EXPLORING ECOJUSTICE LEARNING AMONG YOUTH

by

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Abstract

Ecojustice theory, as described by Martusewicz, Emundson, & Lupinacci (2011), consists of three threads: understanding the interdependence of local and global ecosystems, deep cultural analysis of Western thinking and *in situ* systems, and "need to restore the cultural and environmental commons" (p. 20). Working with youth (15-18 years) at the Pearson Seminar on Youth Leadership (PSYL), an environmental and social justice leadership program, this research project focuses on how youth respond to and share ecojustice learnings beyond the classroom setting, and how it might inform ecojustice pedagogy.

Through journal reflections, Forum Theatre (Boal, 2002), and narrative inquiry, this thesis explores methods youth use for sharing their understandings of ecojustice with their families, friends and communities. Synthesis/analysis of data includes a "dataplay" (O'Riley, 2003) where participants' "data" is presented as conversations in an interactive script and responded to by the participants. This changes the power relations between actor and observer as well as scripted and spontaneous intervention within the research process.

The youth participants articulated a desire to overcome apathy among some of their peers, together with a need to develop strategies for having (at times) difficult conversations about social justice and ecological justice concerns around the world. They expressed feelings of guilt and fear, together with a strong desire to create change when addressing systemic global issues like climate change and out of control consumerism. Storytelling, other creative engagements with the issues being dealt with, and personal conversations were offered as possible pedagogic solutions. The students also explored the emotional effects of working with difficult issues. The youth's responses call on PSYL educators to address ecojustice issues in

their teaching, as well as possibilities for actions that the youth can implement in their local

communities.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Rebekah Parker. This

research was conducted with the approval of UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board,

Certificate #H15-01311.

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List of Abbreviations

PAR   Participatory Action Research

Pearson College   Lester B. Pearson United World College of the Pacific

PSYL   Pearson Seminar on Youth Leadership

UWC   United World College

Acknowledgements

My thinking, feeling, doing, sharing, and practising for this research primarily took place on the occupied, unceded, traditional and ancestral lands and territories of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh, Selílwitulh, Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Sc'ianew, and Songhees nations. I am grateful to be able to live on, and learn so much from this wonderful land on the shores of the Salish Sea.

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To the youth who continue to encourage and challenge their communities to pause, listen, and dream of new ways of living, being, thinking, and working together.

Keep the cycle going.

Chapter 1: A Spark in the Cycle

"In one of my countries, when I talk about climate change, my friends always agree that it's a problem, and an urgent one at that. However, in my second country, climate change isn't on people's radars at all. This second country produces a large portion of the planet's oil and natural gas, so I've tried explaining to my friends why fossil fuels in particular were so damaging and why our country's oil industry wasn't sustainable. Unfortunately, though, my friends politely listened to my tirade against oil (and especially against hydraulic fracturing), they refused to acknowledge the magnitude or urgency of the problem… In short, sharing environmental issues is much easier in some places than in others. However, even if I found it easier to share these issues in my first country, I still had trouble getting people to take action to solve the issues. My friends certainly agreed that the problem existed, but seemed unwilling to do anything about it. For instance, when I suggested that we each write a letter to our MP about fracking and how harmful it is, everyone thought it would take up too much time. They said I could write my letter now, but they'd do it later, when they had more time. Needless to say, 'later' never came. I guess what I'm trying to say is that just sharing issues is easy, but getting people to acknowledge them or to do something to solve them is much more difficult." - Catherine[1]

       Climate change has a growing presence in the mainstream Canadian media landscape (Stoddart, Haluza-DeLay, & Tindall, 2016). However, topics "that link climate change to concerns with social impacts or even adaptation measures are minimal, while even less attention is

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[1] Written by one of the youth in this study. All youth are identified by pseudonyms.

devoted to climate justice and social inequality as a lens for understanding climate change"
(Stoddart, Haluza-DeLay, & Tindall, 2016, p. 229) with most coverage focusing on government
responsibility and reporting meteorological effects. While climate change is broadly
acknowledged, what of the plethora of other environmental and social issues communities are
facing locally and globally? How do communities and the public learn about these issues?

Education institutions are responding to the climate crisis by promoting climate change
curricula for post-secondary students (Wachholz, Artz, & Chene, 2014; Fahey, Labadie, &
Meyers, 2014) and younger students, including those in middle and high schools (Bofferding &
Kloser, 2015; Dawson, 2015) among others. Increasing curriculum content and teaching the
science and facts of climate change are important; however, this fails to provide the whole picture
of or whole engagement with the crisis. Discussions about "what can we do?" are limited to
recycling and driving less (Leonard, 2013; Lousley, 1999), while local contexts and issues are
often left unaddressed. What of the larger capitalist/consumer systems that enable Western
societies to emit so much carbon (Burnham, Radel, Ma, & Laudati, 2013) and to be responsible
through their purchasing choices and the depredations of globalization? And when talking to
youth, how can they be supported in learning how to make a difference when they may not have
full autonomy over their lives?

My research aims to explore the nuances of these issues through the theoretical and
experiential lenses of ecojustice learning. Specifically, I am curious about how youth receive
environmental and social justice messages they hear through the media, school systems, their
families, and peers, and what they do with the information they learn.

1.1   Overview and Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to explore how youth share ecojustice learning outside of classroom settings. The community I worked with was the 2015 Pearson Seminar on Youth Leadership (PSYL), an annual summer leadership program designed for students in Grade 10-12 (usually ages 15-18).

Ecojustice learning has not previously been taught at PSYL, nor has it been an explicit program theme. I chose to work with this group because of my previous experience with the program, and the fact that many of the participants are already aware of local and global environmental and social justice issues. These youth commit to attending a 3-week summer program with a curriculum focused on social justice and environmental justice issues, Indigenous knowledges and traditions, cross-cultural training and personal growth; many are already asking questions about how to make change in their communities and what needs to be done. Working with these youth, I hope to gain insight into how they are having these conversations with their families, friends, and peers, and explore how educators can support them.

1.1.1   Research Question & Objectives

My research question is: how do youth share ecojustice learning outside of the classroom, and how might this inform ecojustice pedagogy? The objectives of this study are to:

a) examine how PSYL youth respond to and share their ecojustice learnings beyond the classroom setting;

b) widen the knowledge base for educators seeking innovative ways of introducing challenging topics such as ecojustice into their teaching.

These are timely questions to ask as the discussion of ecojustice issues in classrooms and informal education programs is on the rise, and formal programs are being created, such as the recent Ecojustice & Sustainability Education M.Ed. off-campus cohort at the University of British Columbia. This thesis fulfills my requirements as one of the M.A. students in the program. While it is crucial to introduce ecojustice concepts and issues, it is also important to consider the challenges youth face in sharing these learnings beyond the classroom, and what pedagogical strategies might be needed to support students in involving others in a broader conversation.

1.2   Study Site & Participants

1.2.1   Study Site

PSYL 2015 took place at Pearson College, a United World College (UWC) located on Pedder Bay near Metchosin on Vancouver Island, territory of the Scia'new Nation. It is "an intensive, interactive and experiential learning program from dawn to dusk" (PSYL, n.d.) where a community of up to 100 people lives together, and aims to "grow as leaders around the themes of peace, ecological sustainability, social justice and intercultural understanding" (PSYL, n.d.). The eight adult coordinators spend six weeks designing and implementing the program. The first week is spent deciding the program's schedule and themes and developing curricula. The program is also supported by a team of 17 peer leaders – youth who are either past participants or students at one of the 13 other UWCs around the world. These leaders are the Community Animators, who arrive during the second week to receive a week of training and preparation before the rest of the participants arrive in the third week. From there, the whole community works together for 20 days of programming, beginning with community building in the morning – a space where everyone checks-in about how they are feeling that day, and youth lead energizers to start the day well, then

continues to several workshops, outdoor activities, and social experiences throughout each day. Following the participants' debriefing and departure, the coordinator team spends a few days debriefing and setting the program up for the following year.

The 2015 community consisted of eight adult coordinators, and 90 youth from around the world. I am a former participant and have remained connected with the PSYL community over the years. My role for 2015 was the Program Assistant on the coordinator team, where I co-developed twelve workshop sessions, supported various aspects of the programm, including talking circles and outdoor activities, and helped coordinate operational logistics.

1.2.2   Participants

Program participants typically are from across Canada, though each year some come from Asia, Europe, and Africa. The 2015 program was the first in its 19-year history to have more international students attending than Canadian, with 30 countries represented. Participants in this research were from fourteen countries, in Europe, Asia, North and South America, and Africa. While no gender was indicated in the journal responses, the majority of PSYL 2015 participants self-identified as female at the time of program registration (72%), and this representation is reflected in the demographics of this research.

1.2.3   Significance

This research offers an examination of how the PSYL youth respond to and share ecojustice learning. It brings the focus to students, as it is their narratives and experiences that provide the data for this study. Youth are given an opportunity to express their own thoughts on diverse ways of sharing ecojustice learning with family, friends and the public.

Potential benefits exist for educators, and the friends, families, and communities of the youth who are committed to working on ecological and social justice issues. For educators, this research has the potential to help frame discussions about ecojustice issues such as climate change, including its direct impacts on communities, natural resource extraction practices and local economic growth. It provides a snapshot of what youth are considering when they share these learnings beyond the classroom, as well as the challenges they face when discussing them. Education does not end with the information shared in a classroom or workshop, but includes the perspectives of these youth informing educators how they can support the broader dissemination and consideration of ecojustice issues.

Another important part of this research is supporting youth who are committed to making change in their communities. Activist burnout is well documented (Gorski & Chen, 2015; Goodwin & Pfaff, 2001) and youth often face guilt and anxiety (Kennelly, 2009) over their level of participation in social change. Learning more about the challenges they are faced with can allow students' communities to better support them emotionally, and spur conversations about what that support might look like.

1.3   A Map for This Paper

The following pages include a review of the relevant literature (Chapter 2), and an overview of the methodology of this research (Chapter 3). Chapter 4 is an analysis/synthesis of the youths' responses in the form of a "dataplay" (O'Riley, 2003), while the themes of these conversations are discussed in Chapter 5. Overall findings and recommendations are presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2: Literary Baselines

For this research, I draw on ecojustice education theory (Martusewicz, Edmundson, & Lupinacci, 2011; Mueller, 2008), critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2007; Kahn, 2010); and rhizomatics (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Semetzky, 2006). Ecojustice theory provides theoretical frameworks and strategies for challenging environmental and social justice issues at a deep, systematic level, leading the discussion to action items that can be completed both at the individual and societal level, something that is important for youth to consider when thinking about their responses to ecojustice issues. Critical pedagogy challenges hegemonic educational paradigms of contemporary Eurocentric schooling, questioning political, social, and economic contexts. This is an important perspective when working with a youth leadership camp, as much of what I hope to teach is not purely content, but a way of connecting the trends participants see in their world, and of understanding ecojustice and sustainability issues within their contexts. Rhizomatics offers a framework for data analysis/synthesis that allows for the participants' voices to come to the front, and engage with the complexities that exist within and between the experiences that the participants share.

2.1   Ecojustice Theory

Martusewicz, Edmundson, & Lupinacci (2011) identify six themes that are recognized and analyzed in ecojustice and sustainability education:

- the deep cultural assumptions that underlie mainstream ways of thinking and downplay the importance of ecosystems,
- the "deeply entrenched patterns of domination" (p.9) that define groups of humans and non-humans as inferior,

- patterns of hyperconsumption and commodification that lead to the exploitation of developing nations of the Southern Hemisphere by the North,

- the protection of interdependent relationships between humans, non-humans, and our shared environments,

- an emphasis on "strong Earth democracies" (p.9) where those who are impacted the most make decisions, and consider the needs of future generations, and

- using curriculum and pedagogy that focuses on "both deep cultural analysis and community-based learning " (p.9) as ways to find the causes and solutions for local ecological and social justice issues.

These themes are often touched on in social justice and environmental education; however ecojustice education explores them in depth, asking tough questions, including why environmental education often neglects to address socio-cultural and socio-economic issues linked to environmental degradation, and why it is often put at odds with social justice education. Ecojustice education highlights this entrenched dualism (Lowenstein, Martusewicz, & Voelker, 2010) and emphasizes that current approaches miss "a *human humility* that recognizes the importance of protecting many different perspectives" (Mueller, 2008, p. 165; emphasis original). My study uses ecojustice learning as a theory based on experience and research for creating a more equitable and ecologically sustainable world. It has the potential to "dissolve this feeling of powerlessness" (Mueller, 2009, p.1000) that many students experience, by highlighting how worldviews and meta-narratives can impact the decisions they make, thereby helping them address environmental and social problems (Lowenstein, Martusewicz, & Voelker, 2010). Ecojustice theory and practice highlights connections and interdependencies of the human, non-human, and more-than-human worlds.

2.2   Ecojustice Learning

Current literature focuses on bringing ecojustice into the classroom, specifically in the sciences where it can challenge hegemonic assumptions (Mueller, 2011; Mitchell, & Mueller, 2011). Similarly, ecojustice education emphasises the importance of community service learning, including community revitalization, that offers alternatives and solutions to ecological and social crises that communities face today (Martusewicz, Edmundson, & Lupinacci, 2011; Glasson, 2011). Ecojustice education is critical to strengthening youth programs as it expands students' worldviews "in such a way that they can pay more attention and make nurturing choices about what narratives should be emphasized" (Mueller, 2009, p. 1006) in their lives. It also goes beyond learning about environmental or social justice and sustainability issues by asking students to critically examine the contexts and complexities of their lives and lifestyles within their immediate communities and the larger world. This analysis of the complexities involved in social/environmental/political/economic issues is the reason why ecojustice and sustainability is a theoretical focus of my research. Few outdoor education, environmental education, and leadership programs for youth explicitly focus on ecojustice education, expanding it to include the nonhuman and more-than-human. Ecojustice can serve as a valuable tool for youth leadership programs, because part of the challenge of ecojustice education is taking action within local contexts to discuss and address some of these deep-seated issues, many of which relate directly to the effects of global scales of economy and politics, through multinational 'free' trade agreements.

2.3 Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy focuses on education as a tool of self-empowerment to encourage students to recognize their own agency and practice critical thinking about the world around them (Giroux, 2007). It draws its roots from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and challenges the systems and institutions that continue to increase inequalities and oppression on both local and global scales (Kirylo, Thirumurthy, Smith & McLaren, 2010). It positions "the task of education to make sure that the future points the way to a more socially just world" (Giroux, 2007, p. 2) and recognizes that it is impossible to separate the teaching that goes on inside classrooms from the world around them. Kahn (2010) argues that there is a current crisis in environmental education over how to teach and address the global environmental concerns we are currently facing. His take on "ecopedagogy" is as a form of critical pedagogy, focusing on a holistic education that links "environmental literacy to the need for varieties of social and cultural literacy" (Kahn, 2010, p. 11). This challenges the dominant economic and "sustainable development" rhetoric in Western society by focusing on the way environmental degradation stems from economic, social and political inequalities. For Kahn, this theory emphasizes the importance of education as a socially responsive and responsible tool, and its power to challenge dominant narratives that exist in, indeed, that are constructs of, Western society. This helps shape my research as it allows participants to consider questions underlying many of the ecojustice and sustainability issues facing us today. It is of key importance in my work to look at this from an educational perspective, and for ecojustice movements to consider how the issues are being shared and taught, and how these discussions can be engaging for all communities.

2.4 Rhizomatics

Deleuze & Guattari's (1987) concept of "the rhizome" provides openings for potential theoretical and material affiliations in relation to complex relationships and interactions that take place in ecojustice learning. Rhizomes "can be connected to anything other, and must be" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7) and disrupt the underlying discourses that encourage unity and conformity to a single narrative. When a rhizome breaks "it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines" (p. 9) and is not restricted to a single form. The lines that make up the rhizome are lines of flight without a distinct beginning or end. This distinct "middle (milieu) from which it grows and overspills" (p. 21) is a valuable space to assess learning and examine (dis)connections among a community, and challenges each person to view systems not from above, but from multiple contexts.

Working rhizomatically disrupts the traditional Western idea that learning best takes place in classroom settings, and opens up possibilities for students to speak to the relationships and interactions they have formed in the past and continue to build as a valued source of knowledge and learning. Rhizomatics also informs my analysis/synthesis of the "data" collected in this project, as it "becomes a method of thinking and learning, the craft of making the unconscious conscious" (Semetzky, 2006, p. 89) that allows for a multiplicity of expression within a community. It creates room for the "non-sense" (Semetzky, 2006, p. 72) encounters, and complexities that cannot always be expressed through language. These are crucial considerations when working with narratives shared by youth.

2.5   Weaving the Theories Together

Bringing the theories of ecojustice, critical pedagogy, and rhizomatics together provides a unique "play-ground" for research where both myself as a researcher and the youth participants have an opportunity to explore and reflect on our experiences and how it relates to deeper cultural patterns as well as unnoticed surface patterns. This exploration took place in journals, in workshops such as the Ecojustice Forum Theatre, and in these very pages that I type to weave the stories and experiences together. These theories allow for the consideration of our (the students and myself) personal and collective connections of our experiences to our pasts, presents and futures. It makes space for the personal, and for questions that at times may be uncomfortable. These are crucial for the study as ecojustice issues rarely have comfortable solutions, and require both a personal and collective approach to finding local solutions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Participatory action research, narrative inquiry and Forum Theatre provide the methodological shaping for this research. The following explores each methodology, and expands on how they are woven together in this research.

3.1   My Situatedness in Doing This Study

An entry point into my methodology is to recognize my positionality and situatedness within the PSYL community. I was first introduced to PSYL at the International Children's Conference on the Environment in 2002 in Victoria. My mother had heard about it at a session for parents, and four years later I was accepted as a participant for the 2006 session. I was inspired by the experience, and successfully applied to be a youth facilitator for the 2007 PSYL March Break program in Ontario. I have maintained my connections with the PSYL community since that time: coordinators from the program continue to be my friends and mentors, and I have strong friendships with many of my peers.

Part of my reflection on my positionality is to identify my triple role within the PSYL 2015 context. I was a researcher, a participant in the Forum Theatre process that I offered to the PSYL community, a member of the PSYL 2015 community, and a salaried staff member as the Program Assistant. I paid close attention to, and tracked through a journal, the benefits and tensions of this triple role. In my staff role, I co-taught a session on climate change and ecojustice for all PSYL participants, and built on this learning with an optional Forum Theatre (Boal, 2008) exercise later in the program.

3.2   Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research (PAR) involves collaborating with individuals who are directly affected by an issue or problem in a process of inquiry about a locally relevant issue. Its users seek solutions to everyday problems, and value knowledges of groups that are traditionally excluded from or marginalized by Western academia – Indigenous Peoples, people of colour, youth, among many more (Chilisa, 2012; McTaggart, 1997; Gatenby, & Humphries, 2000). The collaborative aspect is critical for my study. The questions posed to youth were designed to be open-ended so they could respond in whatever manner best suited them – instead of needing to fill out a survey with questions that limited types of responses or were restricted in other ways. The youth were also invited to provide feedback on my draft "dataplay" analysis/synthesis, suggesting new characters, lines of dialogue, and edits to the scenes to better represent their voices and opinions. The results of this study will also be reported back to the PSYL community; research praticipants and broader community members were invited to (virtually) attend my thesis defence via a Google Hangouts link, and through sharing the final results with the community. This extended relationship attempts to go beyond the transactional style that many research projects take, where the researcher receives information but never reports it back to the community, or allows for input beyond the initial conversations or interrogations.

3.3   Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry focuses on analysing and synthesizing the stories that are shared in societies (Chase, 2008). More recently, it has expanded to looking at narratives within society – whether it is consumerism, theories of science, or curriculum shared in schools and programs – as stories and examining their sources of authority and strategies to keep people interested (Gough, 2008b).

Narrative inquiry offers a lens that focuses on how stories operate and converse with each other. Conversation is critical in narrative inquiry, and often leads to deeper learning, one reason why I chose the Forum Theatre format as a powerful place for the youth participants to share their narratives on ecojustice learning.

3.4   Forum Theatre

Boal's (2008) *Theatre of the Oppressed*, specifically Forum Theatre, involves replaying a scene or situation multiple times in order to offer the audience a chance to change the performer-spectator dynamics by adjusting the behaviours or reactions of the characters involved. All audience members become "spect-actors" (Boal, 2002) where they are engaged with the interactions taking place on stage through witnessing and reacting to what they see, and having the power to choose to intervene in the scene at any point. The scene under question is played through once, and the facilitator asks if the audience members are satisfied with the result. If not, the scene is repeated and spect-actors can intervene at any moment by yelling "STOP!" to pause the action, and taking the role of any character in the scene whose struggle they relate to. The spect-actor is welcome to change the narrative at this point, from "the world as *it is* into a world *as it could be*" (Boal, 2002, p. 269) or might other/wise be. The facilitator in this process encourages the audience to share their knowledges, feelings and experiences and to try new things in the scene.

The Forum Theatre process is a powerful tool that has been used for decades (Boal, 2008; originally published in 1974) in communities from West Africa (Morrison, 1991) to English and French Canada (Graham, 2000) among many throughout the world. Several theatre companies tour Forum Theatre performances, each attempting to bring up relevant global or local issues and conflicts and trying out different solutions or conversations in the theatre (Diamond, 2004;

Hammer, 2008). More recently, Pratt and Johnston (2007; 2013) have effectively used this method to start community dialogues between the East- and West-sides of Vancouver about how democracy is enacted in the city, and between Filipino nannies and the families they work for, respectively. I modified the format of Forum Theatre slightly, as I agree with Diamond's (2004) argument that Boal's original vision of the *Theatre of the Oppressed* where the oppressed find a voice over their oppressors can create a polarization among the actors and spect-actors that is not always relevant to the community or scene. Instead, it is more fitting to ask audience members to "replace a character who they [understand] to be struggling with issues" (Diamond, 2004, p.12) in the scene.

When I led the ecojustice-themed Forum Theatre session at PSYL, I offered a situation from my own experience to start the exercise. This was a situation where I experienced conflict around sharing an ecojustice theme. After this scene was recreated and explored several times, I invited the spect-actors to share a situation from their experience and help recreate it on stage. The full session lasted 1.5 hours and explored many alternative scenes.

Overall, the embodied nature of Forum Theatre disrupts the bias in academia towards privileging language, by allowing for the expression of experiences beyond speech and writing (Thrift, 1997). It is also a way of engaging non-hierarchical approaches to learning, as the facilitator can be difficult to distinguish from the actors (Rae, 2013), and it is "a platform for honest dialogue and mutual education" (Sullivan & Lloyd, 2006, p.643) that values every participant's views and experiences.

Boal nicknamed the Forum Theatre facilitator the "joker" who is not tied to a specific interpretation of events, and who is there to reinforce the complexities that arise (Rae, 2013). I attempted to embody this in my role as a facilitator in the Forum Theatre process. I paid attention

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to the grey areas of the (un)spoken and physical dialogues occurring in the scenarios, and asked questions about the choices the spect-actors made. I was also there to encourage the participants to be active spect-actors, to question each other about the decisions and actions they enact, and to generally act as a support to the participants if the conversations and scenarios become difficult.

3.5   Weaving Methodologies

By building a methodology with PAR, narrative inquiry and Forum Theatre, a variety of experiences and expressions can be recorded and triangulated in terms of theory and points of view. It does not privilege one form of storytelling (written, performative, art), rather it leaves space for the youth to decide which way they want to share their experiences. This came into fruition, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 4, with youth submitting drawing, stories, and enacting scenarios and ideas they deemed worth sharing.

This again, breaks away from traditional academic models where the researcher simply records an interview, and attempts to be objective when interpreting the results (Glesne, 2011). Instead, participants co-create the content, are able to actively think about, discuss, and test ideas in the Forum Theatre context, and have the space to self-reflect in their writing. It also provides space for me, as the researcher, to include my thought process and questions that I have for the youth's responses, rather than hiding behind definitive and "objective" language.

3.6   Consent & Confidentiality

Consent to complete this project was needed on several levels: from the PSYL Director (to consent to the research taking place during the program), the participants' parent/guardian and/or the participants, themselves, when they were over 15 and able to weigh the risks and benefits of

the research on their own. This study was approved by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board, University of British Columbia (UBC). The Forum Theatre session and follow-up online reflection questions was optional, and it was only open to participants who assented and consented to participating in the research. After receiving consent from the PSYL Director, consent forms and information about the research project were sent to participants and their families two weeks before PSYL began. All participants brought their signed consent forms to PSYL registration. I verbally confirmed the participants' assent to participating in the research when they handed in their consent forms, and let them know they could drop out at any time.

To maintain confidentiality, participants were asked to select a pseudonym for their reflections. Each participant was given a notebook to record their reflections, which was collected by me at the end of PSYL. These were only identified with the selected pseudonyms. The reflections in the notebooks were scanned in August 2015 and stored on my personal computer in an encrypted folder. No PSYL staff (other than myself) knew who participated in the research project, as I collected consent forms at PSYL and handed out the notebooks at a lunch information session for any participant interested in the research.

The online follow-up reflection was hosted by FluidSurveys/SurveyMonkey on a Canadian server, per the agreement with UBC. The reflection question asked for participants to provide the pseudonym they used in the previous reflections, and did not ask for any identifying information. The exercise was open for two weeks, upon which time the data was downloaded to my personal computer, stored in an encrypted folder, and deleted from FluidSurveys/SurveyMonkey's dashboard.

The Forum Theatre session was public, and took place as a concurrent session during the third week of PSYL. After the session, I wrote notes about what happened, and did not record any

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names of participants. I gave each scenario and character a nickname to refer to in my synthesis/analysis.

After I defend my thesis, all data related to the study will be transferred to an encrypted password-protected CD and will be stored in a locked cabinet in my Supervisor's office for five years, after which time it will be destroyed.

3.7 Data Collection, Analysis/Synthesis

The data collection with the PSYL youth who consented to participate in the study was through four written and/or graphic reflections (20-min. each, see Appendix A). The following is an outline of the procedures and schedule:

1. During the first 3 days of the PSYL program (July 13), the participants completed Reflection Question #1.

2. During Week 2 (July 21), I co-presented a workshop on Climate Change and Ecojustice to the entire PSYL community, and then had the consenting participants complete Reflection Question #2.

3. During Week 3 (July 25), I facilitated a 1.5 hour public Forum Theatre session on an ecojustice scenario for all consenting and interested participants to participate in.

4. At the end of Week 3 (July 28), the participants completed Reflection Question #3.

5. (Optional) Approximately two months after the program ended (September 21), I sent the consenting participants the Post Reflection Question via email.

I distributed thirty-eight journals to interested participants, seventeen of which were returned at the end of the program. The follow-up survey was sent to thirty-two consenting

participants, of which fourteen responded. The Forum Theatre exercise included eight

participants, predominantly women from countries in North America, Asia and Europe.

In August 2015, I began an analysis/synthesis of the common themes emerging from the

data of the three Reflection Questions and the Forum Theatre. For the Forum Theatre, I worked

from my own notes about the activity as I looked at the physical reactions, crowd reactions – what

resonates with whom, etc. This included noting body language, tone of voice, and non-verbal

reactions. Combining these notes with the responses to the journal questions, I mapped out the

themes and areas that the youth explored, and synthesized these themes with those from the

reflections. Once I had the Post-Reflection Question responses, I began the final

analysis/synthesis in the form of narrative and/or "dataplay" (O'Riley, 2003). O'Riley's dataplay

presented participants' data from her own study as a conversation in the form of a play script as "a

chorus of many voices" including theorists and other characters "allowing for the whether of data

stories that refuse and exceed containment, confinement and codification. The writing, staging,

editing, and rewriting act as both data and analysis without succumbing to interpretation" (p. 53).

While teaching a research methodology course at a university in New Jersey, O'Riley invited her

students to comment on and become participants in re-writing the script which went through

several iterations. Some of the graduate students, all elementary teachers, also decided to bring in

the voices of their own students. While sharing the "dataplay" at an invited seminar at Deakin

University in Australia, when asked for his response to reading his own quote, curriculum scholar

Noel Gough, playfully drawing on Donna Haraway's "I'd rather be a cyborg than a woman"

responded with "I'd rather be a character than a citation" (O'Riley, 2003, p. 121). This allows the

participants' voices to be heard in complex and nuanced ways as they come together, intersect and

diverge, more of a rhizomatic mapping than a simple analysis that attempts to interpret the

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participants' responses. This is relevant because it brings more agency, immediacy and inter-relationality to the participants' voices, and does not place them in a hierarchies or coded framings of my making. Further, this method of narrative inquiry also allows for the interaction of the participants' voices and my voice as a researcher in conversation (Chase, 2008) and does not rely on one single interpretation of the "data" (Andrews, 2008).

Reflection 1 (20 minutes)
• Questions distributed July 13, 2015
• 1st day of PSYL; before the "Climate Change & Ecojustice" Session

Reflection 2 (20 minutes)
• Questions distributed July 21, 2015
• Occurs after "Climate Change & Ecojustice" Session

Optional Forum Theatre Session (1.5 hours)
• Afternoon of July 25th, held during a parallel session block where participants chose which session to attend
• Public event

Reflection 3 (20 minutes)
• Questions distributed July 28th, 2015
• Occurs after Forum Theatre session

Optional Reflection 4 (20 minutes)
• Questions e-mailed September 24, 2015, survey open for 2 weeks
• Occurs two months after PSYL's end; online

Optional "Dataplay" Feedback
• An e-mail was sent to participants inviting those interested in providing feedback for the "dataplay"
• In spring 2016 a rough draft was sent to participants for them to comment on and edit
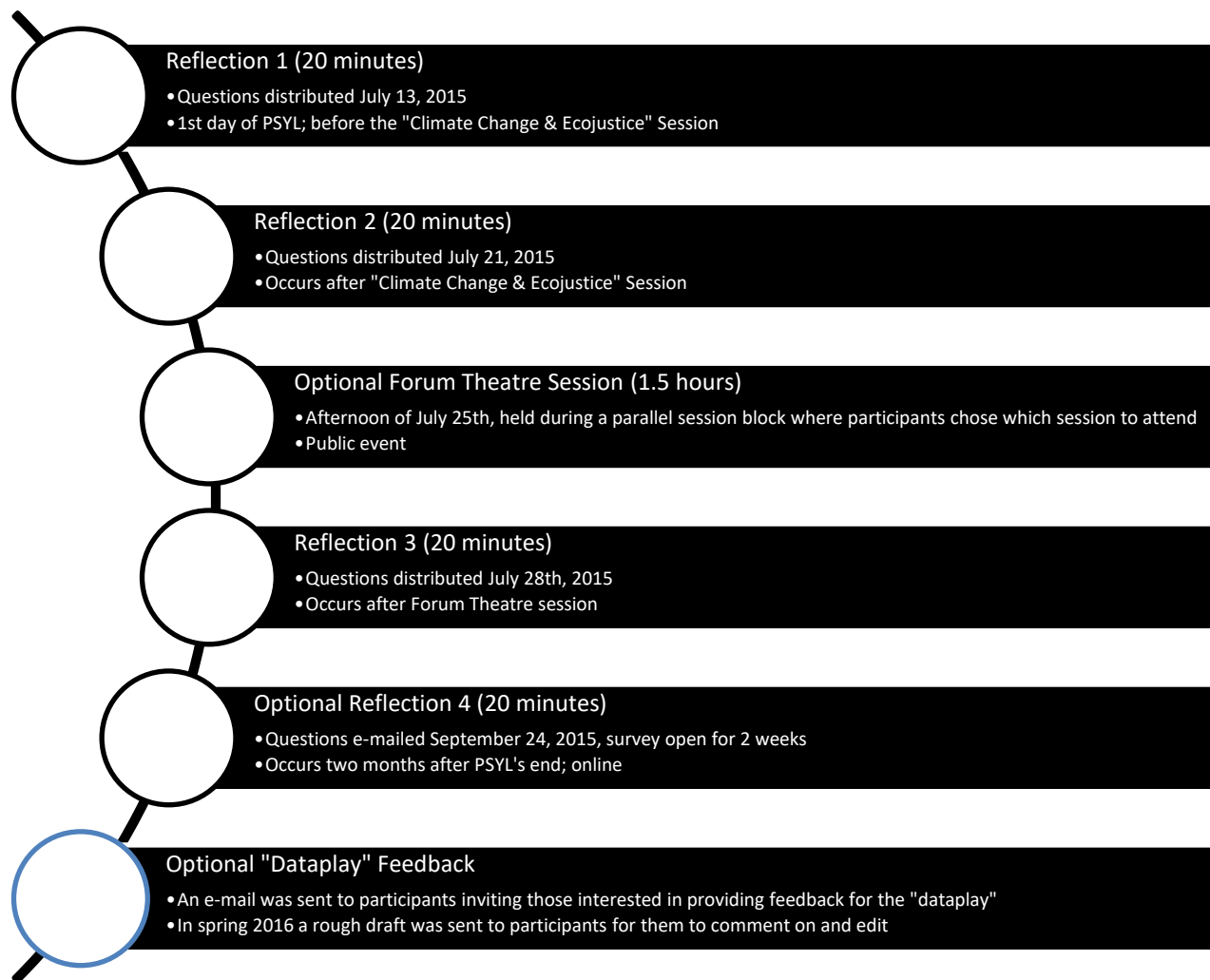
Figure 3.1 Visualization of Research Process for this Study

Chapter 4: Mapping Ecojustice: Dataplay

This chapter is an experimental mapping of ecojustice ideas set as an interactive, participatory "dataplay" (O'Riley, 2003) involving the voices of the PSYL youth participants in the study, my voice, relevant theorists and other characters. I draw on Deleuze & Guattari's (1987) concept of "map" that is "open and connectible in all its dimensions: it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation" (p. 12).

The "dataplay" offers a dynamic and reciprocal process for analysis/synthesis. For example, the youth participants exhibit agency as they join their voices with those of the theorists, other colleagues, and each other, allowing for more interactive relationships rather than relying on their contributions as merely static quotations. Writing in this way also draws on Haraway's (1997, 2004) notion of "diffraction" that challenges the prevalence of reflexivity as an analytical paradigm. Haraway (1997) is suspicious "that reflexivity, like reflection, only displaces the same elsewhere" (p. 16) whereas diffraction is a "mapping of interference, not of replication, reflection or reproduction. A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather where the effects of differences appear" (Haraway, 2004, p. 70). Instead of simply looking at how the youth's responses are same/different, the "dataplay" disrupts binaries as the diversity of voices converge, diverge, build on each other, and respond to textual contexts. In this way, the "dataplay" is an enactment of a diffractive methodology, encouraging "a critical practice of engagement, not a distance-learning practice of reflecting from afar," (Barad, 2007, p. 90). This creates a space where "data are analyzed purposefully with questions" (Masny, 2013, p. 344) instead of using "habitual normative readings (e.g., coding)" (Mazzei, 2014, p. 742) that dominate much of Western research (O'Riley, 2003). The "dataplay" opens the possibilities of "rethinking

underpinning assumptions (such as 'data', 'voice', and 'truth') and challenges dichotomies

separating the human and non-human" (Cumming, 2015, p. 138) in the research responses, and in

the analysis/synthesis. Drawing on Deleuze & Guattari (1987) once again, I attempt to work

"rhizomatically," making "lines of flight" that emerge as I write this script. The "lines of flight"

can take the form of "an unexpected student question… or… anything that breaks from the norm

of neoliberal education" (Storm & Martin, 2013, p. 228) and encourage "random, proliferating

and decentered connections… that mesh, transform and overlay one another" (Gough, 2006, p.

628).

Four major themes emerged from the youth's responses in their journal reflections and

from the Forum Theatre activity that provide the scaffolding for this four-map "dataplay":

- concern about the state of the world

- how "environment" is languaged

- holding difficult conversations

- reactions to the concept of ecojustice and sustainability with family and friends.

What follows is my weaving of the voices of the youth with relevant theorists, and otherly-

worldly characters to analyze and synthesize some of the assumptions, challenges, un-said

messages, and practices that influence discussions about ecojustice. I returned a draft of the

dataplay to four youth who expressed interest in providing feedback and (re)writing parts of it

based on what perspectives they believed were missing/needed to be amplified. I then edited the

dataplay and sent an updated draft back to them for further suggestions or edits. The youth

participants chose their own pseudonyms for this project, which are reflected in the character

names. For Forum Theatre, the actors have been identified by the roles the youth participants

played in each scene. The youths' dialogue in this scene are direct excerpts from their journals and

the Forum Theatre session, with minor edits for spelling, grammar and scene flow.

Cast of Characters

Youth thinkers/teachers/doers
        Blackbird
        Bluejay
        Catherine
        Chickpea
        Chipmunk
        Coastal
        Cranberry
        Giggles
        Harper
        Honey
        Hope
        Jelly Bean
        Jellyfish129
        KittyblinkerIII
        Kiwi
        Magic
        Poly
        The Vegan Cow
        WaldoPancakesandSyrup
        Watermelon
        Winter

The Non-Human and More-Than-Human Residents of the Land around Pedder Bay
        Arbutus
        Atmosphere
        Blue Heron
        Chorus of Plants
        Chorus of Salmon
        Deer
        Grand Fir
        Grasshopper
        Great Blue Heron
        Moss
        Raccoon
        Red Squirrel
        River Otter
        Rock

Salal
Sword Fern

Special Guests

Annie Leonard (creator of The Story of Stuff)
Buffy Sainte-Marie (Cree singer-songwriter)
Bruce Willems-Braun (geography professor)
Cheryl Lousley (professor in English & Interdisciplinary Studies)
Coyote (a trickster of North American Indigenous Peoples)
Eduardo Grillo Fernandez (Peruvian scholar and co-founder of PRATEC (Proyeto Andinas
 de Tecnologias Campesinas))
Elodie Gentina (professor of marketing)
Enrique Salmón, Rarámuri (professor of American Indian Studies)
Frédérique Apffel-Marglin (professor emerita of Anthropology; director of the Sachamama
 Center for BioCultural Regeneration in Peru)
Joshua Miller (professor of social work)
Karen Houle (Canadian philosopher, author, professor, poet)
Kathryn Stevenson (post-doc environmental educational researcher)
Leanne Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, activist, author, professor of
 Indigenous Studies, musician)
Noel Gough (professor of curriculum theory and environmental education)
Pat O'Riley (Irish/French/Mohawk heritage, professor of curriculum theory and ecojustice,
 Indigeneity and sustainability education)
Patrick Reinsborough (co-founder of the Center for Story-based Strategy)
Raging Grannies (international protesters, singers, humourists)
Rebekah Parker (Australian-Canadian researcher, student, sometimes Joker)
Raven (another trickster character of North American Indigenous Peoples)
Sarah Hunt (Kwagiulth professor of Indigenous and legal geographies)
Shane Koyczan (poet, author, activist)
Sharon Connell (environmental education researcher)
Thomas King (Cherokee and Greek/German-American author, professor emeritus)
Thomas Reimchen (professor, principal investigator of the Salmon Forest Project)
Winona LaDuke (Indigenous activist, author with a focus on Indigenous land-based
 knowledges)

Setting & Time

The play takes place from July 2015 to January 2016 on the grounds of Pearson College

(*Sc'ianew* land and territory), and through the internet connections reaching the continents of

Asia, Europe, and North America, and the several islands and spaces in between.

4.1   MAP 1: The World is Dying

Youth thinkers/teachers/doers are sitting in a circle on the East House Lawn of Pearson College with Rebekah Parker. There is a strong breeze from the southwest making tall Douglas fir trees whisper and sway above the lawn. The grass is dry, and sticks to everyone's clothes as they fidget, sway, and settle into the circle. Giggles moves to the centre of the circle and looks at the ground. The clouds above shift to surround the sun, creating a spotlight shining on Giggles. The directions, North, East, South and West are indicated on the set.

SFX: (Gustav Holst's <u>Mars the bringer of war</u> plays faintly in the background [Holst, 2003])

Giggles: The world is dying *(pauses. Looks up around at everyone in the circle.)* Monday, I wake

up, I look at the sky, it's tinted orange.

Giggles freezes, and the light shifts to the Northeast area of the circle. Blackbird, and four other youth jump up. One starts a smoke machine, covering the area of the circle in thick smoke.

Blackbird: (*stepping forward, coughing*) This haze has crossed borders and caused schools to

close, people to get sick and air quality to deteriorate!

SFX: (Chainsaw and fire)

Two of the youth stand as trees. One of them mimes a chain saw action, in time with the SFX. The "trees" fall down as the youth approaches them. The youth with a chainsaw then mimes starting a fire on the field. Meanwhile the fourth youth is casually eating Oreos, watching the scene.

Blackbird: (*snatching the Oreos out of the youth's hands)* Stop eating Oreos! They have palm oil

in them that's linked to this slash-and-burn deforestation. Don't you see? We're a part of

this - we eat palm oil; we're connected to this destruction. We need to change this cycle!

(The youth thinkers/teachers/doers freeze, and the light focuses again on Giggles in the centre)

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Giggles: Tuesday, driving home from school I see a man throw a plastic bottle onto the side of the road.

Harper: *(Stands up in the Eastern area of the circle with a plastic bottle in their hand. The spotlight moves to them.)* At my school most people disregard the environment and act in favour of their actions and laziness. *(Shakes the plastic bottle angrily)* We should be making smart choices. This should be reusable! *(River Otter comes up from Pedder Bay)*

River Otter: Or better yet, humans should stop giving companies permission to sell water at a profit. *(The conversation freezes, and the light returns to Giggles)*

Giggles: Wednesday, I sit watching E! entertainment, this comes from fossil fuels. (*The light shifts to the Southeastern corner of the circle, where a small group of sword ferns, salal, and Western Hemlock observe the conversation.*)

Sword Fern: You hear that? My old friends are being used to produce shows about the funny things that people in fancy clothes do.

Salal: Hah. When do your friends get their turn in the spotlight? They should be as famous as those "celebrities"! *(The light shifts back to the centre of the circle)*

Giggles: Thursday, my brother is brushing his teeth, he leaves the tap running. *(Chickpea stands up in the Southern part of the circle, light following their movements)*.

Chickpea: *(Shaking their head)* Some people do not take the time to notice how their actions can have negative impacts on the environment.

Grand Fir: *(rustling from behind Chickpea)* Some people do not take the time to notice that they should be listening to the environment.

WaldoPancakesandSyrup: *(Turns around from their seat in the circle and looks at Grand Fir)* Without ecojustice we may soon end up with a disgruntled, angry environment and what do we do then? Die?

Grand Fir: We can't avoid that cycle, the one that sees us from birth to eventual death.

SFX: (Mars pauses. A verse from the instrumental and spoken track of Leanne Simpson's she sang them home plays in the background on repeat [Simpson, n.d.])

Leanne Simpson: *(voiceover)* "bubbling / beating / birthing / breathing" (Simpson, 2013. p. 124)

Grand Fir: We plants are used to this cycle – many creatures use us as nutrition, as shelter; you humans even use our ancient remains as fuel. Perhaps it is humans who are less comfortable with the last phase. (*They freeze and the light travels back to Giggles*).

SFX: (she sang them home ends abruptly with the conversation. Mars resumes)

Giggles: Friday, our car runs on petrol, we drive everywhere. CO_2 everywhere. *(The light shifts to the Southwest as Jelly Bean jumps to their feet.)*

Jelly Bean: Can we move the conversation beyond one carbon and two oxygen molecules? There's so many other issues out there, like shark finning. These problems are not just about one animal, they are about our whole ecosystem! It seems obvious to me, but a lot of people just ignore the bigger picture. (*They look down at their feet and freeze. The light moves back to Giggles in the centre of the circle*).

Giggles: Saturday, I breathe the poisonous gases, and every day the weather gets weirder and weirder. *(Light shifts to the West where Coastal, Watermelon, Raccoon, Arbutus and Coyote and are in mid-discussion)*

Coastal: We are panicking because species are dying yet are pumping millions of chemicals into the air each second.

Watermelon: Yeah, people always talk about the animals going extinct; there are posters, events to raise awareness about certain species. They talk about it so frequently that the subject gets a little boring.

Arbutus: Well, thank goodness we can talk about the weather!

Raccoon: I've been waiting for my local lake to become a sauna! Hmm, I wonder how much humans would charge to use it? In their minds the earth can't warm up fast enough!

Coyote: That's right, comfort before the planet! Remember, "countries based on capitalist economies might have the best quality of life but they have the worst quality of air" (Cole & O'Riley, 2012, p. 26) *(The conversation freezes, the light returns to the centre)*

Giggles: Sunday, it took six days to create the world the Bible says. Why destroy our home for money? *(The light shifts to the Northwest where Cranberry, Catherine, and Kiwi are shaking their heads).*

Cranberry: Some groups and people, especially corporations, treat land as a commodity.

Catherine: In one of my countries, climate change isn't on people's radar at all. Talking about environmental issues is much easier in some places than others.

Kiwi: *(nods sympathetically)* With the messages I was hearing in my country, in my school, I started to think that there's no way to stop factories because they are essential to the way we live our lives. *(A rock pipes up from the Northwest corner of the circle)*

Rock: And who told you those messages? Who told your friends that's the way they should live their lives? Have they ever tried living in a different way? *(The conversation freezes, and the light returns once more to the centre)*

Giggles: *(Giggles slowly surveys the frozen scenes of destruction, worry, frustration, and fear around the circle. They look around and ask their community)* Is it really worth it?

SFX: (<u>Mars</u> ends abruptly)

The light suddenly expands to the full circle. All beings unfreeze. The youth stand up in unison.

Youth Thinkers/teachers/doers: No!

The scene ends with passionate yells as the youth start talking with people and non-human beings around them about their current frustrations and worries for the world. The scene fades to black.

4.2   MAP 2: Ripples and Refractions

The scene picks up from the end of MAP 1. The youth thinkers/teachers/doers have settled back into a circle. Rebekah Parker is also sitting in the circle, and the many species from the Pedder Bay area are quietly listening, observing, ready to provide their views. Rebekah Parker slowly stands and walks to the middle of the circle, making eye contact with every being.

SFX: (Local bird calls, a light breeze in the trees)

Rebekah Parker: Thank you all for sharing your thoughts and feelings about where our world is
   headed, and what needs to be changed. *(The circle rumbles with approval when change is
   mentioned)* We're here today to have a conversation about ecojustice, what it means, and
   where we can spark action. I've invited a few guests to join us. *(Enter Enrique Salmón,
   Coyote, Raven, Bruce Willems-Braun, Eduardo Grillo Fernandez, Thomas Reimchen,
   Frédérique Apffel-Marglin and Winona LaDuke. The youth look curiously around at the
   new faces in the circle.)*

Rebekah Parker: Welcome. We're sitting here on the land together, and I think before we dive in
   we should take a moment to recognize our connection. Let's all take a breath together.
   Breathe in... *(Everyone inhales, some in an exaggerated way. A few youth start coughing)*...
   and slowly exhale. (*The quiet rustles of exhalations ripple around the circle. For a moment,*

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the area is quiet before the sounds of birds, a light breeze, and leaves and needles, gently moving, re-emerge.) Excellent. Now I invite you to close your eyes, and pay attention to your senses – what you hear, what you smell, what you taste on the air, what it feels like to be sitting on the ground. Take a couple of breaths and notice.

SFX: (Sounds of breathing around the circle)

Rebekah Parker: So, we're sitting here outdoors, feeling, hearing, tasting, watching, and smelling the world around us. I'm curious to hear from the youth – do you feel connected to the environment? Do you think all humans are? If so, how? *(Rebekah returns to the circle and finds a seat. The youth ponder this for a few seconds.)*

Jellyfish129: (*jumping in enthusiastically*) My ideas might be full of imagination!

Grasshopper: *(Chirping to the full circle)* They also go beyond nations, places, locations.

Salal: Right, they're not geoblocked or landlocked.

Rock: *(defensively)* Hey, don't blame me for blocking ideas!

Rebekah Parker: Imaginings of all sorts are welcome here. Here at PSYL we use a hand - or branch, or paw - gesture to show that we agree with what someone is saying. In this way all of us - humans and non-humans, can show our appreciation and resonance with someone's thoughts. *(She demonstrates the gesture by shaking her hands at her wrists, it resembles jazz hands. The circle copies the motion.)* Great, go on, Jellyfish129.

Jellyfish129: I think "ecojustice" means having a good relationship with nature. It means sustainability, caring, loving, and knowing how amazing the earth is – and that it has really delicate systems.

Blackbird: It's seeking to create awareness of the importance of preserving the ecological beauty of our planet.

Rock: *(skeptically)* I'm not sure if I want to be in a relationship that only focuses on beauty.

Sword Fern: *(mischievously)* Yeah, I'm looking for something deeper.

SFX: (The plants start singing the chorus of Queen's <u>Somebody To Love</u>)

Chorus of Plants: Can anybody find meeeeeee / Somebody to love?

SFX: (The singing ends, except for Salal, who keeps humming the song in the background)

Bluejay: You're right, we as humans are a part of a community – we live with plants, trees, animals, water, landscapes, natural resources –

Grand Fir: *(interrupting, branches swaying)* Just a moment. Think about the word you just said – "natural resources" – is that all we are to you? (*The youth consider this*)

Coastal: Of course not. People and companies are exploiting our land at an astronomical rate, though they have no right to do so. The land belongs to its people and is sacred.

Red Squirrel: *(chattering from one of Grand Fir's branches)* And "people" include?

Chickpea: Humans, animals, amphibians, plants, bugs…

Rock: *(muttering)* Don't forget rocks.

Magic: With ecojustice it means that people care about keeping this world alive and in the process care about fighting for equality of all beings.

Raven: *(Leans towards Coyote and talks loud enough for all to hear)* "you know coyote every wo/man tree stone might be a person   but is every coyote a stone   is every person   a tree which way do the equal signs go for coyotes we see people as people trees as trees   we don't assign one thing to another community how equal is equal" (Cole, 2006, p. 85)

Coyote: "don't get caught up in human language raven it's never been good for you" (Cole, 2006, p. 85) *(Chuckles arise from around the circle.)*

Chickpea: *(Considers Raven and Coyote's words)* I think ecojustice means equity between everyone and everything that forms our environment. *(There is a ripple of excitement and assent around the circle. Birds chirp, plants sway, rocks roll and mammals wiggle in agreement).*

Harper: *(nodding)* And we need to make sure we take action to preserve and support the environment, including nature and creatures that are interdependent.

Bluejay: *(passionately)* Yeah! We as humans have to take care of our planet and all its members. Other than us, none of them has a voice, they can't be heard and they can't fight for the rights, therefore it is our task to do so.

Salal: I like your passion. But we non-humans can fight; we just do it in ways you don't expect. And we have voices. You're hearing us now, aren't you?

Bruce Willems-Braun: *(nodding in agreement)* "Environmental politics is not solely a matter of 'speaking for' a 'mute' nature, or becoming nature's 'voice'" (Willems-Braun, 1997, p. 25)

Raccoon: I don't think I've ever met a mute raven, stream, or bush.

Moss: Even us moss can make some noise, when we choose to! *(The moss rustle together to create a buzzing sound, proving their point)*

Enrique Salmón: "We have to change our language about this issue. We have to stop talking about the environment." (Martinez, Salmón, & Nelson, 2008, p. 102)

Chorus of Plants, Animals, Insects, Water, Wind & Rocks: Hear, hear!

Rebekah Parker: We've set up a false binary – a nature/culture divide. The theorists Frédérique Apffel-Marglin (2011) and Donna Haraway (1991) tell us that this comes from the Cartesian and Newtonian scientific paradigms, where everything can be separated in twos. Black/white. Good/bad. Nature/culture.

Red Squirrel: - Human/non-human -

Rebekah Parker: - exactly! These divides are reproduced in schools – they're in the language and content of our textbooks. Western education subtly teaches us that culture is superior to nature, as researchers Lesley Le Grange (2004) and David Clarke and Jamie Mcphie (2015) have noted.

Enrique Salmón: "We have to stop setting up this barrier, this wall, between what we feel is good and proper behavior, and apply it to our language, and take it into a deeper sense, a deeper truth, which is what? That we are the environment, and if we are harming the environment, we're harming ourselves." (Martinez, Salmón, & Nelson, 2008, p. 102)

Rebekah Parker: The challenge here is to overcome the patterns of Western thinking and

    consider what a worldview where every human, non-human, more-than-human are seen as

    equivalent could look like. Eduardo, you explain equivalency so well, what are your

    thoughts?

Eduardo Grillo Fernandez: "every one (be it [hu]man, tree, stone) is a person, complete and

    indispensable, with its own and inalienable way of being, with its definite personality, its

    own name, with its specific responsibility in the keeping of the harmony of the world."

    (Grillo, 1998, p. 224) *(The circle shakes their hands/paws/branches in approval)*

Rock: (*grumbling*) There are some with a bit too much personality.

River Otter: We need a bit more otter-ality, or tree-ality!

Grand Fir: *(shaking their branches in agreement)* You see, it's a bit different than trying to

    "preserve" us in a static state. We are never static; some/thing/body/being is always moving.

    (*The non-human residents of the circle shake their paws/branches with approval*)

Chickpea: *(smiling and nodding)* We all need each other to survive. It's like what we talked about

    at the start of the program with the salmon-bear-tree cycle. The bear needs the salmon to eat

    and survive, the tree needs the bear to bring the salmon to its roots and the salmon needs the

    tree to nourish the water and make the water flow.

Thomas Reimchen: *(nodding)* "There is no separation between these ecosystems. These areas

    exist as part of a continuum; they cannot be dealt with as separate units because the nutrients

    cycling the flow of energy between them is a continuous process." (Cascadia Bioregion, n.d.)

SFX: (The Youth thinkers/ teachers/doers burst into a familiar song they learned at PSYL)

Youth thinkers/teachers/doers: (singing) If you decide / if you decide that you're gonna eat

salmon/ gonna eat salmon/ you've got to know / you've got to know / how to keep the cycle

going / keep the cycle going (Hocking, 2010)

Voice of Authority: *(voice over to the Chorus of Salmon)* Excuse me! Who gave you permission

to swim upstream?

Chorus of Salmon: *(voice over to Voice of Authority)* Who gave you the authority to decide what

is "up"stream? North could be South and up could be down. We follow instincts, smells,

and paths that generations have taken before us. We keep the cycle going in the way we

know best. *(The word "best" echoes around the circle)*

Hope: Ecojustice is a cycle, too! *(Jumps up and starts to create a diagram in the middle of the*

circle with dried leaves, sticks, and small pebbles)

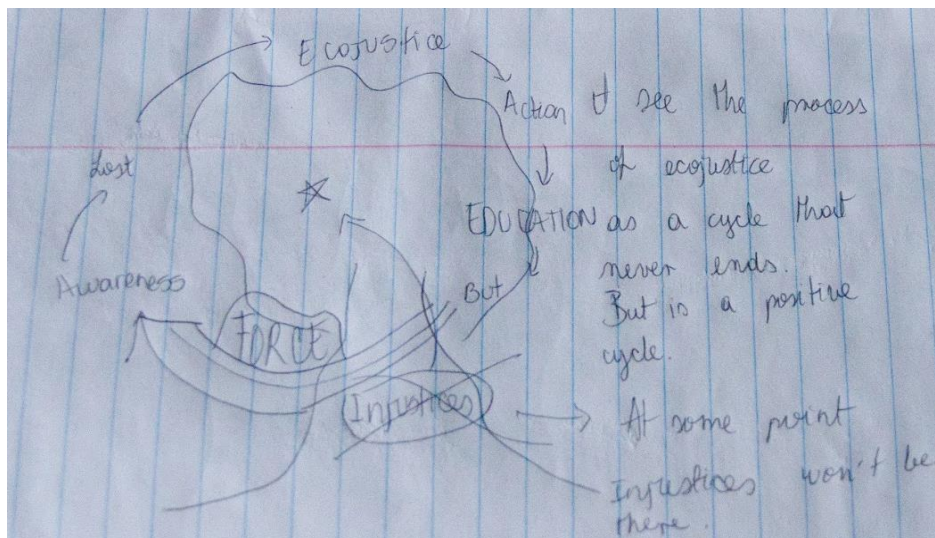*SFX: (The Byrds' song* Turn! Turn! Turn! *plays as Hope creates their diagram)*

Figure 4.1 Hope's Diagram of Ecojustice

Hope: It relates to oppression and injustice. *(Dances around their diagram as they explain it)* Ecojustice inspires action, which leads to more education. But injustices still exist and it takes a lot of force and effort to build awareness. It's easy to feel lost. But then we take an ecojustice action, and the cycle keeps going. At some point the injustices won't be there.

The youth begin to stand up and begin to walk Hope's cycle, slowly at first, then faster and faster, running in one direction. Some of the birds watching join in, flying in circles above their heads. The music swells, and the youth laugh as they start to get dizzy and fall gently into the middle of the circle. Coastal grins and stands up in the middle of the laughing youth.

Coastal: Ecojustice isn't just about equality and protecting nature, it's about changing the opinions of communities. It's about uprooting cultural assumptions, not trees. It's a lot more complicated than saving the environment, it's about saving our connection to the environment. *(A chorus of "yeah!"s erupts, while others shake their hands/paws/branches)*

Blackbird: It is about realizing that we cannot continue with "business-as-usual" and must consider the environmental and social implications of our actions.

Rebekah Parker: *(beaming proudly)* Discussions like this are ways to start challenging the status quo; disrupt and diffract the way we see the world, and reconsider who and what "counts." This is just a spark. Does anyone have a closing words they'd like to share?

Catherine: I think ecojustice means that we need to do right by the environment.

Chorus of non-human and more-than-human beings: *(chanting)* Do right by us.

Red Squirrel: *(chattering happily)* When can I expect to see my benefits package?

Rock: *(muttering)* I think that's a ways off…

Sword Fern: Still sounds good to me!

KittyBlinker III: We need to have an understanding that humans can be detrimental to the environment, and we need the environment… but it does not necessarily need us.

Sword Fern: Have you tried asking the plants or animals around you about that? The answer may surprise you.

Frédérique Apffel-Marglin: "the land can't be the land without the humans and the humans can't be humans without the land that makes them live" (Apffel-Marglin, 2011, p.53).

Kiwi: Right, it's more complicated. It's a relationship where we don't gain things endlessly from nature. We give something back as well. *(the non-humans and more-than humans in the circle let out happy cries, pleased with this idea)*

SFX: (Imogen Heap's <u>Cycle Song</u> begins playing softly, gradually increasing in volume)

Rebekah Parker: *(nodding in agreement)* Yes – reciprocity is a crucial part of our relationships with the world around us. We've got a lot of work to do.

Winona LaDuke: "Change will come. As always, it is just a matter of who determines what the change will be." (LaDuke, 1999, p. 200)

Salal: I think there are a few ideas here...

(The scene ends with side conversations sparking around the circle. Youth chat with people and plants around them, checking-in, sharing ideas, excitement clearly on their faces. The Douglas Fir trees sway as another breeze picks up, blending the voices into the wind.)

4.3   MAP 3: Difficult Conversations

Raccoon is standing in the middle of East House Lawn, waving a fern above their head. The Youth Teachers/Thinkers/Doers enter from the Eastern edge of the clearing.

Raccoon: Step right up, step right up! Get a grape for your gripe! We're here to T-A-L-K! *(The Youth teachers/thinkers/doers look at each other, confused)*

Youth: *(whispering to each other)* What's going on here? What's that raccoon doing?

Raccoon: C'mon you must have a situation to share! Isn't this what talk therapy's supposed to be like? Group solidarity?

Grand Fir: Raccoon, maybe talking isn't the only way of doing things.

Raccoon: Oh?

Deer: Maybe they want to dance it out! *(leaps elegantly around the circle, ending with a pirouette. The youth move out of the way, worried Deer might wobble)*

Rebekah Parker: *(enters the circle dancing)* Such a great way to move through and with sometimes difficult conversations! Come join us around the circle. *(The youth move into the familiar circle around the field, shifting and fidgeting until they find the perfect seated positions)* I'm curious, what's your experience been when sharing ecojustice issues?

Honey: Talking's not always enough. At school we had a mandatory presentation with a guy talking about ecological footprint – a good thing. His mistakes: he spoke for too long, in front of too large of a group (100 people) and never gave us the opportunity to speak.

Salal: That does sound rather restrictive.

Honey: In the end, we could ask questions, but most people were annoyed and created a bad atmosphere. He should have done it differently – with a small group, interactive, alive, no big use of PowerPoint.

Arbutus: I've always wondered why there's so much power in pointing. Can a screen tell us as much as a face? Can it communicate the complexity of a breeze, or root system? *(The breeze picks up in response, gently blowing the branches of the plants around the lawn)*

Raccoon: That may be true, but at least they are talking, right? That's how we make progress on these issues – talking through it!

The Vegan Cow: *(nodding)* I think that the best idea is to explain every point from the simplest concept, as if we were explaining it to our grandparents.

Grand Fir: *(inquisitively)* So being older means that person/being is slower?

Raging Grannies: *(The group of Raging Grannies are humming in the background, while Granny Elaine addresses the youth. Their clothes are brightly coloured and some are twirling boas.)* "We're old, but we're fairly savvy." (Sawchuk, 2009, p. 178) *(Granny Susan steps forward)* "[We have] nothing to lose… [We're] not so worried about what the neighbours might say or think about [us] being on the evening news and so [we] can just go ahead and take a stand on some issues." (Sawchuk, 2009, p. 177)

SFX: (The Raging Grannies sing <u>Why Be A Granny</u> [DeShaw, 2009])

Raging Grannies: *(singing and dancing)* "Why do we come out in public to speak/ of the wrongs in the world, what does it take? / Grandchildren needing a better world NOW! / So we put on our hats, we'll show them now: / Is there injustice? Tyranny? Is our country at war? / Are politicians listening? We'll tell them some more! / We WILL go on singing as long as just one / Grandchild needs us anywhere, til our life's done" (DeShaw, 2009) *(They end with smiles on their faces and a bow. The youth clap at the end of the performance.)*

Rebekah Parker: It's good to check our assumptions when we're talking with others, and to remember that we can have allies within and across generations! I'd love to hear more about how you've shared ecojustice issues with others. *(Looks around at the youth)*

Magic: *(Stands up)* I quite often share conversations about environmental/social justice issues with my friends. I have also shared these issues through dance & social media. *(They twirl, pause in the middle of the circle)*

Salal: *(shimmies its branches)* Dancing is social media! We're sharing patterns, movements, and reacting to each other's steps.

Magic: *(nods, then looks down)* My main problem and something which often holds me back from continuing or expanding these conversations is the fear of saying something "wrong" and not having the same depth of knowledge as others.

Sarah Hunt: "One starting place might be accepting the partiality of knowledge. Its relational, alive, emergent nature means that as we come to know something, we attempt to fix its meaning, we are always at risk of just missing something." (Hunt, 2014, p. 31)

Red Squirrel: Tracking can be more powerful than knowing following a line of thought where it con/di/verges. Looking to the fluid not the static

Rebekah Parker: Conversations about these issues aren't always easy, and it can be hard to figure out how to move forward together. Let's try an experiment: a Forum Theatre. Does anyone want to share a tough conversation they've had around ecojustice? We can work together to see how we can change the conversation. *(Murmurs and whispers emerge from around the circle, the youth checking in with each other. They shake their hands/paws/branches in agreement.)*

Catherine: *(Jumping up)* I have one!

Rebekah Parker: Great, I'll now assume the role of the Joker or moderator of this Forum. Tell us about the scenario, then we'll call for a few volunteer Spect-actors to the stage. Let's make a stage everyone! *(A few youth create a line of sticks and leaves to create a stage area.)*

Catherine explains her scenario, and two Spect-actors come to the stage. Catherine directs them on their dialogue, motivations and attitudes. Catherine notes that for the scene, the "Governor" is the country's president, and "Clean Oil" a major oil and gas company. The youth and residents of Pedder Bay gather excitedly in a half-moon cluster in front of the "stage" area.

Joker: Ready? *(see the nods of the spect-actors)* Action! *(The spect-actors start chatting with each other, until one brings up a mutual friend of the group)*

Spect-actor 1: Her dad works for Clean Oil, right?

Catherine: *(makes a disgusted noise)* Eugh, Clean Oil? They're so terrible.

Spect-actor 2: *(looks confused)* What do you mean? They're an important part of our nation's economy.

Catherine: No way! Do you know how much damage fossil fuels do to our environment?

Spect-actor 2: If it was such a problem, our government wouldn't be promoting it. It's what helps us live our lives the way we do.

Catherine: (*visibly annoyed, voice rising*) Clean Oil's getting most of their fossil fuels from fracking, and drilling. Why should we support such an unsustainable industry?! It's not a safe choice for us, or the environment.

Spect-actor 2: *(voice getting a little louder, more frustrated)* No, they are safe choices – they

must be! There are so many people in our country who work for that industry. If it wasn't

safe, the government would shut it down.

Catherine: *(sarcastically)* Right, because the Governor is going to protect us. *(Some youth look at*

each other, surprised at the intensity of the conversation. A few chuckle)

Spect-actor 2: (*angrily, fists clenched)* I can't believe you'd say that! Have you no love for your

country?

Catherine: (*interrupting at a yell)* You're just believing all the propaganda the government tells

us! It's not right – they're hiding this awful industry and hoping we don't notice. Clean Oil

has clear connections with politicians.

Spect-actor 2: You're blowing this out of proportion. If oil were so bad, our government wouldn't

be building more pipelines. The people in charge of oil companies are professionals; they

know what they're doing.

Catherine: *(yelling)* But politicians are known for taking bribes from oil companies!

Spect-actor 2: *(furious)* How dare you say that! Where is your proof?!

Spect-actor 1: *(clearly uncomfortable, leans in between the two speakers)* I really don't think we

should be talking like this right now. Let's talk about something else. *(Spect-actor 2 and*

Catherine look angrily at each other, then look away, still visibly worked up)

Joker: *(Stepping forward)* And scene. *(Audience claps)* Great work. Alright audience, now it's

your turn. Take 30 seconds to think about what you just saw and what you would change. Is

there a character in this scene whose struggle you understand, and who you would like to replace? *(Pauses for a minute)* Does anyone have an intervention they would like to try?

One spect-actor tries a brief intervention as the bystander of the conversation. They interrupt the conversation, yelling the Governor's name, and shock the other two characters out of an escalated conflict. The Spect-actors debrief with the Joker, and reset the scene. The Joker asks for a new intervention.

Spect-actor 3: *(standing up from the audience)* I have an idea.

Joker: Okay, which character would you like to replace?

Spect-actor 3: The person arguing for the oil company.

Joker: Okay, and where would you like to start from?

Spect-actor 3: From the point where we start talking about oil.

Joker: Spect-actors please reset to the start. (*Spect-actor 3 replaces Spect-actor 2 and the three spect-actors move into the positions from the start of the scene).* Ready? Begin.

Catherine: *(makes a disgusted noise)* Eugh, Clean Oil? They're so terrible.

Spect-actor 3: *(looks confused)* What do you mean? I've heard an important part of our nation's economy.

Catherine: No way! Do you know how much damage fossil fuels do to our environment?

Spect-actor 3: *(in a calm tone)* I don't really know much about that.

Catherine: *(surprised)* Really? Well, they contribute to things like climate change because of the amount of energy it takes to extract them, and then when we use oil and gas it releases CO_2 into the atmosphere.

Spect-actor 3: Oh. But the government supports companies like Clean Oil, and so many people work there. Could it really be all bad?

Catherine: *(considers their words carefully before responding)* Well oil isn't really a sustainable solution for the long term, especially when they're using fracking to get to the fossil fuels.

Spect-actor 3: But everything I hear says it's safe.

Catherine: Where do you get this information from?

Spect-actor 3: I hear it from my family, my friends, and sometimes the government.

Catherine: What makes you think that they're right?

Joker: *(interrupting the dialogue)* Pause! *(the Spect-actors pause. Channeling David Diamond, Joker continues).* When I touch you on the shoulder, I want you to say out loud the secret thought that your character is thinking. This is something they haven't said in the conversation. Take 30 seconds to think about it. *(Slowly moves towards Catherine, and after 30 seconds lightly touches their shoulder.)*

Catherine: How can they believe this propaganda? *(Joker moves to Spect-actor 3 and lightly touches their shoulder)*

Spect-actor 3: I'm starting to wonder about climate change. *(Joker moves to Spect-actor 1 and lightly touches their shoulder)*

Spect-actor 1: … *(Spect-actor 1 doesn't say anything, then breaks character)* I'm not really sure what the character is thinking. Probably happy that the disagreement didn't result in a major conflict.

Joker: Thank you all. This is a unique space where we get to play around with interactions and feelings. *(looks at Spect-actor 3)* Can you tell me more about the intervention you chose?

Spect-actor 3: I was trying to be more curious than defensive. *(Murmurs of acknowledgement and realization ripple around the circle)*

Joker: *(nods in acknowledgement)* Great. And for you, Catherine, what did you learn from this intervention?

Catherine: I never realized I was being so passive aggressive to them. *(There's an audible "ahhh" heard from the audience. Joker pauses to let that statement hang in the air.)*

Joker: Thank you so much for sharing your scenario, interventions, and reflections. Spect-actors please take your seats. *(The scene ends and the spect-actors mime taking off hats, signalling the end of their roles. The Joker does the same.)*

Rebekah Parker: Alright Catherine, that was great. Now, I'm wondering what your biggest challenges in this conversation were?

Catherine: The challenges stemmed from a difference in values between myself and my friend. She was patriotic and full of national pride, while I did not value patriotism as much as she did. Because of this, I was perfectly willing to insult our country's government by saying that officials take bribes from oil companies, while my friend was infuriated that I would accuse our government of something as dishonorable as that.

Rock: *(muttering)* even if it was true.

Catherine: This prevented us from having a reasonable, calm discussion and instead pushed us into argument territory.

Winter: *(breaking into the conversation)* In my experience, even though some conversations about the environment have gotten heated, I'm still glad that I brought it up to my friends because I think arguing about the issue is still better than ignoring it.

Jelly Bean: I hear you. Depending on the person I am speaking to it can be a pleasant conversation or a frustrating one.

Karen Staller: "Talking with people is really hard. It is much easier to talk at them, or around them, or past them, or over them." (Staller, 2014, p. 173)

River Otter: You're telling me! Humans have a tough time communicating with each other; imagine how hard it can be for us non-humans to get a word in!

Rebekah Parker: These skills take practice. How can we work on holding these difficult conversations?

SFX: (Tracy Chapman's <u>Talkin' Bout A Revolution</u> *starts playing quietly in the background)*

Honey: I've started using more storytelling and personal examples now than open reminders. I think they are less passive aggressive and people like them more.

Magic: Yeah! I feel like real world realities are what often inform people of the true severity of a situation. Using them can help find real ways to solve problems.

Grand Fir: And what about ideas that go beyond talking? *(The youth consider this.)*

Bluejay: I've realised 2 important things about ecojustice issues. 1. Things need to be done quickly. When we live our everyday routines it's hard to see, but when you look back, or worse, forward, you realize that the Earth really needs our help.

Atmosphere above the lawn: We've been sounding those alarm bells for years.

Bluejay: 2. It's not only politicians that have to take action: we can also do our part. Each of us taking a step and doing something can even be more effective.

Salal: And we need to go beyond individual and political action.

KittyBlinkerIII: Exactly. When talking to organizations, we need to be interested in their policies and thoughts about ecojustice. Show that it is a big issue for us and that this should make them more thoughtful about their actions as an organization. If they are trying to interest consumers, show that we are consumers and we want to see the sustainability that you believe all organizations should aim for.

Deer: Ah, speaking their language to try to encourage change.

Rebekah Parker: What other ways can we incite change in our communities?

Coastal: (*stands up, speaking passionately*) I've tried giving suggestions at school, with signs, announcements and other ways but they never get much response. It's easier to ignore the problems than to act. This is the technique I plan to use: bombard my school with statistics to frighten them enough to open their eyes to the world's problems. I need to shock them into action because nice suggestions aren't working.

Bluejay: Yes, videos and 'scary' data are what make my hair stand on end, what makes me want to do something about it. From my perspective, it's the only kind of data that actually works.

Deer: (*eyes wide)* Those are strong statements. Have you thought about what type of responses you will receive to this approach?

Rebekah Parker: It can be a fine line between providing enough information to communicate

that these issues are important, and worrying people so much that they are not sure about

what to do. Kathryn, you've done some research on feelings of despair about climate change

among teens, can you share a few ideas with us?

Kathryn Stevenson: "These feelings can lead to inaction… directly acknowledging and

addressing feelings of despair may also be an important part of avoiding the inaction among

adolescents." (Stevenson & Peterson, 2016, p.7)

Coastal: *(Nodding along)* People deny the truth so they don't have the realization that they are not

innocent. So they ignore. I feel the crushing guilt every day. I feel that if I don't change

anything, my life is pointless. *(Some of the youth gather around Coastal supportively.)*

Grand Fir: This is an old capitalist story we are told – that solving the world's problems is on the

shoulders of one single person.

Annie Leonard: "Over the last few decades, the theme of the individual's role in wrecking the

environment, and the individual's responsibility in fixing it, has only grown stronger –

driven … by hundreds of businesses, by government, even by well-meaning individuals and

organizations" (Leonard, 2013, p. 242)

Rebekah Parker: So it's up to us to start looking at the language and burdens we're placing on

ourselves, and to start considering the implications and how we can transform it into

collective action and responsibility. Kathryn, what else did you find in your research?

Kathryn Stevenson: "Avoiding despair is important, however climate literacy efforts should not

shy away from communicating the seriousness of climate change as adolescents are likely

capable of productively responding to concern." (Stevenson & Peterson, 2016, p. 8)

Poly: I have seen a lot of frustration around this topic, because as a school we claimed to be

sustainable, but we're actually not.

Salal: It sounds like there's a lot of greenwashing going on – people and institutions with

authority, like schools and companies, saying that they're helping the planet when they

really need to reconsider the way they are living and perpetuating cycles.

Raven: "oh yes sustainability it's one of the buzzwords that is supposed to mean that we are

caring about the environment but it actually means business as usual but with green food

colouring" (Cole & O'Riley, 2010, p. 31)

Chipmunk: I think it's important for people to know what the issue is and to truly understand it

before we deal with any of the [other] issues. I think that requires a lot of education and

public knowledge.

Harper: Yeah. There is little education on ecojustice or environmental awareness in my school –

most people disregard it and act in favour of their actions and laziness such as driving

somewhere that would take ten minutes to walk.

Hope: I think that for me the hardest challenge has been finding ways to convince people of how

important this is and that it's our responsibility to take action.

WaldoPancakesandSryup: I hear you. That's my biggest challenge: how do I get there? I am

young, unsuccessful and fairly mediocre at a lot [of things]. How can I change how stubborn

society views ecology?

Grand Fir: Part of sharing these issues is recognizing that it is not necessarily about age, ability,

or how much you know about the topic. It's about how successful you are at connecting

these topics to the lives of those you talk with.

River Otter: Besides, how can you define "successful?" For our friends here, like Sword Fern and wildflowers, it's a success that they return year after year, or for birds it's a success when the wind doesn't destroy their nests. What story of "success" are you reaching towards, and how does it fit in with who you want to be in this world?

Rebekah Parker: River Otter's right; it is unrealistic to reach up to one definition of a "good" or "successful" life. We all come from different places, and different contexts. Not everyone has the same background knowledge on ecojustice issues, and maybe they haven't had a chance to learn. Can anyone relate to this?

Jellyfish129: Before PSYL, I had never had a really deep conversation about these topics because I don't really know much about those kinds of things, and I've never found someone who was interested. *(Sympathetic sounds come from the circle.)*

Watermelon: *(moves from across the circle to sit next to Jellyfish129)* People back home do not care so much about the environment. So when I came to PSYL I was so surprised to hear that people actually care and this gives me hope! *("yeah!"s are heard around the circle.)*

Rebekah Parker: So what other ways can we start to overcome this inaction we're seeing in our communities?

Cranberry: I feel like one-on-one conversations or ones in small groups about social or environmental justice issues and how to solve them would be the most personal and thus, most effective when trying to persuade others to participate in taking action.

WaldoPancakesandSyrup: Yeah, we can do this in short conversations too. Often the way

    teenagers handle these topics is to pretend they are too "cool" to care, but in reality they do

    and will help in private. It is our job to make the topics cool.

Watermelon: Yes! If there was a way to make it fun or "cool" to raise money or love the

    environment a lot more people would be involved.

Grand Fir: Hmm. Why do you think we need to cater our actions to what the dominant society

    thinks are "fun" and "cool"? *(pauses and looks around the circle)* What I'm hearing is that

    the current movements aren't engaging some teens. Maybe this is a chance for us to engage

    with imagination, instead of attempting to align ourselves with one worldview.

Patrick Reinsborough: "Without the shared vision of radical possibilities for profoundly

    different futures we cannot set our collective sights high enough to overcome denial, resist

    despair, and escape the myth of powerlessness" (Reinsborough, 2010, p. 74).

Sword Fern: We can radically imagine what new ways of living/being/breathing together might

    look like, from school systems to family life to how we relate with our communities.

Pat O'Riley: Learning and teaching "would become worlds to cohabit and participate in,

    collectively made, involving mutually accepted conversations, nurturing life-spaces,

    opening to not only people, but to all living things, including things orthodox western

    science tells us are not living" (O'Riley, 2003, p. 156).

Rebekah Parker: This a space where dreams can grow, and we can bring folks of all sorts into

    ecojustice movements. What do you think a conversation like this might look like?

Joshua Miller: "a discussion where participants do not claim to know all the answers… where the object is not to convince but to explore, where the goal is to seek the gray areas and spaces of ambivalence" (Miller, Donner & Fraser, 2004, p. 387)

Honey: *(nodding in agreement)* It's important to focus on the goal (like reducing our global footprint) and let people get creative with how they want to get there. Everyone's solution will look different, and it won't feel like an imposed rule.

Deer: A space where all views are heard, where we all can impact the way we live.

SFX: (Buffy Sainte-Marie's <u>Sing Our Own Song</u> starts to play)

Buffy Sainte-Marie: *(Coming into the circle with a guitar, singing proudly)* "We will stand for the right to be free / We will grow our own society / and we will sing, we will sing / We will sing our own song" (Sainte-Marie, 2015)

The youth and beings in the circle begin to dance in a circle, holding hands/paws/branches, slowly moving towards the right as a circle. The song continues to build and the youth start cheering along with "yip"s and "woo"s. The dancing and singing continues, with youth suggesting songs to play, sing, and share, and the whole community celebrating.

4.4 MAP 4: (Re)Actions

It is fall 2015. Two months have passed since PSYL. The youth and Rebekah Parker are spread across the world. Each of them is sitting in separate parts of the stage – some on the ground, some in chairs. Ethernet cables wrap around their arms and legs. Rebekah Parker motions to a blank screen and a projection appears of a scene similar-to-but-not the East House Lawn at Pearson

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College. The youth gather and create avatars of their own liking, with an array of colours,

shapes, and sizes. The beings from Pedder Bay also log-on, with cyber-forms of their own.

Racoon: Hello, hello, hello? Can you hear me?

Grand Fir: No need to yell, Racoon. We all hear you just fine (*many folk respond with "yup"*

"uh huh" and "you're good")

Rebekah Parker: Welcome back. It's been a while. Thank you again for coming together to

continue these conversations.

Rock: I'm really just here for the free food. Oh wait…

Rebekah Parker: We'll have a few guests who will be joining us as they are able. (*SFX: a log-on*

sound rings out) Oh, some of them are here!

Avatars of Coyote, Raven, Cheryl Lousley, Thomas King, Shane Koyczan, Karen Houle, Elodie

Gentina, Noel Gough, & Sharon Connell appear.

River Otter: So what are we going to talk about today? We've covered a lot of

ground/ocean/terrain so far.

Rebekah Parker: I have a few lingering questions. (*A few people mutter "of course")* I'm

wondering how your ecojustice conversations have been going, if at all?

Jellyfish129: Well, I suggested my classmates join me for a clean-up of a little river in my town,

run by a non-profit organization. They reacted in a very rude way, insulting me for thinking

that "they would have cleaned shit." They said I'm a communist and I shouldn't propose

these stupid things to the class, because there's no school credit offered so it's useless.

A stunned silence.

Arbutus: (*its cyber-branches swaying*) It's deeply disappointing to hear when people do not want to let go of old patterns and stories.

Sword Fern: Especially in Western education systems. They focus so much on the school to post-secondary to job pipeline, it seems they forgot that asking everyone to behave this way and succeed is a pipedream.

Coyote & Raven: (*speaking together*) "we don't see the teaching and we don't hear it or smell it where is the life of it?" (Cole & O'Riley, 2002, p. 147)

Raccoon: It's those rectangle-focused schools and classrooms – not enough space to explore and roam. Take the class outside, on the other hand/paw…

River Otter: What about the attitudes of Jellyfish129's classmates? Has this happened elsewhere?

Hope: I have faced apathy from youth in my country. Where I come from there is not such an ecological culture.

Jellyfish129: (*nodding in understanding*) Before PSYL I didn't care that much about the environment and ecojustice. We discussed environmental issues in middle school, but it was mostly teacher-led, so students didn't really get a chance to speak their minds. I was just too lazy to really learn about environmental issues.

Coastal: (*nodding sympathetically*) The phrases 'it's so far away' and 'it doesn't matter' is the base of our problems.

Sword Fern: So are these cases of laziness or somebod/y/ies not caring?

Chickpea: The fact that these problems are not very visible lets people procrastinate because they do not see the urgency.

Raccoon: Well you know, the U.N. has now released "The Lazy Person's Guide to Saving the World" (UN, n.d.) – maybe it's time to add that to the school curriculum! *(some youth laugh, while other seem surprised by this, one person says quite loudly "but why?!")*

Cheryl Lousley: "apathy can be alternatively read as an active rejection of school norms and culture" (Lousley, 1999, p. 298)

Raccoon: Really?! I thought apathetic youth just didn't want to do anything. Too self-centered.

Cheryl Lousley: "Disengagement from school allows students to symbolically fight the mechanical detachment from life, emotion, and meaning embodied in school culture and the dominant class and cultural values it represents." (Lousley, 1999, p. 298).

Deer: So it's more complicated than whether or not someone cares about an issue.

Rebekah Parker: Exactly. There are lots of threads and systems at play.

Sharon Connell: Youth can suffer from an "action paralysis" where they "believe the only things that they can do for the environment are small things such as recycling" (Connell, Fien, Lees, Sykes & Yencken, 1999, p. 108)

Hope's avatar points to a corner of the cyber-lawn, and a projection of a painting appears.

Figure 4.2 Hope's "The 8 of Ecojustice"

SFX: (Marvin Gaye's <u>Mercy, Mercy Me (The Ecology)</u> begins playing softly in the background)

Hope: This painting describes my feelings about climate change and justice in the world when I'm frustrated or disappointed. The dark parts could be the world. Maybe the black parts would be there for a while, but colours are more powerful.

The youth avatars gather around this projection, and start floating through cyberspace, recreating the figure 8 pattern.

Kiwi: Raising awareness about these issues can be frustrating. I presented a speech at a climate conference organized by local schools recently, and they loved the presentation, but not the content. They just thought I had good public speaking skills! (*shakes head)* It's hard to make people actually do something and take action.

Jellyfish129: *(nods)* Since I received that reaction from my class, I'm not that confident talking about these issues. But I will try hard to make small differences in my life – ones that anyone could do – to make this world a better place.

Salal: So what inspires you to take action?

Cranberry: Hearing about perspectives of my peers in discussion group at PSYL was particularly interesting because everyone came from different places and experienced climate change differently. Listening to negative effects in Asia and Africa, since I'm not from either of those places, gave me more passion for helping to support ecojustice

Catherine: Yes! Before the summer, I never considered human rights to be a part of ecojustice. The seminar informed me about the people who are impacted by environmental issues.

Raccoon: Oh?

Catherine: For instance, the often impoverished people in developing countries have their lives destroyed by developed countries. They often resort to working in factories that don't have adequate health regulations and have to live in polluted areas. I now know that part of ecojustice is helping these types of people, not just the environment.

Moss: There are better words to describe our world than "developed" and "developing"

River Otter: Yes, the so-called "developing" world is better known as the "majority" world, where a large part of the world's human population lives. The "developed" world is the "minority" world, despite the fact that they use the majority of the world's resources. (Raffaelli, Lazarevic, Koller, Nsamenang, & Sharma, 2013)

Noel Gough: "the precarious existence of people who we patronizingly locate in 'developing' countries is less of a consequence of *their* 'alienation' from nature than *our* alienation from otherness. When we think about survival, we cannot speak of a unitary 'humanity', since it is not so much that humanity has damaged its own ecosystem but that *some* humans have

damaged *all others'* ecosystems. (Gough, 2015a, p. 238, emphasis original). *(Calls of "that's right!" and sounds of agreement echo in the cyberspace)*

Giggles: It's a lot harder to make people aware of the impact on Earth in a developing country. I received some weird reactions at PSYL when I talked about the shitty environment at home.

Rebekah Parker: I'm hearing two things here. 1. That again we need to look beyond binaries. Our world is more than "developed"/"developing" and all the embedded associations. 2. Context matters when we're figuring out how to engage people in ecojustice issues, and what actions we can take in our local communities.

Elodie Gentina: Indeed. Youth "learn which strategies 'work' for them depending on cultural and familial contexts" (Gentina & Singh, 2015, p.7593).

Catherine: That makes a lot of sense. When I was arguing with my friend about fracking, we fought because of our different values and different experiences: she lived with the propaganda full-time while I traveled out of the country often and wasn't as influenced by it.

Magic: *(nods)* Families are important too. I recently discussed the idea of sustainable development with my sister. She wasn't enthused by the discussion and repeatedly shut down my ideas and arguments. Since then I have not broached the subject with her.

River Otter: You've created ripples and waves with just that conversation. It's hard to talk to someone with closed ears. Have you changed the way you approach these topics since returning home?

Magic: *(thinks for a minute)* I noticed that I have become far more aware of the vocabulary I use when discussing these issues, particularly gender issues.

Sword Fern: (*nodding*) language, especially English, holds a lot of power. I try to remind myself to take a breath before speaking.

Rock: Yes, who knows what insect family you may disrupt with just a few words!

Rebekah Parker: So how else can we engage our families and communities in ecojustice issues?

KittyBlinkerIII: Discuss with enthusiasm - let people know that you are passionate about this topic!

Winter: There's a few things to remember in these conversations. 1. Respect other's opinions even when they're in direct conflict with yours.

Rock: (*muttering*) easier said than done

Winter: 2. Don't misrepresent your views because you're afraid others will disagree with them

KittyBlinkerIII: (*passionately*) Yes, before I may have had some hesitation about raising awareness of ecojustice issues around what people might think of me for caring, I now do not apologize for my passion and try to enthuse others.

Winter: 3. Show how ecojustice affects whoever you're talking to.

Kiwi: Right. You have to be confident and trust that you can make change and raise awareness to your community or organization.

Honey: And remember that small reminders and triggers do more than we sometimes think. At least in my case they worked!

Youth start calling out ideas. Social media! Videos! Creative posters! Workshops! Go to marches!
Lead by example! Emphasize systems thinking! The ideas ripple into the cyberspace in an array of

rainbow of colours. When their paths cross they spark, shooting more lines of colour into the cybersphere. The avatars all display happiness in whatever form it takes for their being – a smile, a happy sway, a dance, a warm glow.

Rebekah Parker: Well done, my friends. Keep the sparks coming. We've come a long way, so my last question is what's one thing that you're taking away with you after this process?

Watermelon: Before I didn't think ecojustice was such an issue but now I understand how important it is to discuss and talk about it.

Poly: Now I'm seeing the whole picture instead of just focussing on one aspect when discussing ecojustice issues. *(points to the scene where a painting appears)* This is a drawing I made for a language and literacy class. I talked about identity and conceived myself as a tree.

Figure 4.3 The Poly/Tree Drawings

Salal: You can learn a lot from taking on a tree's perspective!

Grand Fir: You're taking a leaf from Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and trying out *becoming* a plant.

Karen Houle: "plant-becoming opens up thinking about relations as transient alliances rather than strategies.... Plant-becoming also radically re-imagines Life as that which can be accomplished not within a successfully-managed organic encasement of what a thing is (its being, its *teloi*, its progeny) but, as that which can happen by virtue of *a certain unfaithful power of connectivity*." (Houle, 2011, p. 112)

River Otter: There's a lot of power in these imaginings! How else could we re-imagine the world or the way you work within it?

Hope: I now understand ecojustice as something that is not only related to ecology, but also to other aspects of oppression. Now I see ecojustice as part of my life, I mean, now I know the proper term. *(sounds of agreement come from others in the circle)*

Kiwi: I used to think I cannot make any change by myself. Now I am more confident to tell more people and raise the ideal of ecojustice.

Watermelon: *(nods)* There's a lot of passionate people behind these sometimes scary subjects!

The Vegan Cow: My approach hasn't changed much, but now I have a bigger vision about the topics which helps me in discussing them.

Grand Fir: So we're all learning something here. The question is what are you going to do with your learnings and yearnings?

Thomas King: "Do with it what you will. Tell it to friends. Turn it into a television movie. Forget it. But don't say in the years to come you would have lived your life differently if you had only heard this story. You've heard it now." (King, 2003, p. 29).

***SFX**: (The Short Story Long begins playing the soundtrack to <u>Pale Blue Dot</u> as Shane Koyczan*

speaks)

Shane Koyczan: "Our stories may differ, our goal is the same / How do we save our pale blue

dot? / We act as rain, realizing that each individual drop is equal and important as any / We

act as one / Now, we are many" (Koyczan, 2014, 6:36)

All the avatars begin shimmering as excitement builds. Conversations, dances, and ideas spark as

they begin to forge plans of how to share their learnings in their own communities. The scene

continues as the cyber-scene starts moving away from the viewer. Other clusters of lively scenes

appear next to the scene, and slowly multiply, and shrink into the background; all conversations

dreaming up new futures.

Chapter 5: (Re)Cycling On

"Ecojustice isn't saving the animals, it's motivating others to care about the animals. It's about uprooting cultural assumptions, not trees. It's a lot more complicated than saving the environment, it's about saving our connection to the environment. Each time we consume we break down our connection to nature by not giving back. Ecojustice wants people to change the way they think, creating strong democracies across the globe" – Coastal

This research centred on the question of how do youth share ecojustice learning outside of the classroom, and how might this inform ecojustice pedagogy? It explored youths' reactions to and use of ecojustice theory and pedagogy outside of the classroom, and suggestions for how to approach global and systemic issues. The following chapter will explore the ripples from the research process, including the dataplay, summarize the findings from this research, explore the significance and limitations of this study, and name potential future directions for further research.

5.1   Ripples, Refractions, & Diffractions of the Research Process

As a researcher, my role was complicated in the 2015 PSYL community. I was a researcher, participant in the Forum Theatre process, a member of the PSYL 2015 community, and a salaried staff member. This, for me, is worth repeating, as educators can "fail to examine their own actions and assumptions and how those perpetuate traditional power relations" (Storm & Martin, 2013, p. 222) and traditional Western mainstream academic methods of generating and legitimizing knowledge. At times I found it challenging to balance my three roles in the community, wanting to make sure that I did not give too many reminders for interested participants to complete the journal prompts as I knew the program was full with programing from 9am to 9pm daily, yet I

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wanted to ensure that there were a few people participating in the project. Forum Theatre was a learning process for me as I had only participated in one Forum Theatre activity, and had never facilitated one myself. Despite these challenges, I found great value in working with the youth and learning from their diverse experiences; as Collins & Hitchings (2012), paraphrasing Holloway and Valentine (2000), mention doing research with young people is valuable because of their unique experiences and because we can "see how their experiences speak to wider debates in academia and beyond" (p. 198). This is especially true for ecojustice issues whose impacts ripple around the world, regardless of age, and borders.

Part of the process worth further exploration is the analysis/synthesis of the participants' words, experiences, and offerings into the dataplay. This was the first time I had intentionally worked rhizomatically, and as Cumming (2015) expressed, there were times when I felt I inadvertently returned to my previous methodology trainings in identifying themes and attempting to categorize responses. In the first draft of the dataplay, each map was based around a series of questions I posed for the journal responses, with the Forum Theatre interactions separated. With guidance from my committee, I realized I was settling into a "structure of comfort" (Cumming, 2015, p. 140) when rhizoanalysis is a de-stabilizing methodology that "is not affiliated with a standardized set of established protocols" (Storm & Martin, 2013, p. 223). This realization led to several re-writes.

I returned to the responses, and read them out loud to help identify areas where the youth seemed to carry a lot of energy, passion or emotions. These areas provided scaffolding for the maps that are currently formed: concern about the state of the world, how "environment" is languaged, holding difficult conversations, and reactions to the concept of ecojustice with family and friends. It was a strong reminder that "a researcher enters in the middle" (Masny, 2013, p.

341) where although I may have introduced the concept of ecojustice to some of the youth, this was – in most cases – not their first encounter or reaction to ideas of environmental or social justice.

Four youth responded with interest in providing comments and edits to the draft dataplay. I felt nervous and excited about this part of the process; unsure of how they would react to it. To my surprise, the majority of the edits and suggestions from the youth focused on clarification and speech style. One of the main suggestions was to make the dialogue in the dataplay more like the conversations that were held at PSYL, particularly by including the hand waving gesture that was used by the community to silently communicate agreement. Another youth replied that they "loved" the dataplay and found it "life-like" without too many further suggestions. When asked for further feedback on the process, one youth responded that

> reviewing the dataplay for me was a totally new experience and it felt really
> empowering to be part of something like this, it really made me feel like my opinion
> counts a lot, and I appreciate it. Reading it took so many emotions back into my heart
> and it was almost like being back on East House Lawn[2] discussing world issues with
> all the participants, animators and coordinators.

The dataplay was left without explicit interpretations, as it is grounded in the assumption that "reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing" (Glesne, 2011, p.8). This is why a diffractive approach is powerful; "data are analyzed purposefully with questions" (Masny, 2013, p. 344) instead of interpreting them from a sole perspective. The following summary will attempt

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[2] East House Lawn is a part of the Pearson College campus where many gatherings at PSYL took place

to follow suit by asking further questions of the main themes, instead of reducing and removing nuance from the youth's experiences and opinions.

5.2   How Do Youth Share Ecojustice Learning?

The youth in this research responded to the ecojustice learning with enthusiasm. After I presented a session on ecojustice, many reported that their understanding "[hadn't] really changed so much as has been broadened" (Giggles), and now saw how it connected to a broad range of issues and "to other aspects such as oppression. Now I see that ecojustice is part of my life" (Hope). A few youth remained unsure about the specific meaning of ecojustice; "it seemed as if the presenters were only listing off the things weren't ecojustice or something," (Watermelon) feedback I will incorporate into future ecojustice workshops (see Appendix B). A main takeaway was the interconnections between people and the environment in ecojustice theory, as Catherine explains:

> before the seminar, I had never considered human rights to be a part of ecojustice;
>
> I thought it was all about the environment. However, the seminar informed me
>
> about the people who are impacted by environmental issues. For instance, many
>
> people in developing countries have their lives destroyed by industries from
>
> developed countries. These often impoverished people often resort to working in
>
> factories that don't have adequate health regulations and have to live in heavily
>
> polluted areas. I now know that part of ecojustice is helping these types of people,
>
> not just the environment.

The tension behind the phrase "these kind of people" highlights the entrenched patterns of domination (Martusewicz, Lowenstein, & Luppinnacci, 2011) and dualisms that are often (unconsciously) prevalent in Western education systems and media, as explored in the dataplay.

Despite this, the growing connection and understanding of ecojustice issues and production cycles is an important step to taking action and challenging the status quo lifestyles in Western cultures. For youth like Coastal, this connection went deeper, understanding that ecojustice is "about uprooting cultural assumptions, not trees." This expanded view provides more opportunities for youth to continue to build connections, like a rhizome that "[re-routes] the terrain, its tracks, and narratives that have been covered, inhumed and otherwise disestablished" (O'Riley, 2003, p. 28).

Engaging in a rhizoanalysis, this research avoided simply interpreting the words the youth shared, instead allowing readers to draw their own connections and learnings in whatever form they take. Rhizoanalysis allowed me to "generate questions, provocations and challenges to dominant discourses and assumptions" (Gough, 2006, p. 625) in the form of characters in the dataplay, and the inter-texual relationship between readers of the dataplay and the youth whose voices lie at its heart. Four areas arose from this: the youth's concern about the state of the world, how "environment" is languaged, holding difficult conversations, and reactions to the concept of ecojustice with family and friends.

Throughout this research, youth wove tales of sharing ecojustice learning. When they returned home they shared ecojustice through personal discussions, and school-based contexts such as classes, clubs, and presentations. Their audiences varied from those already passionate about environmental and social justice issues, to those who do not care or who actively deny the severity of these issues. These interactions were just the beginning; many expressed a desire to share what they had learned further through personal conversations, social media, storytelling, and hard data because, as many noted, there is not much time to waste.

The biggest barriers the youth identified to sharing ecojustice issues were not knowing enough about the issues (not feeling confident enough to comment or share their opinions), and

addressing ecojustice issues with family, friends, or peers who do not agree with their views, or who do not see the point in having these conversations. Some youth simply did not understand why their peers did not care about the state of the world, and were frustrated and disappointed in the reactions they received. These sentiments are a call to educators to help young people practice ways of having difficult conversations, including about their own privilege and feelings of entitlement, and provide youth with opportunities to build their confidence in sharing their opinions and beliefs.

With each voice shared in the dataplay was a call: context matters. Youth shared ecojustice issues in a variety of ways, from conversations with families and friends to presentations to sharing on social media. They emphasized that education matters, especially in 'informal' learning and relating contexts – teaching friends and families about what is going on in the world, and what they can do about it. This however, does not mean that there is one way that these discussions should be approached. Rather, many of the youth mentioned the diversity of reactions or cultures within their schools, or friend groups that they felt should be addressed in a variety of ways.

Many of the youth faced personal challenges in sharing ecojustice issues. Whether it was personal anxieties about not knowing "enough" about the issues, or feeling guilt about their own impact on the world around them. Interpersonal challenges also came up in the form of not understanding the positions of people they shared these issues with, or not knowing how to address apathy among their peers.

5.3   Implications for In/Formal Educators

PSYL is a unique educational space. The community of about 100 (including the coordinators who design and implement the curriculum) used consensus decision-making to decide what time everyone would go to sleep each night, and which "identity principles" best represent what the community wants to embody throughout the program. As a coordinator of the program, I had the freedom to co-design the Climate Change and Ecojustice workshop as my colleague and I saw fit, without worrying about adhering to a specific curriculum. This allowed me to experiment both within the workshop on introducing ecojustice, and in a separate session with the Forum Theatre exercise with different educational techniques to see what resonated with the youth. While many workshops were classroom-style, including the Climate Change and Ecojustice workshop, they engaged in informal and experiential learning opportunities, including conversation and dialogue (Darity, 2008) about how climate change is affecting them, and the simulation of the greenhouse gas effect through a game. The Forum Theatre exercise also engaged in "informal" learning strategies, as the session focused around the scenarios and ideas of the youth. Informal learning opportunities are abundant in the discussions and interactions youth had outside of the workshop times during the program as they debriefed and discussed topics with their peers. The term "informal" as used here means that learning or experience is not taking place in a conventional school environment.

The youth spoke to the power of informal moments, such as the reactions of their families and friends to ecojustice issues, and the difficult conversations they held on the topic of ecojustice. Engaging with these experiences through a diffractive methodology that "takes into account that knowing is never done in isolation but is always effected by different forces coming together," (Massei, 2014, p. 743), recognizing the many learnings that can come from these

moments. For educational settings like PSYL, it demonstrates that the learning outside of workshops is just as important as the content presented during workshops.

When presenting content (in)formally, the youth's voices point to several patterns that educators should be aware of, including how Western binaries can easily slip into our languaging (i.e. "saving nature" and "saving others"), the emotional context of the issues, and the benefits of practicing and building skills for difficult conversations. This calls for "a curriculum that enables students to recognize how languaging processes sustained a take-for-granted attitude towards cultural patterns" (Bowers, 2002, p. 32) and one that remembers that "actions are situated in specific spatial and temporal settings that are characterised by reflexivity and change, and… their durability may depend on individual's preparedness to challenge both personal habits… and prevailing norms" (Collins & Hitchings, 2012, p. 195). "Mundane encounters" (Collins & Hitchings, 2012, p. 195), like one-on-one conversations, can be explored and processed, and are a critical part of ecojustice and sustainability education.

A major challenge that arose in this research is to rethink youth apathy. The youth in this research clearly stated deep concerns about the state of the world, and some even expressed anxiety about not being sure what to do to take action. This speaks to the need for educators to not only introduce and make space for discussion on the content of the issues, but also include a discussion about what youth can do in their context. This challenges the idea that youth are not engaged in the issues, in fact, many of them are influenced by "action paralysis" (Connell, Fien, Lees, Sykes & Yencken, 1999). It is not about "explaining or changing young people's attitudes" (Partridge, 2008, p. 21) rather recognizing that the severity of issues like the climate crisis cannot be disputed (IPCC, 2014; Klein, 2014; Engelman, 2013; Folke, 2013; Reinsborough, 2010), and that "without a radical U-turn in education and politics, progression will quickly descend into

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survival" (Buchanan, 2013, para. 10). Ecojustice education and sustainability issues are necessarily social-political-economic education issues. If part of education's role is to ensure a socially just world (Giroux, 2007) then ecojustice education must be centered in discussions, including actions that can be taken locally and beyond. In these discussions, educators might consider the many ways conversations come up for youth as their "experiences of political and moral conversations in social media are relevant" (Andersson & Öhman, 2016, p.1) in discussions inside and beyond classrooms. This was brought up by several research participants who mentioned that they raise awareness of issues using creative social media posts/videos/discussions (Magic, Honey).

One of the research participants noted that the reaction they were most surprised about at PSYL was the relationship they built with their "spirit spot" – a daily practice at PSYL where youth find a spot on the land to sit quietly, reflect on their day, and notice the many beings and interactions around them for 20-30 minutes. Returning to the same spot for almost twenty days provides incredible education and personal growth opportunities – youth "not only learn about wildlife and its relationship to the trees, but they connect what they have seen with personal stories" (Gough, 2008a, p. 83). This builds on Leanne Simpson's (2014) reminder that education "comes from being enveloped by the land" (p. 9) and recognizing the many interconnections of beings in the many places humans live, occupy, and play in, and learn from. It also allows for infinite possibilities of lines of flight where connections can be made between the human, more-than-human, and other-than human worlds. Creating space for youth to engage in relationships beyond the four walls of a classroom opens the possibilities of learning from "a compassionate web of interdependent relationships that are different and valuable because of that difference" (Simpson, 2014, p. 11). This challenges the trend in education, including environmental, to

"privilege an anthropocentric gaze, which assumes autonomous human subjects as starting points for knowledge production" (Gough, 2015b, p.159) and creates space for decentring human experiences.

Overall in/formal educators, like those at PSYL, should be mindful of the stereotypes and connotations associated with youth "apathy" or inaction, and acknowledge that action paralysis exists and could be impacting youth. Time could be found in educational sessions to practice difficult conversations, as these topics will continue to arise in personal conversations inside and outside of the classroom. Care should be taken to acknowledge and address the embedded stereotypes in language that perpetuate binaries such as nature/culture, us/them, and "developed"/ "developing" (Clarke & Mcphie, 2015). "This narrative detachment of human culture from the earth that sustains it is manifested by stories that construct the 'cultivated' subject – the educated person – as an individual consciousness 'dislocated from nature" (Gough, 2015a, p. 236). Finding time for youth and educators to sit in nature and observe and experience belonging, explore and engage in the many relationships that exist in a place can help dissolve these binaries and narratives by engaging in a "place-responsible pedagogy of expression" (Clarke & McPhie, 2015, p. 16) in locations that "offer exceptional *opportunities* for the perception of the world as human-environment process" (p. 16, emphasis original).

5.4   Limitations

This study focused on intensity sampling (Chilisa, 2012) as participants in PSYL demonstrated an interest and care for environmental and social justice issues through the application process for PSYL, and specifically asked participants to provide examples of places where they have or would like to play leadership roles within their communities, and examples of issues they are

passionate about. Participants in this research project also demonstrated and voiced their experiences in sharing issues before PSYL, and desire to continue to do so when returning home. It is exciting to see this drive continue, and important to note that these experiences and expectations do not necessarily represent a predominant view among youth, particularly for those who have not had opportunities to learn about some of these issues in depth or in context, and the variety of ways to take leadership in communities, or for youth who do not have the means of taking these steps easily (i.e. lack of time, resources, support). The youth's experiences shared in this research are also difficult to generalize as their contexts vastly differ; they have spent time in separate continents, let alone countries, and likely have unique educational experiences.

One of the biggest challenges and limitations of this research was the sample population. Youth who attend PSYL typically come from a socioeconomically advantaged background as there are very few scholarships for participants to attend the program. The findings from this study are limited to the experiences of this socioeconomic group, which does not represent how all youth share and enact ecojustice values. The program was also embedded within the Pearson College context, which carries not only the legacy of the late Canadian Prime Minister, Lester B. Pearson who was the first proponent for the college, but also the philosophy of the United World Colleges which "makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future" (Pearson College, n.d.). These underlying philosophies were taken into account when doing this research, as a consistent reminder when analyzing/synthesizing the findings from this study about the importance of context and place. Despite these challenges, this research started a conversation about the importance of recognizing the underlying impact of language, and the implicit connotations and associations it holds, when engaging youth in ecojustice issues. It also might be used as an example of the possibilities of engaging youth in

ways outside of the typical environmental studies curriculum, and exploring ways to weave local action and collaboration into these issues.

Another challenge of completing this study was the limited amount of free time available during the PSYL program. Every day of the three-week program has activities, workshops and other curriculum, thus the Forum Theatre was held in parallel to other sessions so youth could self-select as participants, and the journal exercises were designed to be short – overall 45 minutes for those writing reflections (15 minutes per week). The post-program survey only took up to 15 minutes for the participants to complete.

5.5   Cycling On

A rhizome has no end, no beginning (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Similarly, in making this research rhizomatic, I do not attempt to tie the threads, or converge the lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) that have emerged in this process. Similar to the difficult conversations that were explored in the Forum Theatre and dataplay, the "object is not to convince but explore, where the goal is to seek the gray areas and spaces of ambivalent" (Miller, 2004, p. 387) where dichotomies dissolve, questions arise and further thought is encouraged. This diffractive methodology "is a critical practice of engagement, not a distance-learning practice of reflecting from afar" (Barad, 2007, p. 90) where youth voices were centered and invited to engage in a conversation about ecojustice issues.

Working on ecojustice and sustainability issues is time sensitive; there is a dire need for action, and education can play an important role in both raising awareness and working with people to find collaborative solutions that make sense for local contexts, and for global collaborations and complexities. There is a need for continued dialogue with youth to help

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uncover effective methods of engaging their peers in these issues and solutions. More work particularly could focus around the impact of role playing and trying out tough conversations in a setting like Forum Theatre, and how this could be incorporated not just into education settings outside of schools and provincially/nationally decided curriculum, but also within formal education contexts. Further research could explore the ways of incorporating action planning (Schusler, Krasny, Peters, & Decker, 2009) into ecojustice lessons, as Leonard (2013) reminds us that "the missing ingredient is not more information or more individual eco-perfectionists, it is collective engagement for political and structural change" (p. 251). Youth action can be supported both through understanding the contextual factors that influence whether or not youth take action on environmental issues, and developing ways to facilitate and introduce youth action (de Vreede, Warner, & Pitter, 2014). There is also a need to deeply examine current curriculum theories, methodologies and materials and the ways they perpetuate, not only a divide between nature/culture, but how it emphasizes the entrenched patterns of domination that ecojustice emphasizes and addresses (Martusewicz, Lowenstein, & Luppinnacci, 2011).

Just as the youth began their journeys towards acting on environmental and social justice issues in many places, they shared ecojustice issues in a variety of manners and contexts. They are committed continue to live/feel/try out ways of expressing their concerns and inciting their communities to take action. With this research there is no definitive end point; "because we are always *becoming*, we cannot produce a final result because a product is never produced and a conclusion is never reached" (Storm & Martin, 2013, p. 223). With that, the lines of this research will continue on, much like the cycle of salmon, bears, and trees, (Reimchen, 2001; Reimchen, Matthewson, Hocking, & Moran, 2003) where movements will swell, impact others, and continue to find a balance that serves the many, many communities on this planet.

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Appendices

Appendix A   Reflection Questions

A.1   Journal Questions

Reflection #1:

1. What does "ecojustice" mean to you?

2. Have you shared environmental or social justice issues with people you know? Have you faced any challenges when doing this?

Reflection #2:

1. Has your understanding of "ecojustice" changed since the seminar and group discussion?

2. How might you share ecojustice ideas with others at this time?

Reflection #3:

1. Thinking about your experience in the Forum Theatre session, or during other PSYL sessions, describe an interaction you've had sharing ecojustice with someone. Were there any challenges you faced?

2. Have there been any reactions or interactions that surprised you when sharing ecojustice with others in the last three weeks?

Post-Reflection Questions

1. Describe a time in the last month when you discussed an ecojustice issue with someone. What was their reaction?

2. Since this summer, have you changed the way you approach discussing ecojustice issues with others?

3. Do you have any recommendations on how to share ecojustice issues with friends, family, community, organizations, etc.?

A.2   Information Provided in the Front of Reflection Notebooks

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project!

This notebook is for recording your responses to three reflections during your time at PSYL. It will be collected by myself, Rebekah Parker, at the end of the program. Please do not use this as your everyday journal or diary for the program – this is specifically for reflections for the research project. I will distribute a sheet with reflection questions once per week for the three weeks of the program. They should take you 20 minutes to complete. Feel free to be creative with your response – you can write, draw, paint, etc. as long as your reflection is captured in this notebook! The questions you receive are a starting point – feel free to go beyond and tell stories about what you think is important.

        Please choose a pseudonym for yourself. This will be used to match your reflections during PSYL to those after PSYL, if you've agreed to do the follow-up reflection. Please do not use real names for any person you describe in this journal.

Pseudonym: _____

Appendix B Teaching Ecojustice to Youth Audiences in a Workshop Setting

The following is an updated outline of a workshop that explores ecojustice issues meant for youth 15-18 years old. I hope to use this at PSYL 2016. The following is an assumption that there will be only space in the schedule for one 2-hour workshop to cover ecojustice and climate change. In an ideal situation, a follow up workshop would be held to dive into some of the more intricate ecojustice themes (see Chapter 2.1) and explore possibilities of taking action to address ecojustice issues. Credit also goes to Natalie Gerum, who co-designed the original workshop with me. Many components have stayed the same from the original workshop, with the ecojustice aspects being tweaked.

Materials Needed:

- Earth Flag or Earth Ball

- Slides, Computer, Projector, Speakers

- Outdoor space for doing the science of climate change simulation, (or flat, large indoor space suitable for people running around) if not space available then the activity can be supplemented with a different interactive activity focused on climate change

Workshop Outline

- **Science of Climate Change Game[3]** (outdoor), 15 min.

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[3] This game was adapted based on a simulation used at the Sea to Sky Outdoor School for Sustainability Education on the Sunshine Coast, British Columbia. It is not an original creation of either of the co-leaders of this workshop

- Students stand in a circle. There is an object in the centre representing the earth (could be a flag, or an inflatable earth).

- Two to six participants, depending on group size, are chosen to represent the atmosphere. They stay in place and attempt to tag the other participants as they run past.

- Participants on the edge of the circle attempt to run to the centre (when the facilitator says "go"), touch the "earth", and then return to their place at the circle. If any get tagged by the atmosphere they join the inner circle of atmosphere around the earth. This symbolizes carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases trapping heat in the atmosphere.

- The game continues until all participants get caught in the atmosphere, indicating the world heating up.

- **The Math of Climate Change Video**, 5 min.

  - Show Bill McKibben video "Bill McKibben does the math" (Kinniburgh, 2013) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBpmzjql4yU

- **Free Write & Group Sharing**, 10 min.

  - Participants write about "When I hear about climate change I feel…"

  - Ask as a group if people feel comfortable with parts of what they wrote, record on chart paper

- **Discussion Group Conversations**, 15 min.

  - Respond to:

    - How is climate change impacting your community

    - What does climate change mean for you?

- **Examples of Climate Activism from PSYL Participants**, 10 min.

    o 1-3 PSYL participants or peer leaders share their experiences with climate activism

- **Break**, 10 min.

- **Introducing Ecojustice**, 10 min.

    o Introduce 3 basic themes that ecojustice explores

        ▪ Interdependency between local and global ecosystems (humans included!)
        ▪ Cultural analysis of Western Thinking
        ▪ The need to restore the cultural & environmental commons

- **Story of Stuff Video**, 15 min.

    o Show the original *Story of Stuff* video (Story of Stuff Project, 2009)

    https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GorqroigqM

- **Think, Pair, Share** 15 mim.

    o Students think individually, share with a partner, then share as a larger group about the following question: Where have you seen these themes come up in the Story of Stuff? In your home communities?

        ▪ Interdependencies between local and global ecosystems

        ▪ Western thinking (e.g. consumerism, separation of nature/culture)

        ▪ The need to restore the cultural & environmental commons

- **Taking the next step**, 10 min.

    o Generating ideas as a group about next steps to take action on these issues

    o Use 1-3 case studies as examples, depending on time