Caught not taught: Growing a compassionate sense of place...

(from *Developing a Compassionate Sense of Place:*
Environmental and social Conscientization in Environmental Organizations,
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Even if the people of our respective communities or of our country are acting in ways that we
believe are unworthy of human beings, we must still care enough for them so that their lives and
ours, their questions and ours, become inseparable.
Grace Lee Boggs

The current state of environmental degradation on a tremendous scale suggests that as a society fundamental changes are needed in order to reverse this trend of socio-ecological deterioration. Upon what dimensions of society should we focus for this change? Institutional structures? Underlying mental models or social paradigms? Personalized lifestyle practices?

The Bourdieusian argument is: *all of these*.

While that may be frustratingly comprehensive, it is because Bourdieu's answer is the sociological corollary to John Muir's famous dictum, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything in the universe." Personal practices are conditioned by institutional structures. But personal practices, accompanied by the thought behind them (unconscious though the thought might be), are also formative of the institutions and their legitimacy. Personal practices accumulate into collective practices – *my* recycling is irrelevant, *our* recycling has an effect. Household recycling affects the systems of waste collection. It generates attention to waste production, such as excessive packaging. It normalizes some mild attention to environmental concerns. Bourdieu uses concepts such as *fields*, *habitus*, and *doxa* to construct an overall sociological approach that can provide tools for specific analysis (Bourdieu, 1990, 1998a; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992), and which I have used here in considering social movements as sites of learning for an ecological *sens pratique*, a logic of practice underpinned by environmental habitus.

Bothered by what I perceive as the environmental movement's failure to capture the broader public imagination in the transformative ways I believe necessary, this study was intentionally oriented to suggest sociologically robust strategies for environmental social movements to better accomplish societal transformation. I believe that we need a better

understanding why environmentalism and environmental education have been failing, and that Bourdieu's sociological tools can supply the means for such an understanding, as well as suggestions for re-visioning (and revisioning) environmentalism.

This study has interrogated the theoretical concept of an ecological habitus, that is, embodied dispositions to live practically in ecologically appropriate ways. The study's genesis and culmination, however, are in the imagining of *a compassionate sense of place.* By this evocative term, I meant a form of a place-conscious ethos of caring: a compassionate sense of place is a field of care involving the intersection of self-awareness and practical attentiveness to the flourishing of socio-ecological relations.

Can a compassionate sense of place lead to a more environmentally effective logic of practice? Could it capture the public imagination? The latter question is unanswerable; only passing time will tell, although the participants in this study suggested that it was evocative for them at least. This study investigated the former question. To move toward an answer, it examined the concept of an ecological habitus, and queried what evidence there was for a compassionate sense of place among environmentalists.

 This conclusion begins with a summary of the research and the conclusions in the three papers. It then moves into two matters that remain outstanding. First, to what extent can caring or compassion be politicized? Second, how can educating for a compassionate sense of place be accomplished within social movements so that seeking environmental and social conscientization can occur?

Revisiting the Research

Education, social movements and environmental learning outlined a rationale for looking at learning outside of the conventional domains of formal education. Specifically, following educational critiques by Orr and Bowers, I concluded that environmental social movements might offer an alternative site of learning. Place-conscious, experiential and social movement learning were reviewed for understandings that could advance a sociologically robust approach to the incidental learning that must precede the routinization of environmental practices.

The practice of environmentalism: Creating ecological habitus drew on Bourdieu's

sociological approach to expand social movement theory. Given the relatively ineffectual position of environmentalism in North America, I argued that the environmental movement would be better served by conceptualizing itself as working to create an ecological habitus. Generated within a social field, habitus conveys cultural encoding yet in a non-deterministic manner that also acts back upon the conditions of its making. The habitus of a less-than-environmentally-aware society – our society – is problematic. Bourdieu's theory of practice was compared with Eyerman and Jamison's notion of social movements as cognitive praxis. The latter tends to overemphasize explicit knowledge constructions while sociologists like Bourdieu along with the literature on experiential and social movement learning, show that much is incidental and tacit. I argued that in order to develop the routinized pro-environmental practices that are necessary for long-term ecological sustainability, an ecologically more appropriate *sens pratique* would need to arise from an habitus attuned to ecological fields as well as social ones – the totality of living well in place. Environmental social movement organizations could serve as the social space in which this new logic of practice can be "caught" through the informal or incidental learning that occurs as a result of participation with social movement organizations.

Research on social movements has looked primarily at activists involved in campaigns. Since the environmental movement has maintained that the everyday lifestyle of the citizen is part of the environmental problem and part of the solution, we would do well to examine also these lifestyle practices and what generates them. To do that, *Habitus and cognitive praxis among environmentalists* used an ethnographic approach coupled with extensive formal interviews. The habituses of environmentally-active people in the Thunder Bay region were examined to see how they could form an environmental *sens pratique*. The habitus of these various people contained a number of common dispositions. These individuals endeavoured to live environmentally-responsibly, although there was considerable variation in the practice of being environmentally concerned. They were, however, keenly aware of their inconsistencies, sometimes seeing these as limitations imposed by the conditions of the broader society. In a variety of ways, these people sought to support their environmental dispositions, which I called "engaging in self-disposing" to represent the tacitness of their strategies to do so. Finally, there was a reflexive component, as their position in the social field of Thunder Bay, being environmentally concerned where most

were not, led to self-awareness. Thus, an environmental habitus included reflexivity. While at first glance this would appear to contradict the conceptualization of the habitus as pre-logical and embodied, in this case, the mis-fit of habitus with the field provided a force for self-awareness.

In their formulation of social movements as cognitive praxis, Eyerman and Jamison (1991) emphasized that social movements create new knowledge systems and are innovators of practices and institutions. In *Habitus and cognitive praxis among environmentalists*, I found that reflexivity was a core part of being environmentally active in society in which a routinized environmental sensitivity is contrary to the dominant logics of the milieu. This finding suggested a way of linking the *sens pratique* and cognitive praxis.

The analysis of the *sens pratique* was extended in *Caring for place? Possibilities for a compassionate sense of place among environmentalists.* "Living in place" and "caring" were used as heuristics in order to explore possible aspects of a place-attentive ethos of care. Whereas in most social discourse and practice, ecological dimensions are relegated to the fringes and social relations take precedence, environmentalists attempted to extend the zone of attention beyond social space to the entirety of "place." When considering the relations of the place, these environmentally-active persons included a wide mix of socio-ecological aspects. The local place – Thunder Bay – was acknowledged as connected to and affected by other places, but its specificity was as the locale in which to conduct their lives and their environmental praxis. The place, in its porous boundaries and complex of social and ecological processes and actants, served as the overarching field, that is, the socio-ecological space in which practices can be performed and habitus formed (or misformed and misfit in the local field).

Therefore, for these environmentally-active persons, place was experiential and practical. The "place" was a container for enactment of the practical logic of environmental lives, thus addressing some of the diversities of being environmentally oriented. However, environmentally-oriented dispositions preceded concern for the environmental facets of the place, rather than a focus on the place first which would then lead to environmental responsiveness. This finding contrasts with the emphasis on rootedness in the place-conscious environmental literature. Fortunately for our mobile society, it indicates that people can carry their environmental awareness into new places, or, that an ecological habitus can generate relevant logics of practice

that are also place-relevant. This finding does not erase the importance of place nor valorize universalized, abstracted or decontextualized knowledge. An ecologically sound logic of practice will still involve living well in place. And an ecological habitus must develop somehow.

Within their environmentally oriented practice, many of the study participants included aspects of caring. However, while caring was seen as leading to action and therefore considered beneficial in personal practice, it was also perceived as emotion and given less credibility than other strategies or frames of environmental organization. Overall, the complexity of the social and ecological relations of place coupled with a locale's links to other places and larger scales again generated an aspect of reflexive attention that could be guided into practical action. Despite the study participants' beliefs that caring or compassion was not the sort of symbolic capital that could be part of environmental movement strategies presented to others, the study did support the possibility that a compassionate sense of place may serve as an internalised logic to orient contemporary environmental practice and describe the logic of practice of an ecologically attentive and responsive society.

Pursuing a Compassionate Sense of Place

I have chosen to mingle the words "caring," "love," and "compassion" in this work. Caring still maintains its gendered, privatized and emotional connotations, in both academic discourse and public parlance, and the strength of this association may not be worth the fight to change.[1] The word and meanings associated with love have an extensive historical lineage, representing some of the most important moral narratives of numerous societies. As Millar and Hong-Key (2000) argue, love is not a set of rules, it is a set of practices, or dispositions. Similarly, Plumwood (2002b) explains,

> It is a mistake to think of love simply in terms of private relationships or episodes of internal emotion, like feeling strongly when you see a beautiful sunset. Love involves dispositions, including practices of caring for the loved one, and attempting to ensure that others' actions also exhibit that care.... Love of the land can be expressed at the public as well as the private level; at the public level also (indeed especially) love requires that we

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[1] That two very recent publications (McGregor, 2006; England, 2005) both problematize caring as woman's work, but proceed to disparage or trivialize men's forms of caring, gives me little hope for wresting the word from its discursive frame.

take care of the land, and see that others do as well (p. 356).

Finally, Bratton (1992) also used "love" (in its Christian form as *agape*) in developing a strong model of environmental praxis. Nevertheless, the word is highly overused, and to avoid syrupy connotations, I choose instead to use "compassion," which seemed to resonate with some study participants. Said one,

> I prefer [compassion] to saying "love"... I think love has to be written on little candy hearts. And while I agree with John Lennon and stuff like that, we've gone past that point. It's too hard to reclaim the word. But 'compassion' hasn't been misused as a word that much. (Richard, Interview)

Nevertheless, in the public parlance and in the ideas of people the words are likely different in connotation, rather than in denotation, which is why I have mingled their use here.

A significant caveat, however, is that while caring (or compassion) was perceived as a deep, positive disposition that often led to action, it was not seen as the sort of symbolic capital that could be part of the political action of presenting environmental movement goals for changed personal and collective practices and institutions. This leads to the first of two major outstanding matters.

Can a compassionate sense of place be politicized?

The main charge against the utility of compassion is that it is particular, and bound in specific, face-to-face relations. In addition, critics argue, compassion is nice, but not adequate as a more pragmatic approach to social organization able to address power and inequity. Ergo, compassion is not political.

Asked to describe their underlying orientations, many of the study participants acknowledged caring in ways that were reminiscent of the theoretical literature on the ethic of care. They spoke in terms of attention and responsiveness. Yet many care scholars have also begun to look at the political dimensions of an ethic of care (Curtin, 1999; Held, 2006; Noddings, 2002). Moving from the personal to the institutional in ethical deliberation is not new; ethicists have always been aware that social structures enhance or impede the ability to care for others or the opportunities for genuine human flourishing. Furthermore, religious ethicists have never limited moral prescriptions to face-to-face relations (e.g., Yoder, 1972). Caring is political, and

must be seen as more than mere personal character and private practice if it is to affect conditions of social organization that may cause harm or reduce care.

As I have described it, a compassionate sense of place is based on three fundamentals that enable it to move toward such politicization. First, it is based on the relational nature of existence, reflected in the rejection of the autonomous individual by care theorists and sociologists alike. Second, a compassionate sense of place is an ethos, not an ethic. A logic of practice originates in the relations of the field and habitus. While we have seen that this will include cognitive thought and reflexivity, it culminates in actions performed in the place. Third, a compassionate sense of place is based on the inclusion of the full range of socio-ecological processes. While modernity's mental models are often dichotomous (e.g., culture/nature, reason/emotion), what we see as hybrid conceptualizations (such as "socionature") are ontological unities. These relational, practical and socio-ecological fundamentals are the reasons for calling a compassionate sense of place a "field of care." It re-places humans in relation with other actants of the place.

Bourdieu's sociological approach is thoroughly relational and geared toward practice. In it, the shifting operations of the field involve trajectories produced by marshalling, using, and competing over resources and positions. The choices of what to attend to or how to respond to inferred or professed needs are political choices. The strategies then used for response involve resources (social, financial, cultural, and symbolic capital) that have effects on the field. For Bourdieu's analysis, historical trajectories are important, as the configuration of the existing field is the product of historical struggles to constitute it. If habitus is historically mediated, then changing conditions will still be met by an old habitus, until rupture (or reflexivity) forces change (Lane, 1997, p. 194). These are political processes and can help us understand how caring and places are political.

Calls to "place" are deployed as symbolic capital as position-takers try to elaborate themselves as the most legitimate to name the appropriate practices in the field. I have referred to the contestation over who constitutes a "Northerner," and who therefore gets to speaks for northern forests – timber companies or local environmentalists. This is just one example of discursive representation with place-making as symbolic capitalization. Another example is Trees Thunder Bay doing a presentation to Thunder Bay City Council against a proposed development

project. One city councillor told them the organization should stick to beautification work. Yet another example was the battle over Cloud Bay as wetland or as trailer park development. This incident led municipal governments along the Lake Superior shore to look more favourably on Ducks Unlimited's offer to help them develop proactive wetlands plans. These are contestations over place meanings; they are place making, in that they shift the trajectory of the field. The processes of these contestations eventually produce "environment" and reconfigure socio-ecological relations of a place.

Place is the site of the performance of practices deemed appropriate. Environ-mentally involved persons will argue practices need to be consistent with (what they perceive to be) the ecology of the place while other position-takers in the place will maintain their own versions of appropriateness, with different valuations (Trainor, 2006). Daniel Kemmis (1990) is one of the most articulate proponents of a politics grounded in place. A long-serving Montana state politician and city mayor, he writes with the nuance of experience. He includes a vision of the conjoined processes of socionatures, although without using such language (and with hardly a mention of environmentalism either). The politics of place "includes some mixture of the natural and the altered... The willing of our common world then becomes a kind of joint venture in which humans will part of the world and agree among themselves to allow nature to shape the remainder" (pp. 119-120). In his description, translated into Bourdieusian concepts, place and its politicization have the recursive effects of field and habitus. "This politics, which takes as its task the deliberate common inhabitation of a specific part of the earth, would require virtuous citizens, but it would also be instrumental in creating them" (Greear, 2005, p. 344).

Calls to place have been coupled with other resources to be recognized as symbolic resources. For Bourdieu, symbolic capital is that naming that allows recognition or misrecognition of what is valuable by the particular field (Meisenhelder, 1997).[2] It is little stretch to opine that in our current society, ecological processes are not as valued as the economic or other processes of

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[2] A substantial portion of determining the utility of Bourdieu's sociological tools for social movement scholars will be applying Bourdieu's forms of capital and field struggles to existing social movement theories of the mobilization of resources, or political opportunities. For example, framing of social movement messages is a contest over symbolic capital. What social movement scholars of framing have neglected so far is how such contestation is internalized by members, nonmembers, affiliates, and opponents. This, Crossley (2002) argued, will be the particularly productive use of Bourdieu's theory of practice for social movement scholars.

places. While ecological processes can be unrecognized, as they generally have been by most social actors according to the dominance of the modern social imaginary, they cannot be ignored forever. Ecologies of places – including such things as water quality, scientific evidence of chemical presence, resource decline from overextraction, visibility of impacts or change deemed unacceptable – eventually force us to pay attention. Ecological objects and processes are therefore actants in a place/on the field (e.g., Murphy, 2004).[3] The problem is that ecological feedback is often of longer time scales than social feedback loops, reducing the mis-fit of an un-ecological *sens pratique* in a place. Environmentalists try to reconfigure place-attentiveness to include a wider range of space-time feedback, including environmental change and intergenerational sustainability.

Ecological thinking, in its situated focus on webs of life or systems in which things are nonreductively interrelated, is a counterknowledge to the dominant social imaginary of modernity (Bowers, 1993). Place-conscious counterknowledges are heterodoxies, particularly in respect to the decontextualized, abstract knowledge that derives from European tradition (Goonatilike, 2006). Human societies understand their environment in a wildly diverse range of ways (Milton, 1997). Such range emphasizes that the predominate ways that Euro-American societies (including its social scientists who have not examined their taken-for-granted assumptions) construct the human-earth relationship are not the only ways, and that if sociology were to be open to diversity of global epistemology, its own epistemic doxa would be called into question.[4]

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[3] This understanding would require reconceptualizing nonhuman agency, and extending Bourdieu's theory. I have tried to do that by extending field beyond Bourdieu's conceptualization of it as social space, and bringing nonhuman and ecological processes into that field that shapes the ecological habitus. Bourdieu conceives of fields changing via the reconfiguration of capital accumulations and deployment. As he has conceptualized types of capital (social, financial, cultural and symbolic) it is difficult to see how these would relate to nonhuman actants who still have some effect on the field. However, since the logic of practice does not, as he argues, depend on the conscious intentions of the actors, one wonders if it can be applied to nonhuman agents, with agency that may not be teleological (Plumwood, 2002a; Walsh, Karsh & Ansell, 1994). This is considerably beyond the scope of this study, but I have emphasized such conceptualization in order to highlight that our academic habitus is thoroughly inscribed by its own assumptions, usually and unimaginatively drawing on modernist terms of reference (e.g., about nonhuman agency), and should itself be a site of reflexive analysis (Bell & Russell, 2000; Meisenhelder, 1997).

[4] Particularly trenchant counterknowledges include the diverse means by which indigenous peoples come to understand their lives as connected to the land. "Wisdom sits in places" wrote Basso (1996) in describing the practical worldview of southwest North American Apache. Most forms of indigenous knowledges dramatically

Because the varying valuations of relevant factors involved in the construction of place result in a multiplicity of place constructions, there will be no objectively normative way of living well environmentally. The result, as Norton and Hannon (1997) proposed would be the formation of many locally-based sustainable ethics: What is to be done in Thunder Bay? And in Kenora? And in Toronto? But these would be better grounded in a practical sense that derives from an ecological habitus, rather than principles and rules alone (Smith, 2001), especially since Thunder Bay, Kenora and Toronto have different needs and different links to other places and scales. Place meanings are politicized. However we orient to the place will involve political choices also.

Another way of looking at the political dimensions of a compassionate sense of place is to consider the invocation of compassion by politicians. In recent years this invocation has been done most deliberately by George Bush and the Republican Party of the United States, in presenting a "compassionate conservatism." In this discourse, "compassionate conservatives rephrase the embodied indignities of structural inequality as opportunities for individuals to reach out to each other, to build concrete human relations" (Berlant, 2004, p. 4). In its best forms, compassion in this model builds relationships, albeit relationships between the privileged/resourced and the less privileged. And in this form, compassion converts itself into charity, rather than structural change. But as Berlant's contributors show, compassion often does not even take its best forms. Notwithstanding the high-minded ethical principles that surround caring, love and compassion, analyses of charity and social work consistently demonstrate that it produces its own forms of oppression (McKnight, 1995).

None of the generally liberal-progressive contributors in Berlant's collection are willing to reject compassion, but all have difficulty finding ways out of the resulting cul-de-sac. In part, this is because they follow contemporary social formulations of compassion as emotion. They also frequently highlight the way that it can allow hierarchicalization in the caring relation.

> The essays of this volume... understand the concept [compassion] as *an emotion in operation*. In operation, compassion is a term denoting privilege: the sufferer is *over there*.

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contest the divisions of the modernized mindset. For many indigenous peoples, "living, non-living, and often times supernatural beings are not seen as constituting distinct and separate domains – certainly not two opposed spheres of nature and culture – and social relations are seen as encompassing more than humans" (Escobar, 2001, 151). See also Walsh, Karsh and Ansell (1994) for a Christian effort to take this perspective.

> You, the compassionate one, have a resource that would alleviate someone else's suffering. (Berlant, 2004, p. 4, italics in original)

This way of positioning compassion as emotion is problematic. Emotions have less status than what is called reason. The perception of emotion as irrational and impractical (see how reason and practice are conflated?) strictly limits its usefulness in public spheres.[5] Compassion is reduced to sentimentality. In addition, by asserting compassion as reproducing socially unequal relationships between cared-for and carer, Berlant and contributors see it as automatically setting up conditions of dependency, which is to be avoided in a world that prizes autonomy. Ethical individualism is the tradition of liberalism (Noddings, 2002; Plumwood, 2002a). Another of Berlant's contributors describes the ethical cul-de-sac,

> The problem is this: Given a shared practical orientation that treats the individual person as the fundamental unit for ethics, how ought one to respond to a man-made [sic] injustice that is neither any one person's fault nor the sort of thing that any one person can remedy? (Vogler, 2004, p. 32)

In this liberal world, Meyers (1998) showed, when one is in need of compassion, power is given to the one able to express compassion to decide how to provide.[6] The way out of this cul-de-sac is to acknowledge interdependence and reject the illusion of the autonomous individual actor, which is both a sociological and ecological verity. "Our interdependence is part of the original condition and in no way a product of some social contract" assert care theorists like Noddings (2002, p. 235).

Garber (2004) and Woodward (2004) both constructed genealogies of the word "compassion." Compassion has two senses, both building on the components "com" (with) and

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[5] Edelman (2004) points out that Kantian-inspired ethics mean that "love as a feeling cannot be imposed upon us as duty, since what we do by constraint of duty is by definition not done from love" (p. 170). Therefore, love or caring is erased from public ethics and enclosed within private relations (because it is conceived as feeling rather than reasoned act or choice of the will).

[6] For Bourdieu, this situation becomes an example of "symbolic violence," that of how dominant discourses are applied to generate misrecognition of the hows and whys of lived experiences of marginalization. That the "poor" are called "rich in spirit" or told they should be grateful for the largess of the rest of society are further examples of the oppression of symbolic violence.

"passion." An older sense, that of "suffering together" has long fallen out of use.[7] In the second sense, compassion means "emotion on behalf of" or "fellow feeling," which has degenerated into individualisms of emotion and response (Garber, 2004). Woodward pointed out how the second sense of compassion as "emotion turned toward one in distress" implies pity, and superiority, thus working against relationships involving justice, equality and care. Compassion becomes sentimentality again, and will be unable to interrogate power (Meyers, 1998; Yoder, 1972).

Woodward began to show a way out however, by drawing on Martha Nussbaum (1996) who has made a similar criticism of compassion. Nussbaum argued that any response to needs of others requires understanding first. Compassion is not a feeling, or not only; nor do attempts at understanding require any fellow-feelings. Nussbaum considers compassion a certain sort of reasoning about the well-being of others, which implies cognitive deliberation but also a situational "moral sense" more than pure ethical rationalization. Thus we are retuned to care theorists' emphasis on caring as response to need, which puts the onus on the carer to accurately apprehend the needs of the potentially cared-for. This is why Tronto (1993) insisted caring must be competent besides being attentive and responsive.

The point is that compassion can have a politicized dimension. Should we believe that people are situated within a web of socio-ecological relations, such a status means that the conditions of human lives are structured from without even as people act within them. Therefore, the professed needs of people are to some extent created by structural conditions that will need to be addressed, which is a political act (Mills, 1959). Noddings (2002) observed that a sense of justice is part of caring-about. Sociologically informed caring leads to the addressing of structural conditions that impede so that caring can proceed and human and nonhuman inhabitants can flourish. It is no stretch to extend the same practice to places and nature as does a compassionate

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[7] In this usage, "passion" conveys suffering, as in "the passion of Christ" during crucifixion. Mel Gibson's recent movie, *The Passion of Christ*, has been criticized in that its graphic depictions of Jesus' suffering missed the point of that suffering. Suffering is itself not redemptive or "good" although some good may come from tribulations. It is not to be sought. Similarly, evil is not to be done so that good can prevail. Nazi atrocities taught the human species a great deal about the evil of which we humans are capable in authoritarian structures, but that does not make those atrocities good, or to be replicated so that the lesson can be relearned (Nelson, 2004). Furthermore, imitation of Christ and love of neighbour and enemy lead to the duty of pacifism and nonviolence (Cady, 1989; DeLay, 1996b; Yoder, 1972). This is a difficult act of the will, no mere feeling or sentimentality.

sense of place. Therefore, a compassionate sense of place is inherently politicized or it is no genuine compassion and only a limited sense of place. A compassionate sense of place situates us, such that such things that come into prominence are those things that affect place, deleteriously and otherwise. Caring takes particular forms when it is linked to place-awareness that includes an intersubjective social *and* ecological orientation.

Caring was seen by the research participants as a higher-level moral orientation – deeply authentic – and disposed to action, yet considered an ineffective frame for environmental improvement because of its construction as an emotion, as impractical and weak, and its devaluation in the modern imagination. This is the ecological care dilemma, as constructed by our societal understanding. We need better language for caring, says Noddings, just as we need a better language and way of understanding how to describe the intimate connections of social and ecological relations of place.

Fortunately, an environmental logic of practice included reflexivity. A compassionate sense of place *must* have an analysis. Caring requires attentiveness to lived experience, including experience of institutions, social practices, and the effects of ruling relations. In particular, resolving the ecological care dilemma will include learning how to do care for that which does not communicate responsiveness, attentiveness, or reciprocal caring for us. Plumwood (2002a) argues that nature *is* responsive and communicative, but that we are socially trained to hear human-style communication and little able to infer nature's needs. In many parts of the world the community includes more than just humans (Curtin, 1999; Milton, 1997). An ecological habitus in the North American context could learn from those worldviews (Basso, 1996; Bowers, 1993; Goonatilake, 2006). "Habitus' non-reflexiveness does not entail that it absolutely cannot surface to awareness" (Lau, 2004, p. 376). However, reflexivity *plus* imagination is needed to overcome habitus' conservative acceptance of the existing doxa (Karakayali, 2004). So while habitus involves internalisation, the element of self-awareness or reflexivity provides an entry for more deliberate learning, especially if the movement organizations frame their organizational praxis in ways that facilitate both reflection on and internalisation of an ecological *sens pratique*. A compassionate sense of place could to be taught (or better yet, caught) by environmental movement organizations, if environmental social movement organizations will envision themselves as

communities of practice (Fenwick, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Educating for a compassionate sense of place

All that remains is to consider how to educate for a compassionate sense of place, and especially, how social movements can deliberately constitute themselves as fields within which an ecological habitus can form. While social movements can be intentional about their educative efforts, this project has focused upon the incidental learning that may also contribute to such conscientization. *The practice of environmentalism* theorizes incidental learning in social movements through movements as impacts upon the habitus, while *Habitus and cognitive praxis among environmentalists* provides further support through empirical analysis.

As presented in *The practice of environmentalism*, learning of an ecological logic of practice involves four components. First, it requires details for ecologically sound lifestyle practices that reduce impact and reinvigorate ecosystems. However, insofar as any sort of environmental education stops at such details, even if in accord with the socio-ecological place, environmental transformation will remain stunted. Consequently, second, it requires a critique of the social structures that inhibit an ecologically sound lifestyle. We need an analysis of the specific ways that social structures impact efforts to be more environmentally appropriate, such as the treadmill of production (Schnaiberg, 1980).

Third, education for an eco-logic of practice requires coming to understand how social conditions of the field and internalised dispositions co-generate one's lived experience. I have claimed that it is difficult to live consistent with environmental beliefs because the un-ecological social field structures the habitus and a habitus not aligned with the social milieu will experience discomfit. By so understanding these forces, we will better understand and resist the effects of "structuring structures" (Bourdieu, 1990). In other words, a sociological consciousness is a necessary support for the transformative imagining of a compassionate sense of place.

Finally, an ecological habitus will thrive only in a field that supports its maintenance. Individuals need to find, or organizations need to create such fields. Environmental social movement organizations would do well to consider themselves as communities of practice in accord with what we now understand about Bourdieu's theory of practice applied to

environmental praxis. Learning communities in which internalisation of the heterodoxy of environmental praxis is supported are in accord with learning theory that emphasises the socially situated character of learning.

So far, however, these four components say nothing about the specific forms of environmental praxis. A compassionate sense of place is about "living well in place" or living in accord with the socio-ecological parameters of a place. As documented in *Caring for place?*, in the *sens pratique* of the environmentally-active participants of this study, place and caring were experiential, practical and performative. Education for these things should be compatible with the character of its content (DeLay, 1996a), that is, experiential and wherein learners have opportunities for practicing actual caring. In this research, place and caring were problematic in that both are particular, therefore both are devalued by the modern social imaginary.

Since both caring and place are experiential and practice-based, we will start with experiential learning. One can hardly talk about experience without discussing place. This is what Doug expressed in a comment on why he believes southern Ontario should recycle, but it does not matter in Thunder Bay.

> Is society different in the North? No, [it is] circumstances. Circumstance drives society's values... I've [been] thinking – does place drive society? To some extent you're investigating society's value of place, and I'm suggesting that... place/circumstance *defines* [emphasized] people's values, to a large extent. There's this phenomenal difference between Northwest Ontario and Southeast Ontario, and not that the people are different, but the circumstance and place are different. (Doug, Interview)

By conflating place and circumstance, Doug asserted that experience is contextual to a locale, and that such contextualization mattered greatly. Experiential learning is based on the assumption that we are embodied creatures who build knowledge upon experience that is related to both thought and embodiment (Fenwick, 2000; Preston, 2003). While much experiential learning theory assumes a process of personal reflection, Le Cornu (2005) demonstrated the importance of internalisation, which would be the process by which the habitus is shaped and reshaped. That we are embodied means we are also emplaced. Although all education takes place somewhere, place-conscious education puts emphasis on local places as at least part of the content and process of education (Gruenewald, 2003). Place-conscious education is experiential.

Within that experientialism, the study participants acknowledged that their place

awareness recognized Thunder Bay's links to other places. Any place awareness that does not attend to the mobility of the contemporary world is foolish. The research participants said that, for them, an environmental awareness led from "this place matters" to "this place matters environmentally," rather than starting with place and moving toward environmental attentiveness. The linkages and fluidity of place in the global cannot be denied. Even bioregionalists acknowledge this. In an excellent analysis of "bioregional possibilities" in Vermont, Klyza (1999) observed, "Without serious attention to these trends toward globalization, moving in a bioregional direction in any given locale will have inconsequential results" (p. 92). Similarly, Thomashow acknowledged that "Strong communities allow for permeable boundaries, and recognize the connections between places as intrinsic to the well-being of any one place" (Thomashow, 1999, p. 129). Therefore, place attentiveness – the "conceptual skills to juxtapose scales, the imaginative faculties... and the compassion" – can be part of a "cosmopolitan bioregionalism" (p. 130). It seems possible that a place attentiveness can travel between places, leading to responsiveness and competence not bound to any specific place (Cuthbertson, Heine & Whitson, 1996).

These are among the reasons, Gruenewald (2003) linked place-conscious education and critical pedagogy. Place-based education has tended to be rural, and nature-oriented. However, and crucially, since most Canadians (80%) and most of the world's human population (50%) now live in cities, we need a sense of place in human-dominated environments too. In an early articulation of a compassionate sense of place, I called this the task that of "remystifying the city."

> To remystify the city is to reawaken a sense of wonder and to alert ourselves to the marvels in familiar things. It is to blur the mental boundaries between "Nature" and "Civilization" so that we have an understanding of ourselves and our human-built environments as part of the natural world. It is to understand that human activities are founded upon the earth's systems, that cities are not isolated islands where these processes are not in operation. It is to instill a compassionate sense of place that consciously links care of self and the broader world, both human and non-human. Remystifying the city and connecting to the place we live is a beginning in learning to live with the land. (Haluza-DeLay, 1997, p. 5).

That this idea resonates with others is evidenced by the number of reprints of the article, and that it has been translated into French and Spanish and is often downloaded from the *Green Teacher* website.

Gruenewald (2003) continued by characterizing critical pedagogy as being primarily

urban-based, with little attention to the environment (at least in the American context, although the Canadian, British and Australian literature is different, he says). Critical pedagogy has focused mostly on human oppression, multiculturalism, colonization, and other dimensions of social justice. These characteristic differences need not be, Gruenewald argued: place-conscious education and critical pedagogy have "clear areas of overlap, such as the importance of situated context and the goal of social transformation" (p. 4). This "critical pedagogy of place" would do the best of both worlds. It would lead to conscientization, that is, "becoming more fully human through transforming the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 5), and foreground the study of place as "politicized, social [sic] constructions that often marginalize individuals, groups, as well as ecosystems" (p. 7). Ultimately, argued Gruenewald, this approach would lead to attention to the complex of socio-ecological processes of places (what he terms "reinhabitation") instead of decontextualized knowledge abstractions, and recognizing, addressing and reconciling exploitation (which he calls "decolonization").

There is a long way to go toward creating this mix of just and caring social and ecological relations of place. In this study, while Aboriginal peoples make up a considerable portion of Thunder Bay's human population (and larger proportion across Northern Ontario), there was little attention to them within environmental groups, little participation by Aboriginal peoples in ENGOs, and, it seemed, little awareness of the complex and ongoing history of Canada's colonial interactions. Environmentalists, perhaps still subsidized by the idealization of "the ecological Indian" (Krech, 1999), seemed to see Aboriginal nations and agencies exclusively in terms of allies for environmental preservation, rather than actors in their own right with different sets of intentions and needs (see also, Ballamingie, 2006 for a very focused analysis of this process in a different part of Ontario).

For this reason, I see Gruenewald's "critical pedagogy of place" as an important part of the theoretical language of a compassionate sense of place. We need better analyses of the intersection of environmental concerns and social and spatial marginalization. Despite my effort to observe conceptions of place that reflect contemporary realities of mobility and globalization, place attentiveness is still about locales, albeit with extra-local connections. A compassionate sense of place will notice histories still present on the land, and those who have been marginalized.

Remember that in Bourdieusian sociology a field is constituted by historical trajectories manifesting in current albeit shifting positions, and that I have already observed that sociologically informed caring leads to the addressing of structural conditions that impede so that caring can proceed and human and nonhuman place inhabitants can flourish. Caring and justice walk hand in hand. A "critical pedagogy of place" synthesizes diverse but complementary methodologies in concert with a genuinely and powerfully compassionate sense of place.

Gruenewald (2003) made a link to compassion, saying that for children to flourish and for the environment to be valued, they must learn to love the earth (p. 8). He emphasized that place attentiveness involves building relationships with places and their component parts and cultivating empathy. Critical pedagogy is analytic, while place-consciousness is relational, which is why compassion is productive as it includes analysis but goes beyond it.

Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that critical pedagogy has *become* analytical. Darder (2002) calls Paulo Freire's work a "pedagogy of love." Freire wrote extensively and deliberately about love, as grounding revolutionary praxis and the dialogical model of education.

> Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for men [sic]. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself.... Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to other men. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause – the cause of liberation.... As an act of bravery, love cannot be sentimental.... It must generate other acts of freedom; otherwise, it is not love.... (Freire, 1983, pp. 78-79)

The point is not that compassion tells you what to do – that would be the "banking model" of education – but that it provides an orientation – toward relationships and for action. For Freire, a pedagogy of the oppressed is a pedagogy of hope, freedom, love, humility and faith that frees the oppressor as much as it frees the oppressed.[8] These are acts of the imagination. Karakayali (2004)

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[8] Roberts (2000) claims that for Freire "critical consciousness [conscientization] not only implies an ability to transform the world, but a *self-conscious, reflective, rational* process of change" (p. 48, italics in original). He gives little notice of the love, humility, hope and so on that Freire placed at the centre of dialogical education in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Perhaps this is typical of later critical pedagogues. Roberts is one of the few who seem to directly address Bowers' criticisms of critical pedagogy and Freire himself head on. While Bowers repeatedly criticizes the colonization of other epistemologies by Western liberalism even in Freiran emancipatory education (Bowers, 1993; Bowers & Apffell-Marglin, 2005), Roberts himself emphasizes Freire's system of rational and cognitive deliberateness.

acknowledges the value in Bourdieu's sociology, but feels that only by linking it to Adorno's critical attentiveness can the imagination be freed to envision alternative relations. Imagination is central to understanding an other, which is key to attentiveness and competent response.[9] Such imagination is even more important when relationships are extended to places and nonhuman others.

We need "practice in caring," that is, we need practice in listening in order to be attentive, and practice in responding, assert many theorists (Meyers, 1998; Noddings, 2002; Ortega & Ruiz, 1999, 2001). Caring people can become global citizens who consider whose place will be affected, if not-in-my-backyard, then not-in-anyone's-backyard (Norton & Hannon, 1997). A local sense of place could expand into a global sense of place (Massey, 1997) and compassion can assist this process (Bratton, 1992). Noddings (2002, 2005) also emphasized place attentiveness in her view of educating for the caring response.

> The problems are complex and require complex solutions, but solutions are unlikely to be found unless our young people become global citizens in the truest sense. They have to *care* about their homeplaces and *those of others*, and they have to *care enough to engage* in serious study of both natural and political problems. (Noddings, 2005, p. 66, emphasis added)

Place-conscious education is a form of educating for caring because of its focus on paying attention and responding appropriately to the circumstance. In contrast, educating in the decontextualized form that predominates – educating for anywhere – is really educating for nowhere (Noddings, 2002, p. 171).

Still, McGregor (2006) questioned whether "care" is adequate for ecological citizenship. This is primarily because of its association with women. Since women currently do a disproportionate amount of the sustainability work, McGregor worried that this will increase that load. In addition, she questioned whether an ethic of care can interrogate power, a concern that I have tried to allay above. I assert, as McGregor observed, "The way to challenge the fact that care is 'irrelevant to the moral life of the powerful' (Tronto, 1993, p. 89) is not to claim it as women's special gift but, rather, to assert it as a political ideal that no democratic and sustainable

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[9] Ortega and Minquez (1991, 2001) also draw on Adorno to present compassion as the only effective ground for a just and globally aware moral education.

society can do without" (p. 235).

Caring-for becomes more difficult as relations are more extended. The size and interrelatedness of the global world is too much for a form of individuated caring. Even the complexity of the total of socio-ecological relations of a local place is too much for individuated caring. "The better solution is to spread caring, like literacy, over the whole population" (Noddings, 2002, p. 124). In this way, I see caring as disposition, which manifests in practice, and argue for environmental organizations and others to actively engage in reshaping the existing habitus that undermines caring practices and place-attentiveness. Caring and place are both experiential and practical. Education systems and social movements would do well to keep this in mind. Educating for caring will lead to caring as central to this self (what Noddings called the "habitual self"). Research consistently shows that learning to care seems to require experiences of being cared-for, as learning to attend to places seems to require relationships to animals, places or pieces of nature, perhaps as early childhood experiences.

Theories of learning, even those of experiential learning, can overemphasize the cognitive dimension of learning (Le Cornu, 2005). In her view and mine, learning should be understood as "the gradual transformation of knowledge into *knowing"* (p. 175), wherein explicit knowledge becomes tacit knowledge. The routinization of environmental praxis – "living environmentally without trying" (Bell, 2004, p. 248) – via an ecological habitus, involves "a deepening internalisation to the point that people and their 'knowing' are totally integrated one with the other" (Le Cornu, 2005, p. 175). This would mean that un-environmental practices – on the job or at a music festival or in someone's home – would sit uncomfortably. As shown in *Habitus and cognitive praxis among environmentalists*, feedback from this mis-fit was apprehended by the habitus and felt bodily, generating reflexive analysis. Such analysis associated the person with the environmental movement (although it did not necessarily lead to a self-identify as an "environmentalist"), all of which fed back into the habitus, future practices, and more reflexive attention to situated practice. Environmental organizations helped put caring into practice. This helped create further conditions for more caring.

This study presents support for the view that environmental organizations can enhance such incidental learning by construing themselves as communities of practice, or fields upon which

ecological habituations are strengthened, maintained and supported in an unecological society.

Researchers have noticed that much learning in social movements is tacit. Most research has focused on learning in activist campaigns, where crystallizing events may provide transformative learning and strategic deliberation. Yet everyday involvement of the non-activist kind is also experience that shapes internalisations. There was learning in the environmental involvement, although it was difficult to assess or illuminate precisely. These processes, however take place over long periods of time (longer than the study period). Furthermore, their environmental involvements are only a portion of total personal involvement with diverse fields in Thunder Bay, all of which have effects on internalized habitus. Learning in involvement with environmental organizations was incidental rather than deliberate, often consisting of structuring of the habitus rather than focused on cognitive processes. By associating with different people, facts, and ideas, and entering into different sets of relations with a fuller range of socio-ecological actants, people who join environmental organizations may gradually alter their own logic of practice.

However, this study is open to criticism similar to the literature on social movement learning. Like most of that literature, this study also does not clearly show processes of learning in action. The "action" – of both social movement involvement, and of learning – was dilute. "The study of the consequences of social movements is one of the most neglected topics in the literature" (Guigni, McAdam, & Tilly, 1999, p. xv). As noted, many potential outcomes are hard to make visible with surety; this is especially true of personal or cultural change *in process*. Easiest to see are political achievements, which is why so much social movement research has focused on politics in contention.

On the other hand, in its articulation of habitus in social movements, this study has contributed to the literature on social movements. It also lays a solid foundation for further research for myself or other researchers, by providing a conceptual basis for incidental learning as the interplay of habitus in the field created by movements and other actors. Future research could attempt to follow those persons who encounter movement organizations, beginning early in their encounter. Such research should focus more deliberately on incidental learning, perusing the literature for methodological advice.

Movements aim to create social change, not just engage in political contention. That this change is not solely cognitive is evidenced by research on learning in social movements. This literature highlights the often tacit character of learning. That observation and this research lend support to utilization of Bourdieu's theory of practice: specifically, that social movements can be the field within which dispositions consistent with the new reality promulgated by movement framing can form and take root. Therefore, Bourdieu provides a robust theoretical framework for movement organizations to be more intentional about their field-based learning strategies. Ultimately, the goal of environmental social movement organizations is an ecologically sound logic of practice, underlain by the routinization embodied in an ecological habitus.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this research is clear: a compassionate sense of place is something to be caught not taught. In an unecological society, existing habituations need to be shaken, not merely stirred. Ecological lifestyles and altered social structures will be an ever-so-difficult proposal in the existing conditions of the social field. This situation strongly emphasizes the need for transformative, experiential pedagogy to be part of environmental social movements. The pedagogy – to change habitus and impact fields – must do more than chip at private social practices. Most importantly, environmental movements cannot cause change if a pedagogy is not in place to create conscientization in members and the public. Environmental movements, then, must see themselves engaged in an effort at education for ecological praxis melding theory, lifestyle, habitus, community, structure, agency, reason, and habituation to form a new habitus.

A compassionate sense of place links the person and their surroundings. From it flows a desire to make relationships more full and genuine, including relationships with the whole earth, linking ecological sensitivity and social justice in a web of concerns. Care for others logically includes care for the air we all breathe, or providing healthy, unpoisoned food and water for others to consume, or to redress the inequalities that reduce both social and environmental flourishing. A compassionate sense of place goes even further to extend moral consideration to the planet upon which we depend, and an active response to improve the complex of social and ecological relations of all.

In conclusion, more than a logic of the social world is needed to develop a new and ecological habitus. The world, being historically and materially situated, is constructed and reconstructed by the dominant habitus, which is unecological at best. The purpose is to take what we know to be the existent logic of practice and analyze it with a belief that change needs to happen. It is to take alternative, even liminal, perspectives of ecologically sound habitus and couple them to a new logic of practice that can point to ways of doing life in this place better. It is to move beyond a sociological consciousness to a compassionate sense of place. The task here has been what Bourdieu (1998b) argued for in his later writings: for social scientists to be involved with social movements and create new forms of symbolic action. My imagined result is that this can translate into the altered habitus that is necessary for adequately addressing our world's environmental and social problems.

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