COMMUNICATION, RACE, AND OUTDOOR SPACES

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COMMUNICATION, RACE, AND OUTDOOR SPACES

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Editorial: Communication, race, and outdoor spaces

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Editorial on the Research Topic
Communication, race, and outdoor spaces

The Co-Editors: Historical and institutional racism and the dominance of whiteness in land management agencies has arguably led to asymmetric uses of public lands by privileged users, to the exploitation of lands indigenous communities hold sacred, and to the perception that only certain kinds of bodies belong in outdoor spaces. Racism and coloniality have enabled and provided logics for environmental abuses and dynamics that produce and regulate poaching and violence against environmental and social justice activists. Black Lives Matter protests occurring in public squares around the world, propelled by and leading to the over-policing of and violence against Black and other protesting bodies in public spaces and places illustrate the urgency for reimagining public, outdoor spaces as racially experienced and discoursed. Furthermore, contemporary public discourse of these and other tragic events such as the mass shootings in Buffalo, NY, and El Paso, TX, in the United States, and in Christchurch, New Zealand by White supremacists and eco-fascists, compel engaged scholars to increase and sustain the study of the dynamics and stakes of race, ethnicity, racialization, and outdoor space in communication studies.

These concerns oriented and compelled our approach to this Research Topic.

This Research Topic aims to foreground the complex ways communication about outdoor spaces and/or the "Great Outdoors" shapes and is shaped by race and identity, coloniality, and the movement (or immobilization) of racialized bodies and borders/bordering. Environmental Communication scholars have written extensively about the environmental justice movement and have begun paying more attention to the nexus of race and place/space/the environment, but it is crucial that more work is done to understand that race and ethnicity are inextricable from understandings of ecology, outdoor experiences, and public, shared, or "protected" spaces (Nishime and Hester Williams, 2018).

We recognize that even though race/identity and coloniality are sometimes interlinked, they are not one and the same: concerns about race/identity can and do differ from concerns about coloniality. At the same time, we recognize that one of colonialism's most devastating successes was, as Wynter (2003) argued, its successful "overrepresentation" of a single ethnoclass as "the descriptive statement" of the human species. On this view, discourses about race are fundamentally an ingredient to coloniality. In other words, the first site of colonization was not land, material, or people but the very idea of the human, of who can(not) be "fully" human.

As we reflect on the essays collected in this Research Topic, two interconnected spaces come to the fore and figure prominently in racial formation and exclusion. The first are the physical spaces, those outdoor places which are symbolically and materially constructed to invite some and exclude others. The second are the academic spaces, places which privilege certain types of research, voices, and relations, while discouraging others. Both J. Drew Lanham in *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature* and Robin Kimmerer in *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* write extensively about their experiences as people of color in nature and in academia (Kimmerer, 2013; Lanham, 2016). For both, the constraints of scientific research and academic publishing demarcated spaces where parts of their experiences, voices, and identities were regulated and excluded. Both describe choosing to wait until they were successfully tenured before attempting to push back on those barriers.

With these stories in mind, our project sought to open space for a wider variety of academic engagement. Our editorial team was mindfully formed as racially, ethnically and regionally diverse in composition, inclusive of secured and recognized scholars in the field, as well as new and independent scholars. Members of the team represent a wide range of methodological experiences and expertise. As such, the call for papers encouraged multiple article types, including original research, hypothesis and theory, review, perspective, opinion, conceptual analysis, community case study, and policy & practice review. Contributors were invited to address a broad array of texts, sites of inquiry, and perspectives related to communication, race, and outdoor spaces. As far as the medium would allow, the editors made room for different forms of methods, questions, engagements, and forms of academic writing. While we were successful in bringing into this edition scholars, works, voices and perspectives missing from academic journals, there is still much work to be done in this area.

In what follows, we offer a conversation among the Research Topic co-editors (i.e., the editorial team) reflecting on our positionalities and interest(s) on these issues, how the featured essays extend understandings of communication, race and the outdoors, and noting some continuing challenges for scholars working at the intersection of race, the environment, and communication studies. We initially held this conversation over Zoom, and have edited it for clarity and deepening here.

Carlos A: I'm Carlos Alemán, and I'm an associate professor at James Madison University in Virginia. I was old-schooled as a communication generalist, first at Fresno State, and then the University of Iowa, specializing in interpersonal relations and trained in social scientific and rhetorical traditions. I guess I just kept moving east. Over the years I've tended to ask questions of communication, relationships, and identity from a variety of perspectives, mused by the welcoming and contesting experiences of places that I call home. I define home in terms of family, the extended familia of our community, and the sacred environments of our residence.

I'm invested in ideas of race, relationally defined, complexly experienced, and critically theorized. I'm happy to think that the invitation to contribute to this project was born in part out of my friendship with Pete, a relationship cultivated through long conversations of race, identity and environment as we canoed the Shenandoah River and took day hikes in the Allegheny Mountains. I find myself bringing that fellowship to this editorial team, sometimes deferring to you all as experts on subject matters of environment, but also imposing into those conversations the wisdom of my racialized body as I've sought to make home in academic and outdoor spaces alike.

Jen P: My name is Jen Peeples and I'm a professor at Utah State University. From the start of my career over 20 years ago, environmental justice has played an important role in my scholarship and teaching. As a White woman instructing a predominantly White student body, I have felt compelled to call out the industrial and governmental villains and make present the communities of color who are victims of environmental racism. Much of this information was new to my students and drawing their attention to these inequities, while raising awareness and ire over the high levels of toxins dumped in Utah, has always felt like important work.

Even though Utah State University is located between Yellowstone and the Grand Teton National Park to the north and Utah's five national parks to the south, and access to "nature" being a selling point for attending USU, discussions of national parks and public spaces in my class were historically and geographically distant, often focusing on Yosemite in the mid-1800s. I did not consciously avoid critiquing my own engagement with nature, or examining who was included and excluded in my own sacred spaces, but somehow those discussions never made it onto the syllabus or into my research. My acutely attuned outrage over the injustices of race and toxins fell silent when it came to race, ethnicity and public spaces. Being part of this edition of Frontiers is one means of attempting to rectify this academic and personal omission.

Mariko: My name is Mariko Thomas, and I'm an independent scholar and a part-time professor in Northern New Mexico. I was connected to this excellent group by a dear friend and mentor, Tema Milstein, and this was really

exciting because I had actually started my academic journey with a heavy focus on critical race studies but detoured a bit in recent years, and was aching to get back to it. During my Masters degree I was mostly interested in multiracial family storytelling, narrative inheritance, and the ways that we tell and construct stories of our racial identities. As a mixed-race person who is mostly read as White, I was trying to understand the complicated tangle of how narratives, as well as genetic heritage interplay to help young people figure out how to identify themselves racially. I then applied for my doctorate wanting to explore race and environment to extend on this topic through the lens of environmental justice, but went left-field and started studying plant-human relationships instead. But I kept thinking about race and environment because that topic was always my starting point of learning to recognize and think about inequity, inequality, marginalization, and who had the privilege of being heard in environmental issues, a logic (or mislogic) that had led me to concern about plants.

This issue is personal, because I come from a mixed-race family, mostly Black and Japanese, and our engaged relationship with the more than human world has given us all a lot of opportunities we might not have had otherwise, and created powerful counter-narratives that have fed both me and our greater communities. The storytelling of race and environment and who gets to tell those stories and make those environmental decisions has always been exceptionally personal for me, and having a platform to support dialogue and publications about this is a hugely fulfilling experience.

Steve: I'm Steve Schwarze, I'm a Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Montana, in Missoula, Montana. So, when I was in grad school with Carlos, Michael McGee referred to one of our colleagues as "the whitest White man in Communication Studies." Now, that wasn't me, but I'm pretty close.

Race has really never been a significant or explicit part of my own scholarly work. And so this building out of the discussions in the discipline and our efforts to embrace this more fully in environmental communication have been good for me, have been challenging for me, and it started to open up a lot more ways of thinking than I have previously been accustomed to.

When we first started getting into this a little bit–when Jen, Jen, and Pete and I started talking about this—we did some work where we were interested in what's going on when people travel to national parks. What are the places through which people go on their way to what we would traditionally consider "Nature" with a capital "N"?

And we all took a place nearby us, and the one that I took was Glacier National Park. I'm still grappling with it because that park is very interesting. Donald Carbaugh (Carbaugh, 1999; Carbaugh and Rudnick, 2006) in our field has written extensively about Glacier and the people and places near it. And on one side, the east side, you have the Blackfeet reservation, which has a very different kind of relationship to the park than does Flathead county on the west side. Flathead county has long been seen as sort of one of the last redoubts for White supremacists in the Pacific Northwest and inland Northwest. And so thinking about that, the differences and the contrast between those two sides of the park is something that has helped me expand how I think about the park, how I think about nature and wilderness, and what that means, and how people and place intersect. So, those are some of the things that have influenced how I come to this.

Kundai: My name is Kundai Chirindo. I am an associate professor at Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. I think of myself as an "accidental" environmental communication scholar because I'm an Africanist. I'm interested in the performance, contestation, and redefinition of Africanity in U.S. American popular culture. One of the nodes I've followed in recent years is this woman, Wangari Maathai, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. *What? An environmentalist won a peace prize?* Yes, she won the peace prize! How did that happen? So, I come to environmental communication scholarship largely through my interest in that very question.

In the Africana world, the concepts that we are interested in here–the outdoors, communication, and race–are not discrete concepts. From my perspective, once the environment is an isolated focus, I am prompted to ask: Whose environment? Whose outdoors? You can't answer those questions without going into questions of coloniality. Smith, an author included in this Research Topic, foregrounds the important role that controversies about ownership play in defining, claiming, and justifying the expropriation and exploitation of outdoor spaces in his analysis of the 2016 occupation of the Malheur Wildlife Natural Refuge in Southeastern Oregon by a group of ranchers. Noting that far from a being stable actant, the various meanings projected onto the land define it as a lively dynamic resource, one that "oscillates between economic resource, the foundation of personal rights, a symbol and site of governmental oppression, a mode of power, and the basis of a theory of constitutional interpretation" for the settler-ranchers, on one hand. On the other hand, that same land signifies an inheritance and legacy of "resilience to colonialism and a perseverance to survive" for the Burns Paiute Tribe. Thus, we can see that questions of ownership can be fundamental to public perceptions of outdoor spaces like parks and other designated "wildlife" areas.

Consider the idea of the national park, which we find not only here in the United States, but around the world and especially in sub-Saharan Africa. To whom do national parks belong? Who goes there? Who can't go there? Who is the "we" implied in "we go in there (i.e., to national parks)"? These are all questions that complicate my relationship to the outdoors, to the environment, and to thinking about it.

The good news for me is that these are all communication problems. These are all rhetorical problems. And so thinking about race, and the environment, and the outdoors works for me topically. But my thinking begins with a disavowal of the universality of "the environment" and of communication.

Because in the places where and among the people whom I do most of my work those are just not discreet concepts.

Jen S: I'm Jen Schneider. I'm a professor in Public Policy and Administration at Boise State, so I think I might be the only person who's not a communication scholar on the team. My degrees are in Cultural Studies, though, which obviously has some overlaps with approaches in communication.

I was thinking about this question, about what brought me to this project. I think I've always been interested in political power, and in particular how political power intersects with Whiteness. For example, my dissertation was about post-war American culture and politics, and the main backdrop of that work was the McCarthy hearings that took place before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. It was an enormously repressive time, and understanding those political machinations set the stage for examining a lot of film and literature of that era. But I didn't want to just look at the typical stuff that parroted the dominant ideologies of the day; I wanted to see what was happening in the art resisting dominant ideologies as well. The project was also motivated by the fact that a lot of people, especially White people, want to believe the 50s were some sort of golden era before all the "troubles" of the 60s and 70s started. But the social movements of the 60s had their roots in the 50s. We see that in the art. 1950s culture was really alive and contradictory and experimental, although White nostalgia seems to have erased a lot of our collective memories of and storytelling about that time. Really understanding Whiteness–including my own whiteness–and how it works was essential to completing that project.

Then my first tenure-track job ended up being at the Colorado School of Mines, which is an engineering school, and a school very focused on training future extractors of fossil fuels and minerals. For a variety of reasons, I got hired to teach environmental courses focusing on politics, policy and ethics. And I don't think I realized it at the time, but my interest in thinking about repressive political apparatuses and Whiteness transferred to thinking about climate change and opposition to climate policy, and then to the coal industry and the ways in which White male identity and grievance in particular gets wrapped up and imbricated with the politics of fossil fuels. And that's when I intersected with three of the people on this team–to write about that.

I'm no longer at the Colorado School of Mines, and we don't write a lot about coal anymore, but I find that I'm still really interested in power and Whiteness and the environment. And so, I think, especially, following the murder of George Floyd, which was now two summers ago, and frankly just calls for White allies and White folks to do something, it felt important to expand the conversations around race and identity in the environmental communication space. It was already happening in pockets, of course. We're not inventing anything here. But I wanted to see if we could work on a project collaboratively that might further and intervene in that intersection of race, communication, and the environment.

Carlos T: I'm Carlos Tarin. I'm an assistant professor at the University of Texas at El Paso. I've been interested in environmental communication since I was an undergraduate. I was interested in working on this Research Topic because it was a way of sort of connecting very disparate parts of my research and my personal identity that I feel, in a lot of ways, I've sort of trained out of myself. When I was in graduate school, I felt like issues of identity, difference, race, and ethnicity were always just the "special topic" at the end of the semester. It was always just a single essay or a single day of class devoted to a topic like environmental justice. And so, even though I had interest in Latina/o/x Communication Studies, I never got training formally in that area at the graduate level. I've had to fill in those knowledge gaps on my own. I feel very well-versed in environmental communication, organizational comm, and in rhetoric, but I was never really taught how race informs those approaches or how it can be instructive or constitutive of those approaches.

When I started in my faculty position at the University of Texas at El Paso, I think that gave me an opportunity to connect these divergent areas because I was now in a position where I did not really have to keep these parts of my personal and scholarly identity separate. There's no need to erase being a person that's interested in the environment, who also happens to be a queer, Latino, first generation college graduate. My interest and the work that I've really been doing the last couple of years has been to connect environmental communication, Latina/o/x communication, and broader discussions about nationality and coloniality.

These experiences brought me to this project with the belief that other people might be feeling those same absences. I know there are graduate students who are receiving instruction on environmental communication and are wondering about the erasure or omission of race in the literature—perhaps wondering if they fit in this field. My hope is that these essays will help to connect these topics in a way that begins to bridge those gaps.

Pete: I am Pete Bsumek, and I am a professor of rhetoric and communication studies at James Madison University. I come to this Research Topic not only as someone who has spent his entire academic career working in the field of environmental communication, but also as an environmental advocate and activist. I have been involved with public lands conservation and the wilderness preservation movement for nearly 30 years. So, my interest in participating in this Research Topic is motivated by my advocacy work as much as my academic commitments.

I also think I come at this much like Jen Peeples, as someone who has been more than capable of talking about environmental justice in the classroom and advocacy strategy sessions, but not fully tuned-in to the whiteness that grounds environmentalism and environmental communication. This began to change for

me about 7 or 8 years ago when my son-in-law, who is African American, began to visit. During those early visits I finally began to understand what people are talking about when they talk about embodiment.

When he and my step-daughter would visit we would take them hiking and picnicking and sight-seeing in the nearby national park or the national forest because we live in a small town and that's pretty much the most interesting thing to do where we live. It was on those family adventures that I began to see things differently and feel things differently. I remember about 25 years ago, I went hiking with a friend outside of St. Louis and as we were driving, I saw more Confederate flags than I had ever seen. Intellectually I was thinking, "Oh! This is why, mostly White people hike." So, I had been intellectually aware of my whiteness and White privilege for a long time, but I hadn't really made sense of it–understood its implications–until I felt like it might not be there anymore.

Carlos A: It's been over 20 years since I started taking my son along on hiking and canoeing trips to cultivate a love of nature and wilderness. And about 15 years since the three of us started camping in the back areas of Virginia, Pete. There were times when we trekked those areas that I communicated a vibe that said, "Tread carefully and keep your eyes open, son." Half the time, I suspect he knew I was saying, "there are some things out here that are more dangerous than snakes and bears, mijo."

What I liked about having you with us, Pete, is that you weren't constantly putting out that signal. I wanted my son to hear that silence. I wanted him to experience canoeing the Shenandoah or hiking a trail without feeling he has to have a background story that speaks to his rights or reasons for being there. That he has the same rights to access as any other person.

I feel that's the same with the journal space here. I'd like more people to feel like it's their space too, even if they've never published in an area of environmental science or environmental communication. So, I know I articulated my positioning on this editorial board rather simply at the outset, but it's motivated from this deep place of inclusion and relationships that we're all coming from.

Mariko: Carlos, your memories brought up a lot for me, because my entry to this always feels complicated as I think this is one of those topics that does move from the so innately personal, lived experiences to these macro theoretical fields that we study, and I'm hoping that these articles help us walk the boundary line between those. My understanding of race and environment came from my uncles, my aunts and my father. We'd all be backpacking and to be clear, I am the whitest person in my entire family, but there I am, backpacking up in the mountains with my dad's generation, and they're like, "Oh this so great!" And, "Race doesn't really exist up here. Not like LA, we're never going to get pulled over out here."

I think I grew up with their stories in my ears thinking, "Oh, cool! Totally. Race doesn't exist up in the mountains." After my entry to academic perspectives on race, I had a reckoning with the short-lived experience of how my family felt up there, but realizing my academic understanding of wilderness spaces as cultural, politicized, and utterly steeped in inequity contradicted their lived experience of wilderness spaces, and I'm not totally sure if it was fair to discount how they experienced it just because I had a bunch of books that say there are no apolitical spaces. I think one of the ways we can toe this line is with accounts of practical lived experiences that perhaps have been placed in academic framings. For example, I had the privilege of writing an article titled "From urban places to outdoor spaces" for this issue with my uncle, who has been running BIPOC-focused non-profits for decades. Thomas and Thomas puts forth five guidelines for working with BIPOC youth in an outdoor recreation setting, and these are based on experiences from the field with kids, analyzed and contextualized within the backdrop of he and our familial relationship and then also extant research in the area. Like Kimmerer and Lanham's work, we were hoping to cover the tension between the interpersonal and experiential part of environmental communication alongside historical context and theoretical renderings of the subject.

So, I guess I'm at a point of wanting to complicate this tension and asking, how can we empathize with these moments of joy that BIPOC folks have maybe experienced in connection with the more-than-human world? But also being able to own that story with these other narratives of things that were going on structurally that we know are not good or beneficial for BIPOC individuals and communities? I'm hoping that that's what this overall issue can kind of start to address a little bit.

Jen S: I was thinking, when Mariko was talking…Carlos Aleman, I don't know if you remember this, but I went to Yosemite a few years ago because a few of us on this call were thinking about not just how race functions within national parks or is constructed by parks, but also about arterials into parks, and the endangering of certain bodies, like Pete's son-in-law for example. You know, as you're driving through in order to get into Shenandoah, you're seeing all of these Confederate flags and as you're driving to get into Yosemite you're, you know, driving through Northern California and seeing a lot of threatening signs there. And I remembered you talked a little bit about traveling with your family and what kinds of negotiations you had to make and think about. And that started being the, the access point to transcendence. Right?

Carlos A: Funny you remember that. It can sometimes feel as if all the routes into Yosemite's gates pass along one enclave or another. Some people will go all the way around through Fresno just to avoid that scene while others have no clue. But I'll tell you this much, I'm pretty sure everyone in my family has a story about some form of racial discrimination at the park or en route that ended up punctuating their experience.

Steve: Talking about those kinds of experiences, one of the questions we talked about was how Lanham [in *The Home Place*] concludes the "Birding while Black" chapter, and it seems to me

that he's not one to shy away from talking about transcendence. Right? I mean, this whole notion of joy is really bound up with these sorts of transcendent moments. About the beauty in birds and the natural world that we can share and appreciate together.

And, you know, as I was reading about that and thinking about that, transcendence is–to me, or to a lot of folks who would consider themselves critical scholars– transcendence is really a form of mystification. It's a move that can erase relevant differences. And I'm very interested in how the rest of you think about that move that Lanham makes in relation to thinking about and trying to incorporate and infuse thinking about race and environmental communication. I mean, I find it provocative at this particular moment because the idea is very much bound up with the larger challenges of multicultural democracy. And it seems like we are so lacking in possibilities in our culture for identification and fellow-feeling and connection that are not fueled by division, or by othering or by demonization to strengthen identification among others.

So those are some of the thoughts that are kind of percolating with me a little bit, about what are those possibilities for transcendence and what's the plus/minus in terms of being able to articulate racial identities.

Jen S: Maybe this is connected to what you just asked Steve, but I'm grappling with the ways in which Lanham's book is very much for me about memory, and it's very evocative of place. It's hard to even talk about it without reinscribing some of these boundaries, but at times it feels as if place, and the relationship to the environment, to the wild things in it, is foregrounded in Lanham's book. At other times race is foregrounded. Now that is not a very intersectional approach to thinking about it right there, always both are present in this book. But it made me wonder if there's a way in which there's a celebration of joy, of memory, of experience, that Lanham allows himself, that feels kind of liberatory. And I wanted to interrogate my own expectation that he also be critical about race, class, intersectionality, whatever it is, at every moment. To not be over-determining what I'm expecting from this memoir. So, I don't know if that connects to the comments you're making about transcendence, but it feels right now as if books like this, like *The Home Place*, can never just be what they are. They also have like all of these ghosts of expectation and theorization attached to them. So, I was just trying to think through that as a White reader this morning when I was preparing for this conversation.

Carlos A: I hear that. Eddah Mutua made a point during a panel discussion at the 2022 Central States Communication Association that international faculty are often directed to publish on mainstream topics in order to secure tenure. It's an act of contortion.

You once pointed out, Pete, that Lanham's writing and viral videos seem to successfully bring the topic of race in outdoor spaces to White audiences. But I could feel when that was happening in his book; the places where Lanham is so obvious in writing to the whiteness of audiences that it must have been painful for him to twist that way.

Similarly, I feel when Kimmerer writes of having to switch their writing voice for the audience, it's what I assume is the imagined audience by most White critics; not simply an academic audience, but a White academic audience. So, yeah, books like this are haunted by ghosts of expectation.

Kundai: There's something evocative about how Steve talks about Lanham's declaration that we all have an appetite for joy and for being out there and birding is for everyone as transcendence. And Steve explains transcendence as denial. Erasure.

I think that I turned that question of transcendence, Steve, into a question as opposed to a declaration. The idea that we all have the environment. The idea that we all communicate; that communication is a human universal. Right? We declare…I mean, that's an axiom of our entire field. For me, it's a question.

And here's what I mean when I say it becomes a question: How can we turn environments, how can we turn climate, how can we turn the outdoors, how can we turn communication into universals? And how can we recognize the ways that the 8 billion relate to outdoor spaces?

And the answer I'm learning, and I haven't quite figured it out, is that transcendence does not mean sameness. I mean, for Burke and McGee and that whole school, transcendence is synthesis; transcendence is oneness. The philosopher Mbembe (2017) concludes *Critique of Black Reason* by noting that we only have one world and it's a world that is multiple and diverse, bursting with variety. That's the kind of transcendence I support, if it's true that we only have one world, if it's true that communication is a human universal. And that's sort of what I'm trying to think through in my own work: What does it mean to say that communication is universal, but it's also different among different people groups? In a similar way in this Research Topic, Senda-Cook's "*Physicality in Postcolonialism: Tension at the Asian Rural Institute*" foregrounds some of the ways in which negotiations of gender, race, and national identity coalesce to define and demarcate the outdoors.

Pete: I really liked that, Kundai. One of the things that has frustrated me about a lot of work in environmental communication, and environmental studies in general, is this idea that if we can just change our understanding of nature from a resource to some other (ecocentric) thing, like from an anthropocentric to a non-anthropocentric worldview, that this will somehow solve our problems.

I remember way back when I first started getting into this stuff, when there were no environmental rhetoric courses in my graduate program, I came across a book by Leiss (1972) called *The Domination of Nature*. One of the things that he pointed out way back then is that the ideology of the domination of nature is also an ideology of the domination of some people by other people. He argued that there are three main components to the

ideology: abstract and universal conceptions of nature; abstract and universal conceptions of society, and abstract and universal conceptions of the human subject. And once those universals are in place, it doesn't matter what they are—you have a tool for the domination of some people by others. This means that we are stuck with that question that Kundai started with: "For who?" Haymes (2018) makes a similar argument about Aldo Leopold's "land ethics" and "biotic community," showing how, like most western systems of environmental ethics, they are grounded in forms of universalized Whiteness.

And what I like about what you were just talking about when you suggest that transcendence doesn't have to be mystification is that you are raising the possibility that there are alternative forms of connection, or consubstantiality as Burke would say. For me this raises the question: What does that transcendence look like? How do you put the universal and the different together without reproducing domination?

These are exactly the kinds of questions that Taylor Johnson and Joshua Smith are addressing in their articles. Smith's analysis of the 2016 takeover and occupation of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge shows how right-wing extremist rhetoric is doubling down on ideologies of the domination of nature associated with settler colonial logics of privatization, racialization, and the erasure of Native peoples. While Johnson calls our attention to the ways that the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition navigated, negotiated, and offered alternatives to American publicity and counterpublicity in their advocacy for Bears Ears National Monument. What I think is especially important about the Inter-Tribal Coalition's advocacy and Johnson's rhetorical analysis of the controversy that ensued over the monument is that they point to the possibility of the kind of transcendence that Kundai is suggesting–recognition of our common humanity and acknowledgment and respect for our differences.

Pete: Well, you don't have to answer this Mariko, but you know when Steve was talking about transcendence, I thought of your personal stories. This idea that "up in the mountains race doesn't exist, but intellectually you know that it does." Even so, there was, it sounded like, the kind of thing Steve was describing, this transcendent sort of thing was happening. And maybe I'm off base on that, but could you talk a little bit more about that.

Mariko: Yeah, thanks Pete for this question, I was thinking as you guys were talking about how intersectional identities work in terms of environmental communication, and really trying to consider a web of intersecting identities where the environment is an influential part of each cog. For me, it kind of helps me think about how environment is everywhere already-always, all the time and indelibly wound into our cultural identities.

Our relationships of how we have learned or choose to engage with "the environment" can be a cultural identity and just like anything else, can be affected by greater structures while still having a really personal, intimate, and experienced component.

That's something that's been helping me kind of work through the micro to macro, interpersonal to intercultural, self to society conflict of environmental identity. I think one has their own associations, an idea of perhaps what one's race or gender is, what it means to them through the sensationally personal experience of being in one's own body, what it means to their family, and in context of the traditions they were raised on– and then there's also the dominant societal narrative that is about the identity. This is one of the key takeaways from Sowards and Banerjee's "*Ecotourism as Leisure in the Experience of the 'Great' Outdoors*." Sowards and Banerjee demonstrate how ecotourism is a form of racialization and coloniality, and a form of transcendence. I don't think it has to be one or the other, you know, I think ignoring the possibility of experiential transcendence isn't great because transcendence is joy, it's magic. It's an alleviation. But we have to consider it alongside the physical and material realities of being a body in a certain space or place in a certain cultural context and the privileges and oppressions that exist there.

Carlos T: Absolutely! I think it's important to remember that we can't disconnect our lived experiences—especially the material and physical realities—when we think about our relationships with the environment, or even how we go about doing environmental communication research. Not all people are able to experience nature in the same ways and we need to be attentive to that. One of the things that Spielhagen et al. argue in their essay in this Research Topic is that we need more intersectional analyses for how we study the environment, but also for how we think about practitioners and people doing work in the outdoors. As they explained, there are so few people of color working in outdoor recreation as it is—so when we place additional burdens on them to, for example, take the lead on diversity and inclusion work, it can be really exhausting. For practitioners, scholars, or just people in nature, I think we need to do a better job of thinking about the constitutive role race can play in how we engage with the natural world.

Kundai: In a way I feel like we're talking to that question, to what philosopher Tuana (2019) has called the forgetting of race in the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene is a human problem. It is a problem of species proportion as Chakrabarty (2009) has pointed out. Right? But the thing about species is that species are diverse, and the human species is not distinct in that regard. How do we retain the variety of human species even as we address ourselves and orient ourselves to what communication scholars have long called the crisis? And that's a communication problem to me. The Anthropocene names a species problem. How do we recover the other end of species thinking, which is speciation?

That's what we've got to contend with even as we think about the Anthropocene. I'm one of the people who's written in our field about precarity, and the generalization of precarity to all of us. And the more I think about it, the less persuaded I am that

I want to keep talking about precarity and the generalization of precarity to people who haven't been precarious before, because that does not seem very promising to me.

Pete: If that's not where it's at, and maybe you don't know where it's at yet, but where's your compass pointing?

Kundai: I think about three things a lot. They are commitments of mine and my research, teaching, and writing. I haven't been able to express these in my writing yet but here they are: First, historicize. You know, we started off talking about transcendence. Even in that moment, every moment of transcendence has its own locality. Has its own specificity, its own conditions of possibility. We should name the enabling conditions for truths we hold. This is why I ask whose environment, whose national park, where did these ideas come from? And some of the pieces that are in this special issue get to those big questions. One of the lessons I take from Graham's "*Resisting 'the World of the Powerful': 'Wild' Steam and the Creation of Yellowstone National Park*" is about the importance of historicizing our ideas of what we think has always been.

The second thing is, pathologize. I think about finding the limits of each moment of relief.

I try to commit myself to finding what's absurd about the ideas I fall in love with.

First historicize and then pathologize. Find what is bizarre about everything. The goal of these first two moves is to humanize, to write more of the 8 billion humans with whom we share this planet into the things that we value most: the environment, outdoor space, and communication. It was weird for me, I mean I've spent half my life in sub-Saharan Africa, to be told that rhetoric is the lifeblood of democracy, and that where there is no democracy, there's no rhetoric. This is untenable to me, people. This is ludicrous. And the problem wasn't that my people don't communicate or aren't rhetorical. No, the problem is *here*. It's the idea of rhetoric that we're sustaining. You know, it's taken me a long time to even say that out loud. But that's it; we've got to humanize.

If we see a concept, something we love, that's lacking in humanity, let's humanize it. Let's figure out why there aren't more women and more differently-abled people in there. Let's figure it out.

So, that's where my compass is pointing right now and I don't have all the methods. These are more sort of principles that I'm trying to orient my thinking around. But that's where I'm at Pete.

Pete: Thank you.

Mariko: I love what you say about how we need to humanize and have more diversity of perspectives in these times of precarity. I think working out some of our human issues right now, like our handling of race, is a great steppingstone to understanding oppressions and lack of voice in general, which will hopefully, extend to us starting to understand more parts of the world that aren't human, which are entirely part of climate disruption.

Kundai: Yup!

Mariko: And I'm hoping that, yes, we have to practice on logics with people who speak, you know, in verbal languages because that's all we have the capacity to understand right now. But hopefully building the structures of understanding and acceptance of diverse voices would expand beyond our species at some point.

Kundai: Absolutely.

Jen P: I love that Kundai keeps saying "whose environment, whose environment?" And I would add, we also have to be much more complex in thinking about what we mean by the environment and what we mean by nature. When we start to police what is and isn't "the environment" and what is and isn't "nature," it leads directly to policing what people and activities that are allowed in those spaces.

At the beginning of the project, even just figuring out what we meant by the "great outdoors," and "great" and "outdoors" took hours of discussions. Where are the demarcations between "the outdoors" and other spaces? What do those distinctions mean? Why are they there and are they of use? And in what ways are they exclusionary? These are the questions that I think are important too. If we are going to continue to use these terms, it's important to actively and consciously note their symbolic limits and their physical barriers.

Carlos T: I think this is something my colleagues, Sarah and Leandra, and I were really struggling with in our essay in this Research Topic that focused on outdoor sport and recreation companies responding to the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020 (Tarin et al.). One of the things we kept coming back to when analyzing the social media solidarity statements is that most of them were vague, which I think is because they were trying to be palatable to White audiences. When you have protests about White supremacy and police brutality, you would imagine that a statement would call those ideas out explicitly—but we didn't find much evidence for that. I think that's because the way we—as academics, as a public—have typically talked about the environment, we talk about it in frames of Whiteness. So, if the big outdoor companies are appealing to White audiences even at a moment when they should be building bridges to communities of color, what does that do for creating a sense of belongingness?

Carlos A: I love how that exchange just worked out a parallel between the environment and the journal. These two landscapes. The assumed "we" that Jen Peeples' recognizes tells us that our conversation is about who gets to play in both spaces.

Jen S: And [Carlos] Alemán, do you remember? When we were working on the call for manuscripts, the four White co-authors had brought a draft to the larger group. And I think your comment, your feedback literally, Carlos Alemán, was like, "This reads like White people wrote it," or "This reads like you're writing it for White people." And I had no idea what you were talking about. And I feel the same, when you said Drew Lanham is writing some of these chapters

for White people, and I was like, "I didn't even think about that."

I feel like that is the sort of, just to go back to these comments about universalizing, the universalization of Whiteness or the presumption of that being the sort of norm or whatever. The ways in which I've internalized that; the way I see the world that way. It sort of operates at this microcosm level of even *this* small project, of putting this Research Topic together. Ways in which, even though we're trying not to recreate some of that unevenness, the conditions of supremacy, there is like this extra work that you as people of color, as co-authors have to do to point out, like, "You've missed this. You're not seeing this. This is absent."

And part of that is just collaboration, but it's just interesting to see that recreated here, even in our group.

Carlos T: I think that sort of self-reflexivity is something that more scholars really need though, especially if they are writing about issues of race and representation. We all have limits to our knowledge and are sometimes oblivious to the kind of erasures or absences that are happening in our work. I think that's why building coalitions in our work, in our communities, in our advocacy, etc. is really important. One of the things I loved about de Onís' essay in this Research Topic is that she's attentive to the ways that coalition building is vital when you're doing the nitty gritty work of environmental organizing and advocacy. She shows how we can connect our work to different audiences—even children!—but we have to be willing to forge those connections. That's something I wish a lot more environmental communication scholarship, or really just communication scholarship, did more frequently.

Pete: When Kundai introduced the problem of forgetting race in the Anthropocene, I thought of Donna Haraway and *Staying With the Trouble.* For a long time, we've thought of the environment as problems that can be solved (Haraway, 2016). And we've reached a point–especially now but if we look back, we can see that it was sort of always this way with toxic things and nuclear waste, and now climate change–where there's just no "solving" the problem. There's only sort of working with the problem, managing things, and so on. Other scholars too have grappled with the central concepts of uncertainty, unfolding, and generally tangling with the lack of clear solutions to complex and wicked problems. For example, adrienne maree brown's *Emergent Strategy* also speaks to this: suggesting ever-emerging fluid solutions for complex social problems (Brown, 2017).

And it seems to me that in a lot of ways these questions of race and intersectionality are really a similar kind of situation. Like Kundai said we have to historicize and we have to pathologize and interrogate the ideas we fall in love with and we have to humanize. We also have to pay attention to who is absent: whose story is missing, who is not in the journal, and who is not part of the coalition. And, it seems to me, we have to continually do that.

Anyway, that's what I was thinking. And it made me think of the essay by Tarin et al. and the statements that come out after the murder of George Floyd and the Christian Cooper incident. And here are all these outdoor recreation companies making statements and at least to some degree recognizing that they are entangled with the problem.

But in a way if you don't stay with that…Right? It's not a problem that can simply be solved with a statement. And these are all the things our universities and our discipline are dealing with right now. There's not one policy or practice that fixes this and there's not one statement that makes it "all good." And we just have no choice but to stay with the trouble. And I guess, like the man said, you know, make good trouble out of it and about it.

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Indigenous Publicity in American Public Lands Controversies: Environmental Participation in the Fight for Bears Ears National Monument

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Environmental decision-making scholars have attended closely to the role of publics and counterpublics in environmental controversies. However, this body of work has undertheorized the ways that Indigeneity may complicate access to or desirability of American publicity as a driving force in environmental advocacy. Inclusion within the American national body both functions as an advocacy tool for Native people and as a colonial discourse that may undermine sovereignty goals. Through a critical rhetorical analysis of documents at the center of the controversy over Bears Ears National Monument, this essay explicates the deployment of American publicity both to support and to undermine Native advocacy for the Monument. Scholars of rhetoric and environmental decision-making must re-orient toward publicity in a way that accounts for settler colonialism and decolonization.

Keywords: publics and counterpublics, rhetoric, environmental decision making, Native American and Indigenous Studies, public land, bears ears national monument

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INTRODUCTION

In 2015, a group of five Native[1] governments (the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe, the Ute Indian Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and the Zuni Tribe) published a proposal for the creation of Bears Ears National Monument. The proposal defined a territory of 1.9 million acres and argued that this portion of Southern Utah holds historical, natural, and cultural value to both Native people and non-Native Americans. In 2016, then-U.S. President Barack Obama responded to the Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition's (BEITC) proposal, designating 1.35 million acres as a national monument. While the response offered hope that the lands would be protected, it also brought complications. Although the BEITC had called for Tribes to manage the monument in partnership with the United States federal government, Obama's proclamation granted only an advisory role to the Tribes

[1]Throughout this essay, I use the terms Native, Native American, and Indigenous largely interchangeably. As Bruyneel notes, the choice of terms is fraught with tension. When choosing terms, I generally echo the language used by the authors and organizations I cite. Similarly, I use the terms Tribe and Tribal to echo the language of the BEITC and also to recognize that some members of the BEITC (i.e., the Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe) share a broader community that has been fractured as a result of colonialism. I recognize that this terminology is contested, and in places where I am not referring to the five member Tribes of the BEITC or specific legal bodies that use the term Tribe, I use the term nation (Bruyneel, 2007).

(Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015; U.S. President, 2016). Additionally, the proposal's explicit focus on ongoing cultural practices important to Native communities with ties to the region was stripped from the proclamation, minimizing the focus on Indigenous rights that had animated the proposal.

The tension over Native rights at Bears Ears escalated with the 2016 election of Donald Trump to the office of the President of the United States. In December 2017, Trump released a proclamation reducing the size of the monument to roughly 200,000 acres – roughly an 85% reduction in size from the Obama designation (U.S. President, 2017). Echohawk (2017) (Pawnee), director of the Native American Rights Fund, denounced Trump's proclamation as "an illegal attack on tribal sovereignty." Echohawk argued that the Trump administration had failed to meet its obligation to consult with Native nations as part of the decision-making process required by law or to engage in government-to-government relations with Tribes invested in the Monument. The Trump administration touted the reduction in size as a victory for public interests, with Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke stating that "public lands are for public use and not for special interests" (Davidson and Burr, 2017). This statement drew criticism from both Native people and non-Native environmentalists, who challenged Zinke's framing of people "that have lived and used these lands since time immemorial" and protection of sacred landscapes as a special interest (Branch and Cordalis, 2018). The framing of Indigenous sovereignty as a special interest, they argued, was couched in logics that center non-Native desires over the needs of Native people.

Zinke's statement was indicative of the Trump administration's general disregard for Native peoples in regards to the Bears Ears designation and demonstrated an unwillingness to de-center settler concerns and unfettered extractive industry growth in land use decisions.[2] Indeed, by framing the concerns of Native people as separate from "public use," Zinke emphasized a monolithic understanding of the American public that marginalizes or ignores Native people while simultaneously uplifting the interests of extractive industries as a desirable core of public use (Lipton and Friedman, 2018).

While the Trump administration's approach toward public lands designations and Native peoples was particularly callous, the problem extends beyond Trump's designations to implicate the entire system of environmental decision-making in the United States. The fight to protect Bears Ears points toward fundamental challenges to the logics that govern environmental decision-making and public lands usage in the United States. As Keeler (2017) (Diné (Navajo)/Dakota) argues, Bears Ears represents a struggle over the foundational values that steer decisions. Who and what is valued – and therefore which voices are heard, understood, and heeded – is a question of vital importance for anyone invested in struggle over land, environmental policy, and Indigenous rights. As Smith (2020) has noted, the shifting boundaries of Bears Ears reflect fluid but always-present neoliberal priorities of the US government during the Obama and Trump eras, particularly commitments to extractive industries.

Through a rhetorical analysis of the BEITC's proposal and the presidential proclamations establishing and shrinking the monument, this essay argues that Native people are often positioned as simultaneously within and outside of the American public sphere by government officials, agencies, and policies central to environmental decision-making processes. As such, Native voices are often silenced in the context of public participation in environmental decision-making. The BEITC's proposal for Bears Ears National Monument highlights the ways that Native people navigate this territory by strategically deploying publicity – which I define as a group's position in relation to dominant publics and marginalized counterpublics or maneuvering around these designations – to gain access to deliberative processes. This pursuit of access, however, is distinct from inclusion in the American body politic – which is tied up with "settler futurities" (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013). This project draws from definitions of settler colonialism as an ongoing process or structure of invasion in which non-Native settlers arrive with the goal of replacing Native peoples (Wolfe, 2006). In this definition, elimination of Native peoples – through genocide, erasure, and assimilation – is a necessity of settler colonialism, because for settler colonialism's project to become complete, settlers must replace Native people and assume their own claims to belonging in the territories that they have colonized. Thus, settler futurities are necessarily premised on the foreclosure of Native futurities. The BEITC's approach, then, resists colonization by centering Indigenous sovereignty/separateness from the colonial state and offering models for decision-making processes where all of the sovereign nations with ties to Bears Ears are participants.

This maneuvering points toward a need for rhetorical scholars to re-orient toward the public sphere in a way that accounts for decolonization. Rather than pursuing a more inclusive standard of publicity (i.e., who counts as public and/or counterpublic), scholars must ask whether inclusion within the public sphere as it stands is even desirable in the first place. As I argue later in this essay, public sphere scholarship's focus on the ways that marginalized counterpublics participate in the production of political discourse, while valuable, has not sufficiently questioned the incommensurability of decolonization and inclusion within a settler public. Tuck and Yang (2012, 13) conceptualize decolonization as "Native futures without a settler state." In other words, decolonization requires the dismantling of settler institutions and the de-centering of settler interests in favor of restoring land and decision-making authority to Native nations. Thus, the pursuit of decolonization and the pursuit of inclusion within a public sphere that centers the improvement and continuance of a settler state run counter to one another. Thus, decolonization necessitates centering the agency of Indigenous nations not as a subset of the United States, but rather as sovereign entities. As environmental activist and executive director of Honor the

[2]Throughout this essay, I align my definition of the term "settler" with the thinking of scholars like Tuck and Yang (2012), 5, who write that "settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain." In other words, settlers are non-Native people whose occupation of colonized lands is tied up with the elimination of Native peoples and societies (Wolfe, 2006).

Earth Winona LaDuke (2008) (Ojibwe) has stated, "we don't want a bigger piece of the pie. We want a different pie."

PUBLIC LANDS, SETTLER COLONIALISM, AND "THE AMERICAN PUBLIC"

I am a non-Native woman living and working at the time of writing in Salt Lake City, Utah in Ute, Paiute, Goshute, and Eastern Shoshone territory. My relationship to the state of Utah and my identity as a white woman have both been shaped by discourses surrounding public lands – particularly national parks and monuments. As a child growing up in the Missouri Ozarks on Oceti Sakowin, Osage, and Kickapoo land, I spent many weekends exploring national parks and forests, listening to interpreters in visitors' centers, and reading countless plaques and pamphlets provided by the National Park Service. For my working-class family, short road trips to nearby public lands provided the opportunity for vacation, education, and identity-formation as Americans all in one. The messages provided by the interpreters and reading materials often spoke of the pioneering American spirit, told celebratory stories of the white settlers who "civilized" or "discovered" these lands, and described the spaces as American treasures. Rarely, if ever, did they acknowledge or unpack the violent histories of colonization that underpinned the stories they told or incorporate Indigenous voices into their narratives.

Later, as a visitor to and prospective resident of Utah, I was showered with images of public lands. Tourists and residents alike are drawn to Utah by the natural wonders and outdoor activities the state offers. The outdoor recreation industry contributes more than $12.3 billion annually to the Utah economy and is intimately linked to the way residents describe the state (Office of Outdoor Recreation). As Raka Shome has argued, it is essential that Western and settler scholars engage in self-reflexivity aimed at critically interrogating how our own embeddedness in colonial systems informs our research (Shome, 1996). My experiences with accessing and engaging with public lands lead me to an interest in how public lands in the United States are implicated in settler colonialism. I am invested in deconstructing the narratives that have defined my relationships to public lands and in unpacking how these narratives produce a monolithic understanding of the American public that results in unjust decision-making processes that undermine Native self-determination and agency in colonized spaces.[3]

Bears Ears presents an opportunity to consider the complicated relationships that Native Americans have to the American public, and to question how Native people strategically navigate decision-making processes in ways that affirm sovereignty and challenge colonialism. While both presidential proclamations discussed in this essay frame their decisions regarding the monument in terms of public goods, their interpretations of public goods differ radically. While the Obama proclamation devotes significant attention to the historical and cultural significance of Bears Ears for Native peoples, the text still places public good for a non-Indigenous American public at the center of the reasoning. The Trump proclamation, on the other hand, makes no mention of the significance of the site for Indigenous people, instead focusing on the scientific and natural resources at Bears Ears. In both cases, settler colonialism underpins the logics at play, serving to elevate the desires of settlers over Native people. Debates about Bears Ears, then, highlight to the colonial nature of American publicity.

As Wolfe, (2006) argues, settler colonialism is premised on the elimination of Native peoples and nations in order to make way for replacement by settler institutions. This process is both material and discursive – it involves both the literal theft, occupation, genocide, and destruction of Indigenous territories and rhetorics that devalue Indigenous people and normalize settler occupation and replacement.[4] Thus, Native people's continued presence, their refusal to engage in the structures of settler colonial society (for example, through refusing citizenship from settler governments), and their continued participation in traditional practices all function as forms of resistance to settler colonialism and highlight the failure of the settler colonial project to reach completion (Bruyneel, 2007; Vizenor, 2008; Simpson, 2014; Barker, 2017).

Indigeneity, in this framework, is best understood as an analytic. As Na'puti (2019, 497) (Chamoru) notes, Indigeneity as analytic centers questions of ancestry/kinship as distinct from "the logics of blood quantum, race, ethnicity, or nationality." Approaching Indigeneity as an analytic allows scholars to recognize the ways that processes of racialization and colonialism are intertwined and appreciate the importance of Indigeneity as identity, while also acknowledging the unique territorial claims of Indigenous people that are obfuscated by centering frames like race or nationality. Indeed, several scholars have highlighted the importance of not conflating race or nationality with Indigeneity, but instead understanding race and settler colonialism as mutually supportive and overlapping systems (Wolfe, 2001; Stephenson, 2002; Morgensen, 2011). Although Indigenous communities in the United States certainly face racialized violence, they also face unique violences related to dispossession and erasure of their continued existence and territorial claims that cannot be boiled down simply to race.

[3]Throughout this essay I oscillate between the use of the terms "public" and "publics" to describe the multiplicity of people and discourses that make up the American public sphere. While I recognize the multiplicity of overlapping and networked publics and counterpublics that cannot be condensed into a singular American public, the documents produced by the US federal government that govern public lands and public participation in environmental decision-making repeatedly use terms such as "the public," "public good," "public interests," etc. These terms, along with implications within the documents that public lands benefit all members of the public equally, suggest that decision-making processes are de3signed *via* the rhetorical production of a singular and monolithic American public. For examples, see: (National Environmental Policy Act, 1969; National Historic Preservation Act, 1966; U.S. President, 2016; U.S. President, 2017).

[4]Even metaphors like the title of this journal – *Frontiers* – may reproduce settler logics. There has been substantial scholarship on the rhetorical facets of colonialism. For example: (Sanchez et al., 1999; Wolfe, 2001; Wolfe, 2006; Endres, 2009).

In the context of environmental policy, approaching Indigeneity as analytic requires thinking through not only the national affiliations of Indigenous people, but also through the ways that publics are rhetorically constructed by the colonial state to privilege settlers' territorial claims over those of Native people. I turn toward theories of the public sphere, then, to understand the rhetorical production of belonging and inclusion that governs access to participatory processes that define communities via more expansive criteria than citizenship. While citizens are often centered in public participatory processes, the regulatory frameworks that govern these processes do not define "the public" merely as a function of citizenship (in fact, these regulatory frameworks provide very little, if any, definition of "the public" at all) (National Environmental Policy Act, 1969). Access to participation, then, is not necessarily premised solely on legal inclusion in the colonial state, but rather on membership in broader discourse communities with assumed shared values and goals. This essay explores the tensions of deliberative processes that are revealed by the question; who is the public in "public land," "Public participation," and "public good"? The BEITC's work suggests that these terms cannot be taken for granted in a settler colonial context.

Thus, the remainder of this essay is organized in three sections. First, I develop a framework for understanding the relationship between Native sovereignty and the public sphere. Second, I analyze the BEITC's proposal, the Obama proclamation, and the Trump proclamation to tease out the varied and juxtaposed portrayals of Native people's relationships to the United States with a particular focus on how publics and counterpublics are constructed in these documents. I highlight the varied ways that Indigenous people are positioned in relation to the American public in these documents in order to suggest that federal government processes for designating and managing public lands are ill-suited for recognizing Native people's territorial claims or facilitating Native governance over public lands. Finally, I argue that the BEITC's proposal navigates the constraints of settler colonial decision-making processes by strategically deploying the often-contradictory rhetorics through which settlers position Native people in relation to the American public as a tool for framing Bears Ears National Monument as a public good. Although this rhetorical maneuvering is a useful approach for Native people working to protect land in the context of decision-making processes controlled by the colonial government, it also exposes the tensions of representative democracy, citizenship, and publicity in the context of environmental decision-making and points toward a need to reject settler-defined notions of "the public" as an organizing force for access to participatory processes. Native relationships to territory are rendered illegible in extant settler logics of public participation in public lands designation and management, as can be particularly seen in the Presidential responses to the monument plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, CITIZENSHIP, NATIONHOOD, AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The official federal processes for public participation central to environmental decision-making are built on the foundational assumption that there is a singular and achievable "public good" that benefits a monolithic "American public." This assumption is reflected in secretary Zinke's statement that "public lands are for public use and not for special interests," and codified in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (National Historic Preservation Act, 1966; National Environmental Policy Act, 1969; Davidson and Burr, 2017). For example, NEPA, which is the regulatory foundation of much of the participatory process in environmental decision-making, frames public participation as a tool to "assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings" (National Environmental Policy Act, 1969). Similarly, the NHPA, which mandates the preservation of lands and structures considered historically or culturally valuable, asserts the importance of historical preservation by stating, "the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people," and, "the preservation of this irreplaceable heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans" (National Historic Preservation Act, 1966). Federal rhetoric thus constructs "the American public" as central to environmental and historical preservation, while simultaneously constructing a singular and monolithic "public interest" that assumes a universalist understanding of the public.

The metrics that determine inclusion in this monolithic public are not explicitly laid out in these documents, but rather function enthymematically to point vaguely toward members of communities with ties to American identity who are affected by issues of environmental and historical preservation. These vague yet universalist references toward "the public," are crucial for understanding who has meaningful access to decision-making spaces. While much of the extant literature on public participation in environmental decision-making utilizes the vocabulary of citizenship to discuss participant communities, the regulatory frameworks that govern the processes do not include explicit references to citizenship as a determinant of membership in "the public" (for example: Kinsella, 2004; Council on Environmental Quality, 2007; Phillips et al., 2012; Sprain and Reinig, 2018). Access to participation, then, is not necessarily premised on legal inclusion in the colonial state *via* citizenship but rather on stakeholder status. Nevertheless, the question of citizenship has been crucial in shaping the relationships of Native nations to the US federal government and cannot be ignored when considering Native participation in federal decision-making processes. Thus, I turn both toward theories of citizenship/sovereignty and theories of publics/counterpublics to tease out the relationship between publicity and access to deliberative processes.

Numerous scholars, both within the field of rhetoric and in other fields, have studied the role of citizenship in shaping relationships between Native people and the US government. These scholars highlight the ways that citizenship rhetorics alternately include or exclude Native Americans in federal conceptions of the "American public," serving the needs of the

US government to both constrain Indigenous people's self-governance and deny access to funding and resources from the federal government (Wolfley, 1991; Witkin, 1995; Deloria, 1988; Black, 2008; Simpson, 2014). These scholars have highlighted the ways that the US government has alternately imposed or denied citizenship to Native peoples to further the colonial project. Others have noted the importance of treaties for shaping relationships between the US and Indigenous nations, arguing that treaties and treaty violation have similarly functioned to construct Native people as alternately within or outside of the U.S. body politic depending on the strategic goals of the U.S. government at any given time (Deloria and Wilkins, 1999). At the same time, scholars note that Native people have navigated these constraints, strategically engaging with colonial rhetorics of citizenship and inclusion in order to access decision-making power, practice inherent sovereignty, and/or demand benefits from the government that enable continued Native survival in the face of colonial constraints (Black, 2008; Endres, 2009; Simpson, 2014).

Theories of the public sphere provide powerful analytic tools for understanding the communicative processes through which private individuals come together to produce discourse that coalesces to inform the political sphere. Originating with Habermas (1989), public sphere scholarship works to theorize the ways private individuals engage one another in rational discourse as a way of bearing on decisions made by the state (Habermas, 1989). Members of the public, Habermas argues, must participate in public discourse in order to prevent state tyranny. A number of scholars, however, have argued that Habermas's conception of the public sphere excludes marginalized voices (Fraser, 1990; Benhabib, 1996; Young, 1996; Asen, 2000). These scholars argue that Habermas's conception of the public sphere assumes that all participants have equal footing in the discussion and brackets power imbalances. They criticize this assumption that having access to the public sphere is sufficient to overcome the factors that exclude marginalized groups from decision-making spaces. For example, Fraser (1990) argues that the form of the public sphere fails to account for the inequitable distribution of vocal space between groups. While previous scholars conceptualize the public sphere as a neutral space, Fraser challenges this understanding. She draws from Spivak's (1988) work on the subaltern in order to argue that marginalized individuals may continue to be underrepresented in the public sphere because white men are more likely to speak more frequently. She suggests that marginalized groups form "subaltern counterpublics" through which they can make their voices heard in the face of discursive exclusion.

Fraser's work has animated a thriving body of literature that discusses counterpublic resistance to dominant discourses. Robert Asen (2000), for example, suggests that counterpublics are emergent collectives that center around exclusions in dominant discourses. Counterpublics, he argues, cannot be reduced merely to a group of people who share an identity category, live in a particular locale, or have interests in a specific topic, but rather represent discourse communities. Furthermore, numerous scholars have noted that the public sphere is characterized by multiplicity, agonistic engagement, and interconnected networks of relationships (Fraser, 1990; Benhabib, 1996; Asen, 2000). These scholars argue both that a singular monolithic public is impossible to achieve and that the presence of a plurality of interconnected publics signifies a move toward representative democracy in which a multiplicity of voices are represented (Fraser, 1990; Benhabib, 1996; Hauser and Benson, 1999; Asen, 2000).

In this framework, counterpublics are made up of individuals who coalesce around a discursive exclusion and work together to challenge that exclusion from the public sphere. Thus, discursive engagement is the primary defining factor for a counterpublic. This is not to suggest, however, that the public sphere is made up of a binary of a singular dominant public and marginalized counterpublics. Indeed, a number of scholars have highlighted the overlapping nature of publics and counterpublics, and have argued that we should instead understand the public sphere as being made up of a network of relationships connected *via* discourse (Asen, 2000; Pezzullo, 2003). Additionally, scholars have highlighted the ways that these networks have become increasingly interconnected in the digital era (Friedland et al., 2006; Pfister, 2014). Pezzullo (2003) complicates this conversation, arguing that scholars have assumed a false dichotomy between publics and counterpublics. She proposes that some rhetorics may be both part of a dominant public discourse, and part of a counterpublic discourse. For example, she studies resistance to National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM) and argues that the campaign functioned as a counterpublic discourse that forwarded women's health and worked to raise awareness about an important disease, while simultaneously reinforcing dominant discourses that obscured the role the companies sponsoring NBCAM played in producing harmful chemicals that contributed to breast cancer. This complicity was challenged by a second counterpublic that sought to highlight the neoliberal element of NBCAM.

This essay builds on Pezzullo's work by considering the ways Indigenous people have been positioned in relation to the American public. Bears Ears offers an opportunity to understand the strategic implications of being positioned as part of a public or counterpublic in particular circumstances. For Indigenous people who have often been alternatively included in or excluded from the American public at the whim of the U.S. government, strategically framing themselves as part of the American public or as outside of that public may serve as a site of resistance to colonial control, or as a way to gain access to decision-making spaces. Furthermore, this case study illuminates the ways in which decolonization calls not for an expansion of the American public to be more inclusive of Native people, but rather a dismantling of the very frameworks of publicity that naturalize settler dominance in decision-making processes.

The relationship between settler colonialism and the public sphere raises distinct issues of exclusion, inclusion, and the potential for collaboration. The incommensurability of decolonization with settler futurities poses a challenge for theories of counterpublic activism that center inclusion as the corrective to marginalization (Tuck and Yang, 2012). Much public sphere scholarship still centers inclusion as the primary

goal of counterpublics, even as it recognizes that counterpublics may sometimes articulate themselves as explicitly separate from wider publics. Asen (2000, 441), for example, locates the "counter" of counterpublics in the identification of exclusion and the "resolve . . . to overcome exclusion." Similarly, Stephenson (2002) theorizes Indigenous counterpublics as discourse communities characterized both by opposition to systematic domination and by the centrality of land claims and struggle for self-determination. She argues that "Indigenous movements for self-determination and autonomy are directly contesting the policies and practices of neoliberal reform and resisting a 'single relationship between the state and its citizens," but she does not challenge the notion that inclusion in the national body politic (either through citizenship or some other metric) is central to publicity itself as extant literature conceptualizes it.

My argument more closely aligns with work on consummatory rhetoric and inherent sovereignty, which asserts that Indigenous rhetorics need not always pursue inclusion or the granting of rights from colonial institutions, but instead may often function to enact or affirm the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples. For example, Lake's (1983) important work on the American Indian Movement argues that the movement's use of prayer and ceremony served a consummatory function of Indigenous world-making through traditional practices. Similarly, many scholars have theorized *inherent sovereignty*, arguing that sovereignty is not merely a legal status granted or recognized by the colonial state, but rather a practice or right inherently held by Indigenous nations (Fairbanks, 1995; Hannum, 1998; Coffey and Tsosie, 2001; Cobb, 2005; EagleWoman, 2012). From this perspective, a focus on sovereignty does not center recognition from the colonial state, but instead emphasizes Native practices of self-determination in defiance of colonial oppression. As I argue later in this essay, the BEITC's proposal makes visible these functions of Indigenous rhetoric by refusing to pursue mere inclusion within dominant conceptions of the American public. Instead, the BEITC deploys the histories of inclusion and exclusion experienced by members of the five Tribes in order to challenge the very framework of publicity that governs environmental decision-making practices in the United States and demand a participatory process grounded in Indigenous practices of sovereignty and shared decision-making authority.

Access to deliberative spaces and decision-making authority has historically been predicated on inclusion within a public sphere invested in the re-production of settler futurities. Exclusion has thus been used as a way to deny access to decision-making spaces and inclusion has been the most viable in-road for achieving access. This, however, undermines Native nations' sovereignty, predicating Native participation in decision-making processes on acceptance of these settler foundations for publicity. It may be more useful to understand environmental decision-making processes as spaces where individuals and nations engage in a relational practice of sovereignty in which decision-making authority is shared between distinct nations without the assumption of shared belonging in an American public or commitments to "public good." From this perspective, the question of inclusion or exclusion becomes secondary to the question of access. Rather than seeking inclusion within the settler state or the American public, the BEITC seeks access to decision-making spaces that have for too long been open only to those invested in settler futurities. Thus, I argue that the BEITC's proposal offers a model for collaboration between Native nations and the US government in which access to and participation in decision-making spaces is severed from assumptions about inclusion within an American public that centers settler futurities.

The BEITC's proposal centers a Collaborative Management Plan that diverges significantly from extant processes for consultation or collaboration between the US and Native governments, which have typically been primarily bilateral affairs. The problem of developing meaningful collaboration and consultation processes has been particularly troublesome in the context of environmental decision-making, not only in regards to federal consultation with Tribal governments, but also in terms of agencies engaging in public participatory processes more broadly (Cox, 1999; Senecah, 2004; Walker et al., 2015; Youdelis, 2016). Numerous scholars have highlighted agency practices that minimize public engagement in favor of brief and unilateral processes. For example, Hendry (2004) identifies a process she calls "Decide, Announce, Defend" in which federal agencies treat public input periods not as opportunities to listen and adapt to public concerns, but rather as platforms to advocate for decisions that have already been made to the public. Additionally, this lack of concern for public input is often exacerbated when the communities primarily affected by a decision are low-income communities and/or communities of color (Cox, 1999; Senecah, 2004; Bell, 2013; Evans, 2020). For Native communities, these issues intersect with settler colonial erasure of Indigenous knowledge and resistance to sovereignty to create even greater injustices (Ishiyama, 2003; Endres, 2009; Endres, 2012; Endres, 2013; Hoover, 2017; Estes, 2019; Johnson, 2019). Thus, the stakes of decision-making process design are particularly high for Native communities, for whom decisions affect not only community health and resources, but also the ability to practice self-governance without interference. As Bonney Hartley (Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican) writes, "the tensions [in consultation processes] are rooted in the inherent contradiction between two sovereignties, one based on preservation of indigenous culture and history, the other aimed at settler pride and state-building. The success of the latter seems to necessitate the containment or even erasure of the former" (Witt and Hartley, 2020). When combined with the construction of a monolithic public through policies like NEPA and the NHPA discussed earlier in this essay, public participation processes may undermine Native nations by treating their concerns as either less important than those of "the American public," or as merely a minor subset of broader public input, rather than as the legitimate input of sovereign nations.

The BEITC's proposal, by contrast, calls for the creation of a commission that includes representatives from each of the five Tribes alongside representatives from the three federal agencies responsible for managing national monuments (the Parks Service, the Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land

Management) (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015). This commission would have decision-making authority over the monument, thus centering Native voices without flattening Native experience by privileging one Tribe over another (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015). This model is rooted in Indigenous perspectives and committed to reciprocal and responsible relationships between multiple sovereign nations with both overlapping and diverging investments (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015; Simpson, 2015; Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2016). The BEITC's approach rejects the assumed authority of the federal government to make decisions with only cursory input from Native communities, and instead insists on cooperation between Native nations and the federal government at every step of the process. In this way, the Collaborative Management Plan rejects inclusion in the American public as an organizing force for decision-making, instead insisting on a relational decision-making model rooted in shared commitments to place rather than shared political identity.

As an interdisciplinary field that is deeply invested in the discourses that circulate through the public sphere, rhetoric is uniquely positioned to interrogate settler colonialism's role in the production of publicity. This move is particularly important given the growing contingent of rhetorical scholars calling for attention to the role of settler colonialism in producing rhetorical narratives (for example: Cushman et al., 2019; Na'puti, 2019; McCue-Enser, 2020; Wieskamp and Smith, 2020). Additionally, this is a question that must be addressed as we take up Chávez (2015) call to move "beyond inclusion" in our work. Scholars of environmental participation, in particular, must reckon with settler colonialism's role in determining how deliberation and management processes are structured and whose interests are prioritized in decision-making processes.

DECOLONIZING PUBLICITY IN THE BEITC'S PROPOSAL

The documents surrounding the creation of the monument highlight the tensions and contradictions inherent in extant environmental decision-making processes, demonstrating a need for new frameworks that can more meaningfully account for the ways in which settler colonialism produces metrics of inclusion and exclusion that preclude Native access to deliberative processes. The BEITC's proposal weaves together separate and sometimes contradictory views of Native people's relationship to the American public in order to call for significant Indigenous oversight of land management practices at Bears Ears. This approach centers Indigenous sovereignty and epistemologies, crafting a rhetoric of decolonization in the context of public participation and public lands management that unsettles extant processes. The Obama and Trump proclamations reproduce the contradictions of settler colonial governance, often failing to meaningfully grapple with the underlying logics that drive the BEITC's proposal. This portion of the essay teases out the rhetorical de/construction of American publics and counterpublics in these documents in order to illustrate the need for new frameworks to address settler colonialism in environmental decision-making contexts.

Inclusions in and Exclusions From "the Public"

The BEITC's proposal traces the historical and contemporary rhetorics through which Native people have been excluded from constructions of "the public" as a means of denying access to participation in decision-making processes. One coalition member recalls visits to the Bears Ears region when white settlers would tell their family to "go back to the reservation" (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 12). Another section of the proposal highlights the exclusion of Native people from the decision-making process surrounding the monument, stating "during the 19th Century and much of the 20th, we were kept down, treated by the BIA as if we were children" (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 14). Through these statements, the proposal highlights the ways that both individual settlers and the settler government have used exclusion from the public to preclude Indigenous participation in decision-making processes. These moves frame Native people as beyond the realm of the public (and therefore not entitled to participation in decision-making processes), either by imposing spatial boundaries that govern belonging (i.e., attempting to confine Native people to reservations understood to be spatially separate from apparently American spaces) or by treating Native people as intellectually inferior and incapable of participating in public discourse.

The proposal further highlights how decision-making bodies have attempted to preclude consideration of Native proposals for the monument. At one point, the proposal states that the BEITC

> made its submission to the county, proposing with extensive research and detailed mapping, the creation of a Bears Ears National Conservation Area, to be co-managed by the Tribes. The County never responded. In 2014, the County completed an eighteen-month public land planning process that essentially ignored Native Americans (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 15).

The proposal, then, becomes a document in which the BEITC can establish this history of exclusion, tracing the ways in which Native people have been excluded from the public sphere and thus access to decision-making processes.

These rhetorical exclusions are reproduced in the presidential proclamations, demonstrating a failure of federal processes to move beyond monolithic understandings of the public. For example, while the Obama proclamation does not explicitly frame the BEITC as either within or outside of the public, it does argue that the national monument designation is not intended solely – or even perhaps primarily – to benefit Native communities. The proclamation states that

> Protection of the Bears Ears area will preserve its cultural, prehistoric, and historic legacy and maintain

> its diverse array of natural and scientific resources, ensuring that the prehistoric, historic, and scientific values of this area remain for the benefit of all Americans (U.S. President, 2016, 7).

This statement simultaneously serves to incorporate the BEITC into a monolithic conception of the American public by emphasizing the benefit of the designation for "all Americans," and to remind audiences that the designation is not meant primarily to benefit Native communities. In this move to highlight the universal benefit of establishing a monument, the proclamation erases the Tribes' unique relationships to Bears Ears and minimizes the particular concerns of Native people in favor of justifying the designation as beneficial to non-Native Americans.

Furthermore, the Obama proclamation historicizes Native presence at Bears Ears, functionally relegating Native people to the past and therefore erasing their continued presence and participation in deliberative processes. Throughout the first several pages of the proclamation, Obama states that "native peoples lived in the surrounding deep sandstone canyons, desert mesas, and meadow mountaintops," that "native peoples left traces of their presence," and that many sites at Bears Ears "tell the story of the people who lived here" (U.S. President, 2016, 2–3). These statements center the past presence of Native people in the Bears Ears region, erasing or minimizing the vibrant lives of contemporary Native people. This historicization imposes a temporal boundary that excludes contemporary Native people from participation in deliberation, instead relegating their role in justifying the monument to the past. Native people, from this perspective, become relics of a past that informs, but is not actively a part of, contemporary public good.

Similarly, the Trump proclamation actively severs modern-day Native practices at Bears Ears from arguments about the value of a monument. Trump's proclamation states that "the Antiquities Act requires that any reservation of land as part of a monument be confined to the smallest area compatible with the proper care and management of the objects of historic or scientific interest to be protected" (U.S. President, 2017, 2). By centering "objects of historic or scientific interest," the Trump proclamation argues that modern-day religious and cultural practices cannot serve as justification for the creation of a monument. Like the Obama proclamation, then, the Trump proclamation imposes temporal boundaries designed to de-center Native concerns in the deliberative process. Additionally, in defining the new boundaries of the monument, the Trump proclamation implicitly argues that any areas of significant value to Native people outside of the newly-defined spatial boundaries are not of interest significant enough to warrant federal protection *via* monument status. In other words, the landscapes, historic dwellings, grave sites, and places where traditions are still practiced that fall outside of the new boundaries may be significant to Native communities, but they are not of import to the American public, for whom the monument exists. Histories of exclusion become justification for Native leadership in the monument-creation process. Continuing the discussion of the 2014 decision from San Juan County, the proposal states

> This in spite of the fact that Native people, by 2014 U.S. Census Bureau statistic, comprise almost half of the County's population. Toward the end of the process, the county put up various proposals for public comment but refused to include the Navajo-UDB proposal on the survey. Despite not even being on the survey, the Native American proposal received 64% of the vote. The well-stated views of the county's Native American citizenry continued to be of no matter to the County (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 15–16).

Despite being actively excluded, the BEITC argues, Native people still participate vigorously in deliberative processes. The problem here, then, is one of voice. As Senecah (2004) argues, mere presence in decision-making spaces is insufficient to produce real justice if participants are not granted a "trinity of voice." Senecah notes that there are three crucial elements for participation to be meaningful – standing, access, and influence. While the five Tribes might have had access to the voting process, they were denied standing and influence when their proposal was left off the ballot. Nevertheless, Native people living in the county continued to pursue participation in whatever ways were available to them, through participating in the voting process, engaging in negotiations with the county, and – when those options failed to produce results – appealing to the federal government instead.[5] Thus, the proposal argues for Native communities' place in decision-making processes by demonstrating the determination of Native communities to participate in deliberation even in the face of active marginalization.

This is not to say, however, that the BEITC's proposal pursues more inclusion for Native people in the American public. Throughout the proposal, the BEITC emphasizes that the five Tribes are not merely a subset of a broader American public, but are sovereign nations that cannot and should not be subsumed under settler-centered understandings of American-ness, stating "the Tribes are sovereign governments and possess solid land management capabilities" (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 2). The proposal argues that the federal government alone cannot serve Native needs, and that "the effort to preserve Bears Ears has always been premised on Collaborative Management between the Tribes and the federal government. Only then will we Native people have real influence on how this sacred land is managed" (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 21). Without a serious commitment to Collaborative Management, the BEITC argues that decision-making processes will remain a primarily unilateral and top-down process in which the federal government treats Tribes as merely a subset of stakeholders within the American public,

[5]I do not mean to argue here that inclusion of the proposal within the County's survey is the same as inclusion of Native communities in the settler public. Instead, I suggest that adding the proposal to the survey would be a means of recognizing and addressing the affects of the Bears Ears decision for Native communities within the decision-making process without subsuming Native people into the broader American public.

rather than as sovereign entities with distinct commitments and investments that cannot be easily wrapped up into conceptions of "public good."

The BEITC offers an alternative to this unilateral and unidirectional process, writing that, "Through an Inter-Tribal coalition, five area tribes are proposing the Bears Ears Monument that would be managed by the tribes and the federal government, where planning, authority, and decision-making are shared equally" (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 3). They expand on this call for shared decision-making authority in their proposal:

> In long, focused, and well-attended deliberations over this proposal, we have concluded that this new monument must be managed under a sensible, entirely workable regime of true Federal-Tribal Collaborative Management. We know that this has never been done before. But most great breakthroughs in public policy have no direct precedent. We want to work with you on this. We have reflected long and hard to come up with the right words to install Collaborative Management in this particular place and circumstance, and believe in our suggested approach, but we welcome your thoughts on how to improve our formulation. Like you, we want to make the Bears Ears National Monument the shining example of the trust, the government-to-government relationship, and innovative, cutting-edge land management. But whatever the specific words might be, for the Bears Ears National Monument to be all it can be, the Tribes must be full partners with the United States in charting the vision for the monument and implementing that vision (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 3).

Here, the BEITC touts the benefits of Collaborative Management, both as a way to set a precedent for more robust government-to-government relations in the future and as a necessity for caring for Bears Ears. The description of collaborative management as a partnership emerges throughout the proposal and other documents on the BEITC's website, highlighting a commitment to a reciprocal relationship based in mutual care and responsibility that runs counter to the federal government's typical approach of engaging in minimal, unilateral, and unidirectional consultation. In addition to the above quote, the proposal states, "The Tribes, through their deep knowledge of this land, their scientists, their land managers, and their artists and poets and songs, will help present this sacred area to the world in a way that cannot possibly be done without their partnership" (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 28). Similarly, in their Spring 2020 newsletter, the BEITC writes that,

> It is important to recognize how results differ between consultation and involvement with Indigenous peoples—when we listen to the concerns, values, needs, priorities, and ambitions of Indigenous communities there is ample potential to bridge and shape robust working partnerships that are authentic, equitable and inclusive (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2020).

Through these statements, the BEITC emphasizes partnerships in which Tribes and the US federal government are on equal footing as a necessary component of collaboration, rejecting the idea that Tribes could ever participate as subsidiaries or subordinates of the federal government.

These statements highlight the inability of the federal government – an entity with an apparent commitment to serving the U.S. public – to address Native concerns without collaboration from Native people. While the federal government might be able to address the needs of non-Native American publics, the same cannot be said of Native peoples. Collaboration is essential precisely because inclusion within the American public undermines the sovereignty of Native nations. The solution, then, cannot merely be inclusion within the public, as extant regulatory frameworks would encourage, but rather collaboration between groups who might share goals in the context of the Bears Ears National Monument, but who are not necessarily invested in the same political futures outside of that collaboration.

Re-Imagining Publics Beyond Inclusion

In the face of these arguments, the BEITC calls for environmental decision-making processes in which Native people can fully participate. These arguments call not for decision-makers to merely listen to Native people as members of the American public, but instead to recognize the multiplicity of relationships to the region held dear both to Native people and to non-Native Americans. In addition to highlighting sovereignty in their discussion of why Native people must be participants in the decision-making process without being subsumed into the public, the proposal emphasizes justifications for the monument which center Native voices. One coalition member, for example, argues that the region must be preserved in order to allow the continued practice of Native traditions. He states,

> We go with offerings to our sites. We knock on that wall and say our names – just like you should – you make your entry properly, and address those that reside there as grandmothers and grandfathers as they are. There is no dimension of time in the spirit world. It's good to come here to the sites, to your grandmothers' homes, you remember how it was to be there. With an offering, perhaps some corn meal, you identify yourself, you sing a song and the children dance, and we just speak our language. Your name, your clan, your kiva (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 9).

This passage highlights a unique relationship between Native people and the Bears Ears region and challenges the idea that public good as a justification for the monument must include or center non-Native people, instead premising the reasoning for the monument on the specific needs of Native people whose histories

are intimately tied to the area. The primary reason for establishing a monument is made even more explicit when the proposal states, "wondrous though the natural formations are, the most profound aspect of Bears Ears is the Native presence that has blended into every cliff and corner. This spirit is the beating heart of Bears Ears" (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 8). The desire to protect the monument, from this perspective, has very little to do with non-Native members of the American public. Rather, it is Native histories in particular that must be preserved.

Nevertheless, the proposal does not seek to preclude non-Native access to deliberation about the site in the way that the presidential proclamations marginalize Native concerns. Instead, the proposal recognizes and embraces the multitude of relationships people hold with the Bears Ears region, constructing a deliberative model in which the juxtaposed Native and colonial histories of the site can simultaneously support creating a monument. The proposal carefully navigates the tensions of local settler histories of the region that celebrate pioneering without acknowledging the colonial violence inherent to that settlement by re-telling an origin story held dear by many non-Native descendants of Mormon settlers (Keeler, 2020)[6]. The proposal states, "In 1880, intrepid Mormon pioneers came through this rugged, slickrock country on the historic Hole-in-the-Rock Trail in their horse-drawn wagons and then travelled down to Cedar Mesas to reach Bluff, where they established the first Mormon settlement in the region" (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 7–8). In framing the monument in this way, the BEITC simultaneously highlights the draw of the monument for non-Native American citizens whose historical connection to the region is founded in pioneering while subtly rejecting versions of that narrative that would posit Mormon pioneers as the first inhabitants of the region by emphasizing that Bluff was "the first *Mormon* settlement in the region." Rather than relying on a monolithic understanding of "the public" in which all members share common histories or nation-building goals, the BEITC's proposal offers a model for sharing decision-making authority rooted in shared commitments and responsibilities to land instead of shared publicity.

The celebration of pioneering history in this paragraph feels almost out of place in a document otherwise so committed to centering Native perspectives on the site – indeed, a document that explicitly notes the harm done by settlers only a few pages later. The passage highlights, however, the ways in which decision-making processes premised on "public good" are fraught with tensions in the context of settler colonialism. Rather than attempting to either to achieve inclusion within "the public" for Native people or invert the hierarchy of participation by including only Native perspectives, the BEITC's proposal embraces this tension and offers a model for decision-making in which shared publicity is not the metric for access. In the BEITC's model, even when groups are invested in incommensurable histories and futurities, they can still share decision-making space. Thus, the BEITC's model of shared decision-making authority is rooted in a collaborative approach in which different histories and political commitments are acknowledged and honored, but shared responsibilities to land are at the forefront of the decision-making process. Rather than calling for consultation or decision-making based on "public good," the BEITC calls for collaboration across difference.

Rather than becoming a justification for the assimilation of Native people into the American public, this recognition of settler investments in the Bears Ears region becomes a call for settler Americans to take up shared responsibilities for protecting the area. The BEITC calls for an equal partnership in caring for the land rooted not in shared publicity but instead in mutual respect and care across difference. They frame this shared decision-making authority as a means of healing for both people and land. The BEITC suggests that settlers must take responsibility for caring for the land alongside Indigenous people as a way of beginning to heal the harms caused by settler colonialism. In an essay on the relationship between land and culture written for the BEITC's website, Kimmerer (2016) (Potawatomi) writes:

> This action [designating Bears Ears National Monument] can aid in healing the land and healing relationship (*sic)* among peoples by restoring rights of native peoples to jointly care for their homelands. Protecting this cultural landscape also invites settler society; today's citizens of the United States, to recognize that one day, they will also be named among the ancestors of these lands. They have a choice as to what kind of ancestors they wish to be. May we humans live in such a way that the land for whom we are grateful, will be grateful for our presence in return.

Kimmerer's essay calls for a practice of mutual care for the land in which all people – Native and settler – recognize and embrace their responsibilities toward the land and future generations. When paired with shared decision-making authority, this model offers an approach to decision-making that undermines "public good" or "public participation" as the organizing force of decision-making in favor of reciprocity, responsibility, and respect between distinct human communities and land.

Centering Collaboration

In addition to highlighting the need to move beyond inclusion in the public as the metric for access to participatory spaces, the BEITC also emphasizes the need for collaboration that embraces polyvocality. Rather than attempting to pursue a singular public good that assumes shared investment in the same futurities, the BEITC calls for a process that can simultaneously embrace the exteriority of Native people to the American public and create space for Native participation in decision-making. The BEITC calls for Collaborative Management, which necessitates the involvement of all five Tribes in managing the monument. The proposal states,

[6]Keeler, J. (2020). personal communication.

> This monument, owned though it is now by the United States, will consist of our ancestral lands. Those lands and our physical legacy in them have been treated badly – horridly, in many instances. The United States has a trust relationship with our sovereign governments. The Tribes, through their deep knowledge of this land, their scientists, their land managers, and their artists and poets, and songs, will help present this sacred area to the world in a way that cannot possibly be done without their partnership (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 28).

The call for Collaborative Management serves as a way for the BEITC to demand access to decision-making processes. Spaces reserved for the American public too often ignore Native voices. However, processes that emphasize sovereignty may fail to account for the inevitable impacts of public policy and public land management practices on Native people who, though external to the American public in many ways, are still affected by the decisions made by the US government.

While the BEITC celebrates the coalitional relationships between the five Tribes that emerged as a result of working to protect Bears Ears, the proposal is also careful to remind readers that each of the five Tribes are separate entities. Just as the BEITC and non-Native members of the American public may not always be invested in the same futures, the five Tribes may also not always share the same investments. Thus, traditional government-to-government relationships between the federal government and the Tribes would be insufficient to address the plurality of investments in Bears Ears or the complexity of relationships between the five Tribes. Decision-making practices must avoid the trap of bilateral engagement, instead recognizing both the individual sovereignty of each of the five Tribes and the relationships between the five Tribes strengthened through multilateral collaboration over the BEITC proposal. The proposal extrapolates on the need for collaboration, writing:

> Federal Indian policy, including the trust relationship, is based on bilateral relationships between recognized sovereign Tribes and the United States. Indian Tribes each have their own individual histories, cultures, and concerns. It is rare that Tribes work together in this fashion, but all the circumstances were right in the case of Bears Ears. "The idea of being a family, all together, one direction, is stronger than individual efforts. The unity of the group fuses all Tribes in the future. Our lifestyle, our food, our way of life seems to be the cornerstone for our position, and I'd like to express my support for that" (Willie Greyeyes, Navajo) (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2015, 18–19).

This passage demonstrates the difficulty of understanding Native participation in decision-making spaces within the context of the publics/counterpublics framework. While the five Tribes have all been historically denied access to US deliberative processes, they occupy distinct positions that may sometimes align and sometimes diverge. Although Willie Greyeyes argues that cooperation over the monument has resulted in entanglements between the five Tribes that extend beyond the bounds of this struggle, that does not mean that all five Tribes can be flattened into a singular public or counterpublic.

The Trump proclamation, in particular, highlights the failure of federal processes to address the complexities of collaboration between the federal government and multiple Native governments. In addition to shrinking the monument by roughly 85%, the Trump proclamation separated the monument into two sections – the Indian Creek unit and the Shash Jáa unit. Furthermore, the proclamation revised the management plan from the Obama proclamation (which had already reduced the decision-making authority of the commission proposed by the BEITC significantly), stating "the Bears Ears Commission shall be known as the Shash Jáa Commission, shall apply only to the Shash Jáa unit as described herein, and shall also include the elected officer of the San Juan County Commission" (U.S. President, 2017, 8). This change precludes Native oversight of the Indian Creek unit of the monument, which encompasses the Canyonlands Research Center and a number of important rock art sites – including the famous Newspaper Rock, a collection of petroglyphs created by members of numerous Native communities over the course of centuries – and weakens Native agency within the Shash Jáa unit by adding a representative from the San Juan County Commission – the agency responsible for the 2014 exclusions discussed earlier in this essay (U.S. National Park Service, 2018).

Additionally, the modification undermines the careful work of the BEITC to establish a monument that equally values all five Tribes. In a press release published by the BEITC responding to the Trump proclamation, Zuni Councilman Carleton Bowekaty stated, "Even the name, the 'Shash Jáa Tribal Management Council,' is problematic … By using the Navajo language, they are trying to divide us, but they will not succeed" (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2018). While the name Bears Ears was chosen by the BEITC in part because it did not privilege one member Tribe over another, the name Shash Jáa centers only Diné relationships to the region, illustrating the failure of federal processes to account for the polyvocality of Native communities.

This flattening of Native nations into a single monolithic counterpublic or subset of the American public demonstrates the difficulty of reconciling publicity as an organizing force for decision-making with Native sovereignty. If decision-making processes assume that all stakeholder groups are merely subsets of a monolithic public with shared investments in settler futurities, then publicity will undermine true multilateral Collaborative Management. Re-orienting decision-making processes toward relational practice centers the individual decision-making authority of each Tribal community while simultaneously building structures for collective decision-making regarding land to which multiple communities share commitments. The BEITC writes of this model, "Each Tribe will work to complete their own piece of the plan while also collaborating with each other in this effort to create a wholly new and innovative strategy for protecting cultural landcapes" (Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, 2020). Thus, decision-making rooted in these kinds of relational

practices center individual Tribes' sovereignty while also necessitating that each government participating in the decision-making process acknowledge and account for the needs of the others. The constant back-and-forth of individual and collective planning produces a decision-making structure not rooted in the assumption of shared publicity, but instead on shared responsibility across difference.

LESSONS FROM BEARS EARS

The Bears Ears controversy offers important insights about the public sphere, Native rhetorics, and environmental decision-making. The rhetorics deployed in the BEITC's proposal and the presidential proclamations highlight the complexities and contradictions of representation and participation in deliberative democracy in the context of settler colonialism. The BEITC's proposal challenges extant environmental decision-making processes' construction of a monolithic American public by highlighting historical and contemporary settler colonial violence that both functions to exclude Native people from the public and to provide reasons that Native people might not find inclusion within the public desirable. At the same time, however, the proposal does not call for the total exclusion of settlers or the US federal government from Bears Ears. Instead, they offer a model for shared decision-making authority and collaboration that prioritizes Native concerns while also making space for settler commitments to the region. Thus, the Collaborative Management Plan functions as a valuable example of Indigenous futurity, which Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013, 80) argue,

> does not foreclose the inhabitation of Indigenous land by non-Indigenous peoples, but does foreclose settler colonialism and settler epistemologies. That is to say that Indigenous futurity does not require the erasure of now-settlers in the ways that settler futurity requires of Indigenous peoples.

The BEITC's model thus rejects settler publicity and settler colonial institutions as the foundation for environmental decision-making, but does not reject the commitments that settler individuals may have to the Bears Ears region or the ability of settlers to participate in shared care for the land.

Whereas much extant literature on publics and counterpublics theorizes counterpublicity as a means of overcoming exclusions, the BEITC instead seeks access to deliberative spaces from a place of exteriority (Fraser, 1990; Asen, 2000). The collaborative management plan offered in the BEITC's proposal thus offers a model for deliberation that is rooted in relational practices of sovereignty. This relational practice may be best aligned with Simpson's (2015, 18) (Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg) definition of sovereignty as "the place where we all live and work together." This conceptualization of sovereignty provides a way of thinking about shared decision-making authority that prioritizes the autonomy and separateness of distinct nations while simultaneously addressing the reality that decisions made by one nation with commitments to a territory necessarily affect other nations with commitments to that territory. From this perspective, the BEITC's collaborative management plan can be understood as a deliberative process in which multiple sovereign nations representing distinct publics with investments in diverging (and often incommensurable) futurities share decision-making authority and deliberative space. Furthermore, this shared decision-making authority functions through a web of shifting relations in which coalitions may form, change, or dissolve based on the needs of each nation in a given moment, where the guiding force in relationships between peoples is shared responsibility to land. In this model, access to participatory processes is predicated not on inclusion within a settler-oriented and singular public – as extant regulatory frameworks posit access – but instead on shared commitments to territory. This understanding of sovereignty may also be useful for understanding how Native nations engage in deliberation not only with the US government but also with one another. Thus, future scholarship of Indigenous and decolonizing rhetorics should take up the task of theorizing sovereignty itself more thoroughly.

Rather than relying on commonplace colonial discourses to highlight the need for a national monument, the BEITC repeatedly highlighted Native people's relationships to the region, emphasized the importance of sovereignty, and linked the need for protecting the site to colonial histories that constrained Native control over and access to the region. While doing all of these things, however, the BEITC also highlighted the historic exclusion of the five Tribes from the American public, emphasized the necessity of maintaining separation *via* sovereignty, and made arguments about why Native voices must be a part of the decision-making processes. The tensions inherent in this straddling of the boundaries between interiority and exteriority challenge the very framework of public good and public participation that governs access to environmental decision-making processes in the United States (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013). In its place emerges a framework for shared decision-making authority between sovereign nations whose people share commitments to territory without necessitating assimilation into a singular public.

This insistence on centering Indigenous relationships to territory and the history of colonial violation of those relationships presents a radical challenge to settler notions of the public. The BEITC's proposal develops a framework for participation in the designation of public lands that refuses to allow settler colonial narratives about public good to take center stage, but still makes space for settler relationships to land. Rather than calling for expansion of the American public to include Native concerns, the proposal highlights settler colonial exclusion of Native people as an important impetus for Native leadership in the creation and management of the monument. This framing rejects colonial notions of public good that center extractive processes, recreation, and national identity, and instead emphasizes the unique relationships Native people have with the Bears Ears region, the importance of protecting sacred sites and artifacts from looters and polluters, and the necessity of Native leadership both for protecting Bears Ears and strengthening Native self-determination.

The BEITC challenges the positioning of Native nations in relation to the American public, highlighting how notions of "the public" become complicated when the assumption that all participants in these processes are invested in settler futurities in which the colonial state asserts sovereign authority over colonized territories is rejected (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013). They highlight the colonial nature of participatory processes that are premised on monolithic conceptualizations of the American public rooted in ties to the colonial state. These conceptualizations necessarily create a double-bind in which Indigenous people must either be assimilated as merely a subset of a broader American public or have their concerns ignored as exterior to the interests of "the public." This, in turn, obfuscates Native people's territorial claims. For rhetoricians, this rejection of settler notions of "the public" is valuable, as it opens space for new conceptions of the public that function not only as democratizing forces, but decolonizing forces as well. From this perspective, Indigenous counterpublics pursuing access to decision-making spaces are not necessarily pursuing inclusion within a public sphere that has marginalized them, but rather represent distinct and separate publics calling for the settler public sphere to be altogether dismantled in favor of unimpeded Indigenous sovereignty. Thus, the responses provided by the presidential proclamations fail not only to account for the demands presented in the BEITC's proposal, but fundamentally fail to engage with the grammar of publicity produced in the proposal. The proclamations maintain a commitment to notions of public good that are unable to grapple with the radical change the BEITC calls for. This inability of settler understandings of the public to address decolonizing rhetorics points toward two necessary changes – one for environmental decision-making processes, and one for rhetorical scholarship.

First, extant environmental policy's approach to public lands designation and public participation in environmental decision-making cannot function as a meaningful tool of decolonization without a radical re-imagining of publicity. Understandings of public good that rely on investments in settler futurities are diametrically opposed to the goals of decolonization (Tuck and Yang, 2012; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013). The logics of cost and benefit that are applied in debates about designating and managing public lands, the frameworks through which stakeholders are positioned in debates about environmental decisions, and the structures of participatory processes serve to protect settler interests in colonized territories over the interests of Native people.

While there has been some attention to settler colonialism in the context of environmental decision-making, there is a need for more intervention that provides approaches to decision-making processes that actively challenge settler colonialism and prioritize Indigenous voices. Many of the problems that other scholars have identified in environmental decision-making processes, such as the de-valuation of marginalized voices as "indecorous" or the "decide-announce-defend" model, among others, may be exacerbated by settler colonial ideologies that prioritize profit, normalize settler occupation, legitimate the settler state, and prioritize (particularly white) settler concerns over those of Indigenous people (Cox, 1999; Hendry, 2004).

Environmental decision-making processes and public lands controversies may be a site where challenges to settler colonialism are uniquely possible. Plans for Collaborative Management and Native-led designation processes may open the door toward wholesale return of land to Native nations. Environmental decision-making processes present this unique opportunity because they are the sites at which competing environmental understandings are negotiated, criteria for future decisions are established, and distributive outcomes are determined. Models like the BEITC's Collaborative Management Plan offer opportunities to chip away at the decision-making authority of the settler state and take steps toward Native nations gaining more control over their territories. These kinds of small shifts in the deliberative landscape might eventually give way to larger pushes for full Indigenous authority over public lands. A particularly optimistic outlook might predict that, given sufficient legal precedent, this expansion of Native governments' authority might be used in the future to argue for the return of land to the Native nations who have been granted management authority. At minimum, implementing models like the BEITC's proposed Collaborative Management Plan are a way of "elbowing out space" for Indigenous nations to exercise decision-making authority in colonized territories (Jacob, 2020).

Second, rhetorical studies must continue to question our investment in the public sphere as a way of framing rhetoric's place in the production of society, and expand that questioning to more thoroughly examine the relationship between the public sphere and settler colonialism. Publicity, as we often approach it, offers a useful way of understanding how individual fragments of discourse exchanged between individuals coalesce into a broader patchwork that contributes to the creation and maintenance of a society. If the goal of that exchange, however, is the improvement and maintenance of the settler state, then thinking through discourse at the level of the public sphere may be unproductive for scholars invested in decolonization. If inclusion within the public necessitates that Native people acquiesce to the violences of settler colonialism, and exclusion from the public means Native voices are silenced or marginalized in conversations about environmental policy, then the framework of publicity becomes a tool of settler colonialism. Thus, we must seek a way of approaching public policy, public good, public participation, and public lands that rejects inclusion in the settler public sphere as the organizing force for access to decision-making processes.

The impetus to demand public participation in environmental decision-making is a useful one. Communities that are affected by decisions must be included in those decisions if environmental justice is to be achieved. At the same time, however, models of environmental decision-making that premise access to those participatory spaces on a monolithic conception of the American Public reproduce the harms of settler colonialism by placing Native people in an impossible double bind; either assimilate to the American public or be left out of decision-making spaces. Environmental decision-making spaces already inherently legitimate the settler state by placing final decision-making authority in the hands of state and federal agencies. To also commit to a vision of access premised on a monolithic American public is to doubly harm Native people who may not be

invested in settler futurities. Thus, policies like NEPA that frame environmental decision-making in the context of American identity and settler futurities must be revised or replaced to better account for Native people's investments in decision-making processes. While regulations such as these likely cannot be entirely scrapped without inviting additional corporate abuses and environmental degradation, those who head up environmental decision-making processes should reject colonial rhetorics and process designs that prioritize settler concerns or frame decisions in terms of benefits to settler society. This call also has significant implications for the field of rhetorical studies, which relies heavily on concepts like the public sphere and public discourse. We must question how our investments in these terms naturalize settler futurities and develop ways of communicating the importance of rhetoric in the production of the material world that move "beyond inclusion" (Chávez, 2015).

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The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

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Physicality in Postcolonialism: Tensions at the Asian Rural Institute

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The Asian Rural Institute (ARI) is a transnational NGO that has a unique model of education and was founded in response to Japan's role as a colonizer. It invites participants from around the world to learn sustainable agriculture, servant leadership, and community advocacy at their campus in Tochigi, Japan. Postcolonial studies has a strong foundation of analyzing physical elements such as bodies and space and their role in both controlling colonized people and resisting colonizers. I argue that the complications of postcolonial and racial relationships manifest physically through movement and shared space at ARI, both of which operate as tensions that support (and sometimes undermine) self-determination and survivance, key characteristics of decolonization. This analysis contributes to postcolonial scholarship by providing another means of conceptualizing movement and linking space to consubstantiation.

Keywords: postcolonialism, bodies, space, rhetoric, movement

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INTRODUCTION

"It is boring and hard, but we practice living together every day," said the director of the Asian Rural Institute (ARI) one day at Morning Gathering. She was referring to how people from all over the world who come from vastly different backgrounds try to do the hard, physical work of running a sustainable farm together. ARI is a transnational NGO that has a unique model of education and was born out of Japan's role as a colonizer. Like other Christians in Japan in the 1970s (Duró, 2020), the founder of ARI—Toshihiro Takami—sought to right some of the wrongs Japan perpetrated against its neighbors through colonization. Despite not discussing colonization explicitly in its training manual (2019), ARI still communicates its focus on marginalized community members, writing:

> ARI's training is especially centered on serving marginalized peoples living in grassroot rural localities—with a focus on the landless, peasants, child laborers, street children, outcasts, refugees, war victims, the disabled, and those who are politically oppressed, economically deprived or who experience discrimination. (p. A-6)

The original focus of ARI was on other Asian countries because much of Japan's aggression had been perpetuated against them, but organizational leaders saw that people in countries outside of Asia had also been the victims of colonization and sought to expand their efforts. Now they accept participants from all over the world. This makes for a novel transnational NGO while also creating a space where people from different racial, religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds must work alongside each other in the same space daily.

The organization is rooted in Christianity, which comprises only 1.1% of the Japanese population (U.S. Department of State, 2019), and strives to provide education in the areas of sustainable agriculture, servant leadership, and community advocacy. Three types of workers keep ARI running.

First, permanent *staff* are from a variety of countries: Japan, the United States, Ghana, the Philippines, and India when I was there; they are the fundraisers, farm and meal-planning experts, and office managers for ARI. Second, *participants* are there for education; in some ways, they are students, learning and perfecting their knowledge in critical areas, and in other ways, they are experts themselves. They are leaders in their own communities, selected because they have demonstrated their knowledge and desire to know more about the three focal areas. They are from countries that, through colonization, have been torn apart and formed anew by outsiders indifferent to indigenous cultural foundations (e.g., Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Indonesia, and the Philippines). The final group at ARI are *volunteers*, who are there to support the education process by working in the office, in the kitchen, and on the farm while participants are in class or on fieldtrips. They are generally from wealthy countries where being white carries great advantages (e.g., Japan, Germany, and the United States).

Importantly, staff, participants, and volunteers all work together to run a transnational NGO that houses residents, grows 90% of its own food, graduates classes of about 25 yearly, fundraises to support most of the participants, and maintains relationships with local food producers. I argue that the complications of postcolonial and racial relationships manifest physically through movement and shared space at the Asian Rural Institute. In this essay, I provide a review of postcolonial studies, focusing on how scholars have addressed physicality. Then, I describe my methodology, engaging in reflexivity about my own position at ARI, and provide background about Japan as a context for ARI's decolonizing efforts. While ARI is based in Japan and adheres to some Japanese cultural traditions, it actively rejects other aspects of Japanese society and adopts values from other global cultures. Next, I delve into my findings, explaining not only the tensions of movement and shared space but also how these two manifestations support (and sometimes undermine) self-determination and survivance, key characteristics of decolonization. Finally, I articulate my contributions to postcolonial literature by drawing a finer focus on physicality and its theoretical connections to indigenous struggles.

POSTCOLONIALISM, BODIES, AND SPACE

As a theoretical approach, postcolonialism emphasizes the extant structures that link historical colonizing practices with contemporary problems (Shome and Hegde, 2002). Tiara Na'puti (2020) explained, "postcolonial theory attends to questions about how cultures persist after colonization, the use/misuse of knowledges about colonized peoples, how formerly colonized and colonized peoples respond to systems of oppression, and the subjugation of colonized peoples' histories and epistemologies" (p. 8). I use the term to indicate that this research takes for granted the problems of colonialism and the connections to past wrongs enduring today. Additionally, I am especially interested in the resistance to such problematic structures in the form of decolonization, which is a branch of postcolonial research. This theoretical body of literature produces, in short, "a rich discussion of resistance, agency, and voice" (Dykstra-DeVette, 2018, p. 182). Such discussions are necessarily developed by considering the means by which power structures endure, degrade, and collapse such as through discourse as well as physical elements. As Na'puti (2020) emphasized, "Understanding the politics of colonialism requires an understanding of the places it reaches and the bodies of people that contest it and reproduce it" (p. 3). Postcolonial scholars have written extensively about physical elements like bodies and spaces and their relationships with power.

In conceptualizing how power is perpetuated through colonial legacies and contemporary forms of neocolonialism, scholars examine how bodies—their appearance, representation, and regulation—function rhetorically. In some cases, bodies come to stand in for the sovereignty of the nation or as a rationale for colonizing communities, which means that the bodies of individuals can take on particular significance (Hasian and Bialowas, 2009; Martin, 2018). In contemporary times, lingering colonial associations can manifest in how people read one another's bodies in colonized places such as Hawai'i (Christensen, 2020). Additionally, associations of sex, gender, sexuality, and race with colonized people's bodies become indicators of power and one of the means by which colonialists control people both in the past and present (Amos, 2017; Banerjee, 2012). For example, scholars have thoroughly analyzed the violence that Korean women endured under Japanese occupation and the cultural impact it had on not only individuals but also international relations between Korea and Japan even in contemporary times (Kwon, 2017; Park, 2014). Jeahwan Hyun (2019) contended that Japanese colonizers sought control through eugenics, writing that one theory at the time argued that "a mixture of biologically similar races would be eugenically superior to both original populations, and thus interracial marriage between Japanese and Koreans would benefit the Japanese Empire" (p. 494). However, people also deploy their bodies in acts of resistance (Enck-Wanzer, 2011). In one example, Stephen John Hartnett (2013) traced the ways that body rhetoric *per se* advanced political arguments in Tibet in the face of Chinese colonization. Like bodies, space is a productive vehicle for theorizing postcolonialism and physicality.

Historically, the link between colonization and space is clear. Colonists want resources, cheap labor, and strategic power; land is a way to attain and maintain those advantages, which means that controlling space ensures the oppression of indigenous people (Endres, 2009).[1] Emphasizing the connection between the physical world and the political one, Kundai Chirindo (2018) articulated, "Colonization was a reconfiguring of space, time, and matter that turned African spaces into spheres of influence first,

[1]I recognize the differences between land, place, and space. Although postcolonial scholars use these three terms to mean different things at times, I am using them interchangeably in this paragraph because I am more concerned with physicality in general and space. The tension that I am discussing in this essay is about sharing space—only touching briefly on how some participants feel about ARI as a place. Land is one manifestation of space and that is relevant to farm work, but I also refer to indoor spaces such dorms and kitchens.

then into nations" (p. 386). This is particularly significant because places and land itself are part of individual and collective identities (McCue-Enser, 2020; Na'puti, 2019). Japanese colonizers used space strategically not only for resources but also to control people (Nam, 2018). Lei Song (2021), for example, detailed how prison functioned towards these ends: "the panopticon surveillance [of Japanese guards] embedded in the Chiayi Prison [in Taiwan] served as a tool of physical oppression and mental domination" (p. 10). Controlling spaces and places—and the ways that people move through those spaces and who can and cannot be there—is not only a show of force. It also undercuts the cultural foundations of groups of people and compromises their identities. Shifting spaces and denying access to land—just as controlling other people's bodies does—ensures continued subjugation.

While this essay addresses bodies and space, it does so indirectly through the discussions of movement and shared space. Therefore, while concepts like the sexualization of bodies, portrayals of violence in media, the grounding of identity in place, and traces of diaspora through online communities have informed my understanding of postcolonial theories (Schwartz-DuPre, 2014), I engage them adjacently to get at the physical elements in a different way. The concept of shared space is not one that I would apply to colonial situations since the elements of power are so unbalanced. Concepts like conquering or occupying would more appropriately describe what is happening and the literature about space, place, and land addresses these. By contrast, the movement of bodies is a bit complicated when considered in the context of colonialism. On the one hand, there is privilege in movement for those who choose to move. When wealthy people choose to go to a place to "help," their movement is a sign of privilege. On the other hand, when people are compelled or forced to move because of violence, resource shortages, climate change, etc., the movement—even when theoretically voluntary—is not a privilege. Obviously, slavery and human trafficking—forced movement and forced labor—is oppression, not privilege. Although the movement of large groups of people—diaspora—might be a form of privilege if they have the means and desire to move, in the context of a new country, the movement disadvantages those who are recently resettled. Moreover, diaspora itself can reveal vast oppression in parts of the world where people have little choice but to move or face lethal consequences. This essay is not about diaspora, but it is important to note that scholars address this topic in depth (see, e.g., Corrigan, 2019; Drzewiecka, 2002; House, 2013). My essay contributes to postcolonial theory by making salient physical practices on a sustainable farm that reveal the complications of physical bodies and spaces interacting together in a transnational space shaped by colonization. Additionally, it focuses on attempts at decolonization to limn the consequences of such efforts.

CONTEXTUALIZING ARI AS A RESEARCH SITE

The field refers to both a physical and abstract site of research in this project. Therefore, in this section, I describe my methodology and Japan as a context for ARI's rhetoric. I adopted a field methods approach, which emphasizes understanding rhetoric *in situ* and speaking to people to access forms of rhetoric that would otherwise remain undocumented (Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres, 2011). Once a critic assembles artifacts (e.g., interview transcripts and field notes), they conduct a rhetorical analysis to discover how ideologies are bolstered or challenged, arguments are formed and defended, and material spaces shaped through discourse. I also incorporated postcolonial theory, which moves the critic beyond unnuanced methodologies that are, "not . . . equipped to deconstruct the subtle mechanisms of Othering that structure the neocolonial discursive regimes of globalization" (Parameswaran, 2002, p. 312). Instead, this approach is, "sensitive to the careful positions one must construct in relation to representational politics" (Hanchey, 2016, p. 15). With this in mind, I obtained IRB approval and used participant observation and interviewing (45 people) to produce field notes and transcripts for rhetorical analysis. I also analyzed materials such as the ARI Training Manual. I volunteered at ARI for five months in 2019, averaging about 30 h/week.

Although ARI does not represent the Japanese government or even Japanese culture more broadly,[2] it is located in Japan and begins its training for participants by recounting Japan as a colonial power. Therefore, it is important to discuss Japanese colonization as a contextual element of my analysis. One often undiscussed example of Japan's colonizing practices is of the Ainu people in Hokkaidō, which one interviewee at ARI mentioned. Acknowledging it here links, "the case of the Ainu into global conversations of Indigeneity" (Grunow et al., 2019, p. 599). Similar to other colonizers, Japan exercised power by controlling language (Pieper, 2019), disrupting traditional family structures (Liu, 2019), and meeting resistance with brutal force (Louzon, 2018). The horrors of colonization—both in Asian and Europe—have been well documented, but it would be a mistake to assume that the foundations for colonization were the same. As Jin-kyung Park (2014) argued, "ruler and ruled shared close racial, cultural and religious affinities and . . . colonial medical power did not stem from white hegemony and Christian religious authority" (p.108). Although to outsiders, people from Asian countries would all be considered Asian, Japanese people have sought out "an alleged foreignness" as a justification of the superiority of some people over others (Amos, 2017, p. 577), which multiple Japanese staff members at ARI discussed openly.

Colonization and race were common topics at ARI. For example, one Japanese staff member discussed the first time she identified as Asian:

> When I was in high school, Takami [the founder of ARI] came to my high school when I was 16 or 17.. . . I saw men, Asian men came along with him and then that was my first time to see um Asian. But it's not Chinese,

[2]Staff would often mention how ARI is not Japan, marking the cultural differences between the campus and the surrounding country. Three different Japanese female community members lamented separately to me about having to leave campus at times and conform to typical Japanese gender expectations.

> Japanese, northeast Asian. They are Indian. I mean northeast Asia; we're northeast Asia: Japan, Korea, and then Chinese. We are similar Asians. But that was to see Indian, more black, dark brown faces. I knew on TV but first time to see them. And he talked about Asia, Asia, Asia. And I thought, ah! We are part of Asia. You are, that's right! And I didn't realize that.

This quote illustrates some of the nuances of race, nationality, and identity in Japanese society, and, significantly, how ARI challenges those by fostering feelings of shared identity among Asian people from different countries. In another example, the Director of ARI invited me to join the participants for their orientation so that I could understand the foundations of this NGO. She began by describing how the Japanese army had invaded many Southeast Asian countries and killed 20 million people, which drew participants' attention to colonization *per se*. In another instance, a Japanese staff member discussed Japan's invasion of Manchuria in his Morning Gathering presentation. Expanding out of Japan and marking ARI as transnational, participants and staff had many stories of conflict and colonization that they shared in interviews. As Ellen Gorsevski (2013) argued, "Religious, ethnic, and political conflict is a telltale marker of postcoloniality, posing great challenges for political leaders who must communicate with diverse, fractured audiences" (p. 175). Examples from their own lives include an entire community being displaced for an infrastructure project in the Philippines, fighting for independence and against colonial governments in India, learning how to use their recently-passed constitution to lobby the government for change in Kenya, fleeing violence in Sierra Leone and living in a refugee camp for years, and, in multiple countries, being dependent on foreign nations for imported food, which makes them food insecure at times. Historical and modern, talk of colonialism emerged spontaneously at times and helped contextualize community members' experiences. During these activities, I was aware of the similarities and differences between and among staff, volunteers, participants, and me.

Field methods demand self-reflexivity because a critic's body (e.g., skin color, age, weight, height, ability, sexuality, and gender) matters when interacting with people (Middleton, Hess, Endres, and Senda-Cook, 2015). As Charles E. Morris, (2014) defined, "Reflexivity is an unceasing process of self-engagement, deeply reading one's multiple cultural, political, ideological *situatedness* and its implications, privileges, relations to others, and effects" (p. 105). Not only does the critic's presence impact how other people interact with and read them, it also offers advantages and disadvantages depending on how well the critic fits in with a community (racially, ideologically, etc.) or whether or not they are interpreted as an academic professional, for example. I came into this research site in a position of power because I am a highly educated white person. While not quantitatively dominant in Japan or at ARI, being white offered me unearned privileges in many circumstances. Additionally, as a United States American who could speak conversational Japanese, I navigated most situations easily, was met with generosity and openness throughout Japan, and was able to get help when I needed it.

Since World War II, Japan and the United States have had a close relationship. The U.S. Department of State (2021) writes, "The United States-Japan Alliance has served as the cornerstone of peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and across the world for over 6 decades" (n.p.). The block quote from the staff member above continues and illustrates this point:

> Maybe many of our generation thought we were part of American rather than part of Asia. America seems more closer than other Asia countries, ne?[3] Um, yeah. So much culture, and was the organization, TV, movies, everything is. But we don't see um Philipino movies, Philipino singers. Only Americans, Europeans on TV. Don't see Bangladesh or Indians on TV or anywhere. So, that was big shock for me. Ah! These are the Asian. Also I'm an Asian too.

Her personal experience of this relationship shaped the way that she saw herself and understood her own racial identity. The closeness of Japan and the United States is troubling to some Japanese people who worry about losing autonomy. For example, another staff member was critical of this relationship, explaining that Japan supported the United States war efforts with money but that lately (in 2019) that had not been enough. He said, "Now they need blood," and not only money, meaning that they might have had to send troops. While this unique relationship exists and was discussed occasionally at ARI, my being read as "white American" certainly offered advantages that might not have been extended to people of color from the United States and other countries.

Financially speaking, I was supported by a Fulbright grant, which enabled me to rent housing off-campus that was more expensive and afforded more privacy. This was at times a disadvantage because announcements would go out through the dorms if the schedule was changed, for example. Yet, overall, having space to myself and access to a kitchen were privileges that other volunteers and participants did not have. Moreover, I am a native English speaker, which is significant at ARI because English is the *lingua franca*. Most staff, volunteers, and participants spoke at least two languages (some spoke half a dozen or more). While not knowledgeable about or skilled at farming and animal husbandry, I am able-bodied, which meant that I could work alongside community members. This was invaluable for building relationships and observing daily life at ARI. These many privileges along with my status as a researcher and non-Christian made me an outsider at times but, more often than not, I was part of the community. These aspects all shaped my experience at ARI, how people interacted with me in the field and in interviews, and how I interpreted my data.

POSTCOLONIAL TENSIONS OF MOVEMENT AND SHARED SPACE

This case study illustrates the tensions present for one transnational NGO trying to combat decades of negative

[3]Adding "ne" to the end of a sentence is common at ARI. It functions as the equivalent of saying, "you know" or "right" at the end of a sentence in English. In Japanese, the phrase is "desu ne," but ARI has adopted its own version.

impacts from colonization. Toshihiro Takashi, ARI's founder, "was . . . born into a colonial world marked by the ideology of Japanese colonialism that understood the Japanese as being a superior "race"" (Gardner, 2017, p. 26). After meeting people who were colonized under Japanese rule, he began to question the patriotic rhetoric that justified Japanese rule and later in life sought a means of repairing the damage wrought through colonization. From its infancy ARI focused on teaching subsistence farming to people as a way to: 1) ensure that they always had enough to eat, 2) empower them to resist neocolonial practices that often result in them losing their land, and 3) building stronger communities through the sharing of food. Through classes and informal discussion, many staff members and some participants directly discussed maintaining one's power in the form of land. For example, one farmer in class talked openly about how indigenous people lose their land because they go into debt trying to convert to industrial farming. In its current form, ARI underscores the importance of the physical world to postcolonial thinking through two tensions: movement and shared space. Using bodies and space rhetorically, ARI manages to subtly impart lessons and values while privileging equality for participants and volunteers to internalize. Moreover, these two themes illustrate two key concepts of deconolonization: self-determination and survivance.

Movement

There is power in movement, made clear by the pattern of the movement of colonization regardless of the form it takes (e.g., resource-extraction, forced labor, religious conversion, social and environmental programs, and pop cultural imperialism). In general, wealthy people travel to "less fortunate" regions of the world to "create jobs," "educate," "help," and "spread the good word." While these efforts almost certainly do help people in some circumstances, they also have clear underlying assumptions about who has the knowledge and means to positively impact a place.[4] Although this pattern of privilege may be evidence of a rhetorical mindset of conquest and epistemology, equally the reversal of this pattern can be rhetorical itself for its capacity to (re)shape the efforts of NGOs. In this case, there are still some assumptions about knowledge and means but instead of sending people from wealthy countries.[5] somewhere else to teach residents about sustainable agriculture, community advocacy, and servant leadership, ARI brings Black and Asian people from less wealthy countries to Japan to learn those things. Although this could be interpreted as equally disempowering, given the colonial practices of forced labor and movement that the Japanese implemented, in this case such movement extends the privilege to a wider group of people and recognizes their extant knowledge, experience, and leadership.

This approach has distinct advantages; participants can be advocates for themselves, they know their land and communities best and know what will work, ARI can avoid colonial and missionary forms of interaction where an expert comes into an unknown area with unknown people to "help," participants also create productive relationships with one another and see other examples of people and organizations doing positive advocacy work. Moreover, they accumulate cultural cache in their home communities from having attended an education program in another country. Efforts like this can encourage smart, motivated people to give back to their home communities rather than seek opportunities abroad. As one staff member from Ghana critiqued, "And that is why many of the young people after graduation they want to go overseas. They want to go overseas, you know. Because the, the, the leaders have not created the opportunity for them to put what they have learned into practice." ARI's program invests in those home communities by supporting residents directly rather than sending a privileged outsider there, and participants appreciate this. One staff member—who is also a graduate of the program—described his own feelings when he was hired to work at ARI in animal husbandry:

> Then it was very happy because . . . Whoa! That is my job as veterinarian, ne. So, I was very happy to come. Not only to know that there is more . . . what is this . . . exciting part of the world. Because here, most of the, of my students are indigenous peoples. And I have been working with indigenous, different indigenous peoples, different tribal groups in the Philippines. That's also an exciting part. From India, from Africa, from Nepal, from . . . And they say I am a tribal community; I belong to tribe of . . . You see? Also, the same, also, as the people I'm working with in the Philippines. So, those things. And then here, it encompasses the community also. I belong to a community in the Philippines.

As this quote indicates, participants have a deep attachment to the land in their home countries; they want to preserve it for themselves and their children. Moreover, they are highly motivated to stay in their home communities once they return and be positive forces there. To facilitate this, each year, ARI hires one graduate of the program to return to be an exemplar for participants, someone who can look after their well-being and help them translate what they are learning to the situations in their home countries. Additionally, participants also share their knowledge. For example, one participant was discussing elephants as a pest in their gardens. Since this is not a problem in Japan, other participants jumped in with their suggestions about how to deter them. Such a sharing of knowledge is possible because ARI's structure supports

[4]It is worth noting that this pattern does not hold all the time. For example, in bringing West African people to the United States as slaves performing physical labor, European Americans were also intentionally bringing West African expertise in plants, farming, and cooking. Harris, J (2012). *High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey from Africa to America*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

[5]In the United States, the people traveling abroad in these volunteer efforts are often white. At ARI, the people from the United States were not uniformly white but rather represented multiple racial categories including white, Black, Asian, and Latinx. Additionally, most of the people I interviewed at ARI who had traveled to other countries for volunteer work were Asian. Therefore, even while patterns of colonization where largely enacted by white people, I am not comfortable characterizing the pattern of volunteering as a white phenomenon. My data do not support that in this case study.

participants from multiple countries learning advanced techniques together.

I contend that this reversal of the pattern of movement emphasizes self-determination because it offers participants the chance to choose what is right for them and their community. Na'puti (2020) summarized, "As one of the elements of the process and broader project of decolonization, self-determination is an internationally recognized mechanism of recourse for determining the legitimacy of control of particular populations and geographic locations" (p. 25). In situations of colonization and neocolonization, the capacity for controlling one's own body, land, food supply, etc. is compromised; the choices are limited. A participant from Sierra Leone joined ARI, "to strengthen our communities, to actually improve on a food self-sufficiency because, after the 11 years of civil war in our country, we faced a lot of challenges. Trouble, much hunger, and abject poverty and most of the communities are actually deprived and a lot of devastation caused by the rebels in our country." Asian Rural Institute (2019) recognizes this explicitly, writing, "Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems" (p. A-6).

Under a typical NGO model, people from wealthy countries are exercising their control and choice when they travel, help, or harm. But in this case study, participants can choose to come to ARI (or not as was the case in 2020 when concerns about COVID-19 led many participants to back out of their plans to go to ARI) and prioritize their own experiences. A Cameroonian participant described her motivation this way, "I'm here to learn both theory and practice, acquire skills to get more useful. That's to make myself more useful, back home, for my community." Another participant from Uganda came to learn how to increase yields from "a small piece of land." One of ARI's main recruitment methods is word-of-mouth among community members in their home countries, which would be unsuccessful if participants felt disenfranchised. One participant explained that after meeting with a graduate of the program in his community in Myanmar, he researched more about ARI because he is from a rural community and ARI centers rural life. He said, "Yeah, first thing I get to know from internet about ARI is that ARI is helping people from rural community, yeah. ARI trains people from different countries. That is what I'm interested." After talking with two graduates of the program, one Kenyan participant decided to focus on culture and politics; he said, "And so far, I'm based on issues of community development, I really like to mingle with others, and share things so that I may empower myself. . .. So that I can help my community." After 9 months, they return to their home communities and decide whether and to what extent they incorporate their training from ARI. Many start planning what they will do just a few months into the program. For example, a Filipino participant explained, "When I'm home and I go back home, I will apply that to the three learning sites that we are building and coming here in ARI and bringing back the technology will be a big showcase to the learning site." Although these examples illustrate the participants' choice in coming to and learning at ARI, this element of self-determination has another side to it.

Movement is a tension in my analysis and not simply a good thing. Although ARI participants are taken care of to ensure that they have all of their needs met while in Japan, their self-determined movement is limited. First, they have limited resources in an expensive country. It would be difficult for most (but not all) participants to pay for a trip to different parts of Japan. Keeping this in mind, ARI organizes multiple trips around Japan for participants—and not volunteers—where they travel extensively (about 30 days of the 9 months) but as part of the group. Additionally, ARI staff will meet participants at the airport in Tokyo but do not do the same for volunteers; volunteers must pay for and navigate their way to ARI on their own. While these things can certainly be seen as conveniences, another interpretation might be that they are constrictions. Participants can choose to go into town and take short train trips to within about an hour of ARI (and ARI provides a map of the surrounding town and location of the train station in the Training Manual), but to travel further, they need to request permission. "Disappearance from the ARI campus," is "considered unacceptable and would not be permitted" (Asian Rural Institute, 2019, p. C-4). The issue, according to some members of ARI's staff, is that some participants in the past have been taken advantage of or involved in illegal activity. For example, one white U.S. American staff member explained that some participants have:

> exploit[ed] the opportunity for us to essentially pay for them to come to Japan and do that. It's been an issue we've had in the past 15 years; we've had far too many people doing that. And by "far too many," I mean less than five, but more than three. So, around four. Four or five, I can't remember exactly.

He went on to describe how some people try to exploit others *Vis-à-Vis* ARI:

> So, what ends up happening in a lot of these cases, especially in Africa, is they have what are called "brokers." So, these are people that they owe debt to or for whatever reason they have power over them. And they say, "here's an opportunity, let's send you to Japan to this program. You're going to pay back your debts because that's a rich country." And you gotta.

By this way of thinking, because ARI provides scholarships for almost every participant, this is an attractive opportunity for those who want to exploit it. Another white U.S. American staff member explained that this policy of granting permission, "is for [the participants'] protection." They justify this by recalling past experiences in which what seemed like friendly meetings turned into someone trying to involve participants in illegal activities. Nevertheless, this protectionist rhetoric has been used to control people's bodies throughout history. Through their intentional inversion of the typical colonialist model of movement and their restriction of movement within Japan,

ARI rhetorically reflects the complications a transnational organization faces when situated in network of past and present colonization. Although they are trying to create a better world, they feel they must still take a paternalist position and limit participants' movement; and in the process limit the participants' control and choice.

SHARED SPACE

The second tension in terms of physicality and postcolonialism at ARI involves shared space—and by extension shared labor—for the purposes of relationship-building and education. In my interviews, participants mentioned again and again how impressed they were that the director of the organization was working in the kitchen, the bathrooms, and the pig pen, as those are viewed as some of the most demeaning jobs and dirtiest spaces. One Filipino participant described her skepticism prior to coming: "I had little bit doubt when [the interviewer was] asking me whether I can clean these toilets, kitchen. I said, "I can do that." He told me, "Even our director is doing. Can you do that?" Actually, I didn't believe, fully." Another participant expressed amazement:

> The first time I saw it I was like, "Oh my God. What am I seeing?" These people don't just pick or teach, they do what they say. Many people always say things which they don't do. Learning by doing. They do what they say, washing dishes, cooking, cleaning, picking eggs, the pig pen. The director, I was like, "Wow, not in Cameroon."

Participants, volunteers, and staff—regardless of race, age, and sex—are in every working space on campus and expected to do every kind of work, including dirty work such as cleaning toilets and "women's work" such as making food. Another Cameroonian participant noted, "Everybody here is equal…. Now I come to ARI and I actually see how it's actually the director washes my plate. That really, really, really touched me." This reinforces the idea of servant leadership; as one Ugandan participant said, "I'm seeing the director, I'm seeing staff and upper management also participating in all activities of ARI, it is something I see, so this is also part of good servant leadership." In this way, no space was seen as "less than," no one was above doing a certain chore. Another participant from Sierra Leone made a similar connection: "When I came, I saw that leadership at ARI, training is practical. I saw the director and all other staffs coming working, serving as servants, workings together with participants. It was very impressive to me. I was very excited in such a leadership system I saw."

ARI also shares space racially through intentional hiring. No one discussed this directly, it was something that I noticed as a participant observer. Although most of the office staff were either Japanese or white U.S. Americans, the leaders of the crews that volunteers and participants worked with daily (i.e., produce farming, animal husbandry, and food preparation) were from Japan, India, the Philippines, and Ghana. Put another way, the people from whom participants learned and volunteers followed were all people of color. This ensures that power as well as space is shared among people of different races. Significantly, it models a productive, inclusive work environment for participants and volunteers because the leaders reflect the global, diverse world that ARI seeks to engage.

These forms of shared space create opportunities for developing shared identities and reconciliation. One Indian participant noted, "This working culture is really good. Even from this director to everyone is treated equally, and everybody working the same thing." A Filipino participant explained the system she is accustomed to:

> If you have a higher place, you don't work so much. You just sit and look at people and "Uh, OK, how's everything?" And other people are doing the dirty work for you and you get all the credit for it. And also, in here everyone is part of a group. It's like you know you belong somewhere.

The end of this quote emphasizes one consequence of shared space, which is a sense of community, of belonging. This helps when conflicts inevitably arise. Several staff members discussed how people from countries or regions that have been or are currently at odds with one another will come to ARI and need to work together. When racism or sexism or religious conflicts occur, people still must work together to weed a field or turn the floor of a chicken coop. Then, later, they will need to eat in the same space and wake up to do exercises at 6:30 a.m. while looking at each other across a big circle. All of this contact makes it difficult to hold a grudge and continue a conflict. One German volunteer explained how she had become used to it: "When people started talking about ARI is a family, we are so close friends, I was like, OK. Sounds a little bit strange to me but now I just feeling comfortable around many people if it's not too long." To be sure, tempers flare and jealousies arise, frustrations leak out and, even sometimes for weeks, people are angry. But eventually, they will set their anger aside or talk to the person or come to some unspoken agreement because avoiding the person is not an option.

Along with the principles of sustainable farming, which participants can use to become more food secure and self-sufficient, through shared space they learn community building and servant leadership. These three principles help participants establish survivance, which, "indicates more than basic physical survival" (Na'puti, 2020, p. 26). Growing one's own food may fulfill a basic need, but community development and servant leadership help ensure that the traditions and stories of indigenous cultures continue, which is a key principle of survivance. One staff member who had graduated from the program several years before detailed his dissatisfaction with his own efforts to help his community in Ghana before coming to ARI. He was selling chemical fertilizers and pesticides, thinking that they would increase the yield of farmers and thus help feed people through the difficult dry season. However, he intimated:

> That is one of the things that I always regret to involve myself in that job. Because people are dying, and people don't know how to apply the chemicals [safely]. And people are getting lots of diseases. That was one of the

> main reasons that led me to come here in 2001. I stopped selling the chemicals and looking for the best way of helping the farmers. And that's when somebody, one of the pastors, introduced ARI to me. That maybe this is where you get your answer to your question. And I was still, maybe they will let me come to the ARI.

Also, ARI addresses this directly in the Training Manual (2019): "Self-sufficiency is protection against the instability of mono-culture, the exploitation of globalization's changing markets, and a tendency to take control over land, undermining local culture" (p. A-7). Sharing space can contribute to decolonization efforts by modeling the best practices of farming and leadership, ways to be self-sufficient; working alongside one another helps build community and create opportunities to learn from the staff as well as each other. Seeing and hearing from community leaders in other countries that have experienced the violence of colonization can be empowering, which is at the core of survivance.

Sharing space also means that ARI begins to feel like home for many people. After just a month or two of living there, two participants said explicitly that ARI was their second home. Furthermore, multiple expressed that they wanted to bring what they see at ARI to their own communities. One Cameroonian participant's words exemplify this idea:

> I love the way ARI is organized in terms of work. Let me explain. The fact that we have everybody working in ARI, including the director, that's something amazing I've never seen. The fact that everybody knows what he [or she] has to do and does it, that's something I like the most. I want to go back to my community and build something like this. Yes. I want to build something where we all work together. Even if you are the boss, you do it. We work together. Because working together make the movement. We progress towards something.

Since staff, participants, and volunteers do all the different jobs, that means a conflation of home and work; any boundaries that existed between the two collapse. So, while cleaning the toilets and raking leaves build relationships, they also reinscribe the place as home. These are jobs that at other organizations would be fulfilled by hired workers. But this is a bit of Japanese culture coming in, as a Japanese staff member noted, because it is not uncommon for Japanese people to clean their workplaces, schools, and public spaces together to show their care and community. The fact that everyone at ARI all must clean together at 6:30 in the morning means that jobs are distributed equitably. It also ensures that, as one white U.S. American staff member put it, ARI is more than work, it is a lifestyle.

However, again, this is a tension with downsides of its own. For those who live in the dorms (volunteers and participants) very little private space exists. As mentioned, work begins at 6:30 am and work/life boundaries blur constantly. Furthermore, internet is restricted to one public building, meaning that what might usually be private conversations must happen in public spaces. Many community members expressed frustration at the lack of space. One German volunteer remarked, "Because for me, I feel like, it's my right to have my own space, my own time, and in here, since you belong to a community, if you want some moment of silence alone, people reject always say, "Are you OK? Is something wrong?"" A Filipino participant said simply, "You can't have personal space."

While too much shared space aligns with the core of this tension, there is another side to it that may not be visible to all community members: Not all spaces are open to everyone. Predictably, the dorms are sex-segregated, which is to be expected at a Christian organization, especially where people of all different ages, cultures, and life experiences are intermingling. This makes it difficult for casual hanging out to happen between the sexes unless they are in a public space and is part of the point. Near the end of my time there, six U.S. American college students of different races came as volunteers and really changed the culture of the place by sitting exclusively with one another at lunch and pushing back against the rules. They were only there for about 6 weeks and struggled to fit in. One day, one of them asked me if I was coming to the volunteer party of if I was "being responsible." I said I did not know about it and asked where it was. They were going to hang out in the men's dorm. If they had gone through with it, I think they would all have been sent home early, but they decided to go camping instead. The privilege of having an option like this is not available to everyone at ARI, as I noted above with regard to movement.

More significantly, some spaces are locked, and others are not. For example, the dining room and classroom, which are next to the dorms and where the internet is, were locked every night. At a certain time, they shoo people to their dorms for the night so they can lock up. Additionally, they are really the only spaces outside of their dorms where participants and volunteers can talk or read or practice an instrument. By contrast, adjacent to (but technically off-campus), ARI uses a building—the seminar house—that is owned by another partner organization that is never locked. I did not know about it at first because it is not part of the unified campus. One morning, when I came up early to do some work online (there was no internet access in the place I rented for the first few months) and found the doors locked, a staff member told me I could use the seminar house, which was never locked. This is the building where groups of day-long or week-long Japanese volunteers would stay. It is further from the dorms and probably not in people's minds as a place to go to hang out, even though they could in theory. That this internet-available space is unlocked day and night draws attention to the spaces that are locked and prompts questions about who knows about this area and who does not. Yet, by and large, the sharing of space functions rhetorically to create feelings of equity among staff, participants, and volunteers. By developing an education model that disrupts the patterns of colonization present in some contemporary NGOs, ARI deploys physicality as a countermeasure to neocolonialism.

IMPLICATIONS

Postcolonial studies is ripe for full engagement with physicality because of the firm foundations established through theories of bodies and space. By controlling bodies and space, colonizers secured power and advancements that continue to give them

advantages even in contemporary times. Colonization, bodies, and space are deeply embedded in one another; when colonizers reshape land, they also affect people's bodies (Fedman, 2018). In a poignant example, Sakura Christmas (2019) demonstrated how a push to produce soybeans in Manchukuo under Japanese imperialism produced negative environmental results and disease in the bodies of residents in the area. In this example, "ecological imperialism" not only yielded fatal results for some local people but also made salient the different conceptualizations of land that nomadic and agrarian societies held (p. 809). My argument builds on this literature to contend that ARI challenges these practices physically by encouraging different uses of bodies and understandings of space, but they are not perfect in their efforts and some of the physical practices reinforce racism by restricting participants' movements and only leaving a relatively unknown space unlocked. Despite this, Asian Rural Institute (2019) strives to, "empower and help [participants] reach their highest potential" (p. A-6). Through this case study, this essay contributes to postcolonial conversations in particular by emphasizing the ways that bodies moving (or not moving) through space communicate power and the processes by which sharing space—as opposed to taking and losing space—creates circumstances for physical as well as metaphorical consubstantiation.

Postcolonial scholars' focus on bodies and the means by which they are controlled thoroughly demonstrates how power is maintained and challenged. For example, Kevin D. Kuswa and Kevin J. Ayotte Kuswa and Ayotte (2014) explained the lengths to which some people must go to assert the last bit of power they have: "contemporary self-immolations often convey the desperate cries of individuals reacting against unconscionable oppression through one of their last available means of expression, burning their own bodies" (p. 108). My analysis illuminates another component of this, which is the power and privilege of movement. Moving allows different experiences and an accumulation of knowledge. Diasporic studies is one way that analyses of movement in postcolonial studies manifests, and these projects reveal strong place attachment and cultural traditions that are compromised through movement. Despite the persistence of memories in bodies and museums (Johnson and Pettiway, 2017), diaspora has meant for large groups of people a lack of recognition of their own intellectual traditions (Corrigan, 2019) as well as loss of family connections and personal historical knowledge (Drzewiecka, 2002). This case study gives postcolonial scholars another way to conceptualize the rhetorical function of movement, as an extension of power and choice. When understood as a physical element of an independent body, movement situates a person or group of people as worldly and wise. They are sought out for their expertise and hold revered status in the new places they go. By reversing the conventional pattern of global movement, Asian Rural Institute (2019) emphasizes that "all labor has dignity and equal value. Even though one may be formally educated, that person's labor and physical work is as valuable as any other work" (p. A-7). What is more is that movement in this case is an extension of a physical body and an indicator of self-determination, a key characteristic of decolonization.

Controlling space creates power for people on international as well as local scales. Postcolonial scholars have shown how the physical control of space maintains power; this study shows how shared space can communicate equality and how restricting access to spaces can also create inequality. People can see themselves as more similar as their bodies reflect the shared activities, food, and temperaments that accompany shared space. In this way, consubstantiality can develop. Through the sharing of space, labor, and food, two people can begin to understand their identities as created through one another (Burke, 1969). While Kenneth Burke conceptualizes this in a figurative way, I posit that postcolonial scholars could productively extend theories of space to recognize the role of physicality in consubstantiation. Shared space gives people the chance to see everyone working on the same job. They build identities together and develop themselves with the land itself, leading to consubstantiation. In a literal sense these practices ensure that their bodies become shaped by the same bending and lifting of shared labor and begin to be sustained by the shared food produced. Asian Rural Institute (2019) links these ideas together when they write, "Life of sharing is the sacrifice a living organism do or perform to support, protect, save and sustain the life of another" (p. A-5). Moreover, I suggest that scholars can deploy consubstantiation theoretically to enhance the concept of survivance because it strengthens ties between communities and reinforces relationships between different groups of people striving for independence, and between people and the lands they love so much.

Finally, it is worthwhile to connect my research to environmental communication scholarship directly. The relationship between colonization, bodies, and space makes postcolonial studies a natural fit for environmental communication research. And, indeed, pro-environmental practices—farming sustainably, using natural pesticides and fertilizers—are beneficial for marginalized people because they can retain more of their power through land ownership and community solidarity (Bullard, 1993; Christmas, 2019). Emphasizing this connection helps to unite two strong progressive movements: decolonization and environmentalism. ARI is one transnational organization that has taken on the project of connecting multiple forms of oppression and providing a model to stand against them. Challenging conventional global patterns of movement and persisting in shared space equally even when it is "boring and hard" does not mean ARI always has the right approach but represents a unique way of facing down postcolonial problems.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets presented in this article are not readily available because the author collected the data for this study, and they are not available publicly. Requests to access the datasets should be directed to SamanthaSenda-Cook@creighton.edu.

ETHICS STATEMENT

This study involved human participants and was reviewed and approved by the Creighton University IRB-02 Social Behavioral

committee. Written informed consent for participation was not required for this study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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"My Dude, Are You Tired? I'm Tired:" An Intersectional Methodological Intervention

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This manuscript is a methodological intervention that addresses ethical considerations associated with conducting research in outdoor spaces, particularly with communities of color and other marginalized communities. The core issue is that BIPOC individuals, LGBTQIA + individuals, and disabled individuals face discrimination and violence in outdoor/recreational spaces. By investigating these issues, scholars can intensify the problem. We hope that our perspectives can assist ethical decision-making processes in methodology, advocacy, and interaction with outdoor communities of color.

Keywords: outdoor recreation, intersectionality, methods, inclusion, race

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INTRODUCTION

We share a unique positionality as academics, current outdoor professionals, and members of organizational boards tasked with addressing social justice in outdoor recreation. Outdoor recreation professionals often help individuals access the wilderness and experience public lands through high-adventure activities such as rafting or rock climbing. With our collective knowledge as scholars and outdoor community advocates, we write this as a consideration for scholars studying the diversification of American outdoor recreation communities, which are being critiqued for their white supremacist, heteronormative, and ableist structures, practices, and norms.

Upon reading the call for submissions for a special issue of *Frontiers in Communication: Science and Environmental Communication* that had a focus on communication, race, and outdoor spaces, this group of scholars was excited. We have researched and written separately about gender, race, and ethnicity in outdoor recreation spaces and are proud of our dual identities as researchers and guides/advocates. With this dual positionality, we feel we may be able to speak on behalf of those working in the field that might be called upon to study diversity in the outdoors who can be put in precarious positions if they do not proceed in this research with extreme care. We are hopeful that this journal call is the start of critical intersectional discussions. We hope our piece is an intervention that urges environmental and outdoor communication scholars to consider important intersectional factors that impact their presence in such spaces. In particular, this is an opportunity for those who do not have outdoor recreation experience to stop and think about ways in which our scholarship might potentially negatively impact minoritized and marginalized communities during the research process. An example of such a disconnect manifests in the title of this article, as reviewers wondered about the significance of the wording and our use of the phrase "My dude." "My dude" is in reference to a common way that outdoor recreationists refer to each other, a slang used by people outside recreating together. Being tired is how minoritized individuals in these spaces feel right now. The title is a nod to the increase of labor we will be asking of minoritized communities as researchers from outside of these communities approach insiders to do research.

This manuscript is a methodological intervention that addresses ethical considerations associated with conducting research in outdoor spaces, particularly with communities of color and other marginalized communities facing discrimination and violence in outdoor/recreational spaces. By investigating these issues, scholars can intensify the problem. We hope our perspectives can assist ethical decision-making processes in methodology, advocacy, and interaction with outdoor communities of color.

AN INTERSECTIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL METHODOLOGICAL INTERVENTION

Cultivating spaces that make outdoor recreation more inclusive and diverse is long overdue. It is vital that researchers understand the racist, sexist, ableist, and exclusionary policies and practices that have long existed, policies and practices that not only communicate to minoritized people that the outdoors is not a space for them but heavily regulate their very presence and threaten their safety. These barriers to safe participation range from: representation (Maria looked at forty websites for commercial whitewater companies and only observed three photos of guides of color) to implicit bias, which affects hiring, scheduling, promotion, and retention (in interviews, she found that female guides were more often scheduled on the family sections of river instead of the intense whitewater) to explicit racism (guides on rivers were routinely highly verbally racist about their East Indian clientele) and violence and predation (patterns of outbursts or predatory behavior by return clients or coworkers directed at only guides of color). It is time for investigation and intervention into these spaces. However, since few researchers have held space in both academic and outdoor recreation areas, the authors of this article hope to provide information and considerations to those engaging in this work. In the process of investigating these barriers, researchers must consider the extra emotional, physical, and mental burdens that often characterize research with people of color, and, in the case of the outdoors, particularly if these people are key informants within their field (i.e., the only person of color guiding in a particular sport or locale). The labors asked of such individuals are often already multiple, especially in this era of DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) initiatives. In this manuscript, we will be providing a framework of intersectionality, research, and action. We will be considering the extra labor we are asking participants to do, reflecting on the potential cost to participation, and investigating how labor and identities intersect in these organizations. Last, this article asks researchers and practitioners to consider material and tangible ways communities can be supported through research.

AUTHORS' POSITIONALITIES

Maria was a whitewater rafting guide for twelve seasons before becoming a scholar of environmental and organizational communication. For the past 3 years, she has been working on a project examining sexism and sexual harassment issues in the whitewater rafting industry. Through this project, her privilege as a white, heterosexual, cisgender woman has become evident to her. She understands that for the outdoors to be fun for everyone, an intersectional examination of who is welcome in the outdoor recreation world is necessary to find out who perpetuates systems of exclusion. She is a founding member of the A-DASH (Anti-Discrimination and Sexual Harassment) Collective, an organization created to help organizations combat harassment in the river industry.

Alexa is a mixed-race, immigrant, cisgender, queer woman, as well as a long-time whitewater paddler. A whitewater guide for the past 14 years, most recently in the Grand Canyon, she dabbles in other outdoor pursuits, like climbing and mountain biking. Additionally, she is a Ph.D. candidate in sociocultural anthropology, studying difference and power in the outdoor industry, as well as spirituality, secularism, identity, and change in the outdoors. A fellow member of A-DASH, she has also worked with various DEI committees in Grand Canyon area river companies, but her heart lies in extra-organizational solidarity and community-building efforts.

Leandra is a Mexican-American, cisgender, queer woman who has been rock climbing for 7 years. She is a communication scholar at the intersections of health communication, Latino communication studies, and media studies, and she has recently started exploring race-based and health-based angles of rock climbing. Her main passion is rock climbing, although she also enjoys hiking and alpinism pursuits. As a scholar and outdoor enthusiast, her research explores the intersections of gender and race that shape media discourses about outdoor recreation and communities' experiences in the outdoors. She has been a member of several women-based and queer-based climbing organizations, most recently as a member of the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance (SLCA) Board of Directors, a member of the SLCA Communication and JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) Committees, and a co-facilitator for the Salt Lake Area Queer Climbers group. Through her experiences, both personally and organizationally, she continually observes the disconnect between organizational acknowledgment of JEDI initiatives and program follow-through to make outdoor spaces more inclusive and equitable for all.

FRAMEWORKS: INTERSECTIONALITY, RESEARCH, AND ACTION

Our primary social justice and theoretical lens is intersectionality, a framework that arose from contexts interrogating identity politics, social movement politics, anti-discrimination, and violence against women. First developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) to address structural and systemic violence against Black women, intersectionality is an approach that analyzes the interconnected matrices of power facilitating social hierarchies and patterns and structures of marginalization. We utilize intersectionality to emphasize the matrices of exclusionary power (racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism) that affect the experiences of marginalized

communities in the outdoors. Furthermore, Leah Thomas, an eco-influencer, has introduced the term intersectional environmentalism, which advocates the ideas of environmental justice while also asking environmental organizations to reflect on racial disparities in their organizations (Oglesby, 2021) that have historically been white.

Several researchers have contributed to this conversation by exploring the role of race in shaping outdoor experiences and research practices. Outdoor recreation scholars have explored what bodies are expected in particular activities (Harrison, 2013) and the exclusionary consequences of such expectations. Floyd (1998) outlines past discussion around a lack of participation in outdoor recreation to be "class-based" or "race-based," but furthered the ideas about discrimination being the cause of people not engaging in outdoor recreation. This idea is also asserted by Harrison (2013) in an investigation of racism "securing" social spaces in the ski industry. Additional investigations have explored the environmental movement and outdoor recreation gatekeepers that keep particular bodies and communities out of outdoor spaces (Finney, 2014). There has also been a call for leisure studies to examine how leisure produces, fortifies, and preserves racist practices (Arai and Kivel, 2009). We applaud efforts to make outdoor recreation spaces more inclusive and the call for environmental communication scholars to open understandings of space and wilderness to consider race, ethnicity, and marginalized people. This article asks for thought and care to be given to that process, especially in understanding and differentiating the unique pressures on diverse outdoor industry employees.

There are examples of scholars reflecting on the damage done while conducting research in a speech community. Goode (2002) offers a reflection of his inappropriate behavior as a researcher as he reflects on an ethnography he conducted in a fat acceptance group as he dated and had sex with multiple participants. In her 2012 ethnographic textbook, Madison instills in new ethnographers the importance of considering the consequence of our work to participants. Environmental communication with its roots in rhetoric is newer to ethnographic study. These cautionary tales of ethnography gone wrong need to be considered as we enter the tiny speech communities that make up outdoor guides to do research. Additionally, it is difficult to find examples of communication scholarship in which authors are reflexive on the harm they may have inflicted on participants or communities. This article hopes to increase awareness of how outside researchers can proceed with caution in such spaces.

As research expands to examine the experiences of historically minoritized groups in the outdoor recreation and environmental sectors, we must remain sensitive to and attempt to mitigate the additional labor and exposure we are putting onto potential participants. We argue that this is done through what we are calling radical community-engaged participant research, a form of participatory action research (Rahman 2008). This is not the moment for curious researchers to be temporary tourists in the world of outdoor recreation, but a time for interested scholars to approach these individuals and communities and ask, "What do you need?' How can I help? What information is necessary for you to feel safe doing this job?" The word "radical" signals that this research is led by those consistently marginalized in the past. This research should start with questions and issues from minoritized changemakers within the outdoor communities to ensure that we, as allies and researchers, avoid both performative allyship by privileging the interests of the people we are working for and with.

Before beginning a research project, a researcher must understand where they fall on what Ong (N.D.) characterizes as a ladder of involvement in social movements. An activist is a person fully involved in a movement, works through protest, resistance, education, and engagement for change. An advocate can be an insider or outsider to the movement who publicly supports a cause, perhaps raising funds or awareness of an issue. An ally is an outsider to the movement who can elevate activists' and advocates' work by educating themselves and sharing information with others. While the work of making the outdoor recreation arena safe and fun for all people will take all three levels of involvement, we propose we as researchers should prioritize advocacy and activism that privileges our minoritized participants, always keeping an eye on creating more equity and justice in outdoor recreation.

A CONSIDERATION OF EXTRA LABOR WE ARE ASKING PARTICIPANTS TO DO

The first consideration is the extra work we are asking outdoor guides, coordinators, and board members to do in addition to the extensive emotional labor they are performing daily as BIPOC guides and community participants, dealing with the racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia that already characterize most outdoor recreation spaces. They are also doing the work of mentoring newcomers in both formal and informal contexts and warning other people could be in danger about communities or people that could be unsafe for them (i.e., whisper networks). This unseen and often uncompensated labor should be recognized and taken into account as researchers recruit participants for outdoor recreation projects.

In one women's climbing organization with which Leandra was affiliated, for example, she was the only woman of color on the leadership board; when group concerns about racism rose to the fore, Leandra was told that "since she was the diversity expert, she could create a separate internal group to talk about racism in the outdoors," since the main group should only focus on climbing beta (information), trip details, and gear. This conversation highlighted the group's prioritization of a white feminist, cisgender-based perspective, treating sexuality and race/ethnicity as both secondary and irrelevant to the cisgender-based concerns of the group, all at the expense of an intersectional, truly inclusive lens. When a journalist approached Leandra about the reasons underlying the group's disbanding, she did not participate in the interview because, due to her positionality, she knew that she would immediately be identified as the proverbial whistleblower. Juggling these tensions—the disproportionate labor demands, the paradoxical organizational siloing of inclusivity and justice, the need for someone to do this work, the value of speaking out publicly,

and the safety risks of doing so—was exhausting, crushing work for Leandra and typical of the experience of minoritized leaders in the outdoors. Often, the only way a person of color gets to "only focus on climbing beta, trip details and gear" in hegemonically white outdoor communities is to subsume their own identity and experiences in favor of white supremacy and the status quo.

Of course, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and the prevailing impacts of hegemonic masculinity, patriarchy, and white feminism continue to be problems of violence in outdoor spaces. For our research participants, excavating those experiences for researchers may be cathartic. However, it may also be retraumatizing, particularly a researcher without prior training in trauma-informed approaches. Several authors have described how professional climbers have created fake social media accounts to bully professional women climbers (Abel, 2018; Hernández, 2021); how white feminists (and feminists writ large) are social media policing larger conversations about racism and sexism in the outdoors (Abel, 2017); and how climbers like Mélise Edwards are speaking out about the need to recognize the diverse histories of the sport in order to have more accepting and open communities (Salabert, 2019), especially for the recognition and inclusion of diverse bodies that are constantly at risk of violence. As Nikki Smith, a professional climber, climbing photographer, and a transgender woman describes, "Climbing still has a long way to go in regards to inclusion of all underrepresented groups. The discussion can no longer be ignored, though, and so many people are advocating for change. Unfortunately, for trans folx, the visibility and change has led to much pushback which has made life more difficult in many ways, but overall, society, in general, is slowly (too slowly) moving forward" (May, 2020, para. 10; see; Ellison, 2019). Reliving those memories and discussing the issues—albeit important for social and structural change—are part of the larger web of emotional trauma that bodies of color, as well as queer and disabled bodies, constantly face in outdoor recreation spaces, especially those in positions of leadership. Any research participant faces the same quandary when approached to do research, risking exposure and continuous reliving of associated trauma.

REFLECTIONS ON THE POTENTIAL COST OF PARTICIPATION

The second research consideration is the potential cost of participation to the contributor. Outdoor spaces are dangerous spaces for people of color in the United States. From their inception, they were always sites of violent regulation of nationhood and whiteness (Kosek, 2004; Ray, 2010; Spielhagen forthcoming). The risks, therefore, to the financial, physical, mental, and interpersonal wellbeing of our research participants are magnified both by the long histories of violence in the outdoors against people of color and the relative lack of anonymity for such people within their outdoor communities.

There is a deeply rooted gendered and racial danger in remote outdoor spaces (Roberts, 2009; Graham, 2020), where just existing with identities that are not often represented in the outdoor industry can be risky. Examples abound. For instance, Maria recalls her first year of guiding in 2001 when, after 9/11, two guides with Middle Eastern heritage were left racist notes on their cars threatening their job and place in the community. Additionally, it is common to live out of your vehicle and park and sleep wherever you find a place to park as a guide. Indeed, this practice is often a financial and geographical necessity. Maria remembers the season that she never found housing in Jackson, Wyoming. She lived in her truck, parking and sleeping on side streets. Recognizing her privilege, she realizes that experience would have probably been different had she had another body. Alexa was recently warned by a white friend against sleeping roadside in a certain isolated section of a road trip, who said something like, "I might be okay, but it's probably not safe for a woman of color in that part of the state." In "Out There, Nobody Can Hear You Scream," Graham (2020) details her unnerving experiences as a Black woman exploring isolated areas of the Great Smoky Mountains. Merely existing in these outdoor spaces can be dangerous for our potential participants, especially if they hold multiple marginalized identities. That danger increases as we ask individuals to speak out against inequities in outdoor recreation or expose themselves by participating in research.

Calling out racist, sexist, and homophobic practices is incredibly difficult and can be met not only with violence but impacts to their career. In Maria's work, she found that scheduling trips was often used as a reward or punishment. The desirable trips are saved or those that are favored by management. A person who exposes themselves through research or advocacy or activism increases their risk of lost work. Another consequence can be a loss of product sponsorship, which can be an important way that outdoor professionals can access gear or money. Last, much outdoor recreation occurs through informal buddy networks to access trips, routes, permits, and even jobs. Tips about access and current safety and conditions information often depend on connections, without which it becomes difficult to navigate the industry, the community, and sometimes even the landscape. The cost of participating in research can be high. In Leandra's experience with the women's climbing organization, when she was approached by outside researchers before the organization unraveled, she worried about the safety of participants in the group and how the group would be framed in outside research. Although this happened almost 4 years ago, researchers she interacted with were insensitive to gender-based and network-based concerns raised by members of the leadership at that point in time.

These risks are magnified by how easily identifiable many minoritized outdoor participants are, particularly those with any longevity or leadership roles and particularly if they work in the outdoor industry, where they are often the first and/or only. The authors have personally experienced and continue to see evidence, whether in their research (Blevins, 2019; Blevins, 2020; Spielhagen, forthcoming) or personal networks, of hostile work environments, harassment, discrimination, and retaliation against non-traditional outdoors people for even seemingly minor acts of non-compliance, or even simply

perceived non-compliance. The ramifications of participating in research studies are serious not only for our participants, should they be identified, but for potentially misidentified bystanders as well.

Rock climbing as a sport and industry, for example, is male-dominated and has historically been such. As Abel (2018) describes, rock climbing is a sport that shirks personal responsibility, utilizes colonialist attitudes, and is dominated by white men: "Let's peel back another important layer here—rock climbing is a white male-dominated sport. Only 29% of sponsored rock climbers are women. Only 4.5% of climbing guidebooks are written by women. We use a grading system that was created by men and is still predominantly upheld and maintained by white men. White men create most of the routes in climbing gyms. White men hold most of the powerful positions in the climbing industry. White men write most of our content and create most of our media" (p. 10). Given these factors, it is no surprise that queer folx, individuals of color, and disabled bodies are most often tokenized in outdoor research spaces despite researchers' best efforts to maintain participant confidentiality. How can we do better, especially when considering how research with such participants—participants whose bodies are marked as different and often fetishized in research spaces—often resurfaces such trauma and violence, and to what end?

LABOR AND IDENTITIES

People of color can become lightning rods as they speak up, attracting increasing attention and requests for time, labor, and representation. This phenomenon often problematically reinforces a monolithic vision of systemic issues in the outdoors. In working with various advocacy movements and groups in the outdoors, we see the same few individuals being drawn upon repeatedly to stand in as the voice of a whole. The movement(s) and individuals are therefore grappling with thorny tensions around activism, solidarity, specific needs, and intersectionality. Even as researchers, we realize we do not have a language that adequately addresses these different interest levels. For instance, in crafting her research study, Alexa could not find an adequate pre-existing umbrella term for outdoor professionals who are not cishet (cisgendered and heterosexual), able-bodied, white people.

In being visible to their colleagues, peers, and researchers alike, marginalized participants become hyper-subjectified, pinned in place under multiple axes of identity, performance, and expectation. We theorize that proximity to white supremacy, with all its heteronormative, masculinist, able-bodied, classed implications, has been central to survival and advancement within the mainstream outdoors industry, which is partially why Roberts (2009) points out that being involved in outdoor pursuits or activities often associated with whiteness, can challenge a minoritized participants other identities. Additionally, outdoor work is identity work, and most literature on outdoors work and practice to date has attended to one (identity) or the other (work), but not to the dialectic between the two how labor issues like chronic wage theft and discriminatory hiring and promotion practices have operated within a white supremacist system. These intricacies of performed and felt identities, together with financial and physical precarity, a morass of survival strategies, and their implications, raise further concerns around internalized racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and fatphobia, and ableism and undermining our participants' credibility and senses of self.

Floyd also identifies that perceived discrimination is why people most often spend leisure time with people of the same ethnicity (Floyd et al., 1993). Nevertheless, lines become blurry between work and recreation in the outdoor recreation industry. In addition to feeling alienated when working in the recreation field, the multiple vulnerabilities of marginalized outdoor work - being physically vulnerable, isolation, and lack of control over group makeup - still exist. Even for cishet white women, there still has not been a deep reckoning, justice, and new sense of safety around the multiple rapes, assaults, harassments, and hostilities in the outdoor environment (Gilpin, 2016).

GIVING BACK TO RESEARCHED COMMUNITIES

We, as scholars, must also think and act like community members. We have to think about what we can give back to participants and ways that we can use our research to connect people to each other and new professional opportunities. "How can we best protect participants?" should be the foundation of all research. The call to research, support, and investigate marginalized groups in outdoor recreation is necessary, but we argue that exceptional care must be taken while doing so.

This is our roadmap for radical community-engaged participant research, which will accomplish the following:

1. We urge researchers to aggregate and anonymize their findings to the greatest extent possible, even if pressured towards greater specificity. In any research project, scholars potentially place a burden on participants to share their experiences and perspectives. A pseudonym will often not be enough. The complexity of analyzing race in such a situation when a person's race and location could be used to easily identify and thus place them at risk.
2. Approaching people in the outdoor recreation community and asking them what research they need to be done to make the outdoor industry a better working environment. In white, masculine, male-dominated outdoor industries, privileging the perspectives and voices of BIPOC communities, disabled individuals, and LGBTQIA + individuals is a radical act, one that must be at the fore of any such project.
3. Make sure that we are not burdening participants with extra work as we collect data, which could include additional physical labor, emotional labor, and racial battle fatigue, among others.
4. This research protects participants by not using identifiers to describe them. Exceeding IRB expectations of protecting identities should be done in situations that could put

participants' livelihood and safety at risk. Editors, reviewers, and respondents to articles should develop an understanding and be more lenient when protecting the identity of participants in this sort of work.

5. When the research is done, we need to ensure we get the information back to the outdoor communities we have worked with instead of only focusing on academic publications. Creative ways of disseminating information through outdoor publications, social media, and podcasts so that many people can have access to what we learn should be a goal of radical community-engaged participant research in the name of intersectional environmental praxis. An example of this is the work that Alexa and Maria are doing in A-DASH, partnering with agencies and outfitters to report findings and research to the whitewater community. Any research has to be useful to the groups we are studying, and those groups have to have access to it.

The goal of the researcher should be to create the safest environment for participants. Real bodies and real lives are implicated with every ask for support and participation, and researchers should not be tourists in these outdoor spaces. We need to be committed advocates for change with the care and safety of the participants at the core of all we do. We come back to the need for intersectional approaches—racist, sexist, ableist, and exclusionary policies and practices have long existed, and even when folx try to build alliances, there is still something missing in safety for marginalized groups. Can we as researchers use our process to create sharing spaces so groups can come together and advocate for each other to be outside? When conceptualizing, carrying out, and writing our research, our responsibility is to become safety builders for these communities.

The issues outlined in this paper that interrogate the role of the researcher are paralleled in multiple communities in which issues of intersectionality and inclusion are being investigated (see, for example, De Los Santos Upton et al., 2021). Doing no harm to those that live and work in the outdoor recreation field should be the priority for researchers. Start with ourselves and ask: What are we asking of communities, and how can we help dismantle systems of oppression and contribute to more equitable change through the lens of radical community-engaged participant research? Madison, 2012; Springer, 2018; Blevins and Leslie, 2020; May, 2020; De Los Santos Upton et al., 2021, Ong, 2021.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All three authors contributed equally to this project in brainstorming, writing, and editing. MB did the administrative tasks.

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"La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí": Translating Collective Struggles for Environmental and Energy Justice in Puerto Rico's Jobos Bay Communities

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Rural, coastal communities in the Jobos Bay region of southeastern Puerto Rico confront disproportionate harms as an energy sacrifice zone. This space is constituted by imported fossil fuel dependency, economic and climate injustices, environmental racism, ecocide, US colonialism and imperialism, neoliberalism, and racial capitalism. In response, many grassroots actors mobilize against the toxic assault on their communities to push for alternatives beyond the suffocating status quo via apoyo mutuo [mutual support]. This survival work and movement building occur literally in "the outdoors" and in other intertwined multispecies environments, challenging narrow, oppressive colonial, and consumerist constructs that reduce "the outdoors" to recreation and thus erase the numerous ways that people labor in, honor, and defend places and spaces to lead good lives. Thus, critical examinations of communication and race/racism/racialization in and about this colonial US territory must grapple with the brutalities and pain caused by systemic and structural cruelties and translate how, where, and with whom self-determined and potentially liberatory environmental and energy justice advocacy takes shape to refuse a trauma-only narrative. Studying these embodied and emplaced efforts positions energy and power broadly construed, including in the form of collective action. This article centers on the collaborative energies of local grassroots actors and scholars who ideologically and politically align and who value working together toward anti-colonial praxis. To provide one example of how these collaborations can yield public-facing projects that contribute to struggles tied to the survival and well-being of the most impacted communities, this essay focuses on the creation of an environmental justice children's book. This bilingual text documents and translates the pollution caused by a US-owned, coal-fired power plant and mobilizations to topple this corporate invader. The article concludes by reflecting on some of the difficulties and possibilities that emerged during multi-year coalitional relationships that inform and exceed the children's book. To reject racist and colonial dominant assumptions and discourses about outdoor spaces as only privileged recreational areas or as a "blank slate" devoid of people and culture, this project narrates how grassroots organizers and scholars persist in continued study and struggle for power(ful) transformations in Jobos Bay and beyond.

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INTRODUCTION

> Quieren detener la propagación del coronavirus, pero nadie mira la plaga mayor que seguirá matándonos día a día por los siguientes años. Hay una pandemia mayor que el COVID-19 y sólo tiene tres letras: AES. [They (government officials) want to stop the spread of the coronavirus, but no one looks at the bigger plague that will continue killing us day by day for the following years. There is a bigger pandemic than COVID-19 and it only has three letters: AES.][1]
>
> -Mabette Colón Pérez, student and community activist, Guayama, Puerto Rico

Applied Energy Services (AES) is responsible for the US-owned 454-megawatt carbonera [coal-fired power plant] that Mabette Colón Pérez describes in this interview with Puerto Rican writer and community activist Víctor Alvarado Guzmán, 2020.[2] Since 2002, Colón Pérez and her coastal neighbors have been forced to host this unwanted occupying "plaga," which is one of Puerto Rico's two most polluting power plants (Santiago and Gerrard, 2021). This facility operates in the rural, southeastern municipality of Guayama in the Jobos Bay region and ecosystem, where residents have a median annual household income of $15,000 (Lloréns, 2016). To witness this powerhouse and its five-story high coal ash heap is to confront the material entanglements of an imported fossil fuel-dependent economy, economic and climate injustices, environmental racism, ecocide, US colonialism and imperialism, neoliberalism, and racial capitalism (Lloréns, 2020; Onís, 2021). Simultaneously, the carbonera creates an urgent need for communally self-determined environmental and energy justice that counters the colonial framing of "the great outdoors."[3] This "frontier mythology [is] built on white heteronormative masculinity and a eugenicist investment in able white bodies" that is tied to logics and discourses of possession, national belonging, and "consumer citizenship" (Wald, 2018, pp. 53, 63). In contrast, for Jobos Bay area residents, the outdoor spaces and places they experience are for working, honoring, and defending, as their survival depends on interconnected multispecies environments that are poisoned by numerous forms of pollution. Accordingly, Colón Pérez's cautionary statement elucidates the high stakes for opposing the toxic AES site and its diffusion in the form of cenizas [coal ash] along a "death route" (Lloréns and Santiago, 2018a; Lloréns, 2020). This lethal "life cycle" begins with extracting coal in Colombia, which then is transported to Puerto Rico and, because of reckless storage and disposal practices, has harmed human and more-than-human bodies in this colonial US territory, the Dominican Republic, and Florida (see **Figure 1**).[4] This material exigency necessitates transforming energy and power broadly construed "from below" (García-López, 2020).

US colonialism, imperialism, neoliberalism, and racial capitalism have been met with tenacious resistance from grassroots groups in southeastern Puerto Rico, exemplified by Colón Pérez, and many of her neighbors, as well as supporters throughout the archipelago and in the US diaspora (Berman Santana, 1996; Lloréns, 2021; Onís et al., 2020a). These energy actors[5] have opposed and worked toward alternatives to multinational corporations and polluting fossil fuel plants that have treated the Jobos Bay region and its mixed-race and Afro-descendant residents as a "peripheral sacrifice zone within a periphery" (Lloréns, 2018). Historically, many community members labored on sugarcane plantations and faced generations of displacement and migration between the United States and Puerto Rico's archipelago because of the precarities and abuses inherent in the capitalist, topdown production model (Berman Santana, 1996; Lloréns, 2016). This past and present dispossession, accelerated by earthquakes and increasingly intense and frequent hurricanes linked to global heating, necessitates imagining and implementing the anti-colonial alternatives advocated by many grassroots energy actors. These approaches to convivir (coexist) otherwise

[1]Alvarado Guzmán, V. (2020, Apr. 22). Más letal el coronavirus en residentes expuestos a la contaminación de la planta de carbón en Guayama, *El Patriota del Sur (blog)*. Available at: https://elpatriotadelsur.blogspot.com/2020/04/mas-letal-el-coronavirus-en-residentes.html?m=1.

[2]Following Holling and Calafell (2011), I avoid signaling out Spanish words in this essay by maintaining regular font, rather than using italics. I provide English-language translations in brackets.

[3]Like environmental and climate justice, energy justice research stems from movement organizing that centers the disproportionate impacts caused by an extractivist economy and other interrelated concerns that harm the lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, as well as low-income and low-wealth communities. This movement, frame, and discourse engages global and regional climate disruption, energy poverty, the fossil fuel and renewable energy industries, decarbonization, decentralization (i.e., changing from centralized, large infrastructure to distributed, small systems and creating horizontal forms of people power), democratization via direct participation, and decolonization. These final four concepts and practices—decarbonization, decentralization, democratization, and decolonization—are indispensable components of energy justice in Puerto Rico. Accordingly, they should be struggled for simultaneously "to avoid reaffirming oppressive power dynamics that benefit from isolating and overlooking other entwined concepts and practices" (Onís, 2021, p. 55–56).

[4]The Florida area targeted for receiving the Guayama plant's coal ash, Osceola County, is one of the fastest-growing places for Puerto Ricans in the United States, many of whom left the archipelago following Hurricanes Irma and María (Calma, 2019). For a more thorough discussion of AES and resistance to this facility and its operations, consult the University of California Press webpage for my book, *Energy Islands: Metaphors of Power, Extractivism, and Justice in Puerto Rico*, which provides a downloadable portion of the introduction: https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520380622/energy-islands.

[5]"Energy actors" comes from a 2014 interview I conducted with engineering professor Efraín O'Neill-Carrillo in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. He and several energy studies colleagues employ this concept to highlight the agency and potential power of everyday local individuals and groups (O'Neill-Carrillo et al., 2019; Onís, 2021).

FIGURE 1 | The AES plant, photographed here in May 2015, permeates natural and human-made borders via coal ash dispersal, including in previous uses of this toxic substance as fill and building material. Image credit: Catalina M. de Onís.

advance local self-determination and community-designed and -directed projects and experiences that cultivate habitable spaces for life-giving and -sustaining relations amid compounding crises (Atiles Osoria, 2014; Onís, 2018a; Onís, 2018b; Lloréns and Santiago, 2018b; Lloréns and Stanchich, 2019; Garriga-López, 2020; Soto Vega, 2020). As this essay describes, these activities and practices often are energized by enactments of apoyo mutuo [mutual support] that value interspecies relationalities. These literal and figurative sites of "survival work," accompanied by struggles for systemic root changes, are in direct tension with and exist beyond racial capitalism and colonialism (García-Quijano and Lloréns, 2017; Spade, 2020, p. 1).

Writing with great concern for Puerto Rico, as a member of the US Puerto Rican diaspora, I join this special issue on "Communication, Race, and Outdoor Spaces" with an interest in environmental and energy justice from an anti-colonial position that centers embodied, emplaced ways of being, knowing, and communicating in rural, coastal, and archipelagic communities. To do so, this essay understands "nature and environment as relational sites for navigating both embodied racial identities and ecological space and place" (Nishime and Hester Williams, 2018, p. 4). Examining these "racial ecologies" emphasizes the connections between co-constituting environments and race/racialization, which "shift and change over time but are always intertwined" (Nishime and Hester Williams, 2018, p. 4). Calling out and combatting the white supremacy, racism, and capitalist economic exploitation that cause disproportionate experiences with toxic exposures and environmental degradation, many environmental justice scholars, advocates, and activists long have insisted that "the environment" is not a place apart, set aside only for recreation, but rather is where people live their lives (Di Chiro, 1996; Pezzullo, 2007; Sandler and Pezzullo, 2007). Challenging this false boundary involves delinking from narratives, tropes, and discourses that uphold the master framing of "the great outdoors" as a white ecotopia that finds its resilient strength in the colonial binaries of "polluted" and "pollutable," "pristine" and "pure," and "wild nature" and "civilization" (Buescher and Ono, 1996; Enck-Wanzer, 2011; Park and Pellow, 2011; Wanzer-Serrano, 2015; Sifuentez, 2016; García-Quijano and Lloréns, 2017; Castro-Sotomayor, 2019). Furthermore, divisionary constitutions of and assumptions about "the outdoors" and "the indoors" should be troubled because these in and out markers are diffuse, permeable, fluid, and mutable. As the environmental justice adage makes clear: "The wind blows, and the water flows" (Pezzullo and Depoe, 2010, p. 89). Contextual and cultural differences also matter for communicating indoor and outdoor spaces, as communities interact with/in environments differently based on natural and built conditions and the privileges and precarities they experience (Park and Pellow, 2011).[6] Echoing and extending these crucial challenges to privileged preservation, conservation, and sustainability discourses and their consumerist investments, this article highlights power and

[6]To illustrate, in Puerto Rico, many house, apartment, community center, and school windows are composed of slats that can be opened or closed with a small hand crank on the side. This infrastructural quality enables the Caribbean tropical brisa [breeze] and sun to pass through and helps to block hot air and natural or artificial lighting when closed.

energy as key interrelated concepts for analysis and for impelling tangible action.

Critical environmental and energy justice communication studies support collective struggles for dismantling racial capitalism, environmental racism, coloniality, and US empire building (Melamed, 2011; Pulido, 2016a; Pulido, 2016b; Pellow, 2018). Grassroots energy actor and scholar colaboradores [collaborators] may work together to record, translate, analyze, critique, share, magnify, and reanimate different rhetorical materials.[7] These expressive energies strive to reimagine dominant coloniality-laden understandings of "outdoor spaces" as a "blank slate" for wealthy occupiers and investors (Onís, 2021, p. 69). Jobos Bay area communities experience extreme pollution and extraordinary beauty in "the outdoors," where they live, labor, rest, organize, and make camp to rebel against injustice.[8] Many residents also participate in subsistence fishing and crabbing, which carries cultural significance, enacts an alternative economy, and provides sustenance (García-Quijano and Lloréns, 2017). Full access to unthreatened places and spaces for various activities and purposes is vital for communities fighting to survive and to live good lives, as they respond to and resist everyday stressors (e.g., anti-Black racism, poverty, colonialism and coloniality, English monolingualism, and toxic air, water, soil, noise, and light pollution) and acute climate- and energy-related emergencies (e.g., hurricanes, extreme heat, and prolonged blackouts) linked to disaster and colonial capitalism. Thus, the ways in which energy actors communicate what "the outdoors" means and for whom marks a crucial site of study, contestation, and struggle that animates this essay and its contributions to what I call Puerto Rican environmental and energy communication studies.

To document and translate possibilities for coalitional work that critically engages oppressive and oppositional conceptualizations of "communication, race, and outdoor spaces," this essay presents its contributions in four parts. First, I describe my positionality and connections to Puerto Rico in terms of familial, kinship, and research ties. After expressing these multiple un/belongings, which inform and complicate how I understand and approach Puerto Rico, I cite a blend of literature on decolonial, energy, Puerto Rican, archipelagic, and environmental communication studies to call for centering anti-colonial imaginings and methods in environmental and energy justice scholarship. To elucidate why this emphasis matters, I provide an overview of the US colonial territory's complex energy politics. Second, I describe how many residents in Jobos Bay communities have responded to exploitation and dispossession by cultivating relationalities that envision and enact alternatives. These efforts are apparent in the ways in which several energy actors and groups honor and nourish interconnectedness and reciprocal relations via apoyo mutuo. Such an approach also can be translated to grassroots energy actor and scholar collaborations that practice a similar ethic of care toward struggling for environmental and energy justice in many relational spaces that take place literally in "the outdoors" and in other areas that shape and are shaped by interspecies connectivities. Third, I present a case study of how several coauthors and I created a bilingual environmental justice children's book: *La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí/ Environmental Justice Is for You and Me.* This interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and archipelagic-diasporic project provides an example of how knowledges about audience, translation, storytelling, message framing, energy politics, and more can provide applied communication offerings to support struggles for material transformations linked to master and marginalized articulations of "outdoor spaces." Fourth and finally, I conclude by reflecting on the pitfalls and possibilities of engaging in grassroots energy actor and scholar collaborations and their significance for anti-colonial methods and praxis that prioritize, learn from, and consensually work in coalition with those most impacted by environmental and energy injustices. In doing so, this essay aims to translate and amplify ongoing collective action by local organizers and their accomplices in the US Puerto Rican diaspora to imagine and implement alternative relationships with power and energy in their many forms.

EN/COUNTERING COLONIAL TOXICITY IN THE JOBOS BAY REGION

Since 2014, first as a graduate student and now as a professor, I have studied and supported self-determined grassroots environmental and energy justice communication and material struggles during extended visits to Puerto Rico and remotely in the continental United States. As a Puerto Rican, Spanish American, and Irish American woman, who was born and raised in the US diaspora, my family history, white-passing and financial privileges, bilingualism (including frustrating struggles to learn Spanish more fully, while sometimes being disciplined for speaking the language), and multiple un/ belongings profoundly shape how I understand, relate to, and write and talk about this Caribbean archipelago. I hold the multiple roles of a family member, friend, researcher, teacher, diasporic co-conspirator, and more. My positionality, identities,

[7]I use "colaborador(es)" ["collaborator(s)"] because this naming is commonly employed in my exchanges with some grassroots group members.

[8]This latter advocacy form occurs in space-occupying protests against extractive industry overseers and their political cronies, epitomized by the Guayama carbonera, and the privatization of public beaches, inspiring the slogan: "Las playas son p'al pueblo" ["The beaches are for the people"]. According to Puerto Rico law, beaches are public spaces and cannot be privatized. However, in practice, privatization of these areas frequently occurs, often resulting in grassroots, coalitional resistance to illegal development. Epitomizing these clashes, in summer 2021, local beach defenders challenged the rebuilding of a swimming pool destroyed by Hurricane María in Rincón, a western coastal town on Puerto Rico's largest island. The pool is part of a private apartment complex owned by people with close ties to the territorial government. Claiming that the project threatened public use and endangered species and ignored growing concerns with sea-level rise and extreme storm impacts in coastal regions due to climate disruption, hundreds of people camped at the beach/construction site to stop the project. The individuals and groups protesting the pool reshaped the meaning of this outdoor space with their transgressive, reoccupying acts of embodied, emplaced defiance. Police arrested and acted violently toward many of these beach defenders (Carrión, 2021).

and kinships result in the liminal contradiction of feeling and being connected to and disconnected from Puerto Rico, including coastal communities, such as Mayagüez, my grandmother's birthplace. In response to these complexities, across time and space, I have attended carefully to power differentials to try to refuse extractivist research that reproduces oppressive relations and structures when interacting with grassroots energy actors in Jobos Bay communities. While a thorough discussion of these experiences exceeds the space available in this article, I describe this reflexive process in *Energy Islands: Metaphors of Power, Extractivism, and Justice in Puerto Rico* (Onís, 2021).

Given my many privileges and the disproportionate power I hold as a scholar who can reach and influence multiple audiences, critical and collaborative "radical reflexivity" that seeks to dismantle oppressive relations marks a key site for countering the neoliberal capitalist and colonial currents that power academia (Tuck and Yang, 2013; Temper et al., 2019, p. 3; Lee and Ahtone, 2020; Lechuga, 2021). Settler colonialism and coloniality are foundational to dominant communication studies assumptions and practices, including in environmental and energy communication studies (Enck-Wanzer, 2011; Castro-Sotomayor, 2019; Banerjee and Sowards, 2020; Lechuga, 2020). Most academic institutions uncritically applaud scholarship that makes a department or university advance its "engaged research," without considering how these interactions may fail to care about the political, material consequences of recording and circulating experiences, struggles, and stories to reach wider audiences. The language of "civic engagement," "listening to," "amplifying," and "collaborative research," among other related concepts and practices, easily can replicate paternalistic and other colonial relationships related to energy and power in certain contexts (Alcoff, 1991; Tuck and Yang, 2013; Wald, 2018). Accordingly, contemplations of what (not) to record and tell, how, when, where, and by and with whom are imperative for navigating difficult tensions that arise in applied communication collaborations that refuse academic pressures and messages to "produce" and "engage" more. Ethically collaborating with frontline/coastline communities—home to many residents who resist and refuse their exploitation and expulsion—requires addressing asymmetrical power relations among collaborators, attending carefully to values, and challenging normative practices and assumptions (Hale, 2006; Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2016; Temper et al., 2019; Pellow, 2020). These focus areas are essential for examining race/racism/racialization in "outdoor spaces" to advance critical environmental and energy justice communication studies that support self-determined movement struggles and the local people who energize them (Pellow, 2018).

Energy justice scholars and practitioners in the United States and Puerto Rico have done well to trouble dominant energy studies that neglect or oversimplify difference and inequities, which too often separate technological transformations from culture and power. These researchers explain that conceptualizing energy transitions as only about technology challenges seriously overlooks the many power inequities shaping these controversies and possibilities (Castro-Sitiriche, 2019; Fortier et al., 2019; O'Neill-Carrillo et al., 2017; O'Neill-Carrillo et al., 2019). Energy studies must account adequately for how privilege and precarity impact the lived experiences of individuals, families, and communities struggling for sustainable jobs, clean air and water, and the protection of places and people about which they care (Teron and Ekoh, 2018). This critical attention evinces the importance of situated, place-based analyses of energy in/justice in practice, including in non-continental spaces, to consider and contribute to "archipelagic rhetoric" (Na'puti, 2019).

Islands and archipelagoes tend to be homogenized by a colonial, imperial gaze that erases marginalized histories, ongoing existences, and differential experiences in various spaces. This Othering is fueled and maintained by hierarchies that are constituted by discourses, narratives, tropes, and policies that communicate the binaries of inferior and superior and disposable and dominant. Puerto Rico, the former colonial "rich port" of Spain (1493–1898) and now the colonial "unincorporated territory" of the United States (since 1898), fits this description. The archipelago's coastal regions long have been targeted and occupied by the US military and sugarcane, fossil fuel, biotechnology, and pharmaceutical industries (Berman Santana, 1996; García-Quijano and Lloréns, 2017). This system of exploiting people and environments has come at a very high cost that includes and exceeds grave economic injustices that have been unevenly experienced.

Though all of Puerto Rico demonstrates long histories of environmental and energy injustices, the southeastern region exhibits heightened environmental racism, given the disproportionate impacts of polluting power plants on the low-income and -wealth individuals who live there, many of whom are mixed-race and Afro-descendant people (Lloréns, 2014; García-Quijano et al., 2015; Lloréns, 2016; García López et al., 2017; Lloréns and Santiago, 2018a; Lloréns, 2021; Onís, 2021). Residents rely on surrounding environments for food, income, and recreation while practicing communal belonging and honoring coastal traditions and ways of surviving, such as subsistence fishing (García-Quijano et al., 2015; García-Quijano and Lloréns, 2017; García-Quijano and Poggie, 2020). These lifeways face serious threats, as Jobos Bay communities are toxically assaulted (Pezzullo, 2006). Studies link the relentless noise, air, water, soil, and light pollution to respiratory problems (e.g., asthma, sinusitis, chronic bronchitis), skin rashes, cardiovascular illnesses, cancer, and reproductive injustices, including spontaneous abortions (Santiago, 2012; Alfonso, 2016; Albarracín et al., 2017; Lloréns and Santiago, 2018b; Feliciano and Green, 2018; Alfonso, 2019a; Alfonso, 2019b; Fox, 2021).

The owners and managing officials of the AES coal plant are responsible for many of these public health and environmental and energy injustices. The facility's combustion residual waste (coal ash) contains arsenic, lead, cadmium, and other heavy metals (Garrabrants et al., 2012). As Puerto Rican journalist Omar Alfonso documents, residents and coalitional partners have organized vigorously for the removal of many tons of coal ash on the AES property and throughout Puerto Rico, the cleanup of this byproduct that has been dispersed and used

throughout their neighborhoods, and the ultimate closure of the carbonera. Over the years, land, air, and water defenders have employed a variety of strategies and tactics, including encampments, physically blocking trucks with their bodies, and legislative activities (Lloréns, 2016; Lloréns, 2020). Members of the grassroots Resistencia contra la quema de Carbón y sus Cenizas tóxicas (la Resistencia RCC) and Comunidad guayamesa unidos por tu salud, among others, often have faced intense repression and brutal force from police (LeBrón, 2019; Onís et al., 2020a). Also, motivating mobilizations is local knowledge that the carbonera has contaminated the South Coast Aquifer, the sole source of drinking water for tens of thousands of residents. At the same time, community members encounter water rationing to address ongoing drought and scarcity concerns caused by, in part, centralized fossil fuel plants, which heavily rely on water for their operations (Santiago and Gerrard, 2021). In January 2020, the then Puerto Rican governor signed a law that would ban the accumulation of more than 180 days' worth of coal ash waste on the AES property (Cortés-Chico, 2020). In response, several public hearings on the proposed regulation were held, and disputes regarding enforcement by Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources are ongoing, including in the form of demonstrations using the slogan "Una sola lucha" ["One Single Struggle"] to express the multiple, interrelated harms inflicted upon residents and the spaces where they live. Given these exigencies, while all people in Puerto Rico experience some form of toxic pollution with the ubiquity and banality of chemical exposures today, Jobos Bay communities live in an energy sacrifice zone (Pezzullo, 2014; Hernández, 2015; Lloréns, 2016; Onís, 2017; Onís, 2021). More recently, in spring and summer 2021, environmental, community, agricultural, labor, religious, and other groups raised their voices to demand greater enforcement of penalties for illegal coal ash dumping and increased communication when communities have been exposed to coal ash, among other demands. This activism is part of the long-term struggle to rid Puerto Rico of the AES coal-fired power plant and in response to a 2021 regulation by the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, which governs the illegal dumping and spreading of coal ash in Puerto Rico.

In addition to disproportionate impacts from the siting of power plants and the "life cycle" of the fossil fuels they burn, the archipelago's centralized power system relies on risky and inequitable transmission and distribution lines from the rural south to urban areas in the north. Seventy percent of power is generated in the southern coastal region, yet only about 30 percent is consumed there. Furthermore, Jobos Bay communities are often the first to lose electricity and one of the last to regain it, as metropolitan San Juan and other tourist regions are prioritized by the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA). This arrangement provides a material reminder of whose existences are marked as exploitable and expendable and whose lives are valued in the service of capital—in the form of tourism and other business interests. This system also evinces which communities experience energy privilege, and which do not, as this inequitable reality calls attention to how racialization, racism, colorism, income and wealth, geographies, and other factors affect communities differently, including blackouts and toxic exposures (Onís, 2018a; Schneider and Peeples, 2018; Castro-Sitiriche, 2019; Onís, 2021).

Further contributing to this serious problem are damaging energy policy and business agreements. In June 2021, key functions of PREPA, the local power authority, were privatized in a neoliberal, colonial takeover by LUMA Energy. This joint US-Canadian business "collaboration" denies many PREPA employees and union workers possibilities for continuing in their previous positions and increases the existing financial burden that residents pay on their electricity bills. These monthly costs already are two to three times more than the average US household, as ratepayers are forced to finance the power utility's heavy debt burden and continued reliance on imported fossil fuels, which make up 97 percent of Puerto Rico's energy mix (US Energy Information Administration, 2020; Conant, 2021; Onís and Lloréns, 2021; Sanzillo, 2021; UTIER, 2021). LUMA is positioned to profit from billions of dollars in FEMA disaster recovery funds to rebuild or "harden" the existing power grid with imported methane gas and more fossil fuel infrastructure. Local attorney and community activist Ruth "Tata" Santiago (2021) argues that the plan is untenable, especially given that "Cambio PR and the Institute for Energy, Economics and Financial Analysis set out a detailed path to achieve 75 percent renewable power generation in 15 years." Santiago and many other supporters of the Queremos Sol (2020) [We Want Sun] plan are working to transform the entire electric system, by shifting to distributed, onsite rooftop solar installations organized at the local community level, and coupled with battery energy storage systems, power electronics, energy efficiency, literacy, demand response, job creation, and other related programs. This approach would revolutionize Puerto Rico's current infrastructure and mitigate long-experienced inequitable power realities that are as much about electric power as they are about people power. Financial and political barriers greatly impede this renewable energy alternative and its connections to self-determined environmental and energy justice. Significantly, while women are not the ones typically visible on rooftops for grassroots project installations, they offer essential scaffolding to these and many other projects by sustaining different relationships, often behind the scenes and in less elevated ways—literally and figuratively (Lloréns and Santiago, 2018a; Lloréns, 2021). As local grassroots activists, labor union members, and other outraged residents persist in seeking a different energy present and future, for now, the colonial territory's electric grid is controlled by LUMA corporate actors who know little about the local power utility, Puerto Rican culture, or the Spanish language, resulting in major communication barriers, power outages and blackouts, and so much more (Onís and Lloréns, 2021).

This complex milieu and its sites of material struggle challenge master and simplistic framings of Puerto Rico's so-called "natural disasters," which carry life and death consequences that are bound to the electric power system. During the 2017 hurricanes that pummeled the Antilles and the wave of

earthquakes and aftershocks a few years later, the fragile transmission and distribution system and centralized power plants faced major, multi-month disruptions to their operations (Orama-Exclusa, 2020; Santiago et al., 2020a; Santiago et al., 2020b). While these outcomes caused problems for everyone, for those requiring oxygen therapy, dialysis, and chilled medications, the stakes of power loss were especially high. Accordingly, in addition to questioning how "natural" these experiences are, this article resists narratives that reduce climate and other related disruptions only to events, which erase the ways in which acute shocks are inseparable from oppressive everyday stressors (Lloréns et al., 2018; Onís, 2018a; Onís et al., 2020b). These violent and traumatic experiences are not isolated and intertwine with deeply entrenched systems, structures, practices, discourses, stories, tropes, and assumptions of colonialism, neoliberalism, and racial capitalism that are resilient and require dismantling to create different existences and relationalities beyond a damage-centric narrative (Tuck, 2009; Tuck and Yang, 2013; Pulido, 2016a, 2016b; Carillo Rowe and Tuck, 2017; Banerjee and Sowards, 2020; Onís et al., 2021b). Many people and groups in and around Jobos Bay are doing this daily work via grassroots organizing that reclaims "outdoor spaces" for their own communities on their own terms.

RECLAIMING COMMUNAL SPACES IN RELATIONAL ACTS OF APOYO MUTUO

To examine and intervene in the energy-related problems and associated inequities and cruelties confronted by people in the Jobos Bay region, attending to environmental and energy justice communication via apoyo mutuo, or autogestión [communal self-reliance], provides one way of framing how grassroots energy actors coexist (García-Quijano and Lloréns, 2017; García-López, 2020). These worldmaking possibilities enact other ways of living beyond and in opposition to state and corporate violence that regularly marginalizes, harms, and suppresses communities in the archipelago, especially defiant individuals and groups. Alternative relational structures and actions are not inherently liberatory, however, if they fail to refuse single-issue politics and avoid vital analyses of intersectionality (Soto Vega and Chávez, 2019). This caution also applies to grassroots energy actor and scholar relationships that engage in translational acts to communicate environmental and energy justice from an anti-colonial perspective. This difficult work involves both co-creating spaces with marginalized individuals who express interest in collaboration to broaden and/or deepen critical understandings and co-conspiring to uproot (or at least to erode) oppressive conditions, systems, and relations. Such a complex process is evident in coalitional organizing in southeastern Puerto Rico.

Members of the Iniciativa de Ecodesarrollo de Bahía de Jobos (IDEBAJO) [Ecodevelopment Initiative of Jobos Bay] organize their actions and relationships using mutual support. Group contributors, and the organizers and ancestors who preceded them, raise awareness about and intervene in urgent environmental and energy problems that implicate corporate polluters, the power utility, the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, greedy developers, and local and US policies that sicken Jobos Bay communities. Composed of and serving residents from Salinas, Guayama, and other nearby rural municipalities, collaborators know intimately the urgent need for alternatives that advance public health and communal self-determination. Accordingly, IDEBAJO members dedicate their energies to sparking, sustaining, and strengthening educational programming and capacity building for the restoration of natural habitats, including the sustainable use and protection of coastal lands and waters. Their efforts illuminate the shared understanding that caring for various environments creates spaces for and necessitates the exercise of community power (Berman Santana, 1996).

IDEBAJO members communicate their values and vision for the present and future in diverse projects. The group initiated and maintains a radio program turned podcast called *Desde el barrio* [*From the Neighborhood*]. For the interviewers and interviewees who make this production possible, their neighborhood consists of physical homes, community centers, schools, parks, boating and fishing areas, mangrove forests, and much more. In these spaces, they coordinate a just hurricane recovery campaign, cultivate community gardens, and organize Construyendo Solidaridad desde el Amor y la Entrega [Building Solidarity through Love and Commitment], a project that involves (re) building homes for unhoused people. Group members also collaborate on smaller actions, exemplified by July 2021 cleanup efforts on the grounds of a now closed school in Aguirre, not far from Guayama. On the group's Facebook page, one member described the experience as for the "bien común" ["common good"] and "un paso por la esperanza" ["one step for hope"].[9] The organization's collaborators also share their specialized abilities related to vocational trainings, including as electricians and lawyers. For example, in addition to her advocacy and activist work with IDEBAJO, Santiago offers pro bono legal services that involve preparing documents, offering juridical advice, and representing community members or groups in administrative proceedings and in the courts. In exchange, she often receives food (e.g., vegetarian meals, seafood, and fruit) and car maintenance mechanical support. Grassroots organizer Carmen De Jesús, who frequently collaborates with Santiago, reflected on their communal efforts in this way: "En cuanto a la comunidad, diría que estamos encaminándonos a rescatar esos lazos sociales que fueron creados por nuestros antecesores: el ayudarnos, compartir lo que tenemos, preocuparnos por los demás, demostrar amor y empatía." ["Regarding the community, I would say that we are aiming to rescue our social ties that were created by our ancestors: to help each other, to share what we have, to care about others, to demonstrate love and empathy."]

IDEBAJO members coordinate with several affiliated groups, including the Comité Diálogo Ambiental [Environmental Dialogue Committee]. In spring 2020, in consultation with

[9]IDEBAJO members make regular Facebook posts at https://www.facebook.com/idebajo.idebajo.

FIGURE 2 | Convivencia Ambiental youth participants and event organizers woke up early for a bird-watching excursion in July 2014. As a material reminder of the Jobos Bay area's experiences with exploitation and dispossession, the Aguirre sugar mill ruins persist in the background. Image credit: Catalina M. de Onís.

Santiago, Dr. Lloréns and I coauthored the "Agua, Aire y Energía Limpia" ["Water, Air, and Clean Energy"] grant proposal. This action was intended to support collaborators' self-determination for their own community-centered investigations and interests, rather than any academic agendas. While it is important to be critical of the ways in which appealing to grant funding calls and funder dictates can limit liberatory possibilities, considering different ways that scholarly training can be repurposed to contribute to political struggles matters, as does considering situations when applying for and receiving grant money may not always compromise radical reimaginings. In this case, the Comité Diálogo Ambiental drew on the funds to make *El poder del pueblo* [*The Power of the People*] documentary, led by local community filmmaker José Luis "Chema" Baerga Aguirre, with associated film screenings and discussions planned. The group also is conducting community science trainings to measure and monitor air, soil, and water quality and is offering technical support for onsite/rooftop solar installations for communities closest to the carbonera.[10]

Accompanying these efforts, since 2006, Comité Diálogo Ambiental has organized an annual, week-long José "Cheo Blanco" Ortiz Agront Convivencia Ambiental [Environmental Coexistence] camp. The experiences planned and facilitated by organizers exemplify apoyo mutuo, as volunteers, many of whom are women, prepare meals, serve as chaperones, and lead workshops (García-Quijano and Lloréns, 2017; Lloréns and Santiago, 2018b; Alvarado Guzmán, 2019; Onís, 2021). These contributions are key for ensuring the camp is financially accessible to all, which is especially important given pervasive economic injustices in Jobos Bay. Organizers also include local youth who, together with older collaborators, center local ecological knowledges and place-based ways of understanding and valuing language and culture, informed by fishers, elders, artists, technical experts, and other participating community members and guests (see **Figure 2**). The camp also endeavors to affirm young people's embodied knowledge(s) and observations about their communities during activities that cultivate spaces for individual and communal self-determination, which I witnessed directly as a volunteer in 2014 and more recently during distanced electronic communication.[11] In 2020, the camp was delivered online for the first time in 15 years because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whether in person or virtual, the space-making generated by Convivencia Ambiental organizers and participants marks a significant alternative to a system that regularly devalues "non-expert" local knowledges and threatens community member well-being and survival. Furthermore, the camp challenges colonial and consumerist understandings of "the outdoors." As a radical rejection of this orientation, these young energy actors experience coexistence, interdependence, agency, and community building beyond dominant preservation, conservation, and sustainability discourses and the constraints of racial capitalism. Together, organizers refuse constrictive narratives of the outdoors that exclude, discipline, and erase how different people and groups coexist in these spaces, including by advancing political struggle

[10]In addition to this grant, at the request of and in consultation with IDEBAJO members Ruth Santiago and Roberto José Thomas Ramírez, I wrote and submitted two additional proposals in spring and summer 2021 to support the administrative needs of IDEBAJO and Comité Diálogo Ambiental for coalition building and amplifying mutual support.

[11]In addition to co-present experiences, I have supported the Convivencia Ambiental camp from afar, including by providing funds for youth participation and designing a role-playing activity that required experiencing difficult conversations on environmental topics.

FIGURE 3 | Convivencia Ambiental organizers, including Yaminette Rodríguez (second from right), incorporated *La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí/ Environmental Justice Is for You and Me* into 2021 programming to resonate with the theme "En nuestro planeta interconectado sobrevivimos junt@s" ["On our interconnected planet we survive together"]. This photo was taken in Coquí, Salinas, Puerto Rico. Image credit: Ruth Santiago, Yaminette Rodríguez, and Gerardo Cruz Pedragon.

and change. Thus, Convivencia Ambiental calls attention to and creates literal and figurative spaces for learning, advocacy, and resistance for collective action.

In 2021, camp programming returned to in-person events, coordinated by determined young organizers who wanted to ensure opportunities for local youth continued, during the pandemic. Among a host of activities, including being interviewed for the *Desde el barrio* podcast, Convivencia Ambiental energy actors received and read the bilingual children's book *La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí/ Environmental Justice Is for You and Me.*[12] This collaborative project narrates experiences with environmental in/justice in Jobos Bay communities for young people and provides a case study for communicating the intersection of energy, community power, environmental racism, and "outdoor spaces" (see **Figure 3**).

TRANSLATING SPACES OF ENVIRONMENTAL IN/JUSTICE FOR AND WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

In Puerto Rico, communicating different experiences often is constrained by English monolingualism and US cultural assumptions that function as powerful symbols and tools of white supremacy, coloniality, and racial capitalism (Onís, 2015; Onís, 2016; Sowards, 2019). For anti-colonial methods and praxis, "rethinking how research is conducted in non-white, non-English language, non-dominant cultures is one way to advance environmental justice, particularly through engaged scholarship that includes deliberation, participation, and decolonization" (Banerjee and Sowards, 2020, p. 4). Given that Jobos Bay residents are mixed-race, Afro-descendant, Spanish speaking, economically oppressed, and from marginalized rural and coastal areas, this article contributes to this "rethinking" of environmental justice research, which also carries strong implications for energy justice theories, methods, and practices. These concerns and actions are inseparable from translating racialization and racism that shape and are shaped by various spaces that complicate "the outdoors." In addition to literal acts of translation between different languages (e.g., Spanish and English) and more figurative ones (e.g., communicating concepts in accessible ways to different audiences), translation also can function "as an epistemological device with the potential of fostering the constitution of spaces for civic action to thrive" (Castro-Sotomayor, 2019, p. 2). As the previous section explained, one way in which this civic action for anti-colonial environmental and energy justice may transpire is by drawing on mutual support networks to reach, learn from, and collaborate with other energy actors and groups. These relational efforts occur in a variety of spaces, including on community center grounds where air pollution is visible and disrupts healthy respiration, during a summer camp that cultivates socio-ecological consciousness and action for and by local youth,

[12]The Comité Diálogo Ambiental Facebook page contains photos and recordings of the Convivencia Ambiental 2021 experience: https://www.facebook.com/Comité-Diálogo-Ambiental-Oficial-102760241683781.

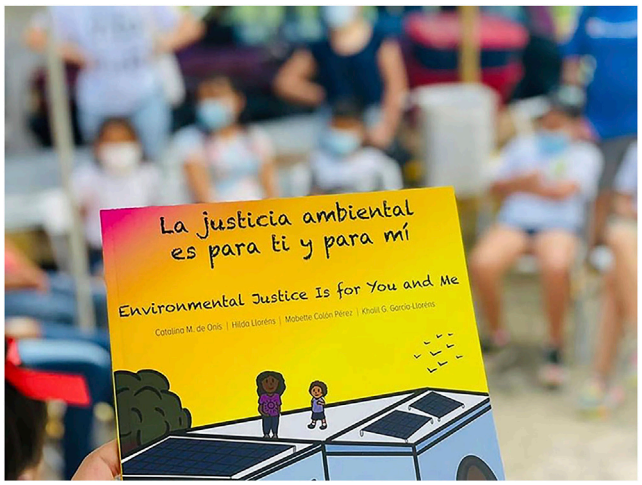

FIGURE 4 | *La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí* book cover depicts the importance of learning about, installing, and maintaining distributed solar power, as energy actors, including young community members, literally take this power into their own hands. Image credit: Andrea Ruiz Sorrentini.

FIGURE 5 | Youth participants in Puerto Rico's Aula en la Montaña program read and discussed the book in September 2021 to commemorate International Literacy Day. University of Puerto Rico Professor Sandra Soto Santiago **(left back corner)** co-organized the event (https://www.portal.editoraemergente.com/colaboraciones/). Image credit: Sandra Soto Santiago.

and even in the pages of a children's book that narrates the activism of student energy actors to encourage their peers and younger generations to join in struggle.

La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí/Environmental Justice Is for You and Me is a bilingual Spanish- and English-language text that was written during 2020–2021. Dr. Hilda Lloréns, Mabette Colón Pérez, whose perspective is documented in this article's epigraph, and Dr. Lloréns's son and middle-schooler Khalil G. García-Lloréns joined me in writing this children's book. Colón Pérez also illustrated various locations and experiences in and around Jobos Bay to accompany her "ecotestimonio" of growing up near the coal plant (Tarin, 2019). My coauthors and I translated this testimony for a younger audience and then integrated the material into a section called "La historia de Mabette" ["Mabette's Story"] to constitute the book's core. Surrounding this section, the text presents information about the socio-ecological context, provides definitions, and invites young readers, using "you" language, to think about how the book relates to them. To do so, *La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí* describes how the environmental justice movement discourse and frame take shape in Puerto Rico-based struggles against the AES coal plant and features Colón Pérez's experiences of enjoying Jobos Bay's beauty in her younger years. However, because of the coal plant, as she grew older, she no longer could swim or fish with her relatives because of the polluted water. Colón Pérez describes how her neighbors became sick, which motivated her to join a local group and to raise her voice, which later informed her involvement with the Convivencia Ambiental camp. In addition to those living in her area of southeastern Puerto Rico, the book also tries to reach youth throughout the world who speak/read Spanish and/or English and who are interested in learning about environmental justice and advocating for their own communities (see **Figures 4**, **5**).

After the main text concludes, the book provides a glossary of relevant terms and selections from the 17 Principles of Environmental Justice.[13] Members of the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit drafted these priorities in October 1991 in Washington, D.C. Thirty years since their writing, these principles continue to guide many aspects of the environmental justice movement, which extends beyond US continental and colonial borders. In this section, my coauthors and I chose to highlight specific environmental justice principles that we thought were especially relevant for young people, including "the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives" (Onís et al., 2021a, p. 50). As just one example of why engaging interconnected ecological and cultural differences matters, the book features an illustration of students on their way to school, passing by mangroves (see **Figure 6**). Literally, on the frontlines of climate disruption, these coastal forests are jeopardized by the same unsustainable, lethal systems that threaten the human and more-than-human communities they protect (García-Quijano et al., 2015).

In crafting this book and its components, my coauthors and I embodied the role of translators, as we moved between different linguistic and material, and digital spaces to amplify conversations and actions for environmental and energy

[13]These principles are available at: https://climatejusticealliance.org/ej-principles/.

FIGURE 6 | Mangroves are a vital part of Puerto Rico's coastal ecosystem. Convivencia Ambiental participants experience different activities that honor these life-giving and -sustaining forests that store carbon and help to mitigate erosion and sea-level rise. In 2017, organizers centered these vital structures in the theme "Mi comunidad entre las raíces del manglar" ["My community among the roots of the mangrove forest"]. Image credit: Mabette Colón Pérez and Editora Educación Emergente.

justice. Sensing the urgency of worsening environmental degradation and climate disruption and the associated disproportionate impacts, we confronted the challenge of addressing young people in accessible ways, such as communicating the complicated topics of injustice and pollution in multiple languages. This translational work informed our multipronged efforts to reach researchers, teachers, students, and others who find the Spanish and/or English languages accessible, as well as to reach the most-impacted community members, whose stories and struggles constituted the exigency for this book project. As part of the "Otra escuela" ["Another School"] series, Puerto Rican publisher Editora Educación Emergente published the e-book for no-cost download on its website (https://www.editoraemergente.com/en/home/122-environmental-justice-is-for-you-and-me.html).
Editor Dr. Lissette Rolón Collazo also worked with my coauthors and me to produce paperback copies of the book for purchase online, with all royalties to be donated to Convivencia Ambiental (https://www.editoraemergente.com/es/inicio/125-la-justicia-ambiental-es-para-ti-y-para-mi.html). Based on conversations about distribution, Dr. Rolón Collazo sent 40 book copies to Santiago, a Convivencia Ambiental camp coordinator, to incorporate into programming and for wider sharing. Additionally, accompanying numerous other dissemination efforts, I coordinated with the editor to have one dozen books sent to Vieques, a municipality east of Puerto Rico's largest island, for presentations and distribution to local elementary schools. To increase online access, a link to the children's book is included on *El poder del pueblo* [*The Power of the People*] website (https://elpoderdelpueblo.com). In consultation with IDEBAJO and Comité Diálogo Ambiental members, I created this resource hub, which includes a Convivencia Ambiental 2019 video, composed by IDEBAJO member Alvarado Guzmán (mentioned in this article's introduction), information about a community-produced documentary on the carbonera and distributed rooftop solar, various virtual panel recordings, and articles and books about grassroots struggles in Jobos Bay communities. Exemplified by this public-facing communication, in some situations, it may be best to offer non-research creative energies, when scholarship, including on-site field research, might not be what is needed most by communities.[14]

Thinking about and practicing alternative collaborations between grassroots energy actors and scholars is vital work for communicating and experiencing coexistence in shared and distinct spaces. Such attention creates openings for and may necessitate coalition that can be experienced electronically in what I call "e-advocacy." This method involves "maintaining ties and coalitional solidarities across time and space that extends the field" (Onís, 2021, p. 21). As with in-person interactions, this

[14]In addition to the listed contributions, my coalitional work in solidarity with Jobos Bay communities has ranged from researching and ordering solar generators to providing spaces for discussing movement building challenges rooted in interpersonal, organizational, and coalitional tensions (Onís, 2021).

collaborative concept and practice, which takes form in distanced digital and virtual exchanges, provide both possibilities and pitfalls in particular contexts.[15] In the case of the children's book, adapting to authors' preferred communication modes (e.g., email, Facebook messaging, WhatsApp, and phone texts) and navigating different time zones and electric power disruptions amid competing responsibilities are just a few examples of e-advocacy negotiations that my Puerto Rican coauthors and I experienced in our different locations in the archipelago and in the US diaspora during the pandemic. These e-advocacy reflections encourage an archipelagic understanding that is both literal and figurative, as individuals interested in examining race/racism/racialization and "the outdoors" can study material archipelagoes as well as metaphoric archipelagic formations, bridging different communities together in coalitional acts (Reyes-Santos, 2015; Onís, 2021). This archipelagic thinking and relating also can involve combining multiple disciplinary and other knowledges (Stephens and Martínez-San Miguel, 2020).

To enact this archipelagic-diasporic collaboration, making the children's book required interdisciplinary and intergenerational energies. Though creating a text that communicated environmental justice struggles in Puerto Rico to young readers grew from an idea I had held for some time, my coauthors transformed this project in ways that far exceeded my initial hopes for the book's creation and its potential circulation and reception. To co-generate *La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí*, Dr. Lloréns, an anthropologist, and I drew on our knowledges of audience adaptation and interdisciplinary understandings of Latina/o/x and Puerto Rican studies, environmental and energy justice studies, ethnography, and narratives, while shifting attention from our well-established practice of writing for adults to coauthor with and center young people as the primary audience. Dr. Lloréns's experience as a parent and reader of many children's books was very helpful for revising the initial draft to make it accessible to young readers. This feedback, in close consultation with her son, García-Lloréns, included bolding certain terms and sentences for emphasis, simplifying language, reducing the amount of content per page, and adding a glossary. Similarly, Colón Pérez offered key contributions that resonated with the communication studies concepts of voice, storytelling, and visual rhetoric. These indispensable offerings constituted much of the book's content. Together, my coauthors offered me—someone who does not often read to children—an opportunity to think more critically about content and form in relation to different audiences.

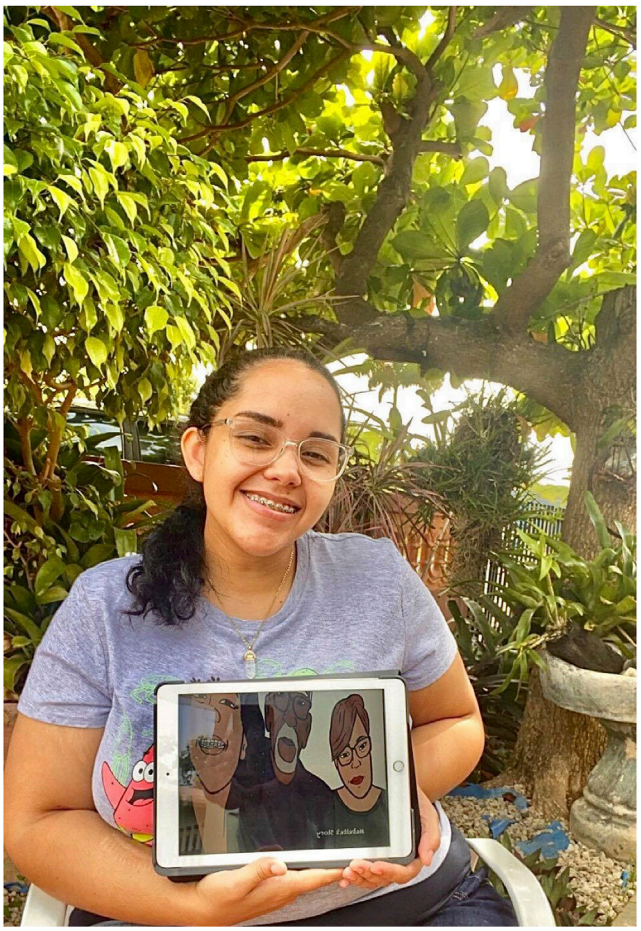

FIGURE 7 | Mabette Colón Pérez spent many hours making the illustrations for the children's book and already has read the text to Arizbeth, who she is expecting in Fall 2021. Image credit: Margarita Pérez.

The collaborative process that resulted in *La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí* required moving outside of familiar writing spaces and revealed that such a deviation carries the potential for informing and (re)shaping how scholars translate ideas. While the children's book implicitly tells a story of energy justice struggles, introducing this movement frame and discourse, in addition to environmental justice, likely would have overwhelmed a single project directed toward a young audience. However, I emphasize both environmental and energy justice in this article because of the importance of these overlapping and different movement frames and discourses for assisting academic and other concerned audiences with understanding lived experiences in Jobos Bay communities. For this essay and its interest in joining critical conversations about communication, race/racism/racialization, and "outdoor spaces," to engage one concept without the other would have

[15]This labor grows more urgent and complex with colliding everyday and acute crises. Global heating and regional climate disruption continue to intensify, increasing the number of climate refugees and migrants who face cruel and often lethal nationalistic, xenophobic policies that claim to "secure" borders and "protect" resources for "citizens," while criminalizing and barring those individuals who seek more survivable conditions elsewhere. Additionally, as the COVID-19 pandemic persists, scientists predict future widespread zoonotic diseases will sicken and kill unevenly because of grave inequities, epitomized by who has the privilege to "physically distance" and access vaccines who does not. Concurrently, environmental racism and other disproportionate impacts of white supremacy will further contribute to additional major health problems that can result in physical and other disabilities that carry mobility and other implications.

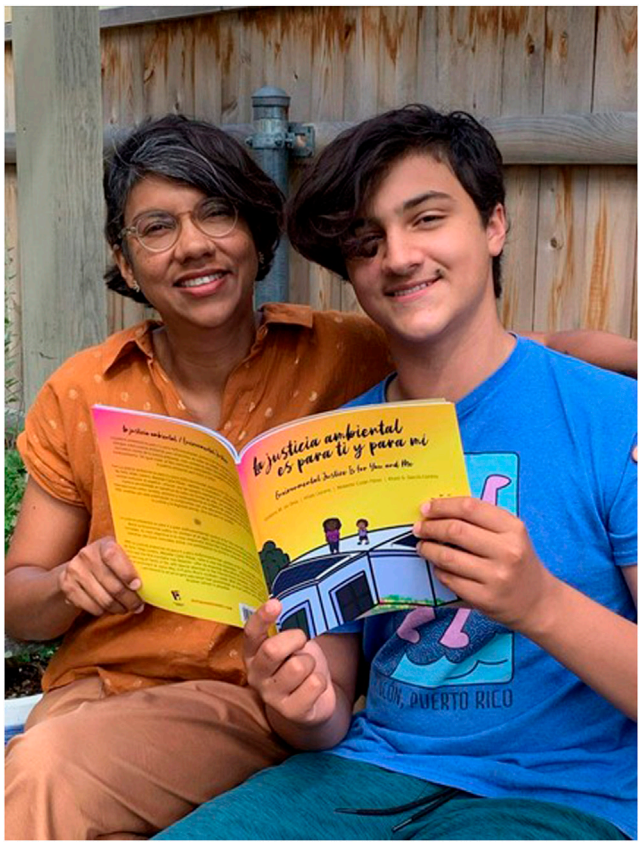

FIGURE 8 | Dr. Hilda Lloréns and her son, Khalil, share the material result of their familial book project. Image credit: Carlos G. García-Quijano.

presented an incomplete account, given grassroots activism and existing scholarship about these efforts that highlight entwined self-determination struggles. By interweaving environmental and energy justice throughout this article, I hope that communicating the latter movement frame and discourse may be thought-provoking for many readers. Ultimately, the process of writing and reflecting on this children's book illuminated constraints that I often have struggled with when translating my research for both academic and popular press audiences: weighing the dis/advantages of introducing and explaining fewer concepts and arguments, while also considering how excluding certain terms and ideas may reduce a project's contributions and impact.

Accompanying my thoughts about this project, I include the perspectives of Colón Pérez, García-Lloréns, and Dr. Lloréns, whose collaborative energies made this bilingual book possible (see **Figures 7**, **8**). Their reflections demonstrate the importance of applied, public-facing communication that seeks to increase environmental justice awareness and action.

> The reason I wanted to work on this project was to spread the message to children. I hope that my images can express what happened in my community and that they can understand in a clear way the importance of environmental conservation. The part that I enjoyed most about the process was creating images for each page and the cover. . . I hope that this raises awareness about our natural resources and the importance of always caring for them.
>
> -Mabette Colón Pérez[16]
>
> I wanted to participate in this project because I felt that more children around the world and in the United States specifically needed to know about the environmental injustices going on in some of the places they call home. Before taking part in the writing of this book I had very little knowledge of Mabette's story, and I found her story a great inspiration for myself and I enjoyed translating her story into child-friendly language. I hope that readers will learn about what they can do to stop environmental injustice from happening in their communities and to feel empowered to speak out about environmental injustices.
>
> -Khalil G. García-Lloréns
>
> I wanted to work on making knowledge about environmental justice and the importance of safe keeping the environment and the planet accessible to younger readers. For me, the most enjoyable aspects of the project were working collectively and cross-generationally in telling this important story. I hope readers learn about environmental threats facing our communities and that they become informed and empowered to act for environmental justice in small and big ways! I hope that this librito [little book] is a beacon of light in the greater fight to achieve environmental justice.
>
> -Dr. Hilda Lloréns

These coauthor reflections reveal the themes of caring for environments; working within and across generations for co-learning; inspiring collective environmental justice actions, especially among young people; and translating. Together, these areas mark key spaces for continuing to communicate the high stakes of these struggles for livable and flourishing communities.

In addition to including what the book coauthors experienced and their hopes for the project's potential impacts, it matters to consider how others not directly involved with the book's writing view its offerings. When asked about the significance of this bilingual children's publication, Santiago reflected:

> The transformation of the energy system in Puerto Rico requires a new way of thinking and envisioning how we produce, transport, modify, consume, and relate to power. People and communities need to see themselves as active

[16]I translated the quotation from Spanish to English. Recordings of Mabette Colón Pérez's reflections on the project are available on my personal website (https://catalinadeonis.com/environmental-justice-is-for-you-and-me-a-bilingual-childrens-book/). Colón Pérez and I also joined in conversation with members of the Editora Educación Emergente to discuss the book's co-creative process in a September 2021 virtual presentation (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFLJ4laK2OI).

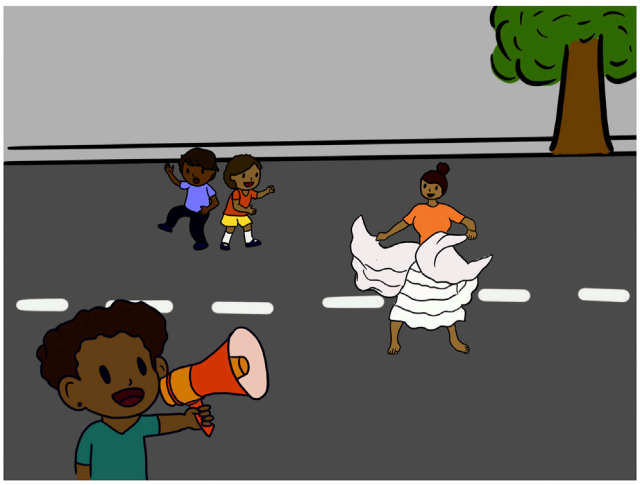

FIGURE 9 | Dance, music, resistance, and community endurance long have been co-constitutive in Puerto Rico. Image credit: Mabette Colón Pérez and Editora Educación Emergente.

> participants in energy issues, not just passive consumers. Changing views, perspectives, roles, hearts, minds, the whole culture around energy necessitates a wide array of approaches. Educating about energy issues is paramount. *La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí* bilingual children's book is a creative contribution to the vital educational process that needs to happen to reach all audiences and the public... Reading Mabette's story about the terrible impacts of the coal-fired power plant close to her community will help others understand why it's so important to end fossil combustion to generate energy. The children's book will help youngsters and their families, teachers, and other community members to grow their empathy and solidarity with the communities that centralized, fossil-fired generation overburden.

The issues, concerns, and possibilities raised by Santiago encourage younger community members to exercise their potential for advancing the well-being of their communities, which is constituted by both electric and people power in varied spaces. Urging these actions challenges corporate polluters, corrupt government officials, and other enablers who treat Puerto Rico, especially its coastal regions, as a site of exploitation and a playground for the rich. *La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí* insists on a different future, one where children and those who support them push back at the poisoning of their communities to reclaim their places of play, protest, and so much more (see **Figure 9**).

"SEGUIMOS EN LA LUCHA": DISCUSSING OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN CONTINUED STRUGGLE

This article chronicles how grassroots mobilizations among IDEBAJO and Comité Diálogo Ambiental members and their coalitional partners work to transform energy infrastructure and hierarchical power dynamics to radically rethink, communicate, and enact different relationships with energy and power in various spaces. By understanding environmental and energy justice as a form of mutual support that is inseparable from the capacious concepts of power and energy, this article builds a case for Puerto Rican environmental and energy communication studies. Focusing on Puerto Rico is important for evincing the resilient entangled roles of imported fossil fuel dependency, economic and climate injustices, environmental racism, ecocide, US colonialism and imperialism, neoliberalism, and racial capitalism that threaten individual and communal well-being. In response to these oppressive systems, structures, and practices, many energy actors seek alternatives rooted in coexisting with and caring for multiple spaces beyond "mainland," English-speaking contexts. Colón Pérez's and other residents' stories of survival, persistence, transgression, and alternative constructions provide crucial counternarratives of how power, energy, and all the relations they constitute take shape from the coastal, intertidal ground up. Centering these powerful stories and embodied, emplaced experiences, this article featured the making and sharing of an environmental justice bilingual children's book as an exemplar of one of the many ways scholars can contribute to anti-colonial environmental and energy justice communication, particularly by joining efforts to create educational spaces that also encourage spaces for action. While this process is different from direct, on-the-ground (or in-a-boat) contributions, the children's book offers a form of e-advocacy that connects with and seeks to support grassroots organizing. Recording, translating, and circulating different stories is one way that "Seguimos en la lucha" ("We continue in the struggle"), as Santiago shared in a winter 2021 email exchange with several Puerto Rico and US diasporic group members.

This discussion section offers some critical reflections on what this collective action entails and the obstacles and opportunities for such work. I highlight the challenging and remotivating aspects of this project in the hope that these offerings might create space for additional conversations and continued exertions that respond to the urgent colliding crises that are inextricable from studies of racial ecologies and "communication, race, and outdoor spaces." Though these concluding ideas could be marked thematically and numerically for clarity, the material that follows takes a fluid form to reflect the interconnected nature of archipelagic spaces and places that enliven this essay.

Attending to the complexities of energy and power can motivate collaborative work across many years and miles that approach grassroots energy actor and scholar relations as potentially coalitional spaces. This labor involves looking toward the coalitional "horizon of possibility" that is mutable, fluid, and temporally and spatially uncertain (Lugones, 2003; Chávez, 2013, p. 8). Much like how apoyo mutuo can enact relationalities of communal care, interconnection, and struggle, so too can grassroots energy actor and scholar collaborations. That written, the framing of "grassroots energy actor and scholar" used in this essay risks overlooking and oversimplifying how people may hold multiple roles and responsibilities related to and

exceeding research. For example, community members who energize grassroots movements are knowledge creators, sharers, and keepers, who know their lived experiences better than anyone else, while scholars might simultaneously generate content for peer-reviewed journals and apply some of the insights they write and teach about to engage in direct political struggle as energy actors. Furthermore, some researchers who center environmental and energy justice topics in their intellectual and other work are members of the same communities in which they conduct their studies (Bullard, 2014; Onís and Pezzullo, 2017; Lloréns and Santiago, 2018a; Marrero, 2021). Exemplifying these multiple roles, Abrania Marrero (2021), who was born in Puerto Rico and trained in nutritional epidemiology and biostatistics in the United States, works in her rural Puerto Rican community to reclaim agricultural practices and spaces for decolonial food relations. She insists that communities already "had been living—thriving, really—in kinship and in the forest long before any white-savior scientist came to document their plight." Marrero (2021) continues: "Knowledge generation must be in the hands of those whose lives are at stake. As researchers, we must learn that power already exists among the marginalized. We do not 'empower'—we help activate and advocate for the un-suppression of that power." This un-suppression necessitates approaches that challenge oppressive relationships rooted in stubborn logics and discourses, narratives, tropes, and other rhetorical materials of conquest.[17]

This article joins anti-colonial and decolonial studies scholars who refuse knowledge creation and dissemination that advances empire's unquenchable, expansive desire for more, represented by universities and disciplines that actively contribute to the settler colonial project and empire building (Tuck and Yang, 2013; Lee and Ahtone, 2020; Lechuga, 2021). This entanglement is apparent in extractivist knowledge production in everyday and acute crisis contexts (Garriga-López, 2020). In acts of refusal, scholars can work with communities that agree to collaborations by confronting systemic problems to locate and contribute to dismantling systems of power, while also engaging in collective action for "resistance, reclaiming, recovery, reciprocity, repatriation, [and] regeneration" to cultivate a "relationship of repair" (Tuck and Yang, 2013, p. 244; Ybarra, 2018, p. 28). Anti-colonial methods and praxis place marginalized community member interests and struggles first, as these individuals make critical engagements possible, and they can be harmed in the process (Madison, 2012; Smith, 2012; Onís, 2016; Ybarra, 2019; Onís, 2021). Even when scholars and local group collaborators align ideologically and share relational affinities, researchers, practitioners, grassroots group members, and other energy actors must consider what can go well and wrong, and for whom. One risk of coalitional work is that those involved might neglect to reflect on their own participation in contributing to oppressive relations and structures, including about race (Chávez, 2021). Thus, delving deeply into the many manifestations and functions of racism and racialization—at different levels, ranging from interpersonal to institutional—is imperative for scholars interested in master and marginalized communicative constructions of outdoor and other spaces. This attention often requires significant amounts of extra labor, resistance, and patience to do coalitional work that ethically contributes to anti-colonial environmental and energy justice communication.

Ways of relating otherwise are undervalued in official measures of academic "productivity" and/or disciplined by the academy. To illustrate, for the children's book to be categorized by my university as "research," I knew that publishing a peer-reviewed article, rather than asking for the book to be treated as its own intellectual project, was required for the text to "count" beyond service. This reality exists even though Dr. Lloréns and I applied our intellectual and other energies in ways that were no less challenging than what tends to be recognized by universities as "academic" work (e.g., peer-reviewed articles and books published by university and other presses). This labor certainly was different from more accepted and expected forms of research and publication, but that does not make the text less relevant. In fact, this project resulted in far greater interest from different publics than my previous forms of academic and popular press writing, which suggests the importance of rethinking and contesting constraining systems and structures that limit the ways that scholars do work in the world "to ensure… multiple opportunities to be curious, or to make meaning in life" (Tuck and Yang, 2013, p. 237; Ybarra, 2019). Translation emerges as a key practice for navigating these limitations and possibilities. Describing work done in one space in another space is necessary to make work "legible" for different audiences in neoliberal universities and departments, while also working to break (from) such structures and the discourses and other rhetorical materials that uphold them. The fact remains, however, that scholars can exhaust their energy supplies, especially when existing in a system that actively works against alternative, liberatory worldmaking. These academic spaces, structures, and norms paradoxically spotlight (for superficial "diversity and inclusion" purposes), discipline, and devalue translation labor. For some of us, confronting this treatment epitomizes our daily struggles to survive in the academy, while trying to make space for life-giving projects and relationships that are shaped profoundly by translation in multilingual and other spaces (Onís, 2015; Castro-Sotomayor, 2019; Sowards, 2019; Maldonado, 2020; Martínez Guillem, 2021).

Translational acts constituting collaborative work also may be impacted by financial realities that enable and constrain possibilities for communicating messages with different individuals and groups. Working with a Puerto Rican press to publish *La justicia ambiental es para ti y para mí* resulted in greater promotional support and thus more (free) downloads than if the text had been self-published, which was the initial plan. However, this formal e-publishing approach cost several hundred dollars. Given that many people in Puerto Rico and the United States requested paperback copies, including for libraries, the printed alternative to the e-version also cost several hundred dollars, as did the purchasing and mailing of

[17]Many of the concerns motivating this essay resonate with the Red Deal. Written by Indigenous peoples, this guide foregrounds anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist approaches to transform relations on Earth (The Red Nation, 2021).

book copies for distribution and educational programs in various locations. Additionally, some of the coauthors drew on personal funds to ensure that the Puerto Rico-based artist and storyteller (Colón Pérez) could be paid for her labor. Without university funding support, the book's formal publication—both in digital and paperback form—would have taken far longer and might not have been realized. Thus, individuals interested in doing similar work would be wise to consider financial realities and how to make decisions in specific situations that address accessibility and other interrelated concerns.

While this article has stressed the importance of translating grassroots organizing and people power, studying how the environmental and energy justice frames and discourses are coopted in institutional spaces also is important for mapping complex, competing, and complementary power struggles. For example, in 2021, the US Department of Energy declared energy justice a priority, while the White House created the Environmental Justice Advisory Council to address environmental racism, the climate crisis, and disproportionate impacts (The White House, 2021a; Dept. of Energy, 2021). Notably, Santiago is a member of this council. Her selection offered many IDEBAJO and Comité Diálogo Ambiental members and others struggling for livable, just relations hope that Puerto Rico's urgent, colliding crises might receive some attention and tangible support.[18] That written, as these movement frames and discourses become institutionalized and appropriated in policy agenda setting, concerned energy actors should be wary of how this increased language traction and circulation is functioning and for whom. Many scholars have troubled how the state's inclusionary efforts maintain existing power relations and systems, while continuing to dispossess, discipline, cage, poison, and murder the most marginalized and subjugated people (Cacho, 2012; Pulido, 2016b; Pellow, 2018, 2020). Thus, attending to the many spaces in which environmental and energy justice terminology circulates and how these movement frames and discourses are translated, by whom, and with what consequences marks an urgent area for analysis, critique, and other actions.

The fluid reflections composing this final section implicate space-making in multiple ways and seek to resonate with and challenge oppressive conceptions of communicating race/racism/racialization in "the outdoors." As with other places on Earth, these expressive acts continue to carry high stakes in Puerto Rico. In summer 2021, the US House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing on how to proceed with the AES coal plant. Both LUMA Energy and AES representatives refused to attend. With their absence and ongoing exploitative actions, industry members and crony capitalist politicians continue to enable the coal plant "plaga" described by Colón Pérez in this essay's opening. However, these abuses are not left unchallenged. For example, in testimony materials for the hearing, grassroots members insisted that full remediation of the plant site and many other contaminated areas must occur along with providing reparations to community members. Given that remediation can cause fugitive coal ash dust, "cleanup" will not be easy in any sense of the word. And yet, although IDEBAJO and Comité Diálogo Ambiental collaborators and other coalitional partners are tired, and although many grassroots energy actors and their neighbors are sick, they continue to do what they always have done when met with forces that seem insurmountable. Residents gather, share stories, provide mutual support, build coalitions, and plan uncompromising alternatives. In doing so, Jobos Bay community advocates and activists tenaciously continue "en la lucha" for self-determined environmental and energy justice.

[18]Dr. Lloréns and I have served as unpaid advisors to Santiago on various legal and other documents. In this role, we commented on a draft focusing on Puerto Rico for the Biden administration's Justice40 Initiative. This initiative seeks to dedicate 40 percent of climate-related federal funds and corresponding efforts to "disadvantaged communities" (The White House, 2021b).

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The content for this article was gathered and analyzed by the author and is informed by previous research that follows IRB conditions for access.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The legal guardians/next of kin of photographed minors signed media release forms for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data, which were provided by and submitted to adult organizers of the youth educational events described in this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms that she wrote this article. However, the collaborative energies of many contributors inspire this essay, as described in Acknowledgments.

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Resisting "the World of the Powerful": "Wild" Steam and the Creation of Yellowstone National Park

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In this essay, I argue that steam operates as a critical, other-than-human actor in the establishment of Yellowstone National Park and a broader, colonial posture towards the natural world that reflects a sharp division between nature and culture on the settler landscape—reiterating what Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser call "the world of the powerful," and a "world where only one world fits" (2018, pp 2-3). By appearing in contradictory contexts of powerful engines and pristine nature, steam was bifurcated into natural and cultural registers in order to justify the establishment of the natural park and the colonists' claim to Yellowstone as "property," foreclosing alternative relationships to the land such as those of the region's Indigenous residents. Approaching this research from the perspective of a settler on Indigenous lands, I am invested in engaging new materialist and ecological methodologies in the important work of decolonial critique. Adopting Nathan Stormer's (2016) "new materialist genealogy" and Nathaniel Rivers' (2015) treatment of wildness in service of a decolonial agenda, I demonstrate how steam's inherent repulsion to nature/culture dichotomies contests the very idea of the park itself, Yellowstone's importance to the settler state's expansion into the west, and its popular understanding as an exemplar of environmental politics. Further, this essay provides a methodological and theoretical intervention for new materialist and ecological scholarship to support decolonial projects in solidarity with Indigenous resistance. By unraveling dominant discourses that persist in collective identification with Yellowstone, the borders of the park that denote iconicity and exemplarity, unspoiled nature from capitalist development, become brittle, fragile, and so, too, does their dominance in discourses about environmentalism. By disrupting Yellowstone and undermining its dominance, we can demonstrate, unequivocally, that another world—indeed worlds—are possible.

Keywords: nature/culture divide, Yellowstone National Park, epistemology, environmental humanities, ecological rhetoric, settler colonial archives, indigenous people, steam

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RESISTING THE "WORLD OF THE POWERFUL": "WILD" STEAM AND THE CREATION OF YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Yellowstone National Park was established as the United States' first on March 1, 1872 An Act Establishing Yellowstone National Park, Congress, 1872 when the Yellowstone Park Act was signed into law by President Ulysses S. Grant. The process of creating Yellowstone was inseparable from colonial violence of the settler state as forced clearing, relocation, and the

genocide of Indigenous peoples who resided in the region for upwards of 10,000 years made way for the white tourist, and a broader mythos of Yellowstone to circulate among the U.S. public. According to Don Shoulderblade, "a Cheyenne spiritual leader and spokesman for Guardians of Our Ancestors' Legacy, a group working to reclaim and preserve ancestral land of Yellowstone National Park," among the 26 tribes with ancestral connections to Yellowstone, many still consider the area within the park "sacred land" and maintain ties to the region (Landry, 2018, n.p.). As historian Mark David Spence writes, "the native groups with the longest connection to the Yellowstone area at the time of its 'discovery' in 1870, were a loose association of bands that anthropologists broadly refer to as the Eastern and Northern Shoshone" (2000, p. 5). To those Indigenous residents and visitors, the region provided fertile ground for hunting and gathering, as sheep, bison, fish, berries, small seeds, legumes, deer, and elk proved extensive throughout the region in addition to refuge from seasonal climate extremes (Spence, 2000, p. 3).

For tribes such as the Crow, Blackfeet, Flathead, Nez Perce, and Shoshone, "Yellowstone" was known by many names; "the land of vapors," "the land of burning ground," "smoke from the ground," "the place of hot water," and *Awé Púawishe*, a Crow phrase translating to "land of steam" (Landry, 2018, n.p.; Old Elk, 2016, n.p.). The hydrothermal features such as hot springs and geysers evidenced by steam on the surface held spiritual and practical importance for the indigenous residents of the area. According to Crow and Yakama author Hunter Old Elk, "native Americans in Yellowstone considered features such as the geysers and thermal pools sacred" as well as beneficial "for medicinal purposes to treat ailments such as rheumatism and arthritis" (n.p.). Sheepeaters, "named for the bighorn sheep whose migrations they closely followed," utilized the hot springs to shape the sheep's "horns into bows by soaking them in the Yellowstone hot springs" (Messa & Sims, 2021, n.p.). While *Awé Púawishe* provided Indigenous people with sustenance and shelter, steam rendered the region uniquely significant for its practical, spiritual, and medicinal offerings.

Steam was also important to the settler colonists who took credit for the "discovery" of Yellowstone and played an important role in how the park idea was sold to both congress and the broader U.S. public. For the settlers in the region, steam provided a unique opportunity for the extension of empire into the west, both through Western scientific investigation into steam-powered geysers, and the expansion of the railroads and steam-powered tourism. As the United States government and military forced Indigenous peoples onto reservations and the borders of the park rendered Indigenous occupation and use "trespassing" and "illegal," they also attempted to erase a particular orientation to "the land of steam" in favor of one that served the interest of the settler state. Per Spence, explorers assumed Indigenous peoples were fearful of geysers, "believing them sacred to Satan" (2020, p. 2). Maligned as "'unscientific savage(s),'" Indigenous residents were presumed to have "vanished," showing "little to interest them in the soon-to-be-famous geyser basins" (2020, p. 2-3). In many ways, the work of creating Yellowstone National Park was the work of erasing *Awé Púawishe* so as to validate the park's establishment and subsequent removal of Indigenous peoples from the land, both physically and in the minds of the U.S. public. Indigenous removal, in addition to being defined by forced relocation onto reservations, was an epistemological and ontological battle over steam.

For white citizens living in the 19th century, steam was the symbol par excellence of industrialization that defined U.S. progress. Steam harnessed in an engine was the driving force behind industrial capitalism, providing evidence that "man" ould command "powers of nature," propelling boats up rivers and later train cars over rails as colonialism via trappers and traders turned to entrepreneurs and tourists proceeding westward (Etzler, 1833, B). Since the mid-nineteenth century, steam billowing from trains or factories was an iconic image of industrialization and technological advancement in the United States. As a "power of nature," steam was also a natural resource crucial for the establishment of Yellowstone National Park. Within Yellowstone, steam was demonstrative of "nature's handiwork," in progress since the beginning of geologic time (Langford, 1871a, p. 15). Geysers and hydrothermal features are near-synonymous with Western science's understanding of Yellowstone. According to the U.S.G.S., of the near 1,000 geysers known to exist around the world, half are within the borders of the national park (U.S.G.S., 2019, n.p.). Hydrothermal features, which account for geysers, fumaroles, hot springs, mudpots and more, rely on subsurface structures and plumbing that transfers heat from the magma core of the earth to pools of water accumulated through the surface. As the water heats and begins to turn to steam, the growing pressure eventually forces the water above into the atmosphere accompanied by clouds of steam. Steam-powered features revealed unique, unparalleled natural wonders "adorned with decorations more beautiful than human art ever conceived," requiring the protection of the federal government from destruction or exploitation brought on by steam-powered capitalism (Dunnell, 1872, n.p.). As both threat and threatened, steam provided evidence upon which the argument for the Yellowstone establishment was based, and thus was a critical component in the settler state's continued seizure of lands in the west.

However, despite the efforts of explorers and the enduring legacy of Yellowstone, steam defied (and defies) the categories of nature/culture in which settlers attempted to situate it. In this essay, I argue that steam operates as a critical, other-than-human actor in the establishment of Yellowstone National Park and a broader, colonial posture towards the natural world that reflects a sharp division between nature and culture on the settler landscape. By appearing in contradictory contexts of powerful engines and pristine nature, steam was bifurcated into natural and cultural registers to justify the establishment of the natural park, denying steam's simultaneity across-and-beyond engines and geysers and foreclosing alternative relationships to the land such as those of the region's Indigenous residents. Approaching Yellowstone by bringing forth the other-than-human relations that made arguments for the park possible and demonstrating steam's inherent resistance to nature/culture contests the very

idea of the park itself, its role in the settler state's expansion into the west, and its status as an exemplar of environmental politics.

Disrupting Yellowstone's border bears implication beyond how we approach national parks and their prominence on the U.S. landscape. Yellowstone is just one visible iteration of a colonial epistemology committed to a singular world bifurcated into oppositional realms of nature/culture. In the introduction to their edited collection A World of Many Worlds, Marisol de la Cadena and Mario Blaser describe this singular world as "the world of the powerful" and "a world where only one world fits" (de la Cadena and Blaser, 2018, pp. 2-3). Maintaining the "world of the powerful" requires countless, unending, violent iterations, even as they appear as "treasured landscapes." Critically, this epistemology serves as the bedrock of settler colonialism in the west where distinctions between culture and nature, "civilization" and its opposite, are mapped onto the land and the bodies of occupants: Indigenous peoples, white settler-colonists, and nonhuman nature. This epistemology informed a vision of the west as terra nullius, a practice that "actively creates space for the tangible expansion of the one world by rendering the places it occupies and making absent the worlds that make those places," (de la Cadena and Blaser, 2018, p. 3). As settler colonialism violently progressed west, the assertion of absence and need for expansion served as a precursor to forced clearing, boarding schools, and the designation of the reservation system—all of which made possible the expansive national park system U.S. Americans revere today (Kantor, 2007). At a more fundamental level, a violent and prevailing epistemology that only recognizes a world bifurcated in two realms makes no room for alternative epistemologies, multiplicity of worlds, and ways of relating to the nonhuman beyond a subject/object split. By thinking about Yellowstone "not only as such," by unraveling its powerful border which reiterates with each visitor, we can open possibilities for multiple worlds, ways of relating, and a divergent, decolonial politics (de la Cadena and Blaser, 2018, p. 11). In a time of perilous and catastrophic ecological collapse fueled by "the world of the powerful," we must seek openings for alternative modes of encountering what's now and what's to come.

In what follows, I trace steam through primary texts to bring forth its resistance to white settlers' colonial epistemology. This task of redescribing primary sources and revisiting steam within these colonial archives is inherently a political one, a process of worldmaking that challenges dominant colonial narratives, rendering "visible and analysable (sic)," the very conditions—a "field of coexistences" entwined with power, race, coloniality, and resistance—that both enable and exceed the categories of our design (Tell, 2019, p. 256, Foucault, 2010, p. 112, 99). To begin, I demonstrate a theoretical and methodological orientation to approaching and redescribing primary texts that illustrates the importance of steam to the establishment of Yellowstone National Park. Following the works of Bridie McGreavy, Nathaniel Rivers, Nathan Stormer (2016), and other rhetorical scholars invested theories and methodologies subsumed under a broad umbrella of new materialist and ecological scholarship, I suggest approaching steam as a wild object with the capacity to demonstrate the vast network of contradictory assemblages responsible for the establishment of Yellowstone. Importantly, an orientation to wildness allows us to move beyond a consideration of steam from an epistemological vantage (how it is represented), to approach it ontologically, as an uncontainable entity, whose excesses expose the fragility of the categories in which humans seek to situate it. Tracing steam, illuminates the possibility of contesting a broader colonial legacy and disrupting "the world of the powerful," opening up possibilities for alternative modes of being and relating.

I approach this research as a white settler living on Indigenous lands, committed to the need for environmental communication, new materialist, and ecological critique to engage in the broader terrain of decolonial politics. In the service of this decolonial project, I adopt what Nathan Stormer describes as a "new materialist genealogy" to provide a close reading of primary texts produced in the immediate 2-year context (1871-1872) leading up to Yellowstone's establishment. Through this reading, I bring forth steam to demonstrate the entanglement of colonialism, race, and materiality in the establishment of the park *via* dominant discourses widely circulated and praised as crucial to the park's establishment: Nathaniel Langford's (1871) series The Wonders of the Yellowstone and the report of the first official United States Geological Survey through the region. In addition to the historical inaccuracies and myths surrounding Yellowstone, within these texts steam demonstrates an ontological tenuousness that also undermines the park's status. Following this, I turn to Thomas Moran's painting, *The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone.* By engaging this painting from a new materialist and ecological perspective, I challenge the "truthfulness" of the painting on the grounds of its ontological assumptions, demonstrating the possibility and existence of alternative, Indigenous lifeworlds which directly challenge the power of the settler state.

I focus my attention on these dominant texts as they are critical in establishing and maintaining (both in the immediate context and the park's legacy) an orientation to the park that reverberates throughout U.S. environmental policy, bolstering practices like national park designations as effective modes of environmental sustainability and stewardship. In considering ways these texts participate in designating Yellowstone as "property," intended to curate an "escape" from politics or ecological collapse happening "somewhere else," we can interrogate them on the grounds of maintaining a "dominant ontology of devastation" rooted in patriarchal, Western understandings of how we relate to our environs (Escobar, 2018, p. 7). In his book Designs for the Pluriverse, Arturo Escobar argues that we must confront and interrogate such "patriarchal accounts" of the world that are "central to historicity of our being-in-the-world at present," so as to re-orient ourselves to alternative possibilities and modes of being (2018, p. 7). By unraveling dominant discourses that persist in collective identification with Yellowstone, the borders of the park that denote iconicity and exemplarity, unspoiled nature from cultural development become brittle, fragile, and so, too, does their dominance in discourses about environmentalism and an orientation to myriad other-than-human beings with whom we are enmeshed. Disrupting Yellowstone and undermining its

dominance demonstrates, unequivocally, that another world—and indeed worlds—are possible.

STRANGE ENVIRONMENTAL RHETORIC AND NATIONAL PARKS

Environmental rhetoric has long been attuned to discourses that establish the ideals of "nature" or "wilderness" in the minds of the U.S. public, acknowledging that "nature" and "wilderness" are not universal concepts but rather reflective of social and political power emergent in contexts ranging from empirical science and federal legislation to fine art and environmental activism. Within the field of rhetorical criticism, scholarship about national parks stresses the influence of individuals such as Carleton Watkins and John Muir, and corporations such as the Northern and Southern Pacific railroads in establishing a popularized, socially constructed wilderness. Whether dealing in the realm of symbols and transcendence (Clark, 2004), "origin myths" (DeLuca, 2001), or unacknowledged dimensions of race and class embedded within the "wilderness ideal" (DeLuca and Demo, 2001), scholarship in this vein tends to both the fragility and importance of nature's social construction to U.S. national identity and popularized attitudes towards wilderness and environmental preservation. While recognizing these social constructions and myths to be flawed, critique remains situated at the level of discourse and corrective social constructions, such as DeLuca's (2001) suggestion of a new myth that "reconceptualizes wilderness to bridge the chasm between wilderness and civilization, nature and culture" (DeLuca, 2001, p. 646).

Of course, the legacy of Yellowstone is entwined with myths of "discovery" and "untouched" nature, but as the excesses of steam demonstrate, even a new myth preserves a colonial logic—the world of the powerful—that sees a singular world of two discrete realms. The suggestion that reimagining representation is one way, if not *the* way, to reconcile our understanding of the natural world, operates within a circular logic by reifying (if not creating anew) "epistemic objects" of study and critique, such as revised myths or social constructions awaiting their own eventual correctives (Strathern, 2018, 25). For Nathan Stormer and Bridie McGreavy, prioritizing strategies that emphasize new epistemologies forecloses an ability to reconcile rhetoric as "a collective noun whose diverse members arise from material environments," demonstrating "raveled relations" in which we are already enmeshed (Stormer and McGreavy, 2017, p.3). In this sense, this essay is not concerned with corrective histories of Yellowstone National Park or a new rhetoric about Yellowstone, but (un)raveling myriad relations that simultaneously illuminate and exceed the stubborn "world of the powerful," opening new ways to ask questions about race and power that persist through Yellowstone National Park.

Across the humanities, new materialist and ecological scholarship offers a path to (un)raveling the relations involved in our collective worldmaking. One such example is Nathaniel Rivers' 2015 Rhetoric Society Quarterly piece, "Deep Ambivalence and Wild Objects: Toward a Strange Environmental Rhetoric." Recognizing the limitations of traditional environmental critique outlined above, Rivers poses strange environmental rhetoric to suggest "a more intense rhetoric—one engaged not simply in human discourse," but in relationality between humans, nonhumans, and objects (Rivers, 2015, p. 422). Strange environmental rhetoric seeks to draw our attention to the inherent wildness of objects. Adopted from Thomas Birch, wildness is that which becomes contained in wilderness spaces (Rivers, 2015, p. 423). Within wilderness, objects with their own wild, excessive, idiosyncratic rhetorical agency become situated as part and parcel of that particular wilderness domain, reduced to a position of pure contrast (nature or culture) (Rivers, 2015, p. 423). Thus, strange environmental rhetoric recognizes wildness as a fundamental feature of all entanglements and acknowledges the "material-rhetorical agency that exceeds our particular abilities as humans to describe or delimit" (Rivers, 2015, p. 424). In their meditation on Lake Superior, Joshua Trey Barnett and David Charles Gore discuss wildness *via* the lake's ability to "(undermine) our impulses to represent and objectify, with their attendant imperatives to master and control" (Barnett and Gore, 2020, p. 40). Citing Jane Bennett, Barnett and Gore sketch wildness as a profound disturbance that "confounds settled projects, techniques, and myths" and "troubles every attempt to stabilize the world, to transform it from a teeming, vibrant, dynamic, mysterious place into something that can be known, predicted, or managed," such as a national park curated and controlled (2020, p. 40). Wild objects are everywhere, Rivers contends: "Antarctica, Yellowstone, a city playground, the air ducts in my house, my desk drawer, and my large intestine." Indeed, wild objects do populate and proliferate Yellowstone—though as steam demonstrates, wild objects had to be contained as wilderness or its opposite in order for the national park concept and its concurrent logics to come to fruition.

Counter to prioritizing human discourses about the environment and limiting intervention to questions of epistemology, strange environmental rhetoric is an "ontologically flavored rhetoric (. . .) predicated on a kind of being in the world: being across a flat ontology in which all beings are equally emplaced" (Rivers, 2015, p. 432). As developed by Levi Bryant, flat ontology "invites us to think in terms of collectives and entanglements between a variety of different types of actors, at a variety of different temporal and special scales, rather than focusing exclusively on the gap between humans and objects" (Bryant, 2011, p. 32). Importantly, flat ontology generates a perspective that "we cannot treat one kind of being as the ground of all other beings" and presents a direct challenge to settler colonialism that centers the western subject as the rational actor, capable of imposing categories—such as nature/culture—onto a range of beings in service of imperial, extractive ends (p. 73). As wildness inherently lends itself to reconsiderations of ontology, it is worth expanding upon Stormer and McGreavy's raveled relations and the role of ecology as "an orientation to patterns and relationships in the world" (2017, p.3). To recognize these patterns and relationships, Stormer and McGreavy follow Thomas Rickert's call for a shift from rhetorics of and about a given object or phenomenon (such as

Yellowstone) towards orientations that recognize "more fundamental insights into an a priori enmeshment of person and world" so as to account for "how the material environment itself matters for how life is conducted" (2017, p. 4). Thus, national parks, such as Yellowstone, operate not as a singular object onto which rhetoric is imposed, but rather raveled relations encompassing all manners of human and other-than-human beings "needed for kinds of rhetoric to emerge" (2017, p. 4). Stopping short of outlining an explicit methodology, Stormer and McGreavy offer a reconsideration of rhetorical commonplaces that can better guide scholarly work investigating disparate phenomena. As a "different grounding," the revised commonplaces of capacity (as opposed to agency), vulnerability (contrary to violence), and resilience (instead of recalcitrance) can help direct methods in service of an ecological orientation (2017. p. 4). For the purposes of outlining a methodological orientation towards steam, I will focus my attention on capacity.

Though often collapsed and considered synonymous, agency and capacity are, for Stormer and McGreavy, distinct. As agency "identifies force by its application," capacity "imagines force in its relations," and provides a means of "emphasizing the ecology of entanglements between entities over the abilities that are inherent to humans" (2017, p. 5). In this sense, a dynamic network of varying, intermingled beings (such as scientific theories about geysers, the boilers of a steam locomotive, and fine art) capacitate rhetoric, or "(foreground) what a particular kind of rhetoric can do in an adaptive system" as opposed to "the human becom(ing) a homogenizing agency of agencies that masks rhetoric's ecological, emergent capacitation" (2017, p. 6-7). By engaging in a close reading of primary texts, I present what Stormer calls a "new materialist genealogy" which engages "the material knots and coils that make a given rhetoric possible as a variety of addressivity: not as a subject acting on others through discourse but as a set of capacities for address that forms and fades within fields of power" (2016, p. 306). Building off Ladelle McWhorter, Stormer suggests that such an approach makes possible an "iterative embodiment that undercuts dominant ontology by actualizing some of its plasticity (. . .) exploit(ing) contingency as much as it shows it" (2016, p. 308). Within the context of this project, steam's "capacity to affect certain consequences in the world" and the "incorporation (of those consequences) into larger power relations," means that steam's inherent wildness and capacity to engage and exceed relations in which it is embedded, demonstrates that the ontological assumptions upon which the idea of Yellowstone rests are equally flexible and fragile (2016, p. 308). Illuminating this plasticity provides an alternative mode for seeing the raveled contingencies of race, power, and coloniality, and imagining possibilities for resistance.

Given this critical focus, this essay also accounts for critiques levied against "ontologically-flavored" methodologies for their curious absence in questions of race and power. Despite the fact that a fundamental premise of new materialist and ecological critique is a disruption of nature/culture, subject/object, human/nonhuman distinctions upon which western rationality and colonial logics find footing, it rarely acknowledges its inherent potential for decolonial critique and praxis. In her article, "Gifts, Ancestors and Relations: Notes Towards an Indigenous New Materialism," Jennifer Clary-Lemon articulates this assessment, calling into question the "newness" of new materialist work by drawing forth its indebtedness to Indigenous knowledges premised upon ontologies not accounted for by dominant western texts. While I do not read her critique as one that seeks to cast out new materialist or ecological work, I do take up her call for "new materialist projects" to serve an explicit "anti-colonial agenda" as a critical intervention (Clary-Lemon, 2019, n.p.). Similarly, Angela Wiley, in her essay "A World of Materialisms: Postcolonial Feminist Science Studies and the New Natural," echoes this by suggesting that "thinking postcolonial feminist science studies and new materialisms together can open a more explicit conversation about the relationship between (postcolonial feminist) epistemologies and (new) ontologies" (Wiley, 2016, p. 996). Through the third section of the analysis, I contribute to a conversation about the relationship between new materialism and decolonial politics, demonstrating new materialism's suitedness to engage in and support Indigenous and decolonial resistance. If the establishment of Yellowstone is an attempt to foreclose of alternative modes of being with and of the land, then wildness necessarily suggests a potentiality outside of dominant epistemologies, an ability to live in and with the excesses of the other-than-human, and an opening for solidarity and resistance.

STEAM-POWERED TOURISM

According to park historian Aubrey Haines, Nathaniel Langford was responsible for initiating and documenting the first complete journey by white men through the upper and lower valleys of the Yellowstone River basin (Haines, 1999, p. 100). Langford, a settler living in the Montana territory, was motivated by the promise of steam-powered tourism to attract notoriety and development in the region. To serve that goal, he developed a strategic and fortuitous relationship with Jay Cooke, the primary financier of the Northern Pacific Railroad (N.P.R.R.). Who was seeking exposure and investment in his financially volatile line. If Langford proved correct about the mysterious phenomena of the Yellowstone, the N.P.R.R. would have an important advantage against competing railways in the form of an exceptional destination, while Langford's goals of attention and investment in Montana would be realized *via* Cooke's development and publicity. For both, the steam-powered locomotives of the N.P.R.R., as a means of generating profit from tourists and investment, served important goals. Cooke agreed to fund Langford's expedition and on August 22, 1872, the Washburn-Langford-Doane Expedition departed Fort Ellis, Montana.

Upon his return to Helena, Langford spent roughly 6 weeks turning his notes into a manuscript for publication (Haines, 1999, p. 137). Parts one and two of "The Wonders of the Yellowstone" were published by Scribner's Monthly in May and June 1871. Within these pieces, steam's wildness was carefully contained as a

tourist attraction to be visited by the N.P.R.R.'s steam-powered engines ferrying visitors from the east to witness unparalleled attractions praised as the "grandest scenery on the continent," including "boiling springs, mud volcanoes, huge mountains of sulfur, and geysers more extensive and numerous than those of Iceland" (Langford, 1871a, p. 2). Residents of nearby Bozeman were described as "patiently awaiting the time when the cars of the 'Northern Pacific' [shall] descend into their streets," bringing with them the notoriety and development of steam-powered industry (Langford, 1871a, p. 3). In this way, steam was both empire's infrastructure and impetus for development at the same time it offered a singularly unique attraction made possible and visible by the N.P.R.R. Steam underscored the relationship between geysers and locomotives and thereby the way in which Langford tamed the wildness of steam in and around Yellowstone—for publicity and profit. Importantly, visual depictions granted Langford's prose an additional level of veracity and reinforced the authenticity of his descriptions. Philadelphia-based artist Thomas Moran was hired post hoc by Scribner's to provide the images based from Langford's prose as visual evidence disabusing the skeptical reader and enticing public enthusiasm. In **Figures 1**, **2** representative examples of Moran's work for Scribner's, steam is an important feature, emanating from the ground or surrounding a jet of water, not dissimilar from steam being expelled from the boilers of an engine. Moran's inclusion of barely-visible observers lend to understanding the impressive magnitude of the features.

For Langford, steam relieved mankind from the toil of industrial life—the engines provided an escape and the geysers could fill the visitor with wonder. Though he was not himself a scientist, he demonstrated a fundamental understanding of the role in steam propelling geysers when attributing their massive explosions to "the production of steam (. . .) so instantaneous and so considerable as to cause explosion" (Langford, 1871b, p. 128). In other words, Langford was well-aware that steam was powering the magnificent features he sought to publicize. In order to capture the steam-powered geysers a practical tourist attraction, he organized them into a recognizable spatio-temporal schema through the naming and timing of the features (see **Figure 3**). In this way, the geysers were circulated as individual attractions comprising a larger "Wonderland" beyond the everyday imagination, full of peculiarities and curiosities unfamiliar to readers that could only be reached by the cars of the N.P.R.R. To communicate the reality of "Wonderland," Langford's piece named the geysers a tourist might encounter in the Lower Basin, recording the regularity of their eruptions, and providing notes for Moran to sketch them into a map a visitor could consult (Langford, 1871b, p. 121).

Here, in **Figure 3** steam is depicted emerging from the ground both with the named geysers and as a broader, ambient feature of the park, even stretching into the hillsides surrounding the basin. Notably, the map includes Yellowstone's most iconic geyser, Old Faithful, depicted by a jet of water and engulfed in steam. The expedition members encountered this "perfect geyser," just before the end of their expedition (Langford, 1871b, p. 123). They recorded its eruptions "at regular intervals nine times," with discharges lasting "from fifteen to 20 min" (Langford, 1871b, p. 123). As a result of this regularity and impressive magnitude, the party "gave it the name of 'Old Faithful'" and thus the most iconic feature of Yellowstone National Park was born. Old Faithful provided Yellowstone with something wholly distinct from the waterfalls and giant sequoias of the Southern Pacific's Yosemite. Both the description and accompanying visual evidence helped restrain steam's wildness into a nameable tourist attraction explicitly connected to the N.P.R.R. Steam played an indispensable role in steam-powered tourism *via* the locomotive and the landscape that would prove profitable for both Montana and the railroad. The recognizability of steam, as something that created the conditions of metropolitan life in the industrial cities of the east from which people desired relief, took on a new meaning when situated in the new "Wonderland."

In order for Yellowstone to be practicable as an attraction for the N.P.R.R. and the Montana Territory, Langford and Moran rendered the wildness of the natural world, specifically steam, sufficiently stable and intelligible for circulation which like the

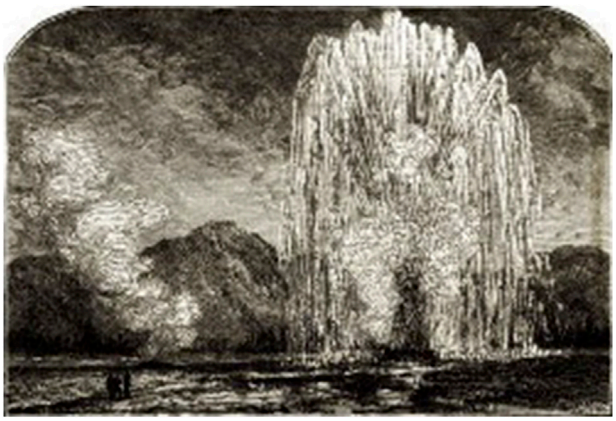

FIGURE 1 | Woodcut by Thomas Moran of the "Fan" geyser. Featured in Part 2 of Langford's Wonders of the Yellowstone (1872).

FIGURE 2 | Woodcut by Thomas Moran of the "Giant" geyser. Featured in Part 2 of Langford's Wonders of the Yellowstone (1872).

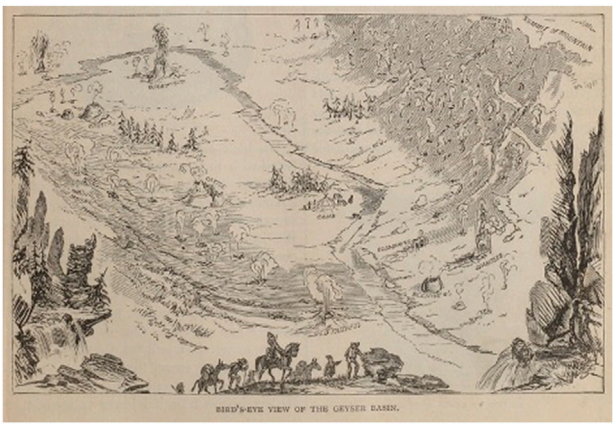

FIGURE 3 | Bird's-eye view of the geyser basin, by Thomas Moran. Featured in Part 2 of Langford's Wonders of the Yellowstone (1872).

steam engine, evidenced man's ability to control and contain the powers of nature for capitalist ends. In considering the park's future, Langford predicted that when "the wonders of the Yellowstone are incorporated into the family of fashionable resorts," the geysers of the Lower Basin would be among their most noteworthy features (Langford, 1871a, p. 7). By Langford's estimation, in no other location in the world could such marvels be seen and experienced by the visitor. Luckily, the wonders were packaged, so to speak, to be immediately accessible both financially through the publicity of the N.P.R.R. and armchair travelers, and physically through the locomotive with which Langford closes his piece, bringing forth steam-powered industrial progress by promising that "by means of the Northern Pacific Railroad, (. . .) the traveler will be able to make the trip to Montana from the Atlantic seaboard in 3 days, and thousands of tourists will be attracted to both Montana and Wyoming in order to behold with their own eyes the wonders here described" (Langford, 1871b, p. 128).

In "The Wonders of the Yellowstone," representations of steam functioned as a means of making valuable and stabilizing its wildness as understood in relation to railroad tourism and the expansion of empire. Steam's value was established as named and scheduled geysers, anticipating the arrival of tourists by way of the steam engine to witness timely performances of unparalleled excellence. In other words, though steam was simultaneously visible in two distinct contexts—the geysers and railroads—within Langford's prose it remained directly tied to the burgeoning railroad industry, the potential of tourism, and the rapidity of westward expansion. However, land could not be set aside in the interest of a railroad company alone. In order for the national park idea to come to pass, steam-powered geysers also had to be legible and contained as unique objects of scientific study and inquiry—creating a space for nature's "domain" to be evident in the park. Thus, steam's wildness was iterated in a second, competing register removed from private development. This was made possible through the official United States Geological Survey of 1871.

STEAM-POWERED NATURE

On January 19, 1871, Langford made his first appearance on his promotional lecture circuit "to a small audience in Lincoln Hall, Washington, D.C." (Haines, 1999, p. 137). Of those in attendance was Dr. Ferdinand V. Hayden, the head of the U.S. Geological Survey of the Territories. Hayden previously attempted to reach the Yellowstone region but due to limited resources and harsh weather was forced to abandon his journey. Langford's talk, accompanied by Moran's woodcuts, reignited Hayden's desire to visit the region in his official capacity with the U.S.G.S. Hayden decided to "capitalize on the current interest in the Yellowstone region by asking Congress for funds to explore it officially" (Haines, 1999, p. 138).

Though steam still powered the engines defining the present and future of the eastern United States and colonial project of westward expansion, it would not be the steam of profit and progress that Hayden encountered in Yellowstone. As a dedicated geologist, he sought to limit wild steam as an object of scientific investigation, contributing to geological theorems, and fixated in the realm of natural sciences. The thirty-two members among Hayden's expedition operated as, in the words of Isabelle Stengers, part of the "hegemonic conquest machine called Science, blindly, unilaterally imposing so-called objectivity and rationality over whatever exists" (Stengers, 2018, p. 87). Scientists ranging from agricultural statisticians to zoologists, as well as the photographer and documentarian William Henry Jackson, captured what would be considered an objective and authoritative account of the region's natural features, "untouched" by man, and masquerading as grounds for removal from any potential claim to the lands occupied by Indigenous peoples for generations. Importantly, one member of the expedition was not selected by Hayden but rather "accompanied the expedition directly in the interest of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company": Thomas Moran, whose legacy in the history of Yellowstone would be solidified after his return home (Haines, 1999, p. 142).

The 6-weeks spent in the Yellowstone region resulted in "incontrovertible evidence of the existence and nature of those thermal features that had so long been rumored to exist upon the Yellowstone plateau" (Haines, 1999, p. 151). The "mass of field notes, sketches, photographs, and specimens" populated the Preliminary Report of the United States Geological Survey of Montana and Portions of Adjacent Territories, issued as an Executive Document in February of 1872, although Hayden was already in conversation with legislators about his findings as early as October of 1871 (Haines, 1999, p. 152). While the report contained accompanying accounts from fellow expedition scientists, it was Hayden who wrote in detail of the hydrothermal features, specifically the geysers.

In the report's introduction, Hayden included a "Letter to the Secretary (of the Interior)," overviewing the survey's critical role in curating "extensive collections in geology, minerology, botany, and all departments of natural history," for the purpose of being "arranged in the museum of the Smithsonian Institution," with duplicates "distributed to the various museums and institutions of learning in our country" (Hayden, 1872, p. 4-9). Hayden

himself prepared "charts of all the Hot Spring groups" found in the Upper and Lower Geyser basins (Hayden, 1872, p. 4). The goal of the journey was not to establish the geysers as potentially profitable, but rather to bolster "the honor of our country" and provide an "increase in human knowledge" (Hayden, 1872, p. 4). Steam was stabilized at the intersection of scientific empiricism and U.S. American exceptionalism.

Experiments performed in the field served to test theories of geysers. Bunsen's theory of geysers, which Hayden considered "the simplest and probably the most correct," guided many of their observations and is not dissimilar from contemporary understandings of how steam powers geysers in action (Hayden, 1872, p. 186). Bunsen's theory posited that beneath the surface of the earth, steam entered "ducts at the bottom of (a) tube" gradually propelling a column of water upwards (Hayden, 1872, p. 186). As the water rose, it reached its boiling point more quickly, creating an "excess of heat" generating more steam, until "suddenly the water above is thrown into the air, mingled with clouds of steam," resulting in "the geyser in action" (Hayden, 1872, p. 186). While steam was evidenced on the surface, making hydrothermal features knowable, Hayden understood its role in compelling the geysers into action. Elsewhere, Hayden commented on hissing sounds emanating from the ground, similar to that of pressure releasing from the steam engine. Near Alum Lake, he drew a direct comparison distinguishing steam-powered geysers and locomotives when noticing "a powerful steam-vent with the strong, impulsive noise like a high-pressure engine, and hence its name of Locomotive jet" (p. 88-89). In one remarkable passage, Hayden describes an early morning view of a valley which was "filled with columns of steam, ascending from more than a thousand vents" (p. 112). The scene was not necessarily unfamiliar, as he "(compared) the view to nothing but that of some manufacturing city like Pittsburgh, as seen from a high point, except instead of the black coal smoke, there are here the white delicate clouds of steam" thus directly juxtaposing the polluted industrial city to the purity of nature unfettered (p. 112). On occasion, steam also posed a threat to the scientists, preventing them from gauging accurate measurements. In regards to attempts at measuring the temperature of a hot spring, Hayden wrote that due in part to "the heat from the steam, it was impossible to take the temperature except at the edges, and by no means at the hottest portion" (Hayden, 1872. p. 70).

Though Hayden's approach to the geysers was as an objective scientist, he was no less struck by the magnificence of the geyser basin. He noted vivid colors displayed in the hot springs, such as the series of "small continuous steam-vents, all of which were elegantly lined with the bright-yellow sulfur," architectural formations of geyser mounds, and the frequent, reliable nature of their eruptions (p.71). Noting the "quantities of steam (. . .) ever ascending from the springs," Hayden commented that "on a damp morning the entire slope of the mountain is enveloped in clouds of vapor" (p. 71). While he on occasion would utilize the names of the geysers provided by Langford, geysers were primarily distinguished by differing physical or chemical properties, networked to other hydrothermal features, natural processes, and existing theories about hydrothermal activity. In contrast to the navigable walking map presented by Langford, Hayden provided a cross-sectional illustration of the geyser basin that showed steam emanating from the surface, emerging from a network of subterranean tubes (see **Figure 4**). His maps situated steam in a larger geologic framework, contrasted from cultural enterprises of steam-powered tourism and industry. The wildness of steam was restrained, furnishing argument based in science and "value-free objectivity," not capitalism, for removing the lands from the public domain.

In his 1917 book about the history of Yellowstone, former park superintendent Hiram M. Chittenden claimed, in no small measure, "To no individual is the public more indebted for the creation of the Park than to Dr. F.V. Hayden" (Chittenden, 1917, p. 96). When the act was initially presented to Congress on December 18, 1871, the bill proposed to "set apart a certain tract of land lying near the headwaters of the Yellowstone as a public park" (Sen. Pomeroy, 1871, p. 159). Representative Samuel Pomeroy of Kansas, cited Hayden's "very elaborate report on the subject," as grounds for supporting the park designation (Sen. Pomeroy, 1871, p. 159). The boundaries of the proposed park were "furnished by Dr. Hayden," encompassing a region forty miles by fifty, with special attention to "valuable hot springs (and) geysers" in the Upper and Lower Basin—features uniquely valuable within a larger network of scientists, the institutional prestige of the Smithsonian as a guardian of objective knowledge, and the various instruments, theorems, charts, calculations, and measurements produced and utilized by the U.S.G.S. (Chittenden, 1917, p. 93; Sen. Pomeroy, 1871, 159).

While the bill was under consideration, Hayden and Langford were present in the Capitol working tirelessly to encourage its passage. Hayden, occupying "a commanding position" in the effort, curated an exhibit "likely seen by all members of Congress" where he presented "geological specimens brought back from the Yellowstone region by his 1871 expedition, and with them some typical (William Henry) Jackson photographs and Moran sketches" (Haines, 1999, p. 168-9). This evidence "did work which no other agency could do, and doubtless convinced everyone who saw them that the region where such wonders existed should be carefully preserved for the people forever" (Chittenden, 1917, p. 93). Though Langford's Scribner's piece was also distributed to all members of Congress, Hayden's evidence supporting the uniqueness of Yellowstone as a place needing protection ultimately justified the passage of the bill, cementing its place in environmental history. Hayden celebrated the speed at which the bill was passed and praised the beginning of "an era in the popular advancement of scientific thought, not only in this country, but throughout the civilized world" defined by the establishment of a national park (Hayden, 1872, p. 162). As a marker of scientific achievement, Hayden appreciated, "at a time when public opinion is so strong against appropriating the public domain," the legislature saw fit to set aside a 3,578 square mile tract, "for the benefit and instruction of the people" (Hayden, 1872, p. 162). In this sense, Yellowstone and its geysers circulated

FIGURE 4 | Cross-section of the Upper Geyser Basin as presented in Dr. Hayden's U.S.G.S. Report (1872).

as "a tribute from our legislators to science," deserving of the "gratitude of the nation and of men of science in all parts of the world (. . .) for this magnificent donation" (Hayden, 1872, p. 162).

On March 1, 1872, President Grant signed the Yellowstone Park Act, officially rendering the region "property" of the United States. This move effectively consolidated all of the wild, nonhuman actors inside, rendering them visible and "knowable" as nature through the enterprise of Western science "justifying" the work of the settler state as "objective" and "value-free." The establishment of the park rendered Indigenous claims to the land "illegitimate," Indigenous activity on the land "illegal," and treaties that would have prevented such a seizure "null and void." As a "donation" intended to serve "the benefit and instruction of the people," the Yellowstone designation illustrates "how property laws (produce) (. . .) racial and capitalist power through philosophies and practices of use, abstraction, improvement, and status" (Vats, 2019, p. 513). In this sense, Yellowstone functions as an exemplar of "countersoverignty: a position of reaction to distinct Indigenous protocols governing life in the spaces the United States claims as a national interior" (Vats, 2019, p. 513).

With the establishment of the park, steam became territorialized from wildness to wilderness, and came to represent effective environmental politics that sees a strict, objective nature/culture split on the U.S. landscape. Every year, as 4 million visitors cross the border of the park, they reiterate the colonial logic that sees "wilderness" in place of "wildness" (Visitation Statistics, 2019, n.p.). The "ongoingness and ordinariness of the American project of empire," such as visiting and reifying Yellowstone National Park, demonstrates the "constant struggle to impose countersoverignty and capitalism on those who resist it" (Vats, 2019, p. 513). In other words, the appropriate means of encountering and visiting Yellowstone encourages a narrow, curated experience of the wonders therein and singular mode of engaging other-than-humans, not from a posture of relationality, but commodity. Resistance to this singular mode, comes not only from Indigenous peoples who sustain kinship and ancestral ties to the land and its other-than-human inhabitants, but those other-than-human inhabitants themselves—such as steam—whose wildness makes the nature/culture split impossible. By utilizing a new materialist and ecological methodology to trace steam's wildness through key texts supporting the establishment of the park and the delineation of borders between steam-powered industry and steam-powered nature, the borders that encompass the park are undercut and contingent upon particular relations of power in which the settler state is enmeshed. However, "undercutting" the dominant discourse is not enough, without inviting alternative worldings, oppositional rhetorics, or a path for imagining places like Yellowstone as "otherwise."

STEAM-POWERED RESISTANCE

To demonstrate an opening for alternative worldings, I turn my attention to a third critical artifact in the establishment of Yellowstone National Park; Thomas Moran's 8-by-14 foot painting, The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, a piece he began on during his time on the Hayden expedition (**Figure 5**). As a result of this painting, Moran was celebrated as "a faithful interpreter of natural scenery," employing a craft "by which absolute truth is caught and fixed in the splendor of picturesque art." In attesting to its accuracy, Hayden commented that the painting was in fact "strictly true to nature." In popular accounts, the painting portrays a vast landscape surrounding the Wyoming Lower Falls, capturing a "curious mass of cathedral shaped cliffs" whose magnificent architecture and coloring was "based on a substructure of lava and basalt, with superimposed strata of cretaceous formation, largely due to hot springs." On the plateau between the waterfall and the distant Teton mountains "may be seen the jets of steam from the famous geysers," whose notoriety had already been established *via* Moran's Scribner's sketches. All of these features, alongside every needle on every pine tree, each stratum in the cliffside, the waterfall, and the steam emanating from the "famous geysers" in the distance, were celebrated through this painting as property of the United States.

Despite its "accuracy," an important element of the painting escaped popular press accounts of the time reinforcing the dominant fictions surrounding the park's establishment. That is, in the center foreground of the picture, we find four men. Two of which, slightly positioned to the left, are tending to a horse and working from a notebook, respectively. In the middle, however, there is a depiction of General Hayden next to what we are led to believe is an Indigenous person signaled by traditional dress—the precise identity of this person is unknown, in all likelihood because the exchange never took place. General Hayden is seen gesturing in the direction of the canyon, towards the geysers on the distant plateau, next to a still, Indigenous figure.

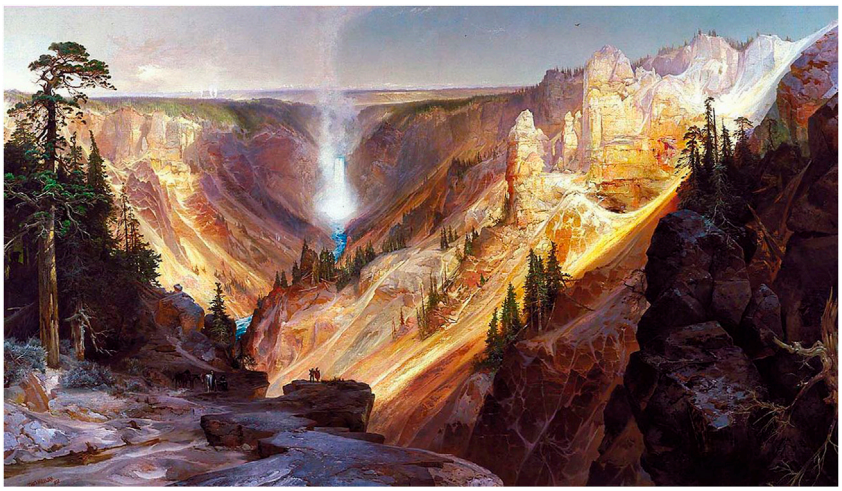

FIGURE 5 | The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, Thomas Moran, 1872. Oil on Canvas.

This portrayal, perhaps predictably, underscores several fictions surrounding the establishment of the park that must persist in order for the settler state to reinforce its claims to the Yellowstone region. First, that Indigenous peoples willfully accepted the imposition of the United States ceding the land from occupation by portraying this exchange as, if not amicable, then uncontentious. Second, the posture of General Hayden, gesturing towards the geysers suggests that of "educating" the Indigenous person about the region, reinforcing not just the falsehood elucidated by Spence that Indigenous peoples avoided or abandoned the region due to fear or ignorance of the geysers, but mirrors the work of boarding schools that sought to erase Indigenous knowledges and culture (Spence, 2000; Kantor 2007). Relatedly, it perpetuates the illusion of Yellowstone's legitimacy because of its relationship to particular knowledges, namely a Western scientific "objectivity"—both of the legitimacy of science, and that this representation of the region is accurate. Finally, the painting buttresses the distinction and separation of Yellowstone from all that surrounded it. Ultimately, the painting reinforces all the varying elements that were required for Yellowstone to become property of the United States and elements that involved the epistemological and ontological situating of steam—the erasure of Indigenous peoples and knowledges, the guise of Western science and objectivity, and the legitimacy of the settler state's claims to the region—all of which have been demonstrated to be intimately raveled with steam. These fictions exist not just in the immediate context the painting's debut, but reiterated as visitors to the Smithsonian encounter the painting of "the people's" park (see **Figure 6**).

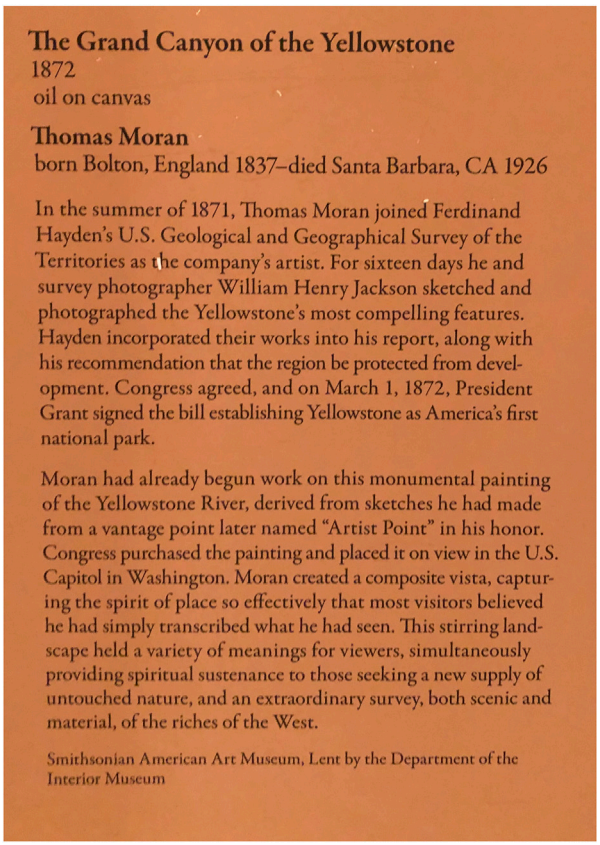

FIGURE 6 | Placard accompanying Thomas Moran's Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone at the Smithsonian Art Museum. Author Photograph, 2019.

However, uncovering these historical inaccuracies is just one (albeit critical) part of undercutting the persistent settler narrative of Yellowstone National Park. What is equally important is that steam itself demonstrates not just the material impossibility of the narrative the painting tells and of the park's fragile borders. Steam's wildness makes alternative modes possible. Steam is one of the countless other-than-human inhabitants that persist through and beyond the park, though its wildness had to be contained as either threat or threatened, nature or culture, in order for the park concept to come to pass. As the settler state claimed Yellowstone National Park as federal "property," it

reflected self-serving ontological and epistemological commitments onto the landscape. Inside, steam-powered geysers demonstrated scientific phenomena, knowable by western science, and outside, steam-powered engines created conditions of industrialization from which "the people" were sold refuge. The Yellowstone of Thomas Moran reflects this split. As Anjali Vats writes, though "property is a profoundly important keyword for thinking about race in the United States," and is "in all its forms is a socially constructed legal and cultural enterprise that is, neither monolithic or universal, (. . .) it leaves place for contestation, for oppositional rhetorics and enactments" (Mei Singh and Mullins-Ibrahim, 2019, p. 510). Steam's wildness ravels with oppositional rhetorics and enactments as its relations are far too numerous and expansive to fit the tidy categories of nature or culture, or the borders of a gilded frame. If steam is neither of these things and more, then what is protected in Yellowstone is not nature, but rather a particular mode of being with and knowing the world—nature as a protected refuge to be studied and admired as a visitor, and a place where we "leave no trace," as if our markings on the world are only tangible. Thus, we must seek an opening for an alternative. Steam's emergence on the horizon suggests not just the possibility of alternative worldings and relations with the land that defy colonial notions of "property," but actively participates in those worlds.

Steam was (and remains) intimately raveled in the lifeworlds of the Indigenous groups referenced in the introduction whose habitation in Yellowstone preceded the arrival of the white settler and the notion of "property" by over 10,000 years. According to Sioux scholar Nick Estes, Indigeneity and Indigenous identity are deeply entwined with "kinship relations" to the land and its other-than-human inhabitants, such as steam (2019, p. 39). This identity, then, is not confined to the individual, but is found in relations to the land are deeper than ownership alone. This, Estes argues, is resistance—a way of "(existing) outside the logic of capitalism" (Estes, 2019, p. 401). Put differently, Indigenous identity, which explicitly acknowledges the entanglement of person and earth, and the inseparability of Indigeneity from the land, is an alternative enactment, and an act of resistance against the settler state and the power of whiteness as it works through property, industry, and ideals of nature. For the Crow, Blackfeet, Flathead, Nez Perce, and the associated bands of the Eastern and Northern Shoshone who still maintain connections to the region, steam is entwined with identity and practices related to medicine, spirituality, and stories of creation (Messa & Sims, 2021, n.p.). The centrality and participation of steam in Indigenous lifeworlds is evident in the many names by which different tribes refer to the region ("land of vapors," "land of smoke," "land of burning ground," and *Awé Púawishe*). For these groups, steam is not something upon which representational categories are imposed, but an active, engaged participant in worlding, resisting, and formation of shared identity. The Indigenous figure in the painting must serve as more than a reminder of historical inaccuracies; rather, the Indigenous figure demonstrates an oppositional rhetoric, an ongoing, endless raveling of excessive relations with other-than-human beings which necessarily contests the notion that *Awé Púawishe*—kin—could ever be propertied.

CONCLUSION

This essay examined the vital role of steam in establishing Yellowstone National Park, tracing how it played on both sides of a nature/culture dichotomy that proved indispensable to the establishment of an iconic U.S. landscape and the extension of settler colonialism into the west and its persistence in the popular environmental imaginary. Aside from the reveries of its unparalleled wonders, it continues to serve as an escape for tourists and naturalists alike from the trappings of a modern society replete with persistent, distressing reminders of climate crisis. For Langford, Yellowstone was a key component of steam as industrial power, capitalism's further extension into the west and Montana, and a place where tourists safely explored wonders exceeding their everyday imaginations, bolstering the stock of both railroad companies and the Montana territory. For Hayden's U.S.G.S., the park was a realized dream of an *in situ* laboratory where the natural world was contained as an object of study and examination—a gift of the federal government to scientific disciplines. Both of these iterations were required to establish and cordon off Yellowstone as "property" of the settler state. Even for contemporary armchair travelers, the story of Yellowstone is a persistent escape to the idea of nature's peaceful majesty, latent fury, and unadulterated scientific evidence of what nature really is. For the belabored contemporary environmentalist, Yellowstone's history represents a time when the Federal Government worked in concert to pass sweeping legislation that on its face favored preservation over profit. For some critics, Yellowstone's history exemplifies the extraordinary power of symbols and attendant myths in idealizing wilderness. Yet all of these perspectives foreclose possibilities for kinship and relationality with the land and its myriad human and other-than-human inhabitants. Further, these perspectives foreclose truly enacting decolonial resistance required not as a corrective to false histories of Yellowstone, but living and enacting alternative futures.

Additionally, this essay demonstrates the imperative for new materialist and ecological scholarship to both recognize its inherent potential to serve a broader decolonial agenda, but further, to support Indigenous resistance efforts against the settler state. Importantly, a new materialist approach helps us explicitly see that resistance is never located solely in a human agent. Rather, resistance necessarily involves our "raveled relations," with countless other-than-human agents, which far outnumber white Settlers. Evoking Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, Estes claims that "while Indigenous peoples have been rendered a statistical minority within their own homelands," it is "the settler (who is) surrounded and outnumbered" (2019, p. 388). In considering "the power of Indigenous lifeways and resistance has always surrounded settlers in North America," we see "a reminder of the settler state's own precarious claims to land and belonging," such as the claims to Yellowstone National Park, undermined by the wild capacity of countless other-than-

human beings (2019, p. 388). Returning to Standing Rock, Estes writes that "while corporations take on legal personhood under current US law, Water Protectors personify water and enact kinship to the water, the river, enforcing a legal order of their own" (2019. p. 400). "If water, a relative, is not protected," he argues, "then the river is not free, and neither are its people" (2019, p. 400). In the path forward, and the resistance to the ravages of capital, "Indigenous people must lead the way," and white settler-scholars must acknowledge the utility of our theories and methods in supporting and standing in solidarity with those efforts (Estes, 2019, p. 400).

What, then, does resistance look like in an age of ecological collapse and extinction-level events in, as Rivers puts it, "the world to come?" In this sense, steam can demonstrate that rhetoric itself is an ecological exercise, primed for resistance. It is important to recall that, in essence, steam is water vapor in a condensed state. Quite literally, steam is a visible iteration of the very thing that sustains life in all forms. When water vapor condenses under pressure, induced by heat, it becomes apparent at particular times and in particular locations, becoming significant as natural, cultural, or otherwise. Then, it dissipates, is forgotten, and returns to the unacknowledged "stuff" in which we survive and persist. This, I believe, is an important mode of understanding rhetoric in a world where we are constantly raveled—as a force that sustains the myriad things making life possible, meaningful, and more than rote survival. However, like steam, we often don't notice rhetoric—or connection—until it announces itself in profound or noticeable iterations, illuminating bridges between disparate actors before it fades into the background of everyday life. As we consider ways in which rhetorical theory might shift in modes of ecological thought and being, we can do best to remember that the relations we seek to identify and bring forth already exist and sustain us in our everyday lives and action. In this way, to consider how we think with an object like steam, we are forced to rethink our relationships to all other beings with whom we are continually involved in worldmaking, and in support of resistance alongside the seemingly mundane, the majestically iconic, and the barnyard of beings we have yet to meet.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/Supplementary Material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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"We Need to be Better": Race, Outdoor Recreation, and Corporate Social Advocacy

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The summer 2020 protests following the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and other African-Americans sparked important conversations about race, police brutality, and institutionalized racism in the United States. In response to widespread civil unrest, organizations across the country issued statements condemning anti-Black violence and supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. This essay analyzes public statements released by 50 outdoor sport and recreation organizations. Extending scholarly literature on race and corporate social advocacy, our analysis develops the concept of conciliatory discourse, which functions by rhetorically constructing 1) a non-specification of grievance, 2) an obfuscation of commitments to action, and 3) a reinforcement of previous actions or processes. We argue that while many outdoor recreation organizations took action in support of racial justice, their public statements complicate long-term commitments for inclusivity and diversity.

Keywords: outdoor recreation, organizational communication, racism and antiracism, black lives matter protests, image repair strategies, environmental racism, corporate social advocacy

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INTRODUCTION

The summer 2020 protests following the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and other African-Americans sparked important conversations about race, police brutality, and institutionalized racism in the United States. In March 2020, a Black woman named Breonna Taylor was fatally shot by Louisville police officers in the middle of the night as she lay sleeping in her apartment. The shooting was the result of a botched drug raid, for which the police used the wrong address, and no charges were made in connection to Taylor's death. In May 2020, a convenience store employee called the Minneapolis police on a Black man named George Floyd, alleging that he used a counterfeit $20 bill. When police arrived on the scene, white police officer Derek Chauvin pinned George Floyd to the ground, kneeling on his neck for 9 min and 29 seconds, continuing long after Floyd lost consciousness. Floyd ultimately died from the injuries he sustained, and in April 2021 Chauvin was convicted of second-degree murder. Although the Black Lives Matter movement has drawn attention to these issues for years, the protests signaled an important turning point that forced white Americans to confront "the social power afforded by hegemonic White supremacy" (Williams, 2020, p. 1). For weeks, tens of thousands of Americans "swarmed the streets to express their outrage and sorrow" (Taylor, 2021, para. 2) in what became the largest sustained protest movement since the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s.

Additionally, several high-profile events involving outdoor recreation and anti-Blackness preceded the nationwide protests, further reinforcing the importance of exploring this intersection. In February 2020, Ahmaud Arbery was murdered while jogging in his

neighborhood after being pursued by two white men (Fausett, 2021). In May 2020, Christian Cooper, a Black man and self-described avid bird watcher, had the police called on him by a white woman following a confrontation in Central Park over an unleashed dog (Vera and Ly, 2020). These highly publicized events are noteworthy in themselves, but also evince a broader historical trend of anti-Blackness in outdoor spaces.

Not surprisingly, as protestors continued to call for reforms, corporations and organizations across the country began issuing statements of solidarity and support. Although corporate efforts in support of social justice are not unprecedented (Jones, 2019), the scope and urgency of corporate appeals in support of racial justice and Black Lives Matter certainly are.

In this essay, we take these organizational statements as our focal point, focusing specifically on 50 statements from outdoor recreation companies and non-profit organizations that responded to the racial justice protests of 2020. The outdoors and outdoor recreation are important sites of inquiry for exploring the dynamics of contemporary race relations in the United States given the frequent policing of Black and brown bodies in public spaces (Finney, 2014).

Our analysis addresses these organizational statements as examples of image repair and maintenance that were intended to speak directly to the exigencies of race relations in the United States. Our work responds to recent calls by scholars to more critically examine race and difference in communication scholarship (Chakravartty et al., 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2019; Wanzer-Serrano, 2019; ToneUpOrgComm Collective, 2020). Moreover, we build on previous outdoor recreation scholarship (Sasidharan, 2002; Madsen et al., 2014; Schmalz and Mowatt, 2014), which has called for a more robust interrogation of the intersection between race and the outdoors. Powell (2021) explains that because "outdoor recreation is coded as white" (p. 172), researchers must "take on the responsibility of asking questions that not only describe the recreation behaviors of African Americans but examines white toxicity in outdoor spaces" (p. 173). Thus, this essay is aimed at interrogating the racialized discursive practices employed by outdoor sporting and recreation organizations -- which have traditionally avoided engaging with "contentious" issues like racism and white supremacy -- to better understand how capitalist practices can shape the lived experiences of people of color in outdoor spaces.

In what follows, we begin by situating this essay within scholarly conversations pertaining to race and outdoor recreation. Next, we discuss corporate social advocacy (CSA) scholarship, particularly as it pertains to organization image repair strategies in response to accusations of racism. After detailing our methods, we identify the concept of *conciliatory discourse* to make sense of how outdoor sporting and recreation companies responded to the racial justice protests of 2020. Conciliatory discourse is an organizational response to non-specific grievance(s) that recognizes particular exigencies within the social milieu but deflects claims of culpability. We argue that, while many of these corporate statements make promises for direct action and accountability, they do so by creating rhetorical distance between the company and those exigencies and by using vague statements about commitments to racial justice to supplant commitments to action. Finally, we discuss the implications of this analysis.

Outdoor Recreation and Race

The ways in which outdoor recreation companies use public statements for image repair during moments of heightened racial violence and strife raises important questions about the racialization of place and space, particularly in outdoor recreation spaces and national parks. The episodes mentioned above, and countless others, highlight the dominant forces and ideologies at play that determine which bodies are worthy of inhabiting outdoor spaces. For example, mass media articles that justified 17-year-old Trayvon Martin's killing in 2012 by a Florida neighborhood "watch captain" signified that he was identified as a threat because he was "out of place" (Anderson, 2013), similar to the ways in which bodies of color are marked as out of place in national parks, white neighborhoods, and recreational spaces, thus heightening racial anxiety and "impurifying" the (read: white) spaces they inhabit (Anderson, 2013; Brahinsky et al., 2014; McDowell and Wonders, 2009). Naturalizing discourses are deployed to construct racial hierarchies through the language of nature and space and to position the proverbial racial Other as a threat (Brahinsky et al., 2014). Moreover, such murders highlight how "racialization works in intersection with discourses about places and environments to lasting and damaging social effect" (Brahinsky et al., 2014, p. 2). The racialization of outdoor spaces has a long history in line with the US's racial and racist history of segregation, immigration penalization, land theft, conservation practices and policies, and the codification of race and bodies as un/worthy to inhabit certain spaces and places (Brahinsky et al., 2014; Deloria, 1988; Finney, 2014; Taylor, 2016; Rothstein, 2017). As Brahinsky et al. (2014) assert, "When these bodies are seen as "out of place", the violent and fearful fantasies of a society deeply scarred by the enduring legacies of racial violence are never far away" (p. 2).

This racialized violence and environmental racism has reverberated throughout the history of America's outdoor spaces and is still glaringly visible today. With respect to outdoor recreation, this is a deliberate move rooted in the history of American national parks, as people of color were rarely key stakeholders in park planning activities in the earliest years of the American park system (DeLuca and Demo, 2001). According to Myron Floyd, dean of the College of Natural Resources at North Carolina State University, "The underlying rationale for creating parks was this idea of U.S. nationalism, to promote the American identity, and the American identity was primarily white, male and young." "It was really trying to distinguish the American identity from the European identity: being a separate, more mature nation in the mid-19th century" (Gosalvez, 2020). Furthermore, as Gosalvez (2020) and Purdy (2015) describe, Gifford Pinchot, the first head of the US Forest Service, held racist beliefs and asserted that parks were created *only* for white Americans. The reverberations of this environmental racism manifest in various ways in the present day. For example, García et al. (2016) found that Latino immigrant communities in Los Angeles, California faced

limited park availability. In addition to Latino communities not having park access, Latinos face racism when accessing larger public spaces (Clarke et al., 2015). Arredondo and Bustamante (2020) found that Latinos in Northwest Arkansas faced barriers to community spaces such as entrance fees, exclusionary practices, and the overall construction of public spaces as "whitespaces." More broadly, people of color in the United States are three times more likely than white people to live in places that have no immediate access to nature or outdoor spaces (Borunda, 2020).

The racism prevalent in outdoor spaces also perpetuates systemic violence against people of color. In an important conceptual move, Wright (2021) argued for the expansion of environmental racism to move from land-based toxins and violence to include anti-Black violence and the devaluation of Black bodies. We contend with Wright (2021) that such a shift must be made to more fully acknowledge, understand, and address the violences experienced by bodies of color in the outdoors, as such environmental racism indeed includes a wide spectrum of micro-level and macro-level violences. Such violences are evidence of continuing tensions between individual rights and freedoms promised to American citizens and widespread discrimination against communities of color (Hill Collins, 2001). Taken together, such findings highlight "the importance of recognizing both historical determinants of inequities in the built environment and how social processes tend to reproduce power configurations in the present" (Hoover and Lim, 2021). While outdoor spaces were initially constructed as spaces of recreation and leisure (read: for white communities by white men in power), history and recent events demonstrate how outdoor spaces are also places of oppression, violence, and disparities for communities of color, further illustrating the codification of race and configuration of social power relationships.

In recent years, as news articles, social media accounts, and academic research have documented instances of environmental racism and its lasting effects, outdoor recreation and outdoor product organizations have touted their diversity, inclusion, and equity (DEI) work. One of the authors of this manuscript, for example, serves on the Board of Directors for a local climbing non-profit organization and has spearheaded its organizational DEI efforts for the past year. It is telling, however, that this is the first time in the organization's history (in the wake of the murder of George Floyd) that this organization and many others are just *now* realizing they need to include DEI efforts and initiatives in their larger strategic plans. Such efforts are representative of the diversity industrial complex (or the equity-diversity-inclusion industrial complex), a phenomenon wherein organizations are conducting diversity seminars, bringing in diversity specialists, and making public promises about goals to do better, all in the hopes of serving as a solution to inequity in the workplace. According to Springer (2018), the diversity industrial complex is defined as "organizations and individuals invested in framing discrimination as an apolitical tolerance for difference through linguistically downplaying bigotry, social norms, and business practices, while avoiding historical contexts of power and oppression" (para 3). Springer (2018) further elaborates that the diversity industrial complex is "ultimately not interested in diversity for the sake of ending discrimination or social justice, but merely for the sake of a harmonious workplace free from harassment complaints and discrimination lawsuits (though such lawsuits are notoriously difficult for plaintiffs to win)" (para. 3). Part of the diversity industrial complex, we assert, includes public organizational statements concerning diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice work, especially because research suggests that diversity work serves the organization more than its employees (Chen, 2020). In this vein, we ask: to whom were outdoor recreation companies' public statements addressed? Whom did they serve? And to what end?

Corporate Social Advocacy and Race

Public statements issued by outdoor recreation companies following the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020 disrupt traditional approaches to public corporate communication. Following sustained public pressure, companies across the United States began to issue statements that directly grappled with the problems of white supremacy and police brutality. While the visibility of these statements across the spectrum of outdoor recreation companies is unprecedented, it is not surprising. Organizations are increasingly using their platform and brand to engage the public on issues of concern or controversy, often times on issues that frequently fall outside the operational scope of the organization itself. Citing well known cases such Nike's support of NFL quarterback Colin Kaepernick, Austin et al. (2019) contend that "the question of what corporations' role in public interest communications should be remains up for debate" (pp. 3–4). As an emergent genre of corporate communication, these statements constitute what Dodd and Supa (2014) term corporate social advocacy (CSA). CSA is a distinct form of public-facing communication that serves to engage the public by taking a stance on social or political issues. Dodd and Supa (2014) differentiate CSA from issue management or corporate social responsibility by highlighting how, in these statements, "the social-political issues addressed by organizations are divorced from issues of particular relevance to the organization [. . .] engagement in the social-political issues is controversial and serves to potentially isolate organizational stakeholders while simultaneously attracting activist groups; and [. . .] as a result, there is a particularly necessary emphasis on financial outcomes for the organization" (p. 5).

For larger organizations that may be able to exert a considerable amount of public influence, the boundary between corporate social responsibility and CSA is a blurry one. Underscoring the significance of these statements, Parcha and Kingsley Westerman (2020) contend that the "effects of corporate social advocacy are important to understand because if corporations are able to influence attitudes on controversial social issues, they could be at least partially responsible for shaping the future of democratic society" (p. 351). Thus, while traditional statements concerning social responsibility may have been limited to contexts directly relevant to the purview of the organization and its stakeholders, CSA represents a significant departure that attempts to engage the public writ-large on issues of cultural or political significance.

CSA statements issued by large corporations have addressed a variety of concerns such as gun control (Gaither, et al., 2018) and same-sex marriage (Dodd and Supa, 2014). Given the prevalence of racial conflict over the last several years, companies are increasingly engaging with the public on issues of race, identity, and difference. For instance, in 2015, Starbucks launched the Race Together Initiative, which was meant to foster racial dialogue following protests in Ferguson, Missouri (Logan, 2021). The initiative, which involved encouraging baristas to write #racetogether on coffee cups to encourage customers to engage in a discussion about race relations, was widely regarded as a failure (Peterson, 2015). Other companies, like Nike, have established an extensive record of engaging in race-focused public statements and campaigns. For example, Waymer and Logan (2021) have analyzed the shoe company's support of quarterback Colin Kaepernick following the widespread public backlash to his kneeling protest against racial injustice as a form of corporate advocacy. As they assert, "Nike's stance on social justice issues–backed by its corporate mission, public statements and campaigns–aims to position the company as a legitimate corporate social justice advocate" (Waymer and Logan, 2021, p. 5). These high profile examples highlight the tricky terrain of racial politics in the United States that organizations are now beginning to navigate through corporate social advocacy.

Given the racial tensions that have permeated all facets of U.S. American society and the communicative negotiation engendered by corporate social advocacy efforts, it is vital to interrogate the complex power dynamics at play in these public-facing discourses. In recognizing that corporations have historically "perpetuated and profited from racial oppression, making them contributors to, and beneficiaries of, racial injustice," Logan (2021, p. 6) proposes a novel theoretical framework termed corporate responsibility to race (CRR). Understood as a normative theory, CRR "could, and perhaps should, guide the behavior of corporations and similar organizations on matters of race and social justice" (Logan, 2021, pp. 6–7) and invites researchers to "theorize how human beings and organizations experience the world within the context of powerful corporations advocating for racial justice" (Logan, 2021, p. 7). CRR draws on a wide body of scholarship including critical race theory, corporate social responsibility, and CSA to provide a framework for understanding how corporations might engage with racial (in)justice. According to Logan (2021), CRR communications should be able to draw attention to race, highlight the implications of racism, advocate for racial justice, express a desire to achieve a more just society, and prioritize societal good over economic profit (p. 13). As a vital reimagining of public relations scholarship that foregrounds race, the CRR framework provides a valuable heuristic for exploring organizational statements about racial injustice.

While the existing literature on corporate social advocacy works to contextualize our present study, it does not fully account for the statements about police brutality and racial injustice. We argue it is important to analyze these statements rather than taking them at face value, because, as Holling et al. (2014) remind us, rhetorical criticism "requires questioning commonsense explanations that produce and reinforce our consent to the current social order and its power structures" (p. 250). To what extent do these public statements disrupt current power relations and demand a change in the material conditions of white supremacy (Gordon and Crenshaw, 2003; Holling et al., 2014)? These organizations issued statements without being directly called upon to do so, and so we echo Gordon and Crenshaw (2003) in asking "What replaces the silence about racism?" (p. 251).

METHODS

To answer this question, we turn to an analysis of 50 statements released by outdoor sporting and recreation companies in the wake of the racial justice protests in the summer of 2020. Public statements provide a salient avenue for exploring organizational values and identity. Previous scholarship has emphasized the importance of public-facing communications like corporate ethics statements (Murphy, 1995), mission statements (Klemm et al., 1991), and environmental statements (Onkila, 2009) for exploring how organizations engage with stakeholders and the general public. Given the centrality of social media, the majority of these statements were issued through platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, but several organizations also issued detailed statements on their web pages. We focused on the 50 public statements compiled by Outside Business Journal (2020), which kept a running list statements "condemning racial injustice and institutional violence against the Black community in the United States" (para. 1).

These statements represent a diverse cross-section of organizations and companies that work in the broad domain of outdoor recreation. The majority of the statements (n = 41) were issued by for-profit companies or corporations. These included larger corporations (e.g., REI, Eddie Bauer, Timberland), smaller companies (e.g., Cotopaxi), and outdoor-focused public relations firms (e.g., Press Forward PR, Outside PR). The second group of statements (n = 6) was made by industry advocacy groups and professional organizations such as the Outdoor Industry Association and the American Hiking Society. The final group of statements (n = 3) is from what we term community-building organizations (Black Girls Climb, Outdoor Afro, and She Explores), which advocate for more inclusivity in outdoor sport and recreation. Given that this final group is composed of organizations whose major strategic goal is inclusive advocacy, we did not include their statements in our analysis. Most of the statements were released on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, although several organizations also linked to their website where more detailed statements were available. In cases where social media posts linked to longer statements on organization websites, both texts were used. We copied the text of these statements and any accompanying images into qualitative coding software NVivo 12, which was used to facilitate coding.

Our data analysis process unfolded in three phases. First, we began with a close read of the statements to identify broad, emergent themes about the data set. We each developed

individual notes about the statements that sought to describe the strategies these organizations employed. We used these notes to develop theoretical memos that were used to orient the later phases of our analysis. During the second phase, we engaged in descriptive first cycle coding (Tracy, 2020) that sought to capture categorical information about the statements as well as meanings that could be used to develop a codebook with examples and definitions. The categorical information including details such as whether the statement was made by a company or non-profit organization, whether the statement committed to a specific course of action (such as donating money or hiring diversity and inclusivity managers), whether the statement explicitly named white supremacy, police brutality, or white privilege as social problems, and whether the statement provided readers with resources that could be used to support social justice causes. Finally, we engaged in third-level axial coding (Creswell, 2007) that explored how these emergent categories and themes were interconnected. We drew on concepts of CSA and CRR as sensitizing concepts to make sense of these data in light of the theoretic memos developed in our first cycle of coding. Additionally, our analysis was partially informed by our positionalities as researchers who engage with outdoor recreation in a variety of ways. Carlos is a Latino borderlands scholar whose research interests focus on environmental organizations. Sarah is a mixed-race Chicana from the Mexico/U.S. border who enjoys hiking, rock climbing, and spending time outdoors with her family. Leandra is a critical health communication and media studies scholar who utilizes Chicana feminist lenses to explore community activism in reproductive justice contexts. As an avid rock climber, she is also a member of the Board of Directors and EDI committee for her local climbing advocacy organization. In the next section, we explore the major themes that emerged in these public statements and advance the idea of conciliatory discourse as an analytic frame.

Analysis

These statements constitute a unique style of organizational image repair that we term conciliatory discourse. Drawing on and extending Logan's (2021) CRR framework, we argue that these public statements represent an attempt to center race in social advocacy, but ultimately do not fully address the "processes of racism and racialization" (p. 16) that perpetuate racial harm. Conciliatory discourse, then, is a hybrid genre of corporate social advocacy that is defined by organizational responses to exigencies within the social milieu that create rhetorical distance and a denial of culpability. An analysis of the public statements issued by outdoor sporting and recreation organizations reveals that conciliatory discourse functions by rhetorically constructing 1) a non-specification of grievance, 2) an obfuscation of commitments to action, and 3) a reinforcement of previous actions or processes. As our qualitative analysis reveals, this new genre of corporate social advocacy highlights how organizations co-opt specific message frames to engage in face-saving engagement with broad publics. These tactics, we argue, evince a commodification of social justice discourse that allows organizations to tout a commitment to justice while simultaneously denying culpability or taking material action. The organizational statements included in our analysis represent a wide range of communication strategies and, accordingly, our intent is not to point to specific examples that were more or less successful. On the contrary, our aim is to showcase how the statements encompass myriad responses that complicate how organizations might respond to complex, deeply-entrenched problems like white supremacy and police brutality.

Non-Specification of Grievance

The first characteristic of conciliatory discourse concerns the non-specification of grievances or the ways in which organizations externalize social problems. While some styles of public-facing communication such as corporate apologia (Hearit, 1995) respond to specific grievances or actions directly related to organizational wrongdoing, conciliatory discourse addresses external problems that may not be directly connected to the purview of the organization. The statements issued in response to the racial justice protests were markedly different in that the responding organizations were not directly at fault for incidents such as the killing of George Floyd or the police call involving Christian Cooper. As a result, the statements largely externalized racial injustice as a broad social problem that allowed the organizations to create rhetorical distance, enabling them to speak about racial injustice vaguely and deny culpability.

Many of the public statements offered exceptionally vague condemnation of injustice but did not address the specific events that precipitated the protests in the summer of 2020. In these cases, the organizations drew on justice and anti-racist frames, but did so without explicitly engaging with the particularities of the unrest unfolding at the time. For instance, Moosejaw, an outdoor recreation apparel company, offered a statement that simply read, "Moosejaw stands for inclusivity, and we stand with all those affected by bigotry, injustice, and systemic racism. We see you. We hear you. We stand with you. #blacklivesmatter" (Moosejaw, 2020). Hoka One, an athletic shoe company, simply posted, "We fly higher when we fly together. It's time to do better. It's time to be anti-racist. Let's do better together. The time is now" (HOKA ONE ONE, 2020). Similarly, Ibex Wool's statement offers a general solidarity statement: "We cannot stand silent while blatant injustices happen daily to our brothers and sisters. We must do better . . . All of us here at Ibex know that we must build diversity and justice into the foundation of our company and not tolerate hate of any kind" (Ibex Outdoor Clothing, 2020). Statements like these highlight a broad strategy of non-specification that points to general ideas like injustice and bigotry, but does not name issues like police brutality or white supremacy that have enabled the perpetuation of injustice in the first place.

Additionally, many of the statements offered general condemnation of racial injustice and police brutality but did not address how racism has permeated outdoor recreation activities. This may not be surprising given that the protests were driven largely in response to the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others. However, in directing focus to problems external to the organizational domain (i.e., outdoor sport and recreation), many of the

statements failed to account for how racist practices have excluded people of color in outdoor spaces. For example, clothing retailer prAna's (2020) statement explains:

> Grief. Frustration. Anger. Confusion.
>
> Fear. Guilt. Exhaustion.
>
> Words fail to capture these feelings.
>
> Action is required.
>
> In trying to understand these feelings, how to express them, and how to respond, we waited. We realize now the waiting in and of itself was a privilege we took for granted, and our silence spoke for us.
>
> We stand with George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and their families.
>
> We stand with those speaking out against racism in Minneapolis and cities around the world.
>
> We stand with anyone impacted by racism and social injustice.
>
> Today, we stand up to listen.

Statements like this demonstrate a process of externalization in which the social ills of police brutality and systemic racism are rendered as problems "out there" that allow the organizations to deny culpability. We do not mean to suggest that these companies are directly responsible for the atrocities committed against Black folks or the centuries of institutionalized racism in the United States. However, the organizational self-reflexivity attempted in these statements does not begin to address how capitalist practice, outdoor recreation culture, and economic privilege have reified the outdoors as space traditionally reserved for white bodies (Finney, 2014). Statements by groups like the American Alpine Club (2020), a non-profit climbing organization, specifically "condemn the systemic racism that jeopardizes life and opportunity for black and brown people," (para. 3) but only offers vague calls for justice "in everyday life, at protests, in the halls of government, *at the crag*, and in the voting booth" (para. 4, emphasis added). Similarly, the non-profit American Hiking Society emphasizes that its mission "will never be fulfilled until systemic racism is erased and black bodies are safe outside. We resolve to re-commit to doing what we can as American Hiking to root out racism in the outdoors" (American Hiking Society, 2020). Whether by speaking in vague generalities or by externalization, these statements reveal how conciliatory discourse works through non-specification of grievance.

Obfuscation of Commitment to Action

Although nearly all of the public statements offered a condemnation of racism and statements of solidarity with protestors, our analysis revealed a wide range of commitments to tangible action. Thus, a secondary characteristic of conciliatory discourse is a general evasiveness on behalf of the organization. Because organizations create rhetorical distance through non-specification as outlined above, efforts to create change are also marked by a general tendency to avoid solid commitments for change.

A primary strategy to obfuscate action commitments was to express the need for change without providing any details for action. In these cases, organizations used nebulous language about promoting justice but did not explain what such an approach would encompass. For example, Arc'teryx, an outdoor clothing and climbing gear company, pledged they "will use our voice to seek justice where we live, work, and play We will educate whenever and wherever we can. We commit to ensuring that every single human feels at home in everything we do" (Arc'teryx, 2020). Others, like public relations firm Outside PR, emphasized that "We need to be better. We need to understand better. We need to listen and learn. We need to stand together." (Outside PR, 2020). Cycling company Rapha similarly expressed the need to "do more in supporting diversity at a grassroots level do more in championing diverse leaders in the sport do more in recruiting and advancing diversity within our organisation [sic]" (Rapha, 2020) but did not specify how such objectives would be accomplished. In these cases, the organizations drew upon vague commitments to the goals of social change but did not provide actionable steps for accomplishing them.

Organizations also employed a strategy of focusing on listening and voice amplification. Rather than committing to concrete action, these organizations emphasized critical self-reflexivity as the best action they could take. Tension Climbing, a climbing gear company, released a statement committing to "listening to and elevating BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, People of Color] voices, and creating short-term and long term goals within our company" (Tension Climbing, 2020) that asked followers to reach out directly with areas for possible improvement. Alpine gear company Mammut took a similar approach with their statement: "Today, we don't have all the answers. Today, we are listening and learning. Talk without action doesn't create change, so please let us know how we can be better and more inclusive" (Mammut North America, 2020). Many of the organizations also utilized the #AmplifyMelanatedVoices hashtag while putting a pause on regularly scheduled content and used the opportunity to "listen and reflect on how we can do better" (Climbing Wall Association, 2020). Conciliatory discourse enables organizations to elide responsibility by using self-reflexive monitoring as a strategy for addressing non-specified grievances.

It is worth noting that several of the organizations in our analysis did commit to tangible actions in support of racial justice. In fact, some of the organizations (n = 13) pledged donations or matching funds to organizations like the NAACP and ACLU. While important, fewer organizations made commitments to engage in long-term efforts in support of diversity and inclusivity initiatives. We argue this distinction is important in the larger context of DEI efforts because it represents a compartmentalization of racial justice. That is, by donating money, the organizations are able to present clear, tangible evidence of their support for racial justice -- but do not necessarily need to commit to longer-term efforts to combat

racialized exclusions within the organization or the broader realm of outdoor recreation. As a discursive strategy, this move is consequential because it uses discrete image repair strategies (i.e., monetary donations) in response to non-specified grievances (i.e., systemic racism), thereby enabling the organization to assert publicly that it is doing the labor of equity and inclusivity.

Reinforcement of Previous Action

Organizational issue management is typically timebound. When a crisis occurs that may undermine the legitimacy of the organization, statements are issued to placate investors or stakeholders so that confidence in the organization is not undermined. Conciliatory discourse, by contrast, is not bound by considerations for expedience in the same ways because the grievances are abstract and, by consequence, solutions do not need to be directly responsive. Although all of the statements in our analysis were released as protests around the country were growing in size (roughly a 1-week timeframe in early June 2020), the strategies outlined in response to grievances about racial injustice were not temporally bound to the present moment. Instead, many of the organizations relied on appeals to previous efforts focused on diversity and inclusivity as another way of avoiding direct culpability. This strategy, a reinforcement of previous action or process, is the third defining characteristic of conciliatory discourse.

Many organizations in our analysis touted longstanding commitments to diversity and anti-racism to underscore commitment to the protests that were occurring at the time. In the clearest example, Timberland, an outdoor clothing wear company known for its distinctive style of boots, posted an advertisement from 1992. The image features the iconic Timberland boot with the text "Give racism the boot." On the Instagram post featuring the advertisement, the caption explains:

> In 1992 we shared a message. Sadly, we bring it back today. We don't want to. We shouldn't have to. As humans, we have the responsibility to care for our planet, ourselves, and each other—all of us, no matter who you are. Let's work together now for a better future. Caring is no longer enough. Use your voice. (Timberland, 2020).

The message concludes by encouraging followers to take action by supporting Color of Change, a non-profit civil rights advocacy organization. This statement is noteworthy because it exemplifies conciliatory discourse in several ways. The company does not directly address the specific exigencies that prompted the statement (i.e., racism, police brutality, social unrest), nor does it outline specific actions that it is taking to combat those problems. Instead, the company alludes to its previous anti-racism efforts by way of an advertisement and attempts to bridge the temporal gap between past and present. This maneuvering allows the organization to avoid direct culpability because the image is meant to serve as evidence of longstanding commitments for social justice.

Other organizations relied on similar strategies to showcase previous efforts in support of diversity and inclusivity. Mountain Equipment Co-Op emphasized that they were signatories to the "Outdoor Industry CEO Diversity Pledge," an industry-wide set of principles intended to increase representation for people of color in outdoor recreation. Their statement explains:

MEC signed the Outdoor Industry CEO Diversity Pledge in 2018. It specifies the work we need to undertake–and continue–and it holds us accountable.

We are aligned with the guiding principles of the pledge, which include:

1. Hiring and supporting a diverse workforce and executive leadership.
2. Presenting representative marketing and advertising in the media.
3. Engaging and supporting broadly representative ambassador athletes.
4. Sharing our experiences with other leading brands (MEC, 2020).

Despite stating that "Anti-Black racism is an injustice that must be named specifically and resisted actively" (MEC, 2020), the company does not highlight any actions it is taking, nor does it highlight specific changes that have occurred in the 2 years since signing the pledge. Other organizations linked their organizational identity to commitments for inclusivity. Cotopaxi, for instance, claimed that "Creating a more equal and just world has been at the heart and soul of our brand" (Cotopaxi, 2020) and the protests have simply catalyzed a stronger commitment to social and racial justice. In these instances, organizations are reinforcing previous actions and value alignments in response to external pressures for public advocacy displays.

CONCLUSION

Conciliatory discourse constitutes a genre of corporate social advocacy responsive to social exigencies that allows organizations to deny culpability and, by consequence, create rhetorical distance between the identified problem and actionable solutions. Our analysis highlights how corporate social advocacy might be employed when dealing with broad, complex problems circulating in the public consciousness. This genre is likely to become more common as organizations and corporations extend their influence into public life (Deetz, 1994; Parcha and Kingsley Westerman, 2020) and are called upon to speak out on issues like climate change, LGBTQIA + rights, immigration, and other complex issues.

Our analysis highlights how organizations navigate the tricky dynamics of racial politics in the United States. To be certain, many of the organizations included in our analysis *did* commit to tangible action that we believe has the potential to create more inclusivity in outdoor sport and recreation. However, these statements also demonstrate how conventional methods of message dissemination (e.g., press releases, social media posts,

etc.) may be insufficient when dealing with issues such as systemic racism and white supremacy. The prevalence of social media in the contemporary information ecosystem means that serious engagement with complex problems may not be entirely possible. For example, Mitchell S. Jackson's (2020) Pulitzer prize-winning essay about Ahmaud Arbery in *Runner's World* serves as a powerful counter-narrative that engages with the dynamics of white supremacy in outdoor recreation in ways that were not evident in any of the public statements included in our analysis. He explains, "It's also clear to me that the same forces that transformed running from a fledgling pastime in my white-ass home state into a billion-dollar global industry also circumscribed a culture that was at best, unwelcoming, and at worse, restrictive to him" (Jackson, 2020, para. 38). Here, style and form enable a greater degree of complexity that would not be possible in a Tweet or Instagram post, especially when dealing with non-specific grievances.

One limitation of our analysis is that it focused exclusively on the public statements of these organizations and may not encompass larger efforts to support diversity and inclusivity. As we explained above, many of the statements expressed a clear commitment to social change, but it was not abundantly clear *how* such changes would be accomplished (within the organization or otherwise). While our analysis aimed to be comprehensive in examining how these organizations responded to the racial justice protests through public communication, we do not account for any long-term initiatives or internal organizational reforms in our analysis. Still, we maintain that public statements provide an important vantage point for exploring image repair or maintenance strategies. Future research should explore whether approaches like conciliatory discourse can manage to engender long-term change in organizations.

Although many of the organizations made commitments in support of social justice such as donations to civil rights advocacy, our analysis calls into question the motivations behind such decisions. Jones (2019) explains that many companies are now engaging in "wokewashing," or marketing that appeals to social-justice-oriented causes to maximize profits. Previous environmental communication scholarship (Pezzullo, 2003) has shown how organizations can draw on eco-friendly discourses while supporting actions that are environmentally destructive (greenwashing). As concerns about racial justice become more mainstream, it is critical to interrogate whether public commitments for change are more than just optics campaigns drawing on the latest cause célèbre. To be clear, we believe that organizations making firm commitments for anti-racism and inclusivity have the potential for positively impacting the racial politics of outdoor spaces. However, given the ambiguous statements issued by many of the organizations in our analysis, we question whether these efforts are genuine or just a face-saving technique so as not to appear out of touch.

The public statements issued following the racial injustice protests in 2020 evince the changing dynamics between organizations and the broader public, particularly around contentious issues like race. In our analysis, we found that organizations like Tension Climbing and Mammut centered dialogue in their statements, and other organizations made monetary donations. This is a start, but true reconciliation would mean that an organization confronts the role *they* have played in maintaining white supremacy in outdoor spaces, engages in dialogue with those who have been most impacted, and collaborates with them to determine the necessary reparative actions. If donations are made, which organizations are doing the best antiracist work? What else is needed to undo the white supremacy inherent to organizational practices and outdoor spaces? Following Logan (2021), we should not "naïvely assume corporate communication can unilaterally undo enduring systemic and structural racism," (p. 12) but these efforts present the possibility of progressive change. These organizations cannot and should not assume they have the answers, and dialogue with the communities most impacted is a necessary step forward towards reconciling historic (and present-day) injustices.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

CT, SU, and LH equally contributed to the development, analysis, writing, and editing in this essay.

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Ecotourism as Leisure and Labor in the Experience of the "Great" Outdoors

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Ecotourism as an international concept promotes foreign and domestic tourism to locations in forests, oceans, and other forms of the natural world. National parks and other preserved ecosystems are popular destinations, usually located in the so-called developing countries or Global South countries, such as South and Southeast Asia, Central and South America, and Africa. This paper examines the construction of labor and leisure as forms of experience of the "Great" Outdoors for both ecotourists and local peoples. We argue that ecotourism is a form of colonial/racialized/gendered gaze, in which power imbalances are reflected in people's experiences of ecotourism as labor and leisure. We use case studies in Indonesia and India, based on our long standing field research in each respective country.

Keywords: ecotourism, travel and tourism, leisure, labor, colonialism in India, colonialism in Southeast Asia

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INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism, or tourism that is centered around visiting natural environments and participating in activities such as national park touring and wildlife viewing, has grown in popularity with international and domestic tourists alike. While ecotourism can refer to any kind of tourism that engages with some aspect of the natural world, in practice, it often refers to tourism in so-called developing or Global South countries, where local or Indigenous people host tourists as a way to earn income and tourists enjoy cultural experiences in the "Great" Outdoors. Ecotourism has been promoted as a way for such local and/or Indigenous people to make a living while at the same time preserving interest in protecting natural habitats (e.g., see Sowards, 2010; Sowards, 2012; Sowards and Varela, 2013). While ecotourism is generally seen as a positive benefit for bringing revenue to poorer communities, the negative aspects can be significant. Revenue leakage (in which income goes to outside providers, guides, or services instead of local people), waste disposal problems, plastics and sewage issues, cultural misunderstandings, inappropriate wildlife interactions, increased human impact on soil, forests, and waterways, and lack of tourist preparation for cultural and natural world engagement are just a few of the issues that arise in communities both new to and experienced in ecotourism industries (e.g., see Honey, 1999; Weaver, 2001; Buckley, 2004; Rubita, 2012).

In this article, we explore how ecotourism is experienced as both a form of leisure and labor, often with class, caste, gender, linguistic, racial, and ethnic implications. We use three communities as case studies for understanding how people as tourists seek exoticized "Great" Outdoors experiences in India and Indonesia. First, the landlocked state of Sikkim in India, located in northeastern India bordering China, Nepal, and Bhutan, promotes ecotourism predominantly through the gateway city of Siliguri in the state of West Bengal, India. Ecotourism in Sikkim has increased rapidly since 2002, with the tourism sector accounting for nearly 7.7% of the gross state domestic product (GDP) (Government of Sikkim, 2018) and providing employment to an estimated 7 out of every 10 families

(Sarkar, 2020). However, recent studies show that local communities have yet to reap meaningful, long-term economic benefits from this boom. While the focus has been on developing and promoting ecotourism in the state around traditional village homestays benefitting local and Indigenous communities, it is estimated that approximately 61% of the workforce in the tourism sector in Sikkim are from outside the state, resulting in revenue leakage in the local context and gradual undermining of traditional customs and practices of rural Sikkim (Whelan, 2013; Development Alternatives, 2018). We define this economic and cultural leakage as the neoliberal failings of ecotourism.

In our second case, West Bali National Park, located on the island of Bali in Indonesia, a local organization developed a micro-tourism project to increase revenue for local communities beyond the mainstream forms of tourism in other parts of Bali. The communities here are approximately a 50–50% mix of Muslims and Hindus, so religion and different ways of life are also part of promoting ecotourism as cultural experience. This project was promoted through a local non-governmental organization and the national park office. We found deeply gendered practices, along with class inequities within the communities, which we label gendered/classed economies, even as they are also racialized/nationalized. Finally, our third case examines national parks in Kalimantan (Indonesian part of Borneo Island). These parks, Gunung Palung, Tanjung Puting, Kutai, and Kayan Mentarang, have received relatively few visitors, but such tourists can have outsized impact, due to lack of infrastructure and difficulty of travel to such locations. The appeal of orangutan tourism in some of these parks draws some international and domestic tourism, but the problems of inappropriate wildlife interaction and waste management need to be addressed. The draw of Indigenous peoples and their performances means that this case also represents the exoticization of cultures and forests. In the Indonesian case studies, communities have benefited from such tourism, but the same problems, such as revenue leakage, waste management, and environmental impact are still concerns as they are in our Indian case study.

These case studies illustrate how the dichotomy of labor/leisure becomes amplified in ecotourism settings through relations of racialization, colonization, and gender (e.g., Crawshaw and Urry, 1997; Sowards, 2012). This essay unpacks the racialized, classed, and gendered aspects of labor in relationship to privileged forms of leisure. We look at the intersectionalities of ecotourism, globalization, neoliberalism, and regional governance to reveal how Indigenous and local ways of life are being rewritten by cultural and religious appropriation, cultural reproduction, and neoliberal conservation debates, to acknowledge and understand what is truly at stake, both locally and globally. Our case studies are based on extensive fieldwork research in Sikkim (India), Bali, and Kalimantan (Indonesia). Our field research is based on ethnographic/observational approaches as well as interviews, community mapping, informal discussions, and participation in the ecotourism projects themselves, sometimes as advisors and sometimes as actual participants. Because our methods were different for each case study, we describe in more detail our specific approaches as we move through those cases. To discuss the relationship between leisure and labor in ecotourism projects, we first turn to literature on de/coloniality that informs how we might understand and frame the "Great" Outdoors within and through the colonial/racial gaze. Much of the decoloniality literature is theoretically focused and/or on settler colonialism and/or Central/South America; we hope with our case studies to bring specificity to what decolonizing practice and thinking might look like. Ultimately, we argue that while we believe ecotourism involves racialized/nationalized/classed seeings and experiences, local communities perceive ecotourism as a possible revenue and cultural engagement enterprise. We suggest, in the end, that local community projects, like the cases we discuss here, have the best opportunity for providing meaningful revenue and actual interactions, even as we recognize these suggestions are fraught and reside within the neoliberal, globalized economic structures of capitalism. However, there is a great need for developed ecotourism policy, greater industry connections, improvement of services (ranging from homestays to transportation), reduction of imported goods/foods and waste, and consideration of gendered labor. Ultimately, we contend that ecotourism, while highly desired by communities and ecotourists alike, remains situated in the colonial, racialized gaze and experience, in which the Westerner/Global Northerner/privileged tourist is able to demand attention and hospitality in ways that perpetually subjugate Indigenous and other local communities. And yet, our critique is not likely to end such programs; we ask that academics, tourists, and communities alike consider the implications of such endeavors.

Ecotourism as Leisure/Labor and Colonial/Racial Gaze

Ecotourism destinations are marketed in specific ways that construct important meaning and experience for both tourists and industry workers. For tourists, expectations are formed through rhetorically constructed messages such as exotic adventure. Such expectations then shape how tourists experience and remember their ecotourism activities, with varying degrees of self-awareness and critical consciousness (Sowards, 2012). That is, such experiences can shape the environmental identity of the tourist supposing a critical orientation and cosmopolitan understanding of the world. However, foreign tourists are also people of their own ontologies and cannot help but understand the world through their own privileged, often racialized, nationalized, and classed gaze. The tourist then, engages in a form of colonial/racial gaze when traveling abroad, particularly from the Global North/West (see Crawshaw and Urry, 1997). For ecotourism laborers, such as tour guides, homestay workers, meal preparers, and transportation providers, their experiences are oriented towards the tourist's pleasure and enjoyment; in our case studies, these are often foreigners and out-of-state domestic tourists. That orientation profoundly alters environmental identities in how such workers experience the "Great" Outdoors and natural ecosystems. For workers who may have

always lived in such environments, to see these worlds through the eyes of outsiders is necessary to provide the ecotourist customer the desired experience. Therein lies the challenge: to see their own worlds from an outsider's perspective, one of leisure, privilege, higher class standing, economic status, colonial language power, and so forth. As Leilani Nishime and Kim D. Hester Williams contend in the introduction of their edited collection, *Racial Ecologies*, "race is inextricable from our understandings of ecology, and vice versa. In fact, ideologies that define terms such as *nature* and *landscape* also subtend categories such as *self/other*, *Asian*, and *white*" (Nishime and Hester Williams, 2018, pp. 3–4, italics in original).

Ideally, travel and tourist experiences enable a different kind of seeing, one that transforms. As Trinh Minh-ha notes,

> Every voyage can be said to involve a re-siting of boundaries. The traveling self is here both the self that moves physically from one place to another, following 'public routes and beaten tracks' within a mapped movement, and the self that embarks on an undetermined journeying practice, having constantly to negotiate between home and abroad, native culture and adopted culture, or more creatively speaking, between a here, a there, *and* an elsewhere (Minh-ha, 1994, p. 9, italics in original).

States of exile, refugeeism, voluntary migration, and national origin/class status deeply inform the traveling self, in ways that a privileged tourist experience of leisure does not. "Colonized and marginalized people are socialized to always see more than their own points of view" (1994, p. 16), while the tourist is often one who explores cultures and natures through myopic consumption and exoticization.

One is aware of differential status when travel is not for leisure, but privilege has the effect of seeing difference through a lens of privileged class and caste status, with less awareness of privileged gaze in juxtaposition to say, refugee or exiles, who are constantly aware of their status, in often racialized ways. Catherine Ramírez (2020) argues that the tourist, in contrast to the refugee, enjoys "the power, privilege, and prestige of elected movement, especially when they bear the right passport, currency, and mode of transportation, be it a reliable car or a private jet" (pp. 113-4). As such, categories of mobile people ranging from tourists and diplomats to immigrants and refugees are hierarchical and racialized in how they arrive and are received, as Ramírez contends. These different types of travel (forced vs. pleasure/leisure) definitively shape how one becomes and evolves from such experiences.

This kind of status and mobility of the Western or Global North tourist, or even the domestic tourist who has the financial resources to travel reflects a privileged way of seeing and not-seeing that local people cannot come to understand, often because of their lack of or limited mobility. Rob Nixon (2011) describes the long-term effects of colonization on how people experience leisure tourism, such as the game lodge in Africa. Discussing Njabulo Ndebele's writings, Nixon describes the game lodge as "free-floating Edenic enclaves of natural time, unmoored from historical memory, clock-time, and the time of labor" (p. 181). As leisure, such lodges as a tourist destination in African countries shape a form of spectacle and an ecology of looking. Nixon explains that: "In the touristic present, the fraught issue of labor resurfaces through the prism of class, which complicates whatever racial identification the vacationing writer may feel with those who tiptoe around him or her in roles of unobtrusive service" (p. 184). Ndebele, as Nixon explains, questions how he will be seen as an insider/outsider within this white tourist/non-white laborer community. Similarly, Jamaica Kincaid explores such questions: "How, she exclaims, can the emancipated descendants of slaves celebrate the Hotel Training School 'which teaches Antiguans how to be good servants?'" (p. 185). Nixon further argues that nature tourism in colonized regions and nations reflects politics of looking and enables a white tourist experience without anguished conflict, whereas for the Black tourist, there is a feeling of spectacle and sense that the non-white folks are on display as much as the non-human animals and environments are.

Not only are the actual interactions and experiences concocted to benefit white gaze and privilege, but the way in which such tourists write about their travels re-entrenches racialized narratives. Writing about the histories and origins of Western/European travelers to the Global South as well as Indians traveling to Europe, Inderpal Grewal illustrates how travel narratives construct identities related to gender, nation, class, and race, as well as labor. Grewal further contends that:

> this mode of travel became and is hegemonic to this day [through . . .] the deployment of the term *travel* as a universal form of mobility. Such a use erases or conflates those mobilities that are not part of this Eurocentric, imperialist formation, while including some, like the trope of exile, that reinscribe European hegemonic aesthetic forms. For instance, migration, immigration, deportation, indenture, and slavery are often erased by the universalizing of European travel" (Grewal, 1996, p. 2).

She continues by noting that travel becomes metaphorical in how one comes to understand relational selves in difference across nationalities and class standings as well as the "knowledge" of the Other that one gains from such travel.

While the travelers themselves form some kind of understanding through their gaze of racialized/nationalized/classed difference, the laborers and other folks in communities who might encounter such tourists struggle with the question of hospitality, that is, how to provide services to the tourist, while existing within this state of the differential. Jacques Derrida, in conversation with Anne Dufourmantelle, theorizes this traveling/migration question surrounding the meaning of hospitality and foreigner, although their discussion resides within the relationship to father and parricide. The connection Derrida makes is among foreign, hospitality, and identity or being: "the place where the question of the foreigner as a question of hospitality is articulated with the question of being" (Dufourmantelle and Derrida, 2000, p. 9), which can also become a sense of blindness and madness. Derrida also links the notions of home and hospitality, similar in some ways to Grewal's connection between home and harem. Although Derrida invokes technology as a violation of home, we

can also think through the power structures of tourism, in "homestays" for example, as both the violation of home and hospitality as well as the invited guest as parasite. While Derrida dichotomizes guest and parasite, in the field of tourism, such meaning is collapsed, as the guest becomes a parasitic form of monetary capital in the context of the "homestay" and laboring and hosting bodies. While guests may be invited, the power imbalances related to race, nationality, caste/class standing, and gender suggest a form of hegemonic hospitality.

So far, we have been discussing the ways in which tourist gaze is racialized/classed (or casted), but gender, in the intersectional margins of race/class/caste, also plays a significant role in the parasitic nature of traveling and touring in the form of leisure. Cynthia Enloe, in her still very relevant book, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*, argues that tourism and travel invoke powerful hierarchies of social and political understanding, particularly within gender dynamics:

> Power infuses all international relationship. We would like to imagine that going on holiday to Bermuda rather than Grenada is merely a social, even aesthetic matter, not a question of politics . . . Power, not simply taste, is at work here. Ignoring women on the landscape of international politics perpetuates the notion that certain power relations are merely a matter of taste and culture. Paying serious attention to women can expose how *much* power it takes to maintain the international political system in its present form (Enloe, 1989, pp. 2-3, italics in original).

Enloe goes on to argue that women become the service workers of the tourism industry, as evidenced in professions such as flight attendants, cleaning personnel, servers, and cooks. Tourists in these senses create intimacy through power relationships, in which expectations for cultural accommodation or adventure are very low, while at the same time invading the spaces/places/senses of people who engage in the labor to ensure that tourists enjoy themselves and acquire the desired engagement: "Often women have been set up as the quintessence of the exotic. To many men, women are something to be experienced" (Enloe, 1989, p. 28). Ecotourism, while presumably more socially, culturally, economically, and politically attuned, cannot avoid these problems, as we examine further in this article, and as have been explored elsewhere both in terms of the gendered nature of forestry and conservation as well as ecotourism more specifically (Husien, 2002; Atje and Roesad, 2004; Arnscheidt, 2009; Liswanti et al., 2011; Mai et al., 2011; Mwangi and Mai, 2011). Various forms of tourism, ranging from hedonistic and deeply problematic forms to the more socially aware forms (such as ecotourism) are all informed by the colonial/racialized gaze in different ways and levels.

Neoliberalisation, Territorialization, and Ecotourism

The ways in which tourism in general reflects the same hegemonic forms of ideologies related to race, class, caste, and gender, for instance, is further complicated and compounded in globalization and neoliberal politics. That is, we can never escape the paradoxical expectations of critiquing/promoting ecotourism because it is both a capitalistic endeavor that may be a boon for local communities, even while rooted in problematic assumptions. Ecotourism, while touted by the United Nations as a means to generate "economic benefits for host communities, organizations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes" and providing alternative employment and income generation for local and Indigenous communities (UNWTO: World Trade Organization, 2002; Stronza, 2007), has been "far more problematic than UN rhetoric" (Dalgish, 2018). As Dalgish notes, the "pressure to engage in ecotourism is effectively a pressure to subordinate concern for environmental conservation and respect for local communities (which ecotourism ostensibly supports) to 'concern for attracting ecotourists and their money'" (West and Carrier, 2004, p. 491 in Dalgish, 2018).

This "postneoliberal environmental-economic paradigm" as posited by McAfee (1999), often reinforces exploitative capitalist relations by pushing developing nations to "sell nature to save it" (McAfee, 1999, p. 133 cited in Dalgish, 2018). According to Igoe and Brockington (2007), neoliberalisation is part of a global process that "involves the re-regulation of nature through forms of commodification" leading to new types of "territorialization—the partitioning of resources and landscapes in ways that control, and often exclude local people" (p. 432, 436). This territorialization is a form of reregulation that often creates "new types of values and make those values available to national and transnational elites" (p. 432). According to Ferguson (2006), protected areas in developing countries are primary examples of such "territorialized spaces of high biodiversity value" that have been "reregulated to give them new types of economic value and to make that value available to transnational interests and national elites, often at the expense of local rural communities" (Ferguson, 2006 cited in Igoe and Brockington, 2007, p. 441). Carrier and Macleod (2005) extend Marx's (1867) notion of "fetishization of commodities"—or the "tendency to present the commodity for sale in a way that obscures the social relations and situations that bring it into existence and to the attention of the potential buyer" (p. 329) to ecotourism, which "seeks to manage and insulate ecotourists from the realities and contexts of their destinations" (Dalgish, 2018).

These forms of touristic travel to experience nature and culture in leisure form then, are racialized, colonized, gendered, and classed/casted practices as part of the neoliberal globalization. Whether tourists travel to places like India and Indonesia from the West as white or non-white, the Western/Global North lens still reflects a colonizing and racialized gaze. And domestic tourists, such as those traveling within Indonesia and India, embody a class/caste status marked by difference in language, food, culture, caste/class, and religion that frames tourists' experiences in relation to those who work within the tourism industry. In what follows, we expand on this argument in our case studies to explore how differences in leisure and labor complicate goals of ecotourism as experiences in the "Great" Outdoors to empower local communities through income streams and work.

In order to understand how leisure and labor function in small ecotourism projects in rural communities, we each worked within such communities in fieldwork for larger projects. Paulami has worked with local and Indigenous communities in East Sikkim for the past 12 years, initially as part of her MS research curriculum, and later as part of her doctoral and postdoctoral research work. Her work with rural forest dependent communities in East Sikkim focuses on community based natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, ecotourism practices, and community capacity building. Stacey has worked intermittently in Indonesia for the past 25 years, focused on environmental issues related to conservation, tourism promotion, agroforestry, and environmental campaigns in Aceh, North Sumatra, West Java, West Bali, West and East Kalimantan, what is now North Kalimantan, and South and North Sulawesi. Her work has been part of partnerships and collaborations with local organizations and the global environmental organization Rare, as well as university partnerships, including the Universitas Mulawarman (in East Kalimantan, Indonesia). We now turn to our specific case studies to explain and outline a few of the emerging issues related to experiences of labor/leisure in the "Great" Outdoors conceptualized through ecotourism experiences.

Case Study: Sikkim, India: Neoliberal Failings

In the following sections, Paulami shares stories from the field—her own experiences and voices of local host communities engaged in ecotourism promotion and development in the Rongli and Phadamchen Territorial Forest Ranges, East Sikkim, India. The experiences shared here are a part of Paulami's doctoral dissertation research conducted in East Sikkim between 2012–2016. She adopted a qualitative, naturalistic inquiry based on multi-sited ethnographic research. Prior to her doctoral dissertation fieldwork, Paulami spent a couple of years with local community members in this region, learning their language, cultural norms, traditions, and ways of life (Banerjee, 2016). Her research team recruited participants by word of mouth, face to face interactions, emails, and phone calls (where possible). The team interviewed over 300 local residents from a wide variety of sociodemographic groups between 2012–2016 (Banerjee et al., 2019). Interview data was supplemented by detailed observational fieldnotes (Allen, 2017). To ensure data comparability and consistency, two interviewers were trained with a strict interview protocol (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Interviews were conducted in Nepali, Hindi, Bengali, or English depending on the participant's preference. Interviews lasted 20–30 min and were audiotaped with the consent of participants. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated into English where applicable. All non-English interviews were back translated to ensure accuracy (Brislin and Freimanis, 2001). As a form of member check, we sent a set of transcribed interviews to study participants for clarifications, feedback, and validation (Birt et al., 2016; Doyle, 2007).

Sikkim, a landlocked northern state of India, is in the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas and part of the Indo-Burma global biodiversity hotspot (Myers et al., 2000). Home to the Khangchendzonga National Park, a UNESCO world heritage site with deep natural and cultural significance, Sikkim includes one of India's largest forested areas, with 47.1% (3,344 km^2) of its area under forest cover (Government of Sikkim, 2015). More than 95% of Sikkim's forested area is designated as statutory forest, meaning it is reserved or protected, usually for conservation purposes (Banerjee et al., 2020). With its varied natural beauty and rich cultural heritage, Sikkim has seen an exponential growth in the tourism sector over the last decade making it one of the most important drivers of the state economy (Government of Sikkim, 2016). With an 84% year-over-year (YOY) growth in the number of tourists visiting the state in 2017, Sikkim has emerged as one of the most popular tourism destinations in Northeast India (Statista Research Department, 2021). The neighboring state of West Bengal, India, is the main domestic market for Sikkim, currently accounting for 60% of all domestic visitors. International arrivals in Sikkim have increased steadily over the last few years with Nepal, United States, Germany, United Kingdom, and France as the largest international tourist markets (Government of Sikkim, 2016).

The concept of ecotourism in Sikkim was introduced in 2002 with the commencement of the South Asian Regional Conference on Ecotourism organized by the International Ecotourism Society and Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim with support from United Nations Development Program and the Ministry of Tourism (Bhutia, 2021). Newly established village homestays across the state became the "new tourism products" that would ensure economic benefits to local and Indigenous communities. With the adoption of the Sikkim Ecotourism Policy, 2012 (subsequently State Tourism Policy, 2015, 2016 and 2018), and Sikkim Registration of Homestay Establishment Rules, 2013, ecotourism or Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) established itself as an important revenue generator for the state of Sikkim (Government of India, 2013). According to the State Tourism Policy 2016:

> Sikkim with its plethora of ethnic communities has tremendous potential for offering tourists a multidimensional cultural experience. At the heart of the rural experience are the homestays spread across the state which provide a glimpse into the village lifestyle and culture. Ethnic cuisine and food products, organic produce, ethnic songs and dances, traditional dresses, handicrafts, vernacular architecture, festivals, traditional medicines, folktales, are some of the items on offer in the cultural basket (Government of Sikkim, 2016, p. 27).

As per the directives of the Sikkim Ecotourism Council, an autonomous council with a village-level operational system, the Ecotourism Directorate (ED) of the Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Division (FEWMD) is responsible for the

execution of ecotourism programs in the state, including monitoring, evaluation, research, and development.

Paulami: Over the course of several years that I spent in the Rongli and Phadamachen Territorial Forest Ranges, I stayed with three separate host families that were willing to share their family living arrangements with me with open arms. The living arrangements were quite basic—I would get my own bed in a shared room (sometimes a separate room, if available) and would share meals with the host family for an agreed upon monthly rent that ranged between USD 100-180. Over the course of the 6 years spent with the host families, two families converted their homes into village homestays to cater to the growing influx of ecotourists in the region.

I personally stayed with various families as part of their homestay business. One of families I stayed with illustrates the way in which homestays are developed to cater and provide hospitality to domestic and foreign tourists alike. This family of four lived in their single storied, two bedroom home constructed on ancestral land in the 1970s. With a modest monthly income and two young children to support, the family decided to convert their home into a village homestay in 2013. With the head of the family (in this case the father) working away from home on a contractual job for the better of the year, it was the mother's (age: 39 years, farmer) responsibility to apply for loans and required permits, hire contractors to remodel the house as per state regulations, reach out to travel agents to enlist their homestay, and to personally look after the day-to-day management of the homestay during tourist seasons. What started out as a means to supplement their household income ended up as a failed endeavor within a short span of 3 years. The semi-finished rooms in the family home are a quiet reminder of what could have been for the family. Back in 2017, the family was struggling to repay large loan amounts, an impending repossession of a leased tourist vehicle, and the possibility of being displaced from their ancestral land. As the woman/mother in this family explained in her own words:

> I did not know what I was signing up for. It seemed like a great idea at that time, and my husband and I jumped at the opportunity. I had no training or previous experience. I am a farmer; my father was a farmer. No one helped me, I just followed others and did what was told by the [tourist] agents from Siliguri [non-local agents] (Respondent 072, farmer).

While the concept of ecotourism has become widely popular in the state due to its largely positive portrayal (Development Alternatives, 2018), tourism capacity building certainly leaves a lot to be desired in the region. Inadequate planning, lack of community training and awareness programs often leave local host communities ill-prepared to own and run their homestays. The dependency on non-local tourist agencies (often established and run by rich businessmen from neighboring states) to promote ecotourism packages lead to revenue leakage. Local host communities, while remaining financially responsible for running the business, often struggle to benefit from the economic opportunities created by their own resources (Development Alternatives, 2018). According to recent estimates, approximately 61% of the tourism industry workforce in Sikkim is from outside the state (Development Alternatives, 2018).

A product of neoliberal conservation (Igoe and Brockington, 2007; Kline and Slocum, 2015), ecotourism, thus, often ends up as a practice where "nature and poor communities can be represented the way they 'ought to be' in order to convince investors, tourists and policy makers of their value" (Büscher, 2010, p. 261). Further, this "intrusion of guests," as explained by King and Stewart (1996) not only commodifies the local environment and culture, but also their labor. According to the authors:

> the commodification of nature implies a change in the meaning of their environment from a source of direct sustenance with a use value to a commodity with an exchange value. This change expresses a shift in the relationship between the indigenous people and their environment, from one of working with the land to one of working for tourists (who observe the land). . .hence, the commodification of nature not only changes an indigenous people's view of their places, but also their view of themselves (p. 296).

The way in which local communities experience the promise of ecotourism, is shaped by what they perceive they need to do to meet the tourist demand that manifests through the traveler's gaze, demand for hospitality, and the all-encompassing servicing of tourist privilege. Instead of focusing on the land or conservation matters, ecotourism requires local people to shift their thinking to understanding dominant structures related to the commodification of nature and the power imbalances related to race, nationality, class, and caste.

In the case of Sikkim, instances of such commodification of labor and nature in racialized form were commonly reflected in respondents' stories. As one community member explained:

> Language barriers often led to miscommunications and the guests became upset. We ended up paying an agent from [West] Bengal to show the tourists around. My family was mainly involved with preparing meals, serving, and cleaning. It was not what we had expected. We wanted to show the guests around, involve them in our cultural traditions, but we could not as we often struggled to communicate clearly (Respondent 073, student/farmer).

As this story illustrates, language is identified as the barrier, but the underlying power differentials of race/ethnicity and caste emerge as important factors, in which this family is relegated to the "dirty work" of cleaning and serving rather than the relatively more equalizing role of "teacher" or conveyor of cultural knowledge. The "guests" failed to learn from their hosts and hospitality is reduced to service.

Further, in many instances, the day-to-day management of homestays were left to the women in the households while the

male members commonly worked away from home. Payments and other financial matters, however, were mostly handled by the male members. In households where the husband (head of the family) was absent, the father-in-law or other senior male members would take on the financial management of the business. Tourism activities, thus, as explained by Figueroa-Domecq and Segovia-Perez (2020), are often built on "gendered, complex and varied social realities and relationships that are usually hierarchical and unequal" (p. 255). Kinnaird and Hall (1996) use the lens of the *gendered host* to understand who "carries out carrying out the work, how this distribution of work is constructed and how the patriarchal power structures are articulated" [Kinnaird and Hall, 1996 cited in; Figueroa-Domecq and Segovia-Perez, 2020, p. 255). Examples of *gendered marketing* (Kinnaird and Hall, 1996)] whereby sexuality and gender relations define and shape how tourism is developed, exoticized, and promoted abound in East Sikkim. Photographs of women in their traditional ethnic outfits participating in local rituals, folk dances, worshipping ancestral gods and local deities are commonly used in tourism brochures and guest handbooks to promote the "authentic experiences" for the travelers. This exoticization of a place and its people, as pointed out by MacCannell (1984), represent a "staged authenticity" and is merely a social construct. As King and Stewart (1996) explain:

> The ecotourist arrives with a reality created from a culturally derived set of images of the host natural environment and culture. Hosts work to maintain the ecotourist's reality by accommodating the images he or she brings. The hosts stage the precise aspects of experience that ecotourists view as marks of authenticity (p. 297; see also Cohen, 1988).

The ecotourism industry, the writers continue, "by its efforts to maintain the reality of ecotourists, can produce contrasts in value and behavior that overwhelm the local culture" (p. 297).

Efforts to align local community development and conservation through ecotourism in Sikkim has, in many cases, not only perpetuated the "historical patterns of inequality, social exclusion, and environmental degradation" (Horton, 2009), but has also reshaped the class, caste, gender, socio-economic, and environmental norms and interrelationships within the unique cultural tapestry of rural Sikkim, interwoven with "legends, myths, rituals, and festivals" (FEWMD, 2011; 2015).

Case Study: West Bali National Park, Indonesia: Gendered/Classed Economies

In this case study and the case studies of the national parks in the following section, Stacey shares her experiences of working in Indonesia. Methodologically, as Stacey shares in the first person, the work in Indonesia has changed over many years. Her work has been informed by qualitative methods in ethnography, interviewing, observation, and lived experiences (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011; Tracy, 2013).

Stacey: I first began working in Indonesia in 1997 or so, although I had traveled to Indonesia six or more times prior to that. These trips were more preliminary, tourist experiences. As I gained more knowledge and research experience, I began to develop research agendas, beginning with my dissertation work and Fulbright year in Indonesia (2000–2001), in which I engaged in ethnographic, observational research and conducted interviews with people in Kalimantan about how ecotourism to national parks worked, while acting as an ecotourist myself. That work resulted in my dissertation about orangutans and orangutan tourism. Various projects have emerged since then, using the same kind of methodological approach, ethnography, ecotourist participation, and interviews. The following case studies in Indonesia rely on that data collection, across a number of studies with different IRB approved protocols. As we describe elsewhere, various issues emerge from this kind of work (Banerjee and Sowards, 2020). What we describe below is based on the amalgamation of that data collection, in which dozens of interviews were conducted and ethnographic experiences were collected over many years, formally beginning in 2000.

Located on the northwestern side of Bali, Indonesia lies the West Bali National Park. The park covers around 190 square kilometers (73 square miles), of which are 158 square kilometers (61 square miles) land, and the remainder is sea. This is approximately 5% of Bali's total land area. To the north, it includes a 1,000 m (3,300 feet) long beach, reef, and islets (Sowards and Varela, 2013). A seaport at Gilimanuk is west of the park, and the village of Goris is to the east. This national park features forest and ocean habitats, with the Balinese starling (jalak putih or Bali curik, a practically extinct bird) as a key attraction to the park. The park, run by the national park system under the Indonesian federal government's Ministry of Environment and Forestry, features a Balinese starling captive breeding program, as well as forest treks, local homestays, scuba diving, snorkeling, and cultural and religious activities. The area is approximately 50% Muslim and 50% Hindu, with a cultural mix of Balinese and Javanese traditions. The nearby village of Sumberklampok and Menjangan Island is where our research team participated in workshops, stayed with families, visited the Balinese starling breeder program, and explored the nearby coral reefs. The purpose of the visit was in part to participate, evaluate and report on the efforts made in ecotourism in the area and to make recommendations to further conservation campaigns. From 2008 to 2015, a university partnership between The University of Texas at El Paso, an international non-governmental organization, Rare, and the Universitas Mulawarman focused on ecotourism evaluation of homestays and ecotourism experiences in West Bali National Park, along with the small non-governmental organization, Seka, with Stacey (the first author of this essay serving as the Project Director). Through this evaluation, a group of UTEP students and faculty members interviewed local people who wanted to develop ecotourism more fully. In undertaking this evaluation, we focused primarily on what local people could do to improve their ecotourism offerings. While such an approach is practical, it also demonstrates the key argument in this paper, that is, the labor of local people in serving mostly foreign tourists who are on

holiday and in pursuit of leisure and adventure. What we found is that a great deal of thought and planning goes into the development of homestays, cultural activities, environmental education, and communicating with tourists, while very little thought or preparation is part of the ecotourist mindset.

In learning about ecotourism in this national park, we found that local people in the town of Sumberklampok in West Bali and near the port/docks that lead ships to Java, sought to provide services to those with higher income levels, particularly foreign tourists, such as Australians, New Zealanders, Europeans, North Americans, and Northeast Asians even though Indonesians from other provinces were also frequent tourists to the area. To that end, our main recommendations were: developing English and Japanese language skills (as many foreign tourists speak some level of English), improving services related to accommodation, training local families to understand tourist expectations, training guides on basic ecology and park information, developing environmental policies, arranging for package transportation, and developing cultural activities within the town of Sumberklampok. In addition, the national park is threatened with logging activities; as such Seka, the local non-governmental organization worked to establish an "energy garden," in which fast growing trees were planted and could later be harvested as firewood or for wood carvings (as part of the souvenir market throughout Bali; interview with Istiyarto Ismu, Seka and Rare). Within the energy garden, local farmers could also plant various crops, using an agroforestry diversity approach.

While the local NGO, Seka, was keenly interested in developing a viable ecotourism program, the labor invested into such strategy falls almost entirely upon local people to know, understand, and provide for Western or global North tourists. While the UTEP team worked with Seka on this project, the discussions were mostly about how to make such tourists feel comfortable, adventurous, and environmentally conscious about West Bali National Park and the Balinese Starling so that their experiences of the "Great" Outdoors is one of leisure, relaxation, and maybe a little bit of learning. The burden of cultural knowing, however, falls almost entirely upon local people, such as those who work for Seka. They must adapt their language practices (e.g., by learning English), their homes (e.g., as homestays), their jobs (e.g., as guides when tourists show up), and even their village's cultural activities (e.g., as performances for the tourists).

To take a closer look at the homestay in Sumberklampok, we found that local people opened their relatively small homes (approximately 500–1,000 square feet in most cases) to house tourists. What this means in practice is that the family (ranging from two or more people) moved themselves out of the one or two bedrooms in the home to sleep on mattresses in the kitchen or living room or stayed with other family members in another house. To get a tourist project off the ground literally requires the dislocation or displacement of people from their own homes for the sake of the tourists' benefit and enjoyment. While local people were financially compensated for their homestays, another issue that emerged is profit sharing among local people. That is, we discussed at length with Seka's community leaders about the great need to spread tourists throughout people's homes so that everyone would have a chance to earn some money from the ecotourism project. This example illustrates the very complicated nature of global North/global South power imbalances and relationships among those who want to experience ecotourism as part of their vacation or holiday and those who are laboring to provide such leisure.

In considering how gender, cultural, and religious dynamics factor into such power relationships between tourists and tourism providers, we found that the homestay example further illuminates. For example, the women in each household became responsible for meal provisions, including breakfast, lunch, and dinner as well as snacks and household cleaning. Again, tourists provide money for such services, but the labor adds significant burden to women's work in the home. Cultural and religious differences also play out in small and large ways, ranging from how one cleans oneself after using the bathroom to which hand one uses to eat with, what kind of food is preferred (e.g., bread versus rice), and so forth. The community members, we found, were constantly thinking about how to accommodate ecotourists, while the ecotourists themselves were not. For example, students who participated in this research project and were also ecotourists, complained about the toilets, the food, the sleeping accommodations, and so forth because they had the foreigner tourist privilege to do so. Even though many of these students were Mexican Americans from El Paso, Texas, or Mexicans from the bordering state of Chihuahua, their traveling privilege and sense of "foreignness" was quite striking in how they related to the power differentials of ecotourist status in comparison to local host status. In fact, the racial/ethnic/linguistic/nationality privileges and lack thereof, are further complicated by the UTEP's team non-whiteness, yet still privileged status. Of course, much more needs to be said about this matter, but in the consideration of space and our focus here, we remind the reader again of the ecotourist's privileged gaze and expectation in the ability/mobility of travel.

Cultural events and performances also took on racialized and gendered roles through the exclusion of women, as we observed in two separate cultural events (Sowards and Varela, 2013). The first was to watch and participate in a traditional Balinese all-girls dance class and performance. The instructors and students were all female and the only males present were one UTEP faculty member, two UTEP affiliated students, and one or two local audience members. The second event was an all-male band at the village center that sang and played instruments to welcome us. Here the only men present were the performers and our group's audience members. No females from the village were present as participants or guests. Both women and men performed in traditional ways in which girls [women] were silent even though visible, while the men were vocal and talkative before and after their performance. After the music performance, we were served dinner, which some of the women had prepared. Then, the male head of household escorted members of our group to their homestays.

The cultural events serve as a racialized, religious, and exoticized Balinese experience. Going back to the work of Clifford Geertz (Geertz, 1973) and his work in Bali, such cultural performances become gazed upon by the foreigner. They literally embody the hospitality mentality and catering to

the tourist/ecotourist as the sole reason for the performance for the tourist. Ecotourists (or even regular tourists) feel as though they have had a cultural experience. As our team's work expanded, we came to have similar "environmental" experiences. Our viewing/seeing/gaze of the Balinese starling is an excellent example. As the West Bali National Park has been developing a captive breeding program of the basically extinct (in the wild) Balinese starling, we witnessed how community members in collaboration with the national park office were working together to expand the population of the Balinese starling. In some of our homestays and at the national park office, the Balinese starling has been bred to release back into the forests of the national park, thereby removing its essentially extinct status. But again, these experiences are constructed for the foreign tourist, emphasizing their values of cultural and environmental production of the extinct and preservation of cultural tradition. Such activities are almost certainly for the tourist, rather than the communities themselves, thereby emphasizing the racialized/nationalized differences and privileges of these communities of local people and tourists.

Case Study: National Parks in Kalimantan: Exoticization of Cultures/Forests

There are a number of national parks in the Indonesian side of the island of Borneo; the most prominent and well-known feature orangutan tourism: Gunung Palung National Park (West Kalimantan), Tanjung Puting National Park (Central Kalimantan), and Kutai National Park (East Kalimantan). As stated previously, going back to Stacey's dissertation research (2000–2001) through the university partnership with the Universitas Mulawarman (2012–2015), and a partnership with the non-governmental organization Rare (2008–2020), many aspects of ecotourism in Kalimantan have been addressed in our research (Sowards, 2010; Sowards, 2012; Sowards and Varela, 2013). Rare, and its partnership with UTEP, focused on conservation campaigns in Gunung Palung National Park and Tanjung Puting National Park/Lamandau River Wildlife Reserve, while the Universitas Mulawarman partnership focused on ecological conservation in Kutai National Park. While many local folks are interested in developing ecotourism activities, the conservation campaign development program determined that ecotourism is often not a viable alternative to other, more effective conservation efforts (such as the energy garden in West Bali mentioned above). In Tanjung Puting National Park area, it was determined that a more effective approach to conservation would be to focus on reducing forest fires, while in Gunung Palung, the conservation campaign focused on microlending to reduce illegal logging (interviews with Eddy Santoso, Pak Rituan, Sally Tirtadihardja, Ade Yuliani).

Even as we determined that ecotourism was not really a viable conservation strategy in these locations over a many year period and in consultation with local leaders, that has not stopped the interest from foreign tourists in visiting orangutans and their rainforest habitat. As such, ecotourism might be considered a cosmetic conservation approach, through the process of virtue signaling. That is, tourists want to seem committed to environmental and conservation efforts in appearance or cosmetics, but ecotourism is not really a solution in these areas for a number of reasons. Participation in such ecotourism ventures then, can have the effect of signaling a type of virtuousness, but in practice has little conservation effect. Local people see ecotourism as a neoliberal economic opportunity, that often fails as noted in the East Sikkim case study. Many of the same recommendations our team developed for West Bali National Park also apply to national parks throughout the five provinces of Kalimantan, with the additional recommendation related to respect for wildlife, particularly orangutans. For example, tourists often want to hold or touch orangutans when they see them, even though such interactions are not good for wild animals. In Tanjung Puting National Park, and other places throughout Kalimantan, many orangutans have been rescued from palm oil plantations, forest fires, local communities, and the illegal pet trade (see Sowards, 2006a; Sowards, 2006b). Rescued orangutans are often relocated to rehabilitation or reintroduction centers; one of the biggest and longest programs is in Tanjung Puting National Park, where foreign and domestic tourists travel to see orangutans. Because these orangutans are more accustomed to humans and are often reliant on human-provided food, tourists have opportunities to see orangutans at feeding stations. The tourist desire for up-close experiences with orangutans can prevail over respected ecological practice on how to see orangutans from a distance. While signs and warnings are posted about interacting with orangutans, inevitably, tourists violate or fail to adhere to such prohibitions.

Another popular tourist activity is tree planting. Tourists can buy a small tree and plant it in the rainforest; from our experience, planting a tree feels like a productive and proactive action for conservation. Foreign tourists seem to especially love the idea of planting a tree in an Indonesian rainforest. Yet in reality, the trees are small and may not survive. If they do survive, the conservation effect is quite minimal. Again, tree planting suggests virtue signaling as a feel-good, do-nothing measure for conservation. While the fee covers both any cost of the tree itself and provides some local income, the infrequent ecotourist visits mean that this activity, as well as trekking/hiking, camping, and other adventures are not viable nor sustainable income sources for local people.

In addition to tourist desire for close-up experiences (as is the case in many national parks around the world), in Kalimantan's national parks, another big issue is pollution management. While tourists may provide income to local conservation NGOs, national park offices, and local people, they also generate water and air pollution through the use of gasoline/diesel fueled boats, plastic trash that is not disposed of properly, and sewage and food waste. For example, while visiting Kutai National Park, we took small canoe-type boats upriver from a small town to an area with camp-like wooden structured buildings within the park boundary. The park guides and local people had said they would provide us with meals, yet they brought no cooking instruments nor food to prepare. Instead, they took the canoes back to the town and purchased boxes of prepared meals and brought them back to the park. Because the

park facilities were rudimentary, there were no bathrooms nor trash disposal facilities. As such, raw sewage, food waste, plastic bags, food boxes, plastic utensils, soda cans, water bottles, and all other waste was dumped under the wooden camp facilities. The lack of trash disposal systems also meant that even beyond our group, much trash ended up in the river, as evidenced by the large amounts of trash we saw in the rivers. The point here is not to blame Indonesian local people for improper disposal, it is to point out that ecotourism facilities are not well equipped to handle small or large groups of people. Trash disposal and sewage are part of the hidden labor and cost to local communities that tourists often do not consider in their ecological footprint.

Similar to the other cases discussed here, gender roles also delineate who participates in what activities. The national park offices in Kalimantan require that foreign tourists are accompanied by a guide or park ranger, who are always men (at least in the UTEP team experiences). Assistants and other related folks are also men. Women are completely invisible except in the case of cultural performances, such as Kenyah dances or even the tourist attraction of seeing "real" Kenyah peoples (one of the sub-Indigenous groups in Kalimantan). That is, tourists/ecotourists can visit Kenyah long houses, the traditional architectural style of home building in Kalimantan's provinces. One can see the architectural style and also learn about family structures in these houses, while also seeing Indigenous people who are on "display" with their traditional tattoos, betel nut colored teeth, and stretched earlobes. Tourists (both foreign and domestic) take pictures to remember such "exotic" people, once again marking the distinction of leisure and racialized/colonial gaze as well as the labor of performing the "exotic."

This gaze illustrates the ecological and cultural/racial implications of how ecotourism functions in practice. The exoticization and romanticization of Indigenous people, along with the romanticized experiences of tree planting and orangutan holding, become problematic through the ecotourist's cultural privilege and expectation of having such experiences and is manifested through the neoliberal, ecological paradigm. Furthermore, the demand for such experiences shapes how Indigenous/local communities perceive their worth, and their community's/land's worth. Without the demand for such exotic experiences, they might value their land and community through a very localized lens. However, the foreign gaze and demand for hospitality refigures the contours of land and community, in racialized/classed/casted ways.

CONCLUSION

In each of the case studies here, differences and similarities emerge. Each case study presents a different facet of how race is experienced in the "Great" Outdoors, through neoliberal failings, gendered/classed economies, and exoticization of cultures/forests. While both tourists and local people experience the "Great" Outdoors in ecotourism projects, the relationship that each group has is quite different. Tourists seek pleasure, adventure, relaxation, and maybe a little bit of learning. Ecotourists are somewhat more ecologically and culturally conscious of their experiences, but perhaps only at the surface level. Meanwhile, tourist providers, guides, homestay families, and cultural activity organizers are constantly catering to tourist demands and the accompanying problems they bring. For small ecotourism projects, the labor is all encompassing to ensure enjoyment, safety, and needs are met. In thinking back to the colonial and racialized gaze, the way in which each group "looks" at each other is quite different and is certainly marked by significant power imbalances related to money, culture, race, language, gender, and religion. As such, there are a number of challenges that ecotourism projects face as they build such programs to draw in both foreign and domestic tourists. Some of these challenges are practical, others are more rooted in the broader effects of colonialism and its long-lasting legacies. While we recognize suggestions to improve small-scale ecotourism projects are inherently fraught with the same critiques that we present here, we proceed in offering such suggestions as a way to think about practical matters. That is, even as ecotourism projects require, by their very nature, power imbalances, racialized experiences of the "Great" Outdoors, and gendered divisions of labor, we also know that local community members may still want to proceed in developing such programs. In the end, the value and possibility of revenue in neoliberal, globalized economic structures still prevails.

To begin, the regions we have discussed here have no developed tourism or ecotourism policy**.** The ecotourism concept has been defined by international organizations and is generally accepted for most of the groups and local people we have discussed here. However, stakeholders use the term 'ecotourism' to fit in with their own specific agendas and may not fully understand the complicated aspects of ecotourism as a business. It is apparent that many stakeholders advocating the development of ecotourism are unclear about the realities of the sector, the requirements of demand for this tourism product, and the importance of developing a strong chain linking supply with demand. Many consider ecotourism to be a social net that will alleviate poverty without understanding that ecotourism is first and foremost a business that follows commercial objectives. NGOs and local people can be naïve about the impact that ecotourism will have on the well-being of local communities. Many NGOs encourage local communities to set up ecotourism businesses or services and build up their expectations in the hope that tourism will bring a steady income. They provide training and mentoring and may also be in a position to access funding to help them develop the products such as setting up homestays and guiding services. They often pick communities in areas with little income generation opportunities but with ecotourism potential thinking that tourists will come if the local community is ready to serve them. Usually these are not established tourism destinations. They need to be developed, adapted to the expectations of the markets that the destination can potentially attract, and then properly marketed. Establishing a tourism destination is a process that takes time and requires investment and strong marketing which neither the NGOs nor the local communities generally have. They focus too much on building up supply but not on developing demand. When demand fails to materialize, the product on which so much

expectation has been placed deteriorates through lack of use and maintenance. The local communities become disillusioned and abandon their ecotourism aspirations. For example, the Sikkim Tourism Department's current village ecotourism strategy is to increase the number of villages offering ecotourism products. The absence of a viable marketing strategy amidst the increasing number of available homestay facilities, however, creates unhealthy competition amongst villages, lowering profitability of such establishments (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2009).

Another challenge is that village ecotourism initiatives have very weak linkages with industry partners. Tour operators are often unaware of the opportunities that are available to include village tourism in their product offerings and how they can reserve homestays that are suitable for their business. While local tourism management committees do not have the necessary skills, experience, or resources to promote ecotourism in an already highly competitive marketplace, there are cases where local NGOs have advised communities not to trust tour operators, especially from outside of Sikkim, because they take commission. And yet, due to a dearth of local tourist operators who can provide competitive rates to homestay owners, locals are often forced to rent their homestays through out-of-state tourist agents. This contributes to revenue leakage, as these tourist agents take a cut of the profit that does not end up in the hands of the local people (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2009).

While tourists may opt to stay in homestays, the quality of the homestays in Sikkim, Bali, and locations in Kalimantan is often not up to tourists' standards (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2009). These homestays often lack attached bathrooms (often a key demand for domestic tourists), adequate trash disposal facilities, and often, based on elevation and topography without reliable or often without any telecommunication services such as telephone/cellphone coverage and internet. Uninterrupted power supply along with easy access to main roads are also important concerns in many areas of rural Sikkim, Bali, and Kalimantan. For example, ecotourism locations may not be far in terms of miles/kilometers, but road quality can mean many hours by bus or car to travel to these locations. Similarly, as discussed above, homestays in Bali or camp structures in Kalimantan may not provide bathroom facilities, trash disposal services, or private rooms for guests as may be desired. Tourists may prefer the "camping" effect, but the waste disposal management is a demonstrated problem.

Another issue is that the tourism and ecotourism sectors use too many imported goods and employ too many workers from outside the state, thus reducing the benefits to local economies. For example, if transportation is offered by a tourist operator from outside the local community because local folks do not have busses/large cars/vans/boats, online travel reservation systems, access to the internet (or even phone services), and/or English language skills, hiring from outside is lost revenue for that community. Communities need capital and skills investment in order to keep higher levels of revenue within their communities.

Furthermore, women are likely to engage in behind-the-scenes work, adding to their already double-burdened labor. As Nani Husien (2002) demonstrates, women in her case study (in East Kalimantan province) have the double burden of working as well as taking care of children, collecting firewood, housekeeping and cleaning, cooking, cleaning, and maintaining water supplies. As we witnessed, women in communities that desire ecotourism development become responsible for the added labor of cooking and cleaning for tourists. They may also take on cultural performance. That is, in West Bali National Park for example, part of the tourist draws is cultural performances of Balinese dance and theater. In Kalimantan, it might be more related to Indigenous cultural performances (such as the Kenyah people's cultural traditions). Because dance is often the domain of women and young girls, we found in these communities some added labor in cultural performance as well as in the set up and entertainment aspects related to such performances, which might involve serving food and drink to go along with the performances. Women can become exoticized through dance performances, Indigenous tattoos and earlobe stretching, and/or betel nut chewing as part of the tourist gaze, not to mention their more silent roles in care taking, food preparation, and household management.

Furthermore, cultural factors also play a role in how we understand gender differences in forestry practices and conservation. In interviews with women and men, there are gendered expectations that women will take care of the family, and there is a heavy emphasis on heteronormativity and traditional family life. Many Indonesians (and to some extent, global Northerners too) resist the idea that women should study forestry or environmental problems because of the field work and travel required to do so. Cultural and religious factors are important to understanding the gendered nature of forestry and conservation in Indonesia, but most importantly, women play important roles in these sectors, given their roles in agricultural production, forest products, and furniture making (see Mwangi and Mai, 2011 for more on these subjects). These are also gendered sectors, and more research is needed on how women participate differently or not at all in such industries or income sources.

Finally, as we have discussed here, ecotourism projects establish a leisure/labor dichotomy illustrated through the power imbalances related to caste, class, race, language, ability, and gender. While our last point here is more critical of broader colonial relationships of power, it is also important to consider how such projects reinforce, maintain, and perpetuate how the people of the world understand social positionings. Some might argue that ecotourism can provide learning experiences and opportunities not just about ecology and cultural practices. However, as Gail Lash notes, even when tourists might learn something, ecotourism can also corrode the flourishing of traditions and cultures: "uncontrolled growth of tourism and the influx of western values can erode local culture" (Lash, 1997, p. 4). Community-based ecotourism projects, like those we have described in India and Indonesia, have the potential to empower local communities, even if power imbalances are almost impossible to erase or diminish. Scheyvens (1999) contends that such programs can provide economic, psychological, social, and political dis/empowerment, depending on demand

and community collaboration in meeting that demand. In our experience in studying these locations, tourists and ecotourists alike, in their expectation of leisure, enjoyment, and adventure, are at best only minimally conscious of the colonial, racial, and power politics at play. Privilege is disguised as cultural and ecological learning, relieving tourist responsibilities, or absolving guilt in cultural and environmental appropriation. Leisure forms of ecotourism provide a connection to the "Great" Outdoors in significant ways that can be life altering and profound, but that often comes at the expense of local people. While labor forms of ecotourism provide sources of income and cultural interactions that might be valuable to local people, the power imbalances remain, and ecotourism projects remain imperfect approaches to conservation, cultural engagement, and gendered/racialized relations of labor and leisure.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/Supplementary Material; further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by UTEP's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Written informed consent for participation was not required for this study in accordance with the national legislation and the institutional requirements. Written informed consent was obtained from the individual(s) for the publication of any potentially identifiable images or data included in this article.

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Both authors contributed equally. PB focused on the East Sikkim section; SKS focused on the Bali and Kalimantan sections.

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Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Public Land, and the Spaces of Whiteness

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In this essay, I examine the 2016 takeover of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. The principal instigators of this occupation, the Bundy family of Nevada, pointed to federally owned public lands as the primary reason for their takeover, citing the allegedly unconstitutional government ownership of these lands. I contend that the Bundys' arguments about public lands exemplify rhetorical strategies that further one of the primary ends of settler colonialism; the remaking of land into property to better support white settlers' claims to that land. I hold that the Bundys remake land by defining the land's meanings following the logics of settler colonialism in three specific ways: privatization, racialization, and erasure. First, I examine the family's arguments about the constitutionality of federal land ownership to show how the Bundys define public lands as rightfully private property. Second, I examine the ways that the Bundys racialize land ownership and how, in conjunction with arguments about property rights, the family articulates land as the domain of white settlers. Third, I discuss how the Bundys further colonial logics of Native erasure. That is, the family defines land in ways that portray Native Americans as having never been on the land, and as not currently using the land. I argue that these three processes render meanings of land—as private property, colonized, and *terra nullius*—that rhetorically further the operation of settler colonialism.

Keywords: public lands, settler colonialism, Malheur, Bundy family, whiteness

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INTRODUCTION

On January 2, 2016, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR) near Burns, Oregon, was taken by force by a group of armed anti-government extremists. Five years and 4 days later, when the US Capitol building was stormed and briefly occupied on January 6, 2021, connections were quickly drawn between D.C. and Oregon. As Segerstrom (2021) wrote for *High Country News*, "It's not hard to trace the links between Malheur and Washington; familiar insignia, instigators and ideologies fueled both anti-government actions" (2021, n.p.). Segerstrom was not alone in making this connection; Siegler (2021), writing for *NPR*, noted the similarities between the Oregon incident and the Capitol occupation, while Bernstein (2021) of *The Oregonian* wrote that Malheur was a "dress rehearsal" for what happened at the Capitol (Bernstein, 2021; Siegler, 2021).

Though the motivations behind the two occupations were different––Malheur was said to be a protest in support of two local ranchers' legal troubles, while the Capitol riot was an attempt to overturn the recent presidential election––the two incidents shared commonalities beyond "familiar insignia, instigators and ideologies." Specifically, the occupations of both Malheur and the Capitol building shared assumptions about public spaces, or that white men, in particular, are seen as

belonging in those spaces. Many were quick to point out the privilege whiteness gave those involved in Capitol occupation, including Joe Biden, who, less than 2 weeks from his inauguration, noted the next day that "You can't tell me that if it had been a group of Black Lives Matter protesters yesterday they wouldn't have been treated very differently than the mob of thugs that stormed the Capitol. We all know that is true" (Chason and Schmidt, 2021, n.p.). As Chason and Schmidt (2021) of *The Washington Post* make clear, BLM protestors and the January 6 mob were indeed treated much differently (2021). Similarly, many were quick to point out how the Malheur occupiers were treated differently than Indigenous water protectors at Standing Rock in North Dakota. Kirby Brown (2016), a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and associate professor at the University of Oregon, wrote "county, state and federal officials have mobilized the full weight of state power against unarmed indigenous water protectors" at Standing Rock, while one protestor noted that "If native people were armed like the [Oregon] militia. we would be killed" (Brown, 2016, n.p.; Levin, 2016, n.p.). The primarily white instigators in both Oregon and D.C. acted as they did, in part, because they regarded the spaces as inherently theirs.[1]

The occupation of MNWR was a rhetorical reclamation of public land, an action that I hold is deeply rooted in settler colonial understandings of land. In US settler colonial logics, land and human relationships to land are primarily understood through the Anglo tradition of property rights descending from John Locke (Tuck and Yang, 2012; Taylor, 2016). The occupiers' claim that they were going to help the people of Harney County "take back their land," fit neatly into an understanding of land as property. Given the US context, it is a logical step, and a short one, to also articulate settler colonialism as a logic of whiteness. That is, settler colonial notions of property provide white settlers with an assumed inherent right to the land (Inwood and Bonds, 2017; Boggs, 2019). In particular, the occupiers' arguments about land demonstrate the ways that white masculinity is enacted in settler colonialism, and how land ownership is ideal of white settler masculinity. Such logics informed the occupiers' arguments about land and their takeover of MNWR.

If we are to take seriously the suggestions that the Capitol occupation in January 2021 had its origins at MNWR, we need to examine the roots of that earlier conflict. In particular, we need to examine how the MNWR occupiers talked about and understood a specific space: public lands. The refuge occupiers assumed an inherent white right to the land, a right they thought gave them––as largely white men––carte blanche to treat the land as they wished. Put otherwise, the MNWR occupiers understood land primarily in terms of private property and "productive" economic use. Defining land in this way is a feature of settler colonialism, an on-going structure that is central to the knowledge systems of whiteness (Wolfe, 1999; Bonds and Inwood, 2016). The occupiers made specific arguments about public lands that define lands in terms of private property, whiteness, and economic production: they argued that the Constitution limits federal land ownership, and that the intention behind these limits was to "quickly dispose the land and resources to the local people, where it is most safe" (Bundy, 2014a, n.p.); the occupiers racialized land ownership, in part, by arguing that Native Americans have "lost" their claim to land (Keeler, 2017, p. 3); and finally, the occupiers argued that "useful purposes," their term for productive economic use, gives the white settler a right to the land (Bundy, 2014a, n.p.).

However, though land was central to the MNWR occupation, media and academic coverage has instead largely focused on matters other than land.[2] This, despite the fact that the leaders of the occupiers identified land as the central reason for their actions.[3] That is, although the occupation was ostensibly in support of the two ranchers in their legal troubles with the federal government, the core issue at stake for the occupation leaders at MNWR was ownership and control of public lands. When the occupation leaders listed their grievances with the government, their primary complaint was the government's ownership of these lands, and their intent was to assist the "people from Harney County. in taking back their land and resources" (Bundy, 2016, n.p.). The primary leaders, brothers Ammon and Ryan Bundy, have a long family history of conflict with the federal government about public land use. The Bundys articulated with public lands a wide range of grievances against the government familiar to any recent example of American anti-government sentiment and conservative complaint: arguments about federal overreach, the Constitution, and the rights of "the people" all circulated in the Bundys' statements about the occupation. Land was, for the Bundys, the cornerstone of their grievances with the federal government and that which spurred their anti-government rhetorics and actions. The roots of the Bundys' anti-government complaint were grounded in white male settler understandings of land, which in turn formed the basis of their actions.

In this essay I argue that the Bundys' claims about land help us further understand the rhetorical operation of settler colonialism. Specifically, I contend that a fundamental part of the settler colonial project––the remaking of land into property––can be better understood by examining what the Bundys say about land. Land is the ultimate pursuit of settler colonialism, that which is "most valuable, contested, required" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, p. 5). In the pursuit of land, land is recast into property, which makes land "ahistorical in order to hack away the narratives that invoke prior claims" (Tuck and McKenzie, 2015, p. 64). By remaking land, settlers create for themselves new claims to the land that displace Indigenous peoples and the meanings the land has for those people. Put differently, settler narratives make new histories for those lands, which allow them to have a rightful claim to the

[1]For rhetorical examinations of the uses of public space for protest, see: Endres and Senda-Cook (2011), Gruber (2020), and O'Byrne and Endres (2021).

[2]For example, see: Blumm and Jamin (2016), Brown (2016), Dare and Fletcher (2019), Fantz et al. (2016), Gallaher (2016), Glionna (2016), Inwood and Bonds (2017), and Irons (2018), among others.

[3]The exception here is legal scholarship, which has typically focused on refuting the occupiers' faulty legal claims about public land law.

land. For many Indigenous peoples, land comprises complex relationships, and is interwoven with identity, knowledge, stories, and origin; land is a central part of the ways that these people know and think about themselves and the world around them (Battiste and James, 2008; Endres, 2012; Tuck and McKenzie, 2015; Tsosie, 2018). The logic behind remaking land is based in white settler understandings of land as property; property is something to own, and which is rhetorically constructed through words and actions. I hold that the remaking of land needs further complication, because the process of remaking land does not stop at property. Rather, land is continually recast and remade. The entire reason that settler colonialism remakes land is that ownership and control of land is a mode of power; settler colonialism says, control the land, control everything else. The Bundys recognize this, clearly connecting land to power, arguing that there is a "direct correlation to land and resources with power and wealth" (Bundy, 2014a, n.p.). The family succinctly relates the entire logic of settler colonialism; land is of utmost importance, because land is power. Land becomes a mode of power in part through rhetorical processes.

My essay proceeds in four parts. First, I give context and background on the Bundys and their involvement at MNWR. Second, I outline some of the scholarship on settler colonialism and its fundamental assumptions about land, highlighting three key insights: first, settler colonialism remakes land into property through articulations with ownership rights, sovereignty, and economic development; second, white supremacy is deeply implicated in settler colonialism's understanding of land as property; third and finally, white settler ownership of property relies on the symbolic and material removal of Indigenous peoples from the land. Here also I discuss the inherent entanglement of white masculinity within settler logics. Third, I theorize the concept of land and the significance of land's changing meanings. Finally, I use the three insights about settler colonialism as a framework to analyze the Bundys' claims about land. Following insight number one, I examine the Bundys' arguments about the constitutionality of federal land ownership. Then, I examine how the Bundys define land ownership as a mark of race. Finally, I examine two ways that the Bundys' arguments about land further the erasure of Indigenous peoples, which is a central goal of settler colonialism. Throughout my analysis of the Bundys' rhetorics, I consider how "power" is pervasive to the Constitution, race, and Native erasure.

THE BUNDYS' TROUBLE WITH THE GOVERNMENT: FROM BUNKERVILLE, NEVADA TO BURNS, OREGON

The Bundy family's long history of confrontation with the federal government can be traced back at least twenty-three years before the MNWR occupation when the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) modified Cliven Bundy's grazing permit on certain tracts of land in 1993. These modifications were intended to reduce the impacts of his herd on the land and the habitat of the endangered desert tortoise. Cliven (father of Ryan and Ammon) refused to comply with the new guidelines, instead turning out "more than nine hundred animals onto the allotment—almost nine times the number stipulated by his permit" (Ketcham, 2015, n.p.). Ketcham (2015), writing for *Harper's*, describes what happened next over the following years:

> In 1994, the agency [BLM] ordered, with the decorum of administrative process, that Bundy remove the cows. One of his sons tore up the notification in front of the BLM officers who delivered it to the ranch. Bundy then attempted, absurdly, to pay his grazing fees to Clark County, which could not accept the money, since it had no jurisdiction over federal land. In 1995, the BLM again ordered Bundy to remove his cattle. Bundy again said he would not, and the BLM again delayed further action. The courts weighed in. The Department of Justice filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for Nevada, which in 1998 found in favor of the government, a decision upheld by a federal appellate court a year later (Ketcham, 2015, n.p.).

After losing twice in court, Cliven continued ignoring the fines and fees he was steadily accumulating (Skillen, 2020, p. 15). During the following years, and as the family bolstered their support among like-minded ranchers, anti-government provocateurs, far-right organizations, and the growing conservative media, the Bundy cattle grazed unhampered (Ketcham, 2015; Skillen, 2020). Then, in 2008, the Department of the Interior (DOI) cancelled Cliven's permit. Cliven ignored the cancellation and his cattle continued grazing on public lands for another 6 years, while he ignored more orders along the way. Finally, in April 2014, twenty-one years after the initial permit modification, the BLM attempted to remove Cliven's herd, intending to auction the cattle off to recoup some of the $1 million Bundy owed in unpaid fines and fees. In response, "hundreds of protestors from around the nation" flocked to the Bundy ranch near Bunkerville, Nevada, including heavily armed, self-described militia members. After a tense standoff that lasted about a month, the BLM backed off, citing safety concerns (Lopez, 2016, n.p.). As of the time of this writing, Cliven's cattle still roam public lands in Nevada, and his grazing fees remain unpaid (Yachnin, 2021, n.p.).[4]

In the almost 2 years between the standoff at the family ranch and the MNWR occupation, the Bundys seemed mostly content to write posts for the family blog calling for greater control of the land and resources by private citizens. The family attempted to get a bill passed by the Nevada legislature that would have made it "possible for the people to clearly claim their rights to the resources in Nevada," but this effort quickly failed (Bundy,

[4]Whiteness surely gave the Bundys and their supporters a great deal of privilege in this standoff, as it did at Malheur. A regularly cited example of the differences between white and Indigenous protests is Standing Rock. Water Protectors at Standing Rock faced a much different response from the government and law enforcement. For analyses of how protestors at Standing Rock were treated, see: Christiansen (2021), Johnson (2019), Welch and Scott (2018/2019).

2015a, n.p.). Things changed in late 2015, however, when the case of Dwight and Steven Hammond first appeared on the Bundy blog on November 3. In the 2 months between the first Hammond-related post and the occupation of MNWR on January 2, the family dedicated sixteen posts related to the father-and-son Oregon ranchers. The Bundys claimed their subsequent occupation of MNWR was in support of the Hammonds; though, after the occupation began, the focus on the blog quickly shifts from the Hammonds to the Bundys' fight with the government and subsequent legal issues. Indeed, only one mention of the Hammond family is made on the blog after January 6, 2016. Even in this final post, the focus is largely on the Bundys' own plight. As this archival archaeology shows, the family's focus was never really the Hammonds, who seem to have largely been a convenient cause to further the Bundys' own agenda.[5]

The Bundys and their followers arrived in Burns, where a local protest supporting the Hammonds was already planned, on January 2, 2016. Approximately three hundred people marched in the protest to show their support for the ranchers. Dwight and Steven Hammond had been prosecuted by the federal government over two cases of arson, in 2001 and 2006, initially receiving abbreviated sentences in 2012. The first fire was allegedly set to cover up an illegal deer hunt, while the second was lit as a back-burn against a lightning-caused fire in order to protect their cattle and land (Wiles, 2016). After appeal, the original sentences the Hammonds received were deemed to be below the minimum required by law and, in October 2015, Dwight and Steven were ordered to finish the remainder of their 5-year sentences. Donald Trump eventually commuted their sentences in July 2018 (Chappell, 2018).

After participating in the protest in Burns on January 2, Ryan and Ammon Bundy, with a group of about thirty supporters, took over the then-closed MNWR headquarters later that day. The refuge headquarters was occupied for a little over a month, until February 11. Between the start of the occupation and when the final occupier eventually surrendered to law enforcement forty-one days later, both Bundy brothers and nearly all of their supporters were arrested, and one man, Robert "Lavoy" Finicum, was shot dead resisting arrest. Though the Bundys and their followers claimed to be helping the citizens of Harney County (where Malheur and Burns are located), most locals did not want their help. Not only were most of the residents of Harney County opposed to the Bundys' takeover of the refuge, none of the occupation's leaders were locals, or even from Oregon (Walker, 2016). Indeed, few of those who occupied the refuge actually lived in Oregon; most were from elsewhere in the West, including Idaho, Utah, Arizona, and Montana. Further, the Hammonds––who the Bundys claimed to be supporting and whose plight supposedly sparked their actions––did not even want their help (Fantz et al., 2016; Wiles, 2016). Finally, the Bundys and their followers did not share the same motives as locals. As Peter Walker writes, "It is important to understand that for virtually all Harney County residents, the rally in Burns on January 2 was about the sentencing of the Hammonds––not about opposing federal ownership of land" (2016, n.p.). For the Bundys, however, federal land ownership was very much the focus.

I contend that the Bundys' rhetorics about public lands, MNWR, and the federal government can help us further understand the rhetorical operation of settler colonialism. The Bundys demonstrate a key tenet of settler colonialism: the rhetorical transformation of land (Tuck and McKenzie, 2015). As a particular kind of colonialism, settler colonialism is characterized by outsiders coming to land previously inhabited by Indigenous peoples, claiming it as their own, and removing those people from the land. The case of the Bundys and MNWR demonstrates that settler colonialism works rhetorically, in part, through the changing meanings of land. That is, when the Bundys occupied the refuge and talked about land, they brought new associations and topics to the land in Harney County. When the Bundys changed the land's meanings, they affected the land's transformation. A key feature of the Bundys' enactment of settler logics, I suggest, was their aggressive display of white masculinity. In the next section I describe settler colonialism and how the transformation of land in the Bundys' rhetorics further settler colonialism's goals.

SETTLER COLONIALISM

I am a non-Native man living and writing in Kansas, a region that is today home to the tribal reservations of the Iowa, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, and Sac and Fox nations, and is the ancestral homelands the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kansa, Kiowa, Osage, Pawnee, Oceti Sakowin, and Wichita tribes and nations. My relationship to this land and the subjects of land ownership, private property, and settler colonialism has shaped my identity in many ways––I am the grandson of third generation Kansas farmers, and today live nearby that family farm. Throughout my childhood and early adulthood, I grew up thinking of the Kansas farm as the family home, my ancestral homeland. The colonial history of this land was never part of my education, and my relationship to the land existed without knowledge of the history of colonial violence. Making such histories unknown is a key method through which settler colonialism operates. As such, there is also a direct link between this Kansas land and the land discussed in my essay. What is today private farmland in Kansas was, not too long ago, public land. This land just followed the settler logics of becoming private property more fully than the lands that I discuss in this paper. As a private farm, my family's home and my relationship to it are the desired end of the Bundys'

[5]My primary texts for this analysis are ten posts from the *Bundy Ranch Blog*, where the Bundy family posted regular updates about their legal fights and confrontations with federal officials from 2012 through 2017. The posts I examine range from 2012 to during the 2016 MNWR standoff, but are primarily from 2014 to 2015. Supplementing these blog posts are quotes from the family in various news outlets, primarily from interviews and press conferences conducted during the MNWR standoff. I chose these particular entries and quotes after reading through the majority of the family's blog posts and a wide range of news stories, selecting those that best represent the Bundys' views on public lands, the federal government, and ownership. I then read these texts through a lens informed by scholarship on settler colonialism to conduct my analysis.

arguments: private property owned by white settlers. Part of my reasons for the subjects I research today is informed by my relationship to land as a settler, so that we can better understand how land and discourses about land are used to continue the logics, practices, and violence of settler colonialism, and better understand our own relationships to land.

Three key insights about settler colonialism are particularly helpful in demonstrating how the Bundys contribute to the rhetorical operation of settler colonialism. In the case of the Bundys, white masculine ideals of control are a key feature of their settler colonial rhetorical strategies. First, settler colonialism remakes land into property through articulations with ownership rights, sovereignty, and economic development. Second, white supremacy is deeply implicated in settler colonialism's understanding of land as property. Especially in the context of the early United States, human relationship to land was a mark of race: Indigenous, Black, and white peoples have all been racialized in different ways according to their relationship with land. Where Native Americans were marked by having their lands stolen from them, Black people were marked by having been stolen from their lands; whites, having affected both thefts, became owners of newly racialized property (Wolfe, 2006; Liboiron, 2021). As such, there is a perceived right of white settlers to land and property which is "a cornerstone for the ongoing production of white supremacy and white racial identities in the US" (Inwood and Bonds, 2017, p. 254). Third and finally, white settler ownership of property relies on the symbolic and material removal of Indigenous peoples from the land. Taylor (2016) notes that "the use of concepts and terminology such as *frontier* and *pioneer* not only erases the presence of indigenous peoples but also establishes the settler as the "first" people to see, do, or experience whatever is being described on "empty" land. It grants settlers ownership and control of land and other resources and gives primacy to their claims" (Taylor, 2016, p. 21, emphasis in original). Ultimately, the transformation of land into property owned by white settlers depends on the erasure of Indigenous peoples.

Settler colonial logics are firmly fixed in the broader American imagination. For example, in April 2021 former US senator and commentator for CNN Rick Santorum made headlines for claiming that "there isn't much Native American culture in American culture" (Fitzsimmons, 2021, n.p.).[6] Nick Estes (2021), assistant professor at the University of New Mexico and a citizen of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, wrote for *The Guardian* that Santorum:

> repeated a widely held myth of US exceptionalism. "We came here and created a blank slate, we birthed a nation from nothing," the former US senator and CNN commentator told the rightwing Young America's Foundation's summit. "It was born of the people who came here." His "we" doesn't include Indigenous people who were already here or African people who were brought in chains. And that "blank slate" required the violent pillaging of two continents––Africa and North America. If the United States was "birthed from nothing", then the land and enslaved labor that made the wealth of this nation must have fallen from the sky––because it surely didn't come from Europe (Estes, 2021, n.p.).

Further, Estes wrote, "The erasure of Native histories and peoples––which existed long before and despite a white supremacist empire––is a founding principle of the United States" (2021, n.p.). The casual racism of Santorum's remark exemplifies the manner in which Indigenous peoples have been strategically erased in the collective story we tell about the United States, a story in which public lands play a prominent role. The history of the public lands is a history of Native American erasure, where Indigenous populations were removed from land so that (predominantly white) settlers could occupy them and, later, so that the US government could preserve them in the form of National Parks, National Forests, and National Wildlife Refuges.

A central feature of the Malheur occupation, and the settler logics influencing the occupiers, was an aggressive display of white masculinity. This display was revealed in multiple ways, from the gender roles the occupiers adopted, to the display of guns from various people at the refuge, to assumptions the occupiers held about public lands and property. The aggressive masculinity on display by the Bundys at Malheur reminds us that public lands are coded as the property of white (male) settlers, and reveals the paradox of white masculine victimhood (Johnson, 2017). That is, the need to control land arises from a feeling of helplessness, which can only be assuaged through violent reminders of white male dominance. Further, the Bundys' aggressive masculinity––enacted through the display of firearms, gender roles, and arguments about property––is indicative of the settler colonial narratives through which the Bundys understand public lands. That is, the Bundys' display of white masculinity shows us that they see public lands through the logics of settler colonialism, because the white male settler asserts his dominance, in part, through controlling the land. For the Bundys, land is the basis on which their control rests.

As Irons (2018) notes, the occupiers adopted conventional gender roles during their time at Malheur. While the majority of the occupiers were men, there were women at the refuge. With the exception of Shawna Cox, the only woman arrested with the other occupiers, most of the women at Malheur were tasked with the daily work of keeping the refuge running, such as "cooking, cleaning, and organizing supplies" (Irons, 2018, p. 488). The men, meanwhile, stood guard with guns drawn. The women's role at Malheur was a crucial part of this display of masculinity and, as "women often do within patriarchal systems, these women contributed to the image of the male occupiers as masculine, dominating figures by reflecting a magnified image of their masculinity back at them. They emphasized that the men were "protecting" the women, further perpetuating the image of these men as providers and guardians of their community" (Irons, 2018, p. 517). The men were portrayed as the occupation's

[6]Santorum was dismissed from CNN shortly after making these comments (Stelte, 2021).

leaders, relying on the women to keep daily life functioning while they, in their eyes, defended the land and the people's rights. The domination of men over land and women is a central feature of settler colonialism, with men portrayed as the heroes protecting their women and taming the land.[7]

The Bundys' colonial desire to control the land also reveals the paradox of white masculine victimhood. Arising out of a feeling of uncertainty, victimhood is a state of perceived slight. As Johnson (2017) writes, "claims of White, masculine victimhood encourage objectively well-off members of society to interpret the presence of difference and uncertainty as threatening the subject with unjust marginalization" (2017, p. 231). By portraying themselves as victims, the Bundys were able to disavow how every aspect of society is structured by white masculinity (Kelly and Neville-Shepard, 2020). In other words, the Bundys clearly feel as though they are on the outskirts of society and feel they have no control over their lives. As both Irons (2018) and Shaw (2016) have written, the aggressive, hyper-masculine posturing of the Malheur occupiers signals a feeling of powerlessness, or that these men felt helpless against the federal government's regulations of the majority of land in the west and, by extension, control over their lives.

The display of guns is yet another way in which the occupiers featured their aggressive masculinity, and signals their feelings of precarity. Neville-Shepard and Kelly (2020) write the "public display of guns is tethered to a history of White supremacy and racist violence" (2020, p. 467). Further, Neville-Shepard and Kelly argue, carrying guns is coded as a specifically white male practice, one which can help "aggrieved White men contrive an image of an emasculating and oppressive state that can only be countered by the militant reassertion of White masculine sovereignty over public space" (2020, p. 468). Through the open carrying of firearms, the Bundys and their followers asserted their dominance over the government, the land, and the Burns Paiute. Put differently, the Bundys' "White masculine sovereignty" was affirmed over their own lives, their families, the Burns Paiute, and the government through "taking back" the public lands at Malheur. The Bundys remind us that it is the privilege of white men to treat property as they wish without much consequence, even when the property is not theirs. MNWR was not the Bundys' in at least two ways, being federal property and also the homelands of the Burns Paiute. However, the Bundys see public lands through the logics of settler colonialism, which tell us that land rightfully belongs to white male settlers.

The aggressive display of white masculinity at MNWR reminds us of the privilege white men have; to be able to violently occupy federal property for more than a month, with little to no consequence, is a mark of inherent privilege. The Bundys' display of masculinity is also a reminder of the logics of settler colonialism. As the Bundys understand public lands, they are rightfully the property of white male settlers. As I will discuss further in my analysis, the Bundys argue that the federal government cannot own public lands, and that they should be privatized. Further, the Bundys are untroubled by the claims of Native Americans to the land; remember, as Ryan said, Native Americans lost their claim. Presumably, the Burns Paiute do not have a strong claim to the land because they had it taken from them. For settler colonialism, land is the ultimate goal and, for the Bundys, control of land is the ultimate masculine ideal.

The Bundys' arguments are thus premised on the assumption that public lands belong to (white, male) individual property owners; as the family once wrote, "the legal and rightful control of the land belongs to the local people" (Bundy, 2014b, n.p.). Or, as Ryan Bundy put it in an interview during the MNWR occupation, the occupiers recognized that "the Native Americans had the claim to the land, but they lost that claim. There are things to learn from the cultures of the past, but the current culture is the most important" (qtd. in Keeler, 2017, p. 3). Keeler (2017) interprets the "current culture" mentioned by Ryan as "one epitomized by cowboys and ranching," while noting that this only "comprises a tiny minority of Americans today" (2017, pp. 3–4). Keeler pinpoints the Bundy family aesthetic––how they present themselves, with ever-present western wear such as cowboy hats, buttoned shirts, blue jeans, and boots––and notes that neither Ryan nor Ammon Bundy are working ranchers.[8] Indeed, Keeler continues: "the Bundy's mischaracterization rules much of the public's imagination to this day" (2017, p. 4). Understandably, the characterization of the Bundy brothers as ranchers is most likely attributable to the 2014 standoff at the family ranch and the fact that patriarch Cliven is actually a working rancher. Extending Keeler's argument here, I believe that Ryan's statement about culture, Native Americans, and claims to the land is an indication that the logics of settler colonialism––and thus Native American erasure––are fixed firmly in the family's views of land. Ryan's words are not only as an attempt to, as it were, play cowboy. Instead, Ryan spoke from deeply-held, foundational beliefs about who has access to and rightful ownership of land. Before examining what the Bundys say about public lands, we need a stronger understanding of land itself and the rhetorical stakes of the shifting meanings of land.

LAND

Land was at stake in the MNWR occupation. When the Bundys talked about the motivations and reasons behind their actions, they discussed a wide-ranging list of issues and people: government and the Constitution, ranching and ranchers, rights and freedoms, MNWR and wildlife, the economy and resource production, and "the People" and Native Americans all

[7]A key way in which settler colonial narratives have become central to the (white) US collective identity is through the frontier myth. For a discussion of how the frontier myth is gendered and supports white male dominance, see: Rushing (1989), Kelly and Neville-Shepard (2020).

[8]It appears that only four of the approximately thirty occupiers actually worked as ranchers and, of those four, only one––Lavoy Finicum––actually stayed at the refuge and fully participated in the takeover. The other three appear to have been visitors to the refuge, and their roles in the occupation are unclear (Anti-Defamation League, 2021; The Oregonian/Oregon Live, 2016).

circulated through the family's rhetorics. Tying these various issues together was the land itself. When the family talked about government, their primary complaint of governmental oppression was federal control of the land; when they talked about the Constitution, the only clauses that mattered were the ones that address the federal government's ownership of that same land. When they discussed the economy, the Bundys made it clear that land is the basis of any economic activity; when they talked about wildlife and the refuge, they claimed that it was the interactions of humans and livestock with the land of the Harney Basin that attracted the wild animals. When the family discussed freedoms, rights, and "the People," land was said to be the foundation of the Peoples' rights and freedoms. No matter the topic, for the Bundys, land was at the center of the conversation.

Given the importance of land to the Bundys, surprisingly little attention has been given to the land in the scholarship on the takeover of the refuge. When journalists and academics do attend to the land and the Bundys' arguments about it, land often remains in the background, a seemingly minor matter, adjacent to other topics of discussion. For example, in their recent essay on the Bundys and MNWR, Dare and Fletcher promise to focus "on the interdependence among the land, nonhuman animals, and humans," examining a "land-use controversy from a "birding" perspective [which] helps to open up a view of human–animal–land interconnectedness" (2019, pp. 413 & 414). However, the land seems to quickly fall out of their analysis, the essay focusing firmly on the human and non-human relationships bound up in the land-use dispute, without much discussion of the land itself. Dare and Fletcher's essay is not alone in this regard.[9] Even in the scholarship concerning MNWR and the Bundys in law and geography––two disciplines seemingly well-positioned to talk about land––the land is buried under a pile of other issues.[10] Typically speaking, scholarship on the Bundys and MNWR tends to assume that land is a given, physical object that, as a concept, remains stable and unchanging. That is, this view assumes that the land is the same for the Bundys as it is for the ranchers of Harney County, for the Burns Paiute Tribe, for the federal government, for scholars, or for journalists. Contrary to this tendency, I hold that land is not a stable concept, and is instead always changing from speaker to speaker. Further, I hold that understanding land in this way is an essential part of understanding the Bundys' anti–government actions and rhetorics, as well as understanding the rhetorical operation of settler colonialism.

Land is often portrayed as a decidedly material concept, physical, and solid concept, composed of soil, rocks, minerals, geological formations. As a material object, land remains stable and permanent, unquestioned, and without meaning. For instance, Clark (2004), in his study of rhetorical landscapes, tourism, and national parks, argues that there is a difference between "land" and "landscape." Here's Clark:

> *Landscape* is not the same as *land*. *Land* is material, a particular object, while *landscape* is conceptual. When people act as tourists, they leave the *land* where they make their home to encounter *landscapes*. *Land* becomes *landscape* when it is assigned the role of symbol, and as symbol it functions rhetorically (2004, p.9, emphasis in original).

Clark ties *land* to territory, the mere material stuff upon which we stand. *Land*, in and of itself, has no meaning for Clark other than its solidity, while *landscape*, imbued with all the power of symbolism, is tied to identity (2004, p. 71). The essential point is that Clark assumes that "land" is a homogenous concept without symbolism and, thus, without meaning. That is, land does not change; it is permanent. Once land acquires *meaning*, however, it becomes something else, something different altogether from that which it was previously; it is no longer *land*. Put differently, *landscape* is an idea, a concept, while *land* is the physical, material object upon which we stand. Significantly, Clark's understanding of land is consistent with a colonial worldview, one which assumes that land is "common, universal, and everywhere, even with great variation" (Liboiron, 2021, pp. 6–7, fn. 19). In this understanding, land exists everywhere, the same for everybody. Even if what land *looks* like changes, the *concept* of land remains the same.

As Druschke (2013) points out in her work on a watershed in Iowa, Clark regards "the symbolic as the sole territory of the rhetorical," and that "the landscape is strictly symbolic terrain" (2013, p. 93). According to Clark, writes Druschke, the "rhetoricity of a given landscape exists only in its symbolic content; the material land drops away once that land is imbued with symbolic meaning" (2013, p. 93). Druschke complicates Clark's understanding of land as only material, and without rhetoricity. Significantly, Druschke complicates Clark's understanding of land by describing its impermanence, or how land––in the topos of watershed––changes (2013). In their essay on identity and Maine's North Woods, Hutchins and Stormer (2013) write that the impermanence of land is often revealed through conflict and disruption. Using articulation theory, Hutchins and Stormer write that land is "an element within a system of practices related to it," entangled with discourse, identity, and practices that, together, construct place and identity (2013, pp. 27 & 35). Building from this study, I hold that land is a conjunction, a combination of elements that, in the case of the Bundys, articulates ideas about property, rights and freedoms, government, the economy, and power together. Put differently, land is that which brings together various discourses and material practices. As new discourses and practices are articulated with land, land's meanings change. When the Bundys occupied the refuge, public lands in Harney County came to mean something different than they had for the county's residents and the Burns Paiute Tribe prior to January 2, 2016. The changing meaning of land is significant because, as Hutchins and Stormer argue, meaning "is not the semantic value

[9]See also: Bonds and Inwood (2016), Ladino (2019), LeMenager and Weisiger (2019), Morgan (2019), and Welch and Scott (2018/2019).

[10]For example: Blumm and Fraser (2017), Blumm and Jamin (2016), Eisenberg (2017a), Eisenberg (2017b), Gallaher (2016), Ingalls et al. (2019), Inwood and Bonds (2017), Irons (2018), Zellmer (2019).

of a sign," but rather "the significance established through conjunctions" (2013, p. 27). That is, when "land" became associated with power, governmental oppression, the Constitution, and rights and freedoms through the Bundys, this new combination of elements changed what the land was in this instance. The land's changing meanings allowed the Bundys to insert new arguments about the land as a consequence of these new associations. The concept of "land" is not permanent and stable, the same for the Bundys in their takeover of MNWF as it did for the federal government, the Burns Paiute Tribe, and the citizens of Harney County. Examining in closer detail what the Bundys and leaders of the Burns Paiute Tribe say about the land of MNWR bring these differences into sharper focus.

COMPETING MEANINGS OF LAND: THE BURNS PAIUTE TRIBE, THE BUNDYS, AND SETTLER COLONIALISM

For the Burns Paiute Tribe, the land at Malheur is associated with their history and of their tribe having existed in this area for thousands of years. As Charlotte Roderique––former Chairwoman of the Tribe––says, the tribe was "here first" before "any of these ranchers" (qtd. in Sam, 2018, p. 47). The land also signals a resilience to colonialism and a perseverance to survive in this place; the Native people who live in the region today are the descendants of those who lived there far before colonization and removal in the nineteenth century, and who then came back to the region at a later time. In their calls to end the occupation, tribal leaders indicated that they saw the Bundys as perpetuating the same sort of colonial politics that saw their ancestors originally removed from the region. Jarvis Kennedy, a member of the tribal council, told reporters that he thought the occupiers were "just a bunch of bullies and little criminals coming in here and trying to push us around over here and occupy our aboriginal territories out there where our ancestors are buried. It gets tiring. It's the same battles that my ancestors had. And now it's just a bunch of different cavalry wearing a bunch of different coats" (qtd. in Sidner, 2016, n.p.). In other words, tribal leaders understood the Bundys' occupation as yet another chapter in a long history of white outsiders taking their lands. Roderique, speaking about the occupiers, said "they are desecrating one of our sacred sites. They are endangering our children and the safety of our community." (qtd. in Sam, 2018, p. 44).

The Bundys' primarily understand land as a resource, most valuable for what it gives humans to use, which fits squarely within settler colonial logics. This definition values the land for its extractable potential and what uses humans can put the land toward, what the family call the land's "useful purposes" (2012a, n.p.). There are two important factors in this definition of land. First, land is something that can be taken and bent to the will of human users. Accordingly, land can also be "conquered," taken over and controlled by those who put land to useful ends (2014a, n.p.). Second, land can be improved to the benefit of humans. Listed improvements were water resources for wildlife and livestock, habitat for livestock and wildlife, and improving the forage for livestock while also reducing the fuel load in order to better control fire (2012b). All of these improvements provide human users with more resources to harvest and use (2012a). Significantly, however, the Bundys argue that it is only private owners who improve the land. In the family's telling, the government restricts the ability of land users to productively use the land and extract its resources (2015d). Further, government control of land has gendered implications for the Bundys. As Irons (2018) argues, government control of the land threatens the Bundys' "livelihood and ability to serve as providers within their families. As their role as provider is central to their familial, gendered hierarchy, control over the land is a threat to these men's control over their families" (2018, p. 508). By threatening the hierarchy of family and the men's ability to provide, the government threatens the men's role of authority within their family structure (Irons, 2018). For the Bundys, land functions as both a provider of resources for human use and as a source of masculine authority.

Land's meanings are tenuous, never stable or permanent. Importantly, the changing meanings of land have implications for our understandings of settler colonialism. Settler colonialism's description of land in terms of resource and productivity objectifies land, stripping it of any meaning and agency outside colonial knowledge systems. Settler colonialism is a violent disruption of human relationships with the environment or, as Whyte (2018) argues, "ecological domination" (2018, p. 125). Settler colonialism accomplishes disruption and domination through remaking land and human relationships to land; Tuck and Yang (2012) write, the settler:

> is making a new "home" and that home is rooted in a homesteading worldview where the wild land and wild people were made for his benefit. He can only make his identity as a settler by making the land produce, and produce excessively, because "civilization" is defined as production in excess of the "natural" world (i.e. in excess of the sustainable production already present in the Indigenous world) (2012, p. 6).

Settler colonialism's remaking of land recasts land through new knowledge systems. Making land into property undergirds "a normalized white supremacy" (Inwood and Bonds, 2017, p. 256). That is, as land becomes property, settler colonialism props up knowledge systems that constitute "whiteness and property are cornerstones of settler traditions of place in that they are reflective of past histories of genocide, Native land displacement, and enslaved labor underpinning contemporary social relations and materialities" (Inwood and Bonds, 2017, p. 256).

With the Bundys' at Malheur, the family brought to Malheur new entanglements which ignored the land's history, both the Indigenous history and history of colonial settlement, and gave new meanings to the land. In terms of the land's Indigenous history, the Burns Paiute frequently reminded the press that they were the land's original inhabitants, and that their tribe's history with the land was fraught with colonial violence (Peacher, 2016; Sidner, 2016; Sam, 2018). The Bundys did not accurately portray the colonial history of the land either, clearly knowing and caring

little about cattle ranching in the region, the creation of MNWR, and the relationship between locals (both settler and Indigenous) with the federal government (Peacher, 2016; Robbins, 2016). In short, the Bundys brought to MNWR new articulations of land with government, history, and rights and freedoms that gave the land new meanings, meanings which enabled them to forward an argument of this land as rightfully the property of white settlers.[11]

With the instability of land informing my analysis, I examine what the Bundys associate with land––what they entangle with it, link to it, and what they bring to attention when they talk about land. Land provides the family numerous rhetorical resources and is thus fundamentally entangled with a broad range of cultural–political concerns. For the Bundys, the land itself oscillates between economic resource, the foundation of personal rights, a symbol and site of governmental oppression, a mode of power, and the basis of a theory of constitutional interpretation. Land is ever-changing for the family, every bit as much tied to government and freedoms as it is a natural resource. This is why the family can discuss land as the key to any economic activity and then, in the same breath, tie land to a theory of governmental power and constitutional interpretation. The Bundys' takeover of MNWR demonstrates the rhetorical power of land, that land has no inherent, singular meaning and is instead always in flux, defined as much by the cultural and political needs of speakers as by the material composition of sand, soil, rocks, and geographic coordinates.

THE BUNDYS AND LAND: THREE CLAIMS

Though land is ever-changing for the Bundys, there are constants in the ways that they talk about and entangle with land. In this section, I analyze the Bundys' claims about public lands, using the insights detailed above about settler colonialism and land. I argue that the Bundys' further the goals of settler colonialism by redefining the land's meanings. I examine three particular entanglements common to the family's discourse: the Constitution, race, and Native erasure. First, I examine the Bundys' arguments about the Constitution. Here, the family argues that the Constitution gives the people power over the federal government. Second, I examine how the family racializes relationship to land, or how white settlers come to be the proper owners of land. Power here is related to who are the beneficiaries of land and its resources. Third, I examine the ways in which the Bundys' arguments further settler colonial strategies of Native erasure through what they say about public lands history and land use. Here, power is related to land through definitions of land and history. Throughout, power is ingredient to these three entanglements. The entire reason that settler colonialism remakes land into that which the settler can claim is because land is a mode of power; control the land, control everything else.

CONSTITUTION

The first way that the Bundys further the rhetorical operation of settler colonialism through their arguments about land is by defining proper land ownership vis-à-vis their interpretation of the Constitution. The Bundys' claims about constitutional limits on federal land ownership should be understood as support for their larger argument about the privatization of public lands. The primary meaning associated with land here is "property," specifically *private* property, not *government* or *public* property. According to the family, the federal government is strictly limited to owning only small amounts of land in very specific circumstances. The family strategically reads the Constitution to support their claims to private property, largely relying on two specific constitutional clauses: the Enclave Clause and the Property Clause, as well as a method of interpretation called "textualism." Textualism is the belief that the Constitution can be understood by "reading the text, without any detailed knowledge of the history and context of its formulation and without taking into account how the Constitution has been authoritatively interpreted by federal courts over the past two centuries" (Smith, 2016, p. 1). Using this interpretative method, the Bundys argue that because the federal government is constitutionally limited in its ability to own land, the vast majority of federal property should be owned by private individuals. The assumption that land should be private property follows the long tradition in the United States of justifying the seizure of land from Indigenous peoples in the name of white male settler property rights (Taylor, 2016). In this context, land's meaning as private property is a fundamental aspect of settler colonialism. The Bundys' arguments about the Constitution, federal land ownership, and private property are an extension of such settler colonial logics.

The family's claims about power are, by necessity, tightly tied to their arguments about the Constitution, and are premised on the assumption that land should be understood as private property. As the Bundys use the term, "power" signals political control; most often, the family presents "power" in terms of a binary, meaning control of either the population or the government. Crucially, control of both population and government depends on control of the land. When the people control the land, they control the government; when the government controls the land, it controls the people. The family argues that the federal government is expressly prohibited from owning too much land because the Constitution is designed to limit the government's powers by strictly delineating what lands the government could control (Bundy, 2014a). The original plan of land disposal, the Bundys claim, keeps the land and power "safe" with the local people (Bundy, 2014a, n.p.).

Rhetorically, situating federal public lands as instead private property enables the family to define the land, its uses, and who gets to own land. The belief that public lands should be turned

[11]While my paper is focused on the meanings given to land by humans, it is important to note that settler colonial notions of land are particularly restrictive when it comes to the land's agency. That is, settler understandings of land primarily conceive of land as a permanent and stable object without agency. See Dare and Fletcher (2019) essay for an analysis of the agencies of land and nonhumans, and the inseparability of humans with those agencies.

into private property falls within an ideology often called "land transfer." The Bundys argue that the original intent of the federal government was to "quickly dispose the land and resources to the local people, where it is most safe" (Bundy, 2014a, n.p.). Disposal of land to private individuals was indeed an early federal public lands policy, but one which the government moved away from in the late nineteenth century. The family's emphasis on disposal is more than a preference for a previous policy, however; according to the Bundys, federal ownership of public lands goes against the very foundations of individual rights, freedoms, and liberties, as well as the proper form of government itself. In one blog post, the family writes, "the legal and rightful control of the land belongs to the local people," and calls on state and local governments to "take control of the land. [and] dispose of the land to the people" (Bundy, 2014b, n.p.). The family argues that federal land leads to a system where "the people that live on or near the land have no say to what happens in their own backyards" and the government does not "protect and uphold the rights of the people" (Bundy, 2014a, n.p.). Further, the family argues that the Founding Fathers intended the land to go to private citizens because this would ensure the proper form of government and governmental power, arguing that the Constitution limits "the powers of government by outlining what lands the federal government can control and by separating the powers they hold. This is called a republic form of government, for the people, by the people"(Bundy, 2014a, n.p.). Put simply, the Bundys argue that the vast majority of land should be owned by private citizens because private property is the guarantor of freedoms liberties, rights, and the proper form of government.

As legal scholars note, the Bundys' interpretation of the Constitution has no support in history or jurisprudence (Blumm and Jamin, 2016; Irons, 2018). Ironically, given their beliefs about textualism as a method, the family actually misreads the text of the document, conveniently ignoring the text to their own ends (Smith, 2016). Specifically, the family argues that the Enclave Clause gives the federal government authority to own land "only ten square-miles from Washington, D.C" (Blumm and Jamin, 2016, p. 814). The Property Clause, according to the family, only allows the federal government to own property with "Territories." In this reading, once a Territory becomes a state, the federal government must "give up the land unless they could take control of it in the narrow circumstances outlined in the Enclave Clause." (Irons, 2018, p. 486). Ryan explained the family's position thus: "the Constitution grants Congress the power to make needful rules and regulations while the land is still a Territory (capital T) and grants Congress the power to dispose of the land." In the Bundys' view, this means that the government has the ability to control the land when it is still in a "Territory," which is supposedly different from a state (Bundy, 2015c, n.p.). This is an important distinction for the family, because once a "Territory" became a state, the federal government lost the ability to own land inside the state, except for very limited circumstances (Bundy, 2015c). However, these arguments have no basis in jurisprudence. Bundy's contention that there is constitutional significance between "Territories" and "territories":

> was considered and rejected by the Supreme Court 176 years ago in United States v. Gratiot. In fact, Bundy's reasoning echoes Justice Taney's discredited analysis of the Property Clause in Dred Scott–that Congress lacked the authority to establish rules for federal territories in the West that were not part of the Union at the time of the Constitution. Thus, Bundy relies on the most reviled decision in Supreme Court history as the only authority supporting his view (Blumm and Jamin, 2016, p. 815).

The Bundys also ignore the fact that federal ownership and control over MNWR has already been upheld by the Supreme Court (Blumm and Jamin, 2016, p. 816). Additionally, the family either misunderstood, or did not know, the history of cattle ranching, federal land ownership, and cooperation between residents and government in Harney County (Robbins, 2016, p. 574).[12] In sum, the Bundys' arguments about public lands, the federal government, and the Constitution have all been thoroughly discredited, and shown to be based in faulty understandings of history and law. As these arguments articulate land, however, it is clear that the Bundys understand land through the foundational logics of settler colonialism. The notion of land-as-private property justified the settlement of Indigenous land and gives the Bundys the ability to claim a right to the land. This claim, and the assumptions behind it, will be examined in the next section.

RACIALIZING LAND

The second way that the Bundys further the rhetorical operation of settler colonialism through their arguments about land is by racializing relationships to land. The primary relationship that I will discuss here is ownership––what the Bundys say about ownership of land, and also the response of the Burns Paiute to the Bundys' arguments. In the Bundys' arguments, ownership of land continues to be a mark of race; whether they admit it or not, land ownership is something that belongs properly to white settlers. Further, land ownership is connected to power in the MNWR occupiers' rhetorics. One of the Bundys' co-conspirators at Malheur, Ryan Payne, succinctly told the *New York Times*, "the idea is power: land is power" (Johnson and Healy, 2016, n.p.). The idea that land is power can be traced back to the Bundys arguments after their 2014 standoff with the federal

[12]For example, Harney County government works to promote active cooperation between public lands users (including ranchers) and the federal government, and provides resources for land users to learn about and become involved with collaborations with the government (see Public Land Issues and Resources. *Harney County*. https://www.co.harney.or.us/index.php/public-land-issues-and-resources). Robbins provides an excellent overview of the history of local and federal cooperation on public lands issues in Harney County. Of particular significance to this essay is how the public was involved in recent planning at MNWR, including "an exhaustive collaborative review and planning exercise. The nearly 5 years' work involved state, local, and tribal governments, individuals, and private nonprofit organizations" (2016, pp. 596–597).

government. In a series of blog posts, the family connected land to control, arguing that "history proves that whoever controls the land and the resources control the people" (Bundy, 2014c, n.p.). The articulation of land with power and control is why the family believes that federal land ownership is so problematic. In their view, Americans' freedoms are at risk when the government controls too much land. As the Bundys argue, freedoms are directly tied to the land, and that the "federal agencies" clearly understand "power and have taken great measures to control the land and resources. Control the land and the resources and you possess the power to manipulate the people and/or oppress them" (Bundy, 2014c, n.p.).

The first key to understanding the Bundys' racialization of land is who the family defines as the owners of Harney County's public lands. In one interview, Ammon Bundy claimed that the "best possible outcome" of the Malheur occupation would be for the ranchers who have been "kicked out of the area" to "come back and reclaim their land." In this scenario, Ammon hoped that the wildlife refuge would "be shut down forever" and the federal government relinquish any claim to the land (Wolf et al., 2016, n.p.). The rightful owners, presumably, were not the Burns Paiute Tribe, on whose ancestral lands MNWR sits, though the Bundys said they supported the Tribe's claims to their ancestral lands at various points (Glionna, 2016). Their actions, however, belied these messages of support, and spoke to the family's fundamental assumption about these lands; that they belong to the white people of Harney County. A far cry from respecting the Tribe's wishes regarding their occupation, the Bundys and their followers "handled and moved" ancient artifacts stored at the refuge and "bulldozed through sacred burial grounds while trying to build a road" (Siegler, 2016, n.p.). Further, Ryan Bundy once argued that the Tribe had "lost" their claim to the land, and that the land now belonged to the "current culture" (Keeler, 2017, p. 3). When the Bundys claimed that they wanted to help the land's rightful owners take back their land, they meant "the people of Harney County who have pre-emptive rights" to the land (Bundy, 2016, n.p.).

The second key to the Bundys' racialization of land ownership is the concept of rights of preemption. According to the Bundys, rights of preemption are what give the citizens of Harney County the legal claim to the land. Preemptive rights are essentially squatters' rights, protection from land speculators for those who live on the land and make "improvements" to it (Gates and Swenson, 1968, p. 68). Preemption, as a logic of colonialism, assumes that land belongs to those who work it, and make productive use of the land. In the Bundys' parlance, land belongs to those who put it toward "useful purposes" (Bundy, 2014b, n.p.). King (2019) writes this notion of working the land and what counts as a "productive use" descends from the Lockean tradition of property rights and assumes that "Indigenous subjects who do not labor across the land fail to turn the land into property and thus fail to turn themselves into proper human subjects" (2019, p. 23). Land ownership is connected to economic and political self-reliance and, Shelton (2013) notes, in early US history property rights became "a means of thinking about the unalienable rights of humankind" (2013, p. 1). In the settler state, of course, only a particular kind of person gets to own land and, thus, receive the status associated with land ownership.[13] Whiteness, as the mark of the proper landowner, has long been entangled with land politics in the Western US. According to Shelton, writing about land ownership in nineteenth century California, the question of land ownership in both California and other Western states was deeply connected to "the survival of the white race" (Shelton, 2013, p. 98). Here, whiteness was defined by a particular type of relationship to land, a relationship threatened by "emancipated slaves and immigrants" (Shelton, 2013, p. 98).

Leaders of the Burns Paiute Tribe could not have been more vocal in their disagreement with the Bundys' methods and ideas about who rightfully owns the land at Malheur. While the tribe has its own issues with federal regulations––in 2016 the tribe noted that the government had "become increasingly bureaucratic about allowing the tribe to catch trout, bass and perch in the rivers lacing the mountains and to hunt elk and deer in the woods"––they preferred a much different approach to the one taken by the Bundys (Allen, 2016, n.p.). Chairwoman Charlotte Roderique, in response to the takeover, said "we don't want people who have no interest in this country at all in here, ramrodding their way through things and possibly being destructive" (qtd. in Allen, 2016, n.p.). Council member Jarvis Kennedy put it more bluntly, saying that the Bundys and their supporters "just need to get the hell out of here" (qtd. in Sidner, 2016, n.p.). Roderique had no doubts about who the Bundys thought the land's "rightful owners" were, saying "For them to say they want to give the land back to their rightful owners–well, I just had to laugh at that. When they talk about returning land, I know they didn't mean us. When [the US government] wanted us to give up the land, we didn't do it. We have never given up our aboriginal rights there. We do as well feel there–because this is still our land" (qtd. in Glionna, 2016, n.p.). Roderique further explained that the tribe still use the land for religious and ceremonial purposes, for gathering plants for traditional medicines, and visit protected sites (Glionna, 2016). Council member Selena Sam put it succinctly: "the land belongs to the Paiute here" (qtd. in Allen, 2016, n.p.). Seemingly, however, the claims of the Burns Paiute to the land and the ways in which they use it fall short of the Bundys' settler colonial understandings of proper claims and use: though there was a hasty attempt by the Bundys to incorporate the Burns Paiute into their occupation, the "occupiers only saw the land as being historically Indigenous at best. In other words, [the Burns Paiute] had a legitimate claim over the past—but not of the land in the present" (Sam, 2018, p. 78). Put differently, land is a marker of race in the Bundys' rhetorics because race can be used to determine one's relationship with land ownership. Indigenous peoples may have historical claims, but white settlers have the present-day claim to the land.

[13]Gender is, of course, also important here. Courtney Irons argues that "By pitting the federal government against the ranchers, the occupation places the dispute over land management policy squarely in terms of a dispute over control. because the federal government has control, the Bundys do not." Claiming ownership of the land is one way in which the Bundys preserve control over their livelihoods, their families, and their "male sovereignty" (2018, pp. 503 and 490).

Defining land ownership in terms of race is thus one way in which power manifests; whomever owns the land controls everything else. From the perspective of settler colonial logics of property, the question of who is the rightful beneficiary of land/power is easy to answer. Inwood and Bonds (2017) note that, in the context of Oregon specifically, the development of the state was "formulated on a white settler project premised on the eradication of Native peoples and the exclusion of other racialized minorities" (2017, p. 259). This historical note can be generalized to the other the Western states, especially in the context of land. Indeed, Ladino (2019) writes, the Bundys' occupation of MNWR shows that "white men are still seen as "belonging" on public lands, and the Indigenous erasure that allowed those lands to be deemed "public" in the first place continues" (2019, p. xi). In the settler colonial state, land is property, owned by white settlers. Land, and thus power, as the Bundys articulate the concepts, rightly belong to white people.

LAND AND NATIVE ERASURE

The third way in which the Bundys further the rhetorical operation of settler colonialism is by defining land in ways that continue the erasure of Indigenous peoples from that land. Carbaugh and Rudnick (2006) write that naming places is a "massively deep symbolic expression," and naming land as "private property" or "public land" is a settler strategy of overwriting the names and meanings that Indigenous peoples gave that land (2006, p. 183). Further, Stuckey and Murphy (2001) note the naming of land is a distinctly colonial project, a method of "rhetorical colonialism" which "undermines the political and cultural influence of Native Americans and asserts control over their lands and resources" (2001, p. 85). The governing imperative of settler colonialism is to acquire and retain land and, in order to meet this imperative, settler colonialism works to symbolically and materially erase the presence of Indigenous peoples from the land. From the settler perspective, Wolfe (2016) contends, Indigenous peoples obstructed "the expansion of settlement," and so "no effort was spared to eliminate them" from the land (2016, p. 3). A range of techniques are employed to remove the land's Indigenous inhabitants, what Wolfe (2006) refers to as "strategies of elimination" (2006, p. 401). By way of these techniques, Indigenous populations are removed from the land or assimilated into broader settler society. In the case of the former, physical elimination is required; the latter is the "not necessarily homicidal dissolution of Native difference into the settler mainstream" (Wolfe, 2016, p. 15). Settlers, moving onto Native peoples' lands, claimed those territories for themselves. No matter the specific technique, however, the ultimate desired outcome is the elimination of the Indigenous presence from the land. The result is land available for settlement. The Bundys' arguments about public lands work to further such strategies of erasure.

In this section, I focus on two specific strategies of elimination, that of making land ahistorical, and that of defining the land's uses. By ahistorical, I mean that land is often removed from its historical contexts in the Bundys' arguments about public lands, the government, and ownership. Just as their constitutional interpretation lacks historical accuracy, so too do their assumptions about the land they desire. Making land ahistorical allows the Bundys to fill in the subsequent gap and apply their own histories and meanings to the land. To make this argument, I build on the family's arguments about the Constitution and power. The second strategy, defining the land's uses, is the Bundys' way of further defining who is implicated in the land and decision-making about land. Here, the family insists on "local control," a euphemism for white settler control of the land. Ultimately, both strategies function as techniques of erasure, ensuring that Indigenous peoples are not implicated in the land.

MAKING LAND AHISTORICAL

Tuck and McKenzie (2015) note that making land ahistorical "reaffirms the myth of terra nullius," or the idea that the land was free, empty, and available for settlement (2015, p. 64). Importantly, this strategy holds that the history of the land begin with settlement. In this telling of history, Indigenous peoples were already gone when settlers arrived, voluntarily leaving the land behind as they moved elsewhere of their own accord. An example of this oft–repeated myth is the concept of wilderness. In the popular imagination, wilderness means a place deserving of preservation and protection because of its beauty, valued because it is uninhabited by humans. As Spence (1999) argues, however, "uninhabited wilderness had to be created before it could be preserved" (1999, p. 4). Making land ahistorical is a strategy of elimination, and erases Indigenous people because it intentionally disarticulates land and settlement with genocide and the violence of colonialism. The ahistoricity of land tells us that settlers never had to reckon with Indigenous peoples on the land, because those peoples were never there or, if they were there at one time, they willingly left before the settlers arrived.

The Bundys' claims about power, the constitutionality of federal land ownership, and race work to place land in a particular history, one which begins with the federal government having already acquired large tracts of land. In this telling, the government acquired land and then unconstitutionally decided to not dispose large portions of it, rather than selling the lands to private owners. The Bundys argue this should be remedied, and that "the legal and rightful control of the land belongs to the local people. It is time for our State and County representative to take control of the land. It is time that they dispose of the land to the people, open the land up for useful purposes" (2014b, n.p.). This selective history emphasizes the period when "the government took ownership of land not claimed during the settlement period, instead of the stage leading up to it, when the government seized the indigenous land it would use for settlement" (Gallaher, 2016, p. 295). That is, as told by the Bundys, public lands history begins with the federal government having already acquired nominally empty land and then selling and giving it to (predominantly white) settlers, a

history that ignores the colonial past and present of public lands. To better understand the Bundys' telling of this history, consider this quote from Ryan Bundy:

> In 1789, the thirteen States were united under the newly signed Constitution. The original thirteen States had land that extended west of the Allegany Mountains, mostly unsettled. The States voluntarily and collectively decided to allow the central government (federal) to administer these lands. They called them Territories. The plan was for the federal government to administrate the Territories until they could become States. As the population grew due to westward expansion, Territorial lands were created into States. There is no question that the people in the original thirteen States owned the land within the State borders. There is no question that the central, or federal government, had no right to any land within the several States (2015c, n.p.).

Bundy is here arguing that the lands "west of the Allegany Mountains" already belonged to the United States. This history begins with Indigenous peoples having already been dispossessed of the lands, because these land were "mostly unsettled." The narrative Ryan tells sets the land apart from anything that happened prior to the government taking ownership of it, e.g., the government removing the land's prior Indigenous inhabitants. Accounts like these make land ahistorical by ignoring how the federal government came to acquire the land in the first place.

As Gallaher (2016) notes, ahistorical frames like the one Ryan describes allows anti-government rhetorics like the Bundys' to argue that they are "reclaiming the people's land from the government rather than engaging in a second round of white theft of Indigenous land" (2016, p. 295). In the Bundys' view, public lands are the rightful property of private citizens that the government illegally retained. Put otherwise, the land became the rightful property of private citizens at the moment the federal government acquired control over it. At the moment of federal acquisition, it ceased being Native land, a fact over which the Bundys have no qualms. Indeed, the logic behind the Bundys' arguments is that the existence of federal public lands signals a state where Indigenous peoples lost their right to the land, and where white settlers have not yet received their claim to the land. Or, as Ammon put these ideas in the context of MNWR: "In 1908 President Theodore Roosevelt, in a political scheme, create an 'Indian reservation' around the Malheur, Mud & Harney Lakes and declared it "as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds". Later this "Indian reservation" (without Indians) became the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge" (2015d, n.p.). Later in this same post, Ammon details the ways in which he believes the federal government has maintained control of the land around Malheur by driving away ranchers and their claims to private land. Ammon never questions why there would be an "Indian reservation without Indians," instead focusing on his belief that white settlers have lost their claims to the land.

The Bundys' conceit is that land's meanings have been held stable for much of the past century; that is, rather than recognizing the switch in federal policy from disposal of land to retention, the Bundys frame land as still freely available to private citizens, much like in the homesteading era. In this understanding, white settlers still have the predominant claim to land. Recognizing the emergence of retention as a constitutionally sound federal land policy would be a recognition that white settlers no longer have an inherent claim to the land. The Bundys do not want to realize a situation where white settlers have no more right to the land than Indigenous peoples who "lost" their claims.

LAND USE

The second strategy the Bundys use to continue the rhetorical erasure of Indigenous peoples from the land is by defining the land's proper uses and beneficiaries. This strategy includes defining who gets to use land, and what uses that land should be put toward. First, the family defines land uses in terms of "locals," a euphemism for white control of land. In Cliven Bundy's view, public lands do not belong to all Americans, nor should they be understood as "public" at all. Instead, these are the lands of the people who live on them, benefit from them, develop and improve them, and use the land; under settler colonialism, the white settler assumes their right to land through such "productive" uses. As Cliven wrote about his ranch lands, they are "the public land of the people of Clark County (Nevada)" (Bundy, 2012a, n.p.). Land is for locals, those who live on and near the land. From the perspective of settler colonialism, land becomes the property of those settlers who move in after the Indigenous inhabitants are removed. "Localism" is a settler colonial strategy where the differences between settlers and Indigenous peoples are whitewashed, and where settlers give themselves a claim to the land equal to that of the displaced Indigenous populations. Goodman (2016) argues that this strategy is a "mechanism of making settlers indigenous" to the land, where settlers overwrite the land's meaning through logics of property, control, ownership, and economic exploitation (2016, p. 16).

The family's definitions of correct land use are those that benefit private owners. The Bundys often describe land as a resource which should be put toward "useful purposes" that benefit human owners. Federal ownership of land restricts individuals from using the land for private benefit. Cliven, writing in 2012, argued that the federal government's land management practices often "managed to destroy human man's way to harvest and use the renewable resource" that the land provides (Bundy, 2012b, n.p.). The government, through regulating land use, are "trying to take the natural resources away from the people," the "greatest immediate threat to the individual person and the people as a whole" (Bundy, 2015a, n.p.; Bundy, 2015b, n.p.).

The family ascribes a symbiotic relationship to human land use, arguing that proper human uses of the land are beneficial to both humans and the land itself. Here, the Bundys are defining

land in terms of resource productivity and their beliefs that certain uses––such as cattle grazing––benefit the land. For example, Cliven once claimed that cattle grazing makes certain plants makes them "productive," his term of choice in describing plants that are healthy and thriving (Gardner, 2015, n.p.). Crucially, according to Bundy, it is the human activity of grazing cattle on the land that creates this healthy environment. This was also not a one-time claim; in his narrative of the Hammonds incident and the history of the MNWR, Ammon Bundy made similar claims. In his telling, Ammon emphasized the improvements early settlers made to the area, his perception that the federal government has been trying to force ranchers out of the basin for several decades, and ultimately argues that the land's health has deteriorated as the government has become more and more involved in land use. In Ammon's telling, MNWR has seen near-constant conflicts over who gets to use the area, as well as how the land should be used. Ammon presents a picture of Harney Basin as place of fruitful and flourishing ranches––at least, until the government stepped in.

In his narrative, Ammon details a history of defining and redefining land, its uses, and its ownership. This post reflects a conviction that, when left to their own devices, ranchers and land users are more than capable of using land to the benefit of both humans and environment. Conversely, government–prescribed land uses are depicted as harmful. Ammon wrote that, when the Harney Basin was settled, the ranchers developed a "state of the art irrigated system to water the meadows" (Bundy, 2015d, n.p.). In his telling, this improved the land so much that it influenced the migratory patterns of birds (National fish and Wildlife Service, 2016). According to the National Fish and Wildlife Service, the refuge was established to protect birds from over–hunting by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 (2016). According to Ammon though, Roosevelt initially created the refuge as an Indian Reservation––"without Indians"––in a "political scheme" (Bundy, 2015d, n.p.). Langston (2016) disagrees, writing that the Paiute reservation referenced by the Bundys existed before 1908, and was "without Indians" because they were removed by the government some years prior to ranchers settling in the area. White ranchers homesteaded on former Paiute land, and the wildlife refuge was later created from former reservation lands (Langston, 2016, n.p.). While Ammon does not agree with the historical details of the reservation, the Bundys and the government do both agree that the wildlife refuge serves as protection for birds. However, Ammon attributes the flourishing bird population to the ranchers. Because of the human-created habitat, he argues, the government stepped in and, starting with Roosevelt's political "plot," began a century-long attempt to wrest control of the Harney Basin from the ranchers. The plight of Dwight and Steven Hammond, the reason for the MNWR occupation, is proof that the government is still trying to gain full control of the Malheur area (Bundy, 2015d). For the Bundys and their followers, public lands should be managed in ways that promote certain land uses––those that benefit the private land owner.

Both of these strategies––that of making land ahistorical and that of defining the proper uses and beneficiaries of land––contribute to the rhetorical erasure of Indigenous people. Making land ahistorical accomplishes this erasure by telling a version of history where Indigenous people were never removed from their land, had left voluntarily, or were never there, reaffirming a myth of empty land. The Bundys further this myth and history by arguing that the federal government is required to give public lands to private citizens. The second strategy of erasure, defining the land's uses and beneficiaries, works to further settler colonialism's goals by arguing that white settlers are the proper beneficiaries of the land. Further, the Bundys' argue that the uses settlers put the land toward are beneficial to the land itself.

CONCLUSION

The Bundys' arguments about public lands demonstrate the rhetorical operation of settler colonialism. Settler colonialism remakes land, a process that I contend is fundamentally rhetorical. As the Bundys show, settler colonialism works to remake land through defining and redefining the land's meanings. Ultimately, settler colonialism remakes land in order to provide white settlers with a superior, inherent claim to the land. In this essay, I discussed three ways that the Bundys further this function of settler colonialism. First, I relayed the family's arguments about federal ownership of public lands. Here, the Bundys argue that the government is not constitutionally able to own large amounts of land and that the public lands should instead be transferred to private individuals. Connecting this section to settler colonialism, I showed how private property is a colonial logic that allows white settlers to presume their inherent right to the land. Second, I recounted how the Bundys racialized land ownership. Here, the family contends that ownership and control of land in the United States was founded on a principle of individual land ownership, a situation where land––and thus power––is primarily located in the hands of white settlers. Finally, I discussed the family's two primary strategies of continuing the rhetorical erasure of Indigenous people from the land. The first strategy is that of making land ahistorical, which allows the family to impose their own meanings onto the land. The second strategy is that of defining the land's beneficiaries and uses, which allows the family to define who land is for, what uses the land should be put toward, and who gets to be the beneficiary of land ownership.

The case of the Bundys and their occupation of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is thus an important example of how public spaces are understood through logics of whiteness in the United States. My analysis of the Bundys and the lessons learned about whiteness, white masculinity, settler logics, and public space demonstrate the need for further analyses of similar events. Though the exact specifics of MNWR differed from the January 2021 occupation of the Capitol building, both events demonstrate the palpable privilege whiteness gave to both sets of occupiers as they interacted with and occupied public spaces. As largely white men, the provocateurs at both MNWR and the Capitol relied on their inherent privilege to occupy public space

with little consequence. Further work might address similar questions as I did about the Bundys and land, and examine how public spaces are talked about, defined, and what meanings are given to these spaces. There is also a pressing need to examine how rhetorical processes have contributed to the violent work of settler colonialism and the erasure of Indigenous peoples. Indeed, as Lechuga (2020) notes, the discipline of rhetoric itself is deeply implicated in settler colonialism. The remaking of land, a fundamentally rhetorical process which is central to settler colonialism's strategies of Indigenous erasure, invites continued work.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/Supplementary Material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

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PERSPECTIVE
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From Urban Places to Outdoor Spaces: Field-Tested Practices for Engaging BIPOC Youth and Diversifying Outdoor Recreation

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This perspective piece offers tools from the field on crucial strategies for successful BIPOC focused outdoor recreation programs. Drawing from applied work in the field, we reflect on the role outdoor nonprofits have played in our family's relationship with "nature" and what we have learned from work with the Los Angeles based nonprofit Outward Bound Adventures (OBA) about diversifying outdoor recreation. We argue for more inquiries from the communication discipline on racial diversity in the outdoors, and suggest five important strategies to working with youth in outdoor nonprofits. These include: grapple with intersectionality, remind students "nature" is wherever they are, make change intergenerational, apply "forced" opportunity, and hire leaders reflective of the student population. In doing so, we hope to provide groundwork for potential studies from the communication discipline on the overall topic of outdoor recreation and race.

Keywords: Outdoor recreation, diversity, communication, leadership, nonprofits

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INTRODUCTION

As people dedicated personally and professionally to advocating for diversity in outdoor recreation, my uncle Charles[1] and I have spent our lives attempting to break down the barriers that the field can build for people of color. Our identities as both individuals and a multi-generational mixed-race family[2] are deeply entrenched in the projects and perils of fighting for diversity in outdoor spaces. We owe much of our passion to our relationship with a Los Angeles based non-profit called OBA.[3] OBA was founded by a woman named Helen Mary Williams who possessed immense conviction that urban kids of color had the right to the therapeutic effects of spending time in outdoor spaces. She was infamous for saying, "No is an answer for other people, it is NOT and answer for us," whenever anyone hit up against social, racial, and financial barriers blocking them from outdoor experiences

[1]While I (Mariko) frame this essay from my perspective for clarity, this essay was co-constructed with Charles's writing and voice.

[2]Charles is Black and Japanese and identifies as mixed or Black. Mariko is Black, Japanese, and white though often read as white and afforded the racial privileges that Charles has not been. While related, Charles has experienced the daily trauma and disadvantages of being a man of color, while Mariko experience has had more to do with carrying the historical trauma of her relatives.

[3]Outward Bound Adventures - OBA (different than the more nationally recognized Outward Bound), was formed in the 50's as a Junior Audubon science club that progressed into the oldest nonprofit in the nation supporting underserved Los Angeles area youth with meaningful environmental education and access to wilderness and careers in conservation.

and other pursuits towards education. In the 1960's, her work provided an opportunity for members of our family to spend summers backpacking with their peers, a respite from the chaos of poverty and racism they experienced in the inner city.[4] Charles was deeply affected by his involvement with OBA, which gave him purpose after a stint in juvenile detention that could have ended many possibilities for him. He quickly moved into a leadership position in the organization in the 1970s and 1980s and a directorship in the 1990s. He has spent his life leading crews of largely BIPOC kids (me included) into deep wilderness areas[5] in the Sierra Mountains of California, teaching outdoor recreation skills, life skills, land stewardship, and forest ecology.

Charles and I have both dedicated our lives to buildling strong environmental relationships within ourselves, and our communities. We have worked in our separate vocations to diversify outdoor spaces by supporting minority youth in practicing the social and environmental tools necessary to become empowered ecological citizens, often through the channel of outdoor recreation and education. We believe that kids need to love and be in relation with an environment in order to defend it. Because of this, we use outdoor recreation to support BIPOC youth, believing that confidence in outdoor spaces and knowledge of environment produces leadership that reflects the needs and elevates the voices of BIPOC communities. Climate change experts have noted the environmental justice issues in that people of color experience the effects of climate disruption more gravely (Harlan et al., 2015) and that being a person of color is also more often correlated with poverty in the U.S. (Taylor, 1989; Census.gov, 2019). This makes our national need for BIPOC environmental leadership and access to "nature" for BIPOC youth an urgent movement with potentially perilous consequences for communities of color. With the resounding anxiety of climate disruption exacerbating inequalities in what Desmond Tutu called the "climate apartheid" (Tuana, 2019) our work is pressing, and we feel immediate need for more scholarly allies in this cause. While we have most often approached this with on-the-ground sweat equity, we argue that the communication field with its potential for diverse approaches to research could do much to aid this cause moving forwards. Communication scholars walk the boundaries between material and social or symbolic processes, and argue that environmental ideas, policies, and practices are mediated by communication (Carbaugh, 1996; Cox, 2007). We believe that increased understanding of the mediated world between physical environmental access and the social, symbolic, and material roadblocks in access could provide vital information on the pervasiveness of inequality in outdoor recreation and other environmental matters.

This perspective piece is an offering of tactics we have learned from intimate experiences of being a family of color dedicated to diversifying outdoor recreation and fighting for BIPOC[6] leadership in environmental spaces. It is also an invitation for communication scholars to put their energies towards more studies supporting fieldwork and practical experience. In the following sections, we give a brief theoretical overview of interdisciplinary literature important to our offerings. Then, we present five practical suggestions for those who wish to work and study in this topic, including, to grappling with intersectionality, reminding students "nature" is wherever they are, making change intergenerational, "forcing" opportunity, and always employing leaders whose cultural identities are reflective of the student population. We have noticed significant gaps in literature that approaches the work of diversifying outdoor recreation and leadership from communication perspectives. There is space (and certainly need) for communication studies to contribute more to researching outdoor recreation work with BIPOC communities. Our aim in providing these suggestions is to lay groundwork and inspiration for what we already know works, so that other scholars may have a starting point to expand, study, amplify, nuance, and question this kind of work.

DIVERSITY, OUTDOOR RECREATION, AND RACE

Working towards diversifying outdoor recreation and environmental leadership are pressing and intricate communication issues that when combined with fieldwork and the expertise of practitioners (like Charles), could help change the landscape of environmental leadership in the US. However, how to support diversity in the institution of outdoor recreation and mainstream environmentalism is an emergent conversation,[7] and Charles and I find ourselves needing to lean into the dynamism, adaptability, and potential interdisciplinary approaches that this issue might require. Lack of diversity in outdoor recreation is a problem in motion. As Ahmed (2012) writes, diversity in institutions is often a shorthand for inclusion but it needs to be a conversation and something that must be "followed around" to be understood. This means that both scholars and practitioners must engage in consistent and longitudinal work with institutions like outdoor recreation nonprofits that aim or claim to promote diversity.

While not the only intersection of "nature" and racial politics, US outdoor recreation and environmental movements are deeply impacted by the chokehold of structural racism and oppression.

[4]While inner city is sometimes used as a pejorative term conflated with race and poverty and we respect the modern questioning of the term, the Thomas family was geographically from the innermost neighborhoods of LA which especially in the 60's were nearly all poor black and brown communities. It is a term that still means something about membership and identity to many who lived in that space during that time.

[5]We are also aware that wilderness can be a contested term relating to purity politics of the sublime and an erasure of indigenous land stewardship, but it is still language that outdoor recreation uses to connote spaces less-altered by humans.

[6]An option for an inclusive acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous and other People of Color.

[7]Here we are inspired by adrienne maree brown's (2017) work titled Emergent Strategy, as a process that acknowledges the dynamic, ever-unfolding process of social change that relies on practioners constantly adapting as new information becomes available.

Our experiences show that basic outdoor pedigree sits firmly in white middle-class to upper-class families. This contributes to structural inequalities for most other groups in comfortably navigating (Lee et al., 2001; Krymkowski et al., 2014) and participating in decision making about outdoor recreation (Rose and Paisley, 2012; Finney, 2014). This lack of access propagates myths and stereotypes of BIPOC disinterest in "nature" that ignore legacies of historical trauma (Taylor, 1989) and social, financial, and environmental privilege. As outdoor recreation culture relies on a long history of overt racism (Finney, 2014; Outka, 2016) and harmful media framings of race (Sturgeon, 2009), this isn't surprising, though it is disturbing. Outdoor recreation has a long history of white leadership, patriarchy, and privilege. For example, The US National Park Service (NPS) is deeply imbricated in stolen indigenous territories (Kantor, 2007; Treuer, 2021) and sublime fantasies of "nature" (DeLuca and Demo, 2000) that obscure the cultural costs that national park creation and access have had on different racial groups. Recreation hesitancy can be exacerbated by dominant conceptualizations of authenticity in outdoor experience (Senda-Cook, 2012), and NPS workforce continues to be predominantly white over time, having been at 83.2% white full-time workers in 1975 and only changing to 79% in 2020 (NPS.gov, 2021). This can contribute to outdoor recreation feeling generally uninviting for BIPOC youth and unreflective of current US demographics.

Arguments for environmental scholarship's overall responsibility in acknowledging race and divserity are not new (*see* Bullard, 1993; First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, 1991) and the topic has been approached from a range of disciplines. In terms of outdoor recreation and race, the bulk of research is from leisure studies. This includes work on how public park design can invite some cultural groups but reject others (Byrne, 2012), how intersectional lenses are important in improving outdoor park recreation design (Powers et al., 2020), and how resource-related constraints to outdoor recreation are continuously experienced more frequently by ethnoracial minorities—necessitating the adoption of more culturally relevant messages of welcome (Winter et al., 2020). Other scholars, such as Sze (2006), have written extensively on environmental justice in urban New York as an intersectional issue and Park and Pellow (2011) have noted that environmentally progressive locations can be rife with race-based inequalities. From a communication perspective, Sandler and Pezzullo (2007) book tracked the tensions between environmentalism and environmental justice, noting the fields' historical lack of partnership, while Tarin (2019) has argued for environmental justice by showing the complexity of how human lives are affected by their cultural identities in conjunction with their ecological spaces. While we understand this is anything but an exhaustive exploration of extant literature, we still argue there is need for more. Communication scholars specifically have yet to expressly work on the gaps in research about outdoor recreation that focus on youths of color and their access to the outdoors and to roles in environmental leadership.

The following experiences we present use our lived experiences with OBA, our intergenerational relationship with the outdoors, and the stories both lived and told (see Ellis and Flaherty, 1992; Thomas, 2020) to offer observations of what we find is already working in diversity-focused outdoor nonprofits but could use more attentiveness and research. In communities of color where academic literature is less prolific, it is especially crucial to understand our stories and community experience as important initial data. We propose the following critical practices for anyone, and communication scholars especially, who are beginning to write, work, or teach in the realm of diversity-focused outdoor recreation nonprofits. Consider the following as observations to contemplate when analyzing impact, practicalities, and importance of BIPOC youth participation in outdoor recreation and most importantly, as an invitation for more conversation, more research, and more participation in community organizations that promote BIPOC leadership and environmental relationships.

REMEMBER IT'S ALL INTERSECTIONAL ALL THE TIME

We can never properly support youth in social change and building relationships with "nature" without realizing they come with the experiences of several cultural identities that are always already in operation (Carbodo et al., 2013), working in an interlocking system of oppressions (Collective, 1983), that ultimately, U.S. law systems and policy have historically ignored (Crenshaw, 1989). We know that women face more disadvantage in outdoor recreation (Warren, 2015), and that women of color face even more (Roberts and Drogin, 1993). This is amidst connections between race and poverty, making intersectionality an important practice to maintain in building diverse programs. It is crucial for a nonprofit to understand that a Black boy coming into an outdoors experience might have a completely different set of apprehensions than a queer Lantinx teenager based on the web of their lived experiences. Programs and team leadership should be constantly aware of intersectional differences and work to consistently renew their educations and sensitivities in various cultural identities, while mentoring and teaching with the fluidity of cultural identity in mind. OBA employs an initiative to assist in this. An activity done before going on any outdoor trips called "Who are your people," works to promote a positive expository dialogue around race, ethnicity and culture for each participant and the entire cohort. In this, we acknowledge the various cultural groups youths are arriving with. Instead of shying away from the different ways these groups operate in different ways for different people, we give youths an opportunity to own them in their own words, and leaders a chance to understand the potential webs of oppression and privilege at play for the students they are supporting.

HELP STUDENTS EXPLORE THAT "NATURE" IS WHEREVER THEY ARE

"Nature" is a relative term for a young person of color living in urban Los Angeles. The vistas of the Grand Canyon are as accessible to low-income urban youth as the Argo Chasma of

Pluto. However, "nature" is everywhere, from lizards living in abandoned lots to the bird's nest perched in a sidewalk tree.[8] We are always surrounded by life, and research indicates humans direly need the exposure (Louv, 2008). Growing up poor in the vast expanse of urban space can sometimes disconnect folks from "nature" unless we understand "nature" is everywhere all the time and something we are all included in. Last year Charles listened in on a group of OBA youth during a meeting as the instructor attempted to explain the habits of a very common urban bird, the mockingbird. Not one youth present had ever seen a mockingbird. In fact, several believed that mockingbirds were invented for the movie *Hunger Games*. They were immediately sent on an urban mockingbird finding adventure. Our goal that day was to connect the youth to the "nature" that surrounds them daily, so as to de-exoticize the kind of "nature" outings they see on television or in outdoor industry advertisements. We want the youth to understand that "nature" could be the peak of Mt.Whitney, but is also the patch of grass across the street or the trickle of water through the concrete LA River. Youth are told constantly to care for the environment, but it is difficult and often unreachable if they aren't supported in understanding the urban space where they live as part of the environment.

CHANGE IS MORE SUCCESSFUL WHEN IT IS INTERGENERATIONAL: EDUCATE (AND GIVE AUTHORITY) TO THE PARENTS, AUNTS, UNCLES, AND GRANDPARENTS

If we are expecting to take BIPOC urban youth on extended wilderness outings or wish to engage them in some form of sustained outdoor recreational experience, cultivating relationships with the primary caregiver is essential. BIPOC populations often experience lack of access due to historical racism that works to create a fear for safety, discrimination as evidenced by lack of other BIPOC, financial burdens of entrance fees, transportation issues, and multiple other barriers (Finney, 2014; Winter et al., 2020). A principle of environmental justice is that BIPOC populations should be visible and heard in speaking for themselves and participating in improving community conditions (Sze, 2006) one of which includes the well-being of their children.

Low-income, urban families of color tend to be intentional non-users[9] of wilderness areas. One critical component necessary to move intentional non-users towards becoming intentional wilderness users is to focus on sharing information with the participant's primary caregiver(s), i.e., grandmother, mother, father, etc. These individuals hold tremendous sway in getting a reluctant youth to feel confident recreating in the outdoors and a potential conduit towards familial and community empowerment. If the caregivers themselves are unsure about the trip leadership, their voice in the situation, or imagining the possibility of their child being eaten by a wild animal or drowning, instructors have no chance of getting that child out of the house.

Caregivers need to experience three things to feel completely comfortable with sending their child out into the wilderness: an unmitigated trust in the organization's wilderness and cultural experience, an authentic relationship with the staff, and a clear idea of exactly what their child will be doing on the trip. To address these areas, OBA created an overnight pre-trip program for the caregiver and child scheduled to go on an extended wilderness experience. This pre-trip, called Teach Me To Camp (TMTC), is dedicated to having the caregiver experience what their child will do on the longer trips. It offers space to connect as a family and clarify family cultural values in connection with outdoor experiences. Additionally, it gives OBA instructors a chance to learn from and give authority to the caregivers in the child's life. The caregiver and child are led in acknowledging one another's goals and are given the opportunity to gain trust in the staff.

BE CREATIVE IN A "FORCED" OPPORTUNITY APPROACH

More often than not, the intentional non-user BIPOC youth OBA works with struggle with the concept of going away from the amenities of their home - to sleep on the ground. No phone, no showers, strange food, no family. Most outdoor organizations tend to focus on the BIPOC youth who are already enrolled in the process of getting outdoors. This leaves huge numbers of underserved[10] urban youth of color. They are often youths whose caregivers say "no" to outdoor experiences, and also the ones who lack resources, inclination, and the knowledge of where to start when getting outdoors. In our experience, they also happen to be the ones who benefit the most from the opportunity to have sustained contact with "nature."

OBA employs a technique called Forced Opportunity[11] to give these youth access to nature. While the term "forced" can feel problematic, our experience is that simply providing oppoturnity isn't enough for many who have been barred historically from

[8]See Sandler and Pezzullo (2007) for more on the importance of expanding definitions of what and where "nature" is.

[9]Intentional non-users is a term developed by Charles Thomas used to identify folk who intentionally avoid the use of outdoor spaces or participation in outdoor recreation-usually based on the above noted fears and lack of access that families might have experienced historically; these barriers ultimately evolve to become new and contemporary barriers that include a failure of prioritization, stated as a lack of time and a dis-interest in outdoor recreation.

[10]It's important to remember that just because one is an urban person of color does not mean they are "underserved." The truly underserved are those who lack access, opportunity, time, money and also—desire.

[11]Forced opportunity is a term to describe a technique developed at OBA that assists the participant in understanding the value of an outdoor recreation experience without the lens of an uninformed narrative that the person may hold. Nothing is truly "forced," rather the experience is proactively promoted with facts, candor and persistence. The participant obviously must consent to the experience and often does so only after OBA employs Forced Opportunity. We find this only works after significant time getting to know a person and intimate knowledge of their social positioning and background. When not done under these circumstances, forced opportunity can turn into an unsensitive form of white saviorism—or whitesplaining when not delivered by a person of color.

outdoor recreation, so a certain amount of force is necessary to reach those who might otherwise stray away from engagement. Forced Opportunity begins with establishing a relationship with the caregiver, as done with the TMTC program. The next step is to respond creatively and sensitively to the participant or parent's "no." Forced Opportunity requires that instructors engage in a sensitive fact-finding dialog with the youth so they can begin to unpack their fears and fallacies about the outdoors and address the personal concerns or stresses they have. This allows them to feel heard and validated in their fears, even it's just about disconnecting from social media, and assists in breaking down some of the historical trauma in regards to safety and belongingness in outdoor spaces. Forced Opportunity incidents are sometimes about basic nervousness; but often, we've found them to be about things like not having food to pack a sack lunch, or no clean clothes for hiking and no money for the laundromat—things that can be easily, quickly, and quietly assisted with by OBA once discovered.

MAKE SURE INSTRUCTORS REFLECT THE CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS OF THE POPULATION BEING SERVED

Charles vividly remembers being the only outdoor education assistant of color in the 1980s at a specific Los Angeles County outdoor education school. While the staff waited for the bus of students to approach, they could see that the entire class was African American. Smiles fading and the color running from their faces, the two head naturalists ran over to Charles and to his horror, exclaimed, "Oh my god, what do we do?!"

Outdoor education, the environmental and conservation sectors can be exceptionally homogeneous. U.S. conservation foundations range anywhere from 75 to 100% white (Green 2.0, 2020). From our observations over the years (more towards 45 years for Charles), the demographics of mainstream outdoor education, wilderness instructors, conservation crew leaders, summer camp counselors, naturalists, nature center staff and docents, have been mostly white. However, the past decade has brought a comparatively large emerging cohort of nonprofits doing an impressive job of getting BIPOC youth outdoors, (e.g., Latino Outdoors, Outdoor Afro, Outdoor Outreach, etc). While we count this as a win, most of these organizations focus on getting BIPOC participants to recreate in outdoor spaces, while less are preparing the participants to move into managerial leadership positions that can more profoundly influence the power structure of the environmental and conservation sectors.

Our experience and numerous studies have confirmed that white instructors who have little to no experience working with communities of color tend to assume racial stereotypes and "implied deficits" when working with students of color (Utt and Tochluk, 2020). In addition, Charles has observed consistently that most BIPOC students' approach to learning is enhanced when mentored and taught by instructors of color. OBA instructors of color tend to understand the realities and situations students of color face and provide more culturally relevant analogies and metaphors that assist in describing and interpreting concepts from "nature." They also allow students to feel seen and reflected in roles of power—an enormously important visualization when we are hoping to support more BIPOC youth in getting into environmental leadership roles. If diversity is truly the goal, leadership and mentorship (not just membership) needs to reflect this, and BIPOC leaders have a better chance of reaching students and building relationships with them, and often serve as the first expert outdoors person of color the student may have ever seen, changing the dominant narrative of who is responsible for being part of the outdoors, and part of an environmental conversation.

"Never Taking No"

Over the years, OBA and other organizations like OBA, have managed to begin addressing the issues and importance of race and outdoor recreation, but attempts at demographic change in outdoor leadership and instructors has not kept pace with the nation's evolving demographics. We argue that while it is important, it is not enough to just get kids outside, and far too many environmental organizations confuse and accept statistics for diversity. Membership and participation numbers along with diverse social media photos are a band-aid, but do not create the real change we dream of in outdoor recreation and education. In addition, we believe that far too many organizations focus on working with those youth of color who are ready and willing to have an outdoor experience at the expense of ignoring the huge numbers of BIPOC youth who intentionally avoid the outdoors for various and potentially remediable reasons.

In our family, we were incredibly fortunate to have access to OBA from early ages. We talk often about how all the uncles and aunties were "saved" from the projects in one way or another. One chose religion, another—school, but most of them credit the fact that tiny Helen Mary Williams dragged them out of their house, pushed them up a mountain, handed them some bent tent poles and told them they'd best never take "no" as an answer from society. Charles has continued this legacy with his leadership in OBA, and outdoor recreation has been a cornerstone in our family's story of racial identity and environmental relationships, as well as in our ability to envision people from backgrounds like ours in leadership positions for environmental issues.

In this essay, we have put out a call for communication studies' involvement in diversifying outdoor non-profits. We have offered a non-exhaustive list of five offerings to help strive for diversity in outdoor recreation and as inspiration for the kinds of practices that could be studied from multiple perspectives. These offerings—grapple with intersectionality, remind folks "nature" is wherever they are, make change intergenerational, engage in "forced" opportunity, and hire leaders reflective of the student population, are a reflection on our work and our lives. We offer our lived experiences, fieldwork, and stories are legitimate knowledge, and we hold on strongly to the understanding that fieldwork like ours is important, but that this cause is big enough to need all hands on deck. We imagine what else we could learn if communication scholars were to get behind this issue with their broad range of methodologies and perspectives, as the issue of BIPOC environmental involvement and leadership is an issue for everyone who is affected by environmental decision making. BIPOC or not, we invite allies in this cause from all racial and research backgrounds. Charles and I owe our lives to the outdoors

and OBA, and will continue working, writing, and recreating in this field, and continuing to never just take "no" for an answer.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/Supplementary Material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MT and CT worked collaboratively on this piece using the professional experiences and lived stories of CT to base the essay on and MT's writing, theoretical perspectives, and interwoven lifelong experience of Outward Bound Adventures to complete the piece. While MT is first author, this article would have been an impossibility without the 45 years of hands-on labor CT has put into environmental justice causes, and his experiential knowledge he generously shared.

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