrated how environmental care ethics emphasizes our relationality and interdependence, and encourages relationships of care and cooperation with other people and non-human beings.

In the last video series I began by introducing the Problem of Inconsequentialism and how it indicates the necessity of collective, systems-level change, while disempowering individual action. In an effort to ward off despair and apathy, and instead highlight the ethical significance of individual actions, I met this challenge by expanding on Joanna Macy's active hope, Francis Weller's grief work, and virtue ethics. I elaborated how hope is a verb, or is embodied through an actively engaged 'doing,' rather than a noun or something that a person passively possesses; I showed how grief for various forms of suffering is the counterpart to love for those struggling, and that grieving in the safety of a caring community container can empower us to move beyond despair and seek to create positive change.

Finally in this series, I showed how virtue ethics affirms the moral worth of seemingly insignificant individual actions, through its focus on the type of person that we are, and whether our actions are aligned with our values and virtues, regardless of if the desired consequences of our actions ever materialize. I then explored whether a virtuous human life could be bound up with the flourishing of non-human beings, and examined environmental virtues such as: simplicity and frugality, care and a willingness to grieve, attentiveness and a celebration of place, an acceptance of our own animality, prudence, cultivating awe, humility and a recognition of our fallibility, and imagination, among others.

Learning the skills involved in researching and producing video essays – such as distilling an article to its key claims and arguments, assessing its strengths and weaknesses while comparing these with another theoretical approach, properly citing a piece, and recording and editing my videos – have instilled confidence in me to continue with this process upon graduation. Thanks to my project, I feel better prepared to begin creating my own content. I plan to research and write my own essays; record and edit these as video essays; read aloud interesting or helpful essays by other thinkers; and interview other people on their interests, including past professors and book authors.

On the other hand, my project's accomplishments didn't neatly square with its plans from the outset. In my mind I envisioned my survey bringing at least some greater degree of interest from teachers than was actually received; and I imagined forming an ongoing dialogue with them through emails, in-person meetings, and/or phone calls. I imagined reviewing their English class curricula with them, and then brainstorming and matching relevant areas of my offerings to their course materials. Namely, I pictured myself and a teacher reviewing my compilation of climate fiction resources, the accompanying discussion questions as recommended by the book's authors, as well as my video series, and floating ideas for connections between their and my materials. After this process of reviewing our materials for collaborative opportunities, I hoped to implement concrete curricular changes in upcoming semesters, since changing their curriculum for the present semester isn't realistic or feasible.

This mismatch between my ideal teacher engagement and the responses I received, has led me to reflect on changes I could've made, as well as advice to someone else trying to replicate my project. First, I should've tried to set up an in-person meeting with the English department chairs – rather than relying solely on email and phone to communicate. When I sent them my survey, I could've included an inquiry into meeting to discuss my project. Second, I should've researched extracurricular student clubs – through speaking with the high school's administrative office – and contacted any organizations who might've been interested in my materials, or who might've been open to a guest lecture or discussion.

Third, I could've included the offer to do a guest lecture or discussion for high school English teachers as part of my survey; as it was, I notified teachers of this offer around a month after the survey was originally sent, to compensate for few responses and attempt to add more engagement work to my project. If the idea of a guest lecture had been offered earlier in their semester, it may have been more possible for them to accommodate it and find a time where it may have smoothly fit with their planned material. Fourth and finally, I also could've tried to collaborate with Agricultural Sciences teachers to incorporate my videos on animal ethics, or my section on agroecology food production.

In conclusion, I found this to be an informative experience into the degree of involvement required to effectively engage community members – in this case, high school teachers. I've realized that a reasonable and respectful amount of persistence, coupled with contacting a broad array of community members, is the best strategy to find success with community engagement, moving forward. I also feel that my project prepared me quite well to research and write articles or scripts for video essays and podcasts in the future, upon graduation. Since I would like this educational content that I intend to develop to reach young people, this project has been a valuable learning experience in honing my approach to partnering with current educators.

For example, I feel that it's improved my confidence in custom-designing curricula in environmental ethics, and applied ethics, for high school classrooms. Whether I try to disseminate and make accessible philosophy in classrooms through working internally as an educator, or from the outside through working with teachers, I feel that I've made substantive progress toward gaining the relevant skills, and familiarizing myself with the education landscape, to carry out this sort of work in the future.

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