

Julie Souza's Analytic Journal

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Climate Change and Environmental Justice

December 18, 2020

Opening Reflection

1. In 50 years I expect the world to still be working through the consequences of current and past actions, but continuing to make exponentially greater changes for communities and environments around the world. I imagine that this would manifest itself in responsible governing bodies, an involved public, and passionate innovators. Governing bodies may take themselves under democracy, socialism, etc., but whatever may function best for certain nations must have a proper checking and balance system under an international agreement that aims to uphold certain values (similar to the UN Sustainability Goals). Every country will join to ensure that values are upheld because everyone needs to participate in this collective action for it to function. Some of the challenges I envision that the world will still be facing are extreme natural disasters, mass extinctions, and more. This will surely lead to conflict and I do not naively believe that this global community will form seamlessly. An involved public who has a transparent relationship with their government can aid in minimizing conflict. Peaceful protests, local sit-ins, and more keep the public in-tune to where the government leads its people. This cannot become a reality without recognizing the injustices faced by those in the past and present. How capitalism harms certain communities, historic injustices embedded in certain systems, and more must still be acknowledged. I envision that in 50 years we are still working to break down and disrupt the ways systemic injustices have harmed others and the environment. I imagine that there will still be the hard work of accountability, but that the difficulty of accepting the reality of these injustices has already been done. To get to this point there will be importance put on passionate innovators. From activists to scientists, anyone who acknowledges the importance of human rights and its intersection with sustainability will go on to do significant things (such as participate in collective action). Funding towards initiatives such as solar geoengineering, clean

energy, gender equality, and more will be a global collaboration. Ultimately the recognition of past injustices, the constant work to challenge preconceived notions, and collective action will be what motivates the world forward in 50 years.

2. Societies change due to numerous aspects; from cultures to historic events and the list goes on. Changes happen very slowly as many are reluctant to change. However, there are things that can make societies change quickly, such as pandemics. The COVID-19 pandemic changed societies in a large way since hygiene and cleanliness have entered the forefront of everyone's mind. However, we will not see the long lasting effects of this change for a while because a whole generation will have grown up being shaped by this event. They may form certain values or notions concerning socializing, problem solving, and more that will be influenced by this pandemic. So, even in sudden changes there are long lasting effects that continually change a society for long periods of time.

Societies also change by external factors such as technological advancements. Technological advancements, such as the creation of the smartphone, can transform societies. The modern day smartphone did not just appear, rather many models and previous technologies (eg. iPod) led to where we are today. The creation of the smartphone led to eventual widespread use of the internet for accessing and sharing information. Previously information was shared through slower, gate-kept methods (that is not to say information is still not gate-kept). Gate-keeping is an example of how slow societies change because while modern day technology widespread information, we still have gate-kept information, so new changes do not necessarily change everything about society. Technological advancements represent just one way societies change, as there are many other ways, from population fluctuation to cultural trends.

3. False information presented through media outlets or "fake news" is dangerous since its

biased, but shown as truth. In Schellenberger's letter he claims, "Climate change is not making natural disasters worse". Before detailing whether this is true or not (spoiler: its false), I would like to point out he makes this claim without addressing the opposing side (in this case the IPCC). One quick google search reveals that the IPCC has clearly stated that climate change IS linked to temperature extremes, drought, wildfires, etc. (Climate Feedback). Schellenberger also fails to note what is making natural disasters worse if its not climate change. This showcases that he is making large claims without properly supporting his argument. The danger in making this claim is he is discrediting numerous scientists, researchers, etc. to push his own agenda to the reader. Instead of supporting his own argument he goes on about "why we have been fooled?" which takes attention away from any flaws in his argument and moves it to blaming his opposing party (environmentalists). He posted his letter on Forbes, but had it taken down for self-promotion of his book, which reveals at least part of his motive which is to get people to read his book. The sensationalism grabs people's attention. Instead of just constructing a sound argument to challenge his concerns with his colleagues, he takes to the public in a shallow attempt for credibility and support.

4. I would hope that my students would assess this open letter as a 5-6 because it has good intentions, but vague language. It asks for "halt of fossil fuel use" and "safeguard democracy" and while those are notions to get behind, it also does not account for those that will lose their jobs due to the collapse of that industry or how to protect democracy/how that would look globally/if democracy works best in every nation. I lack the proper information to fully support this letter as it does properly elaborate.

Analytic Journal Entry 1

This paper will summarize Garrett Hardin's text, *Tragedy of the Commons*, connect it to Marie-Eve Mallet's '*Boys Will Be Boys: Alberta's Toxic Oil Culture*' and Richie Havens' song "What You Going To Do About Me" and end with my opinions on Hardin's article. The *Tragedy of the Commons* demonstrates the problem of population as related to finite resources. Hardin gives his own opinions about how to tackle this by discussing issues of freedom, pollution, and morality and offers solutions of collective conscious and mutual coercion. While Hardin favors mutual coercion he fails to recognize the reality of corrupt authority. Mallet brings attention to this by noting the toxic masculine culture within oil fields and the unsafe working conditions. Havens brings attention to this by calling out the discrimination within the working class that is specifically kept in place to uphold a corrupt system. Hardin's problematic ideals contribute to why I disagree with his argument. Hardin does not believe every person was born with an equal right to the commons and his focus on overpopulation inherently means he does not believe in basic human rights for all and has ecofascism ideas.

Hardin's piece begins with questioning how can, "the greatest good for the greatest number" (Hardin, 1968, 1243) be actualized. He claims that population cannot be the greatest in a finite world because it is mathematically impossible. Ultimately the population problem arises as the quality of goods cannot upkeep with growing numbers for optimization. The more population grows, the worse quality and less share for each individual in the commons. Pollution becomes a consequence of this and Hardin stands against independent, rational, free enterprises. In other words, he believes that limiting others in their freedom to the commons is inevitable. Hardin offers two solutions to the tragedy of the commons: collective conscious and mutual coercion. He ultimately goes against collective consciousness because it communicates two

messages: if one does not participate as told they will be condemned, but if you do participate as told then this person will be foolish for not exploiting the commons. In other words, it cannot realistically function without an authoritative figure ensuring everyone participates according to mutual coercion. Mutual coercion allows for the proper division of the commons, but comes at the cost of limiting individual freedom. Hardin ends his paper by stating, “Freedom to breed will bring ruin to all” (Hardin, 1968, 1248) and urges his readers to accept this fact to put an end to the tragedy of the commons.

Mallet’s article opposes Hardin’s piece because it demonstrates the negatives of mutual coercion and acts as a feminist perspective on the commons. There are few women that are in this line of work because sexual assault is common and its easier to not hire women than to deal with the sexual assault cases (Mallet, 2017). Already this represents an example of how mutual coercion has failed because the authoritative figures are meant to ensure the safety of every person on the job, but instead they let these cases be swept under the rug, so that they can continue to make money, avoid deconstructing the toxic work culture, and tackle the larger problem of equality. The feminist perspective on the commons would argue that birthcontrol, abortions, and knowledge would need to be considered commons to protect women in situations such as this one (Federici, 2011). The industry has mutually agreed upon the acceptance of this behavior and Mallet’s piece acts as a feminist perspective on the commons because she is spreading her knowledge of her experiences to protect other women in the industry and spread awareness of this issue. Mallet does not complement Hardin because he believes that not everyone should have equal access to the commons, but Mallet, by simply writing this piece, has given every person, not just women, access to the knowledge of the mistreatment of women in the petroleum industry.

Havens' song has some similarities to Mallet's piece because Havens demonstrates how corrupt authoritative powers impact air, food, and water, but also how people of color are negatively affected by the destruction of the environment. "What You Going To Do About Me" starts with, "You poison my sweet waters; you chop down my green trees And the food you feed my children is the cause of that ill disease" (Havens, 1971, 00:28-00:41) which is in reference to the authority (such as local and national governments) that control the management of the commons. Already Havens has described how the management of water, air, and food has diminished in quality despite participating in mutual coercion. Hardin states that mutually agreeing upon authority to manage the commons will mitigate tragedy, but Havens quite simply proves this to not be true. There are people that still suffer from pollution despite participating in mutual coercion. Havens continues by singing, "I feel just like a stranger in the land where I was born... Because your rules and regulations don't do the things for me" (Havens, 1971, 02:45-0:3:05). It is significant to mention that Richie Havens is a black man and the injustices he sings about are still experienced by people of color to this day. Hardin would argue that the rules and regulations are meant to manage the people and access to the commons. Havens states that the rules and regulations are pointless when the commons are still polluted and disproportionately affect him and his community. "What You Going To Do About Me" goes against Hardin's text because Havens values equal access to clean, safe water, food, and air.

The conversation concerning managing finite natural resources in a growing population is a valuable one, but Hardin's main argument concerning limiting the freedom to breed does not present a worthwhile contribution. As Mallet and Havens have demonstrated, mutual coercion does not benefit all peoples. Perhaps Hardin would not be concerned with this since he states, "To couple the concept of freedom to breed with the belief that everyone born has an equal right

to the commons is to lock the world into a tragic course of action” (Hardin, 1968, 1246).

Ultimately Hardin’s argument aligns with ecofascism. Ecofascism is the idea that the only way to preserve the Earth is to reduce human population (Darby, 2019). This way of thinking presents itself as problematic because in practice it shows itself in anti-immigration laws, single-child policies, and more that ultimately limits people’s freedom and often marginalized people. A very telling aspect of ecofascism is that many white supremacist align with this ideal (Darby, 2019). Not only should ecofascism be rejected, but analyzing it in texts such as Hardin’s should be done so that these ways of thinking do not become acceptable. I still find it valuable to discuss management of natural resources because authoritative forces such as governing bodies do still use tactics such as mutual coercion to protect the commons, but recognizing other opinions that do not have ecofascism ties will present options that do not limit freedom to breed.

The *Tragedy of the Commons* harps on limiting freedom to breed to manage the commons, but Mallet and Havens have demonstrated how that way of thinking harms specific groups of people and I urge every person to identify problematic ideals such as ecofascism in environmental texts to work towards solutions that keep the freedom to breed for all peoples.

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Analytic Journal Entry 2

Jarrett Murphy's article, *The Summer of 2019 is Over but the Heat Risk to NYC is Not Going Away*, demonstrates how the heat wave issue in New York City is an environmental injustice. In many ways this problem is similar to, *The Case For Letting Malibu Burn*, by Mike Davis. Wealthy areas, in both California and New York, are able to shield themselves, whether in the form of resources as related to fire safety or AC units, from this environmental issue, wildfires or heat waves. Considering which communities suffer as a result of these environmental problems, such as low income areas, is crucial to understand them as environmental injustices. I turn to the concept of "Inverted Quarantine" as explained by Andrew Szasz to understand those that can afford to rebuild from environmental issues and those that can't afford to lose their homes. I find that Murphy and Davis needed to clearly communicate to the reader that these issues are specifically environmental injustices that require a response that addresses the situation as such.

Murphy's article warns NYC that they may see 24-75 days of 90 degrees or higher by 2080s which will likely result in deaths quadrupling depending on climate change, population growth, and adaptive measures (Murphy, 2019). Currently, many New Yorkers simply turn on their window-unit air conditioner to combat the heat waves, but, "85 percent of those felled by heat died in their own homes, and in cases where there was data on air-conditioning, 88 percent of deaths occurred in homes that did not have an air conditioner" (Murphy, 2019). Lower income communities are one of the groups most at risk, along with the disabled and elderly, since some cannot afford AC units and some units are not sufficient to cool an entire household:

When [people turn on their AC units] the [utilities] turn on their peaker plants, which often tend to be the most polluting plants in the city and they are all located in

environmental justice communities. So it's just exacerbating the issue of air quality, which is worsened by extreme heat and it just has a compounding effect (Murphy, 2019).

New Yorkers may travel to naturally cooler places, such as Jamaica Bay, but the urban dense areas remain particularly warm. The buildings provide shade, but at night all the absorbed radiation makes the inside mimic heat wave like conditions that can last for days. The city has responded to this problem by implementing the Cool Roofs Program, installing reflective surfaces on roofs to mitigate radiation absorption, and the Cool Neighborhoods Program, planting more street trees in heavy concrete areas. There are cooling centers for New Yorkers to go when they have no AC, but often the city does not release the list of places until after an emergency has been announced, making it increasingly difficult to plan for heat waves. Ultimately the city has been criticized for its minimal response.

Davis' text compliments Murphy's article because the situation in California relates to New York through the concerns with how local governments and communities react to the problem. *The Case for Letting Malibu Burn* illustrates how wildfires have been spreading across California more frequently. "Our horticultural firebreaks are gone, strawberry fields are now aging suburbs, and the quest for beach fronts, mountain view lots and big trees has created fire hazards that were once unimaginable" (Davis, 2018, 14). In other words, the development of various neighborhoods across California has led to these enormous, damaging fires. Malibu, one of the wealthiest areas of California, also happens to be "wildfire capital" because it's naturally prone to these fires. They have the money to rebuild, but take Paradise, a low income area populated by disabled people and the elderly suffering from similar wildfires; they do not have the resources to rebuild as efficiently as Malibu. This creates a reality similar to New York in which those with the means to personally mitigate the effects of this environmental issue do so,

leaving those with lack of resources to suffer the consequences. What Davis and Murphy point out is that whether its wildfire or heat waves, these issues do not just boil down to simply rising temperatures, rather humans play a role in exacerbating the issue. In New York carbon emissions worsen the air quality which worsens the extreme heat, and in California development has created entire communities as fire hazards which worsens the impact these wildfires have. Davis ended his article, “Two kinds of Californians will continue to live with fire: those who can afford (with indirect public subsidies) to rebuild and those who can’t afford to live anywhere else” (2018, 16) and in many ways this translates to: those that can afford to participate in inverted quarantine and those who have to suffer the consequences of that.

Szasz’s text complements Murphy’s and Davis’ articles well because it introduces the concept of “inverted quarantine” which I used to better understand who these two kinds of Californians and New Yorkers are. The author illustrates how environmental problems require a collective response since they require addressing systemic issues. Americans are able to make individual choices to escape these systematic problems. In other words, instead of participating in the collective action necessary to address heat waves, it's easier to purchase an air conditioner. Systemic issues impact generations, and environmental issues are no different, because inverted quarantine harms everyone in the long run since efforts are not focused on tackling the problem at its root. Since not every person has the resources necessary to participate in inverted quarantine, then they suffer the consequences of the environmental issue. Instead of developers moving elsewhere, they simply continue to move into Malibu and are able to deal with the effects of the wildfires, but Paradise does not have that same ability and they struggle to recover. New York’s heat waves and California’s wildfires are environmental injustices and inverted quarantine only exacerbates the issue.

Murphy and Davis should have more explicitly addressed New York's heatwaves and California's wildfires as environmental injustices. Murphy presented many of the hard facts on the issue, but did not delve into analyzing how the city fails to address this as an environmental injustice. How heat waves impact the elderly, disabled people, and low income communities is crucial to understanding the problem and AC units exacerbate the issue. I found that Murphy missed an opportunity to discuss how tackling the root of this issue, climate change, requires attention to our systematic problems. Similarly, Davis spends little time addressing the environmental injustice aspect of the California wildfires. While he ends on the note about Malibu and Paradise, he does not delve into how systematic change needs to occur to address how overdevelopment harms our communities. Finally, both articles would benefit from addressing how individual choices, such as turning on the AC, matter and how we should prioritize collective action.

Murphy's text on New York City's heat waves illustrates how climate change, population, and adaptation influence the issue. Davis' article relates to this since it also outlines an environmental issue and California's response to said problem. I introduce the concept of inverted quarantine to analyze how these issues are influenced by individuals and collectives and end the paper by claiming that Murphy and Davis should clearly communicate to their readers the implications of these problems as environmental injustices.

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Proposal

For my final analytic journal proposal I introduce an ethnographic study on ecological anxiety in adolescents and young adults. I desire to use this study to comprehend how eco-anxiety impacts an age group as they not only engage with their environment, but also continue to affect their surroundings. This ethnography will contain fieldwork as informed by scholarly texts. Current research concerning eco-anxiety, young people in environmental movements, or ethnographies around environmental issues do not manage to discuss all three points. This ethnographic research will consist of one-on-one interviews with people between the age of 15-25 to directly ask about how they identify with eco-anxiety and how they experience their environment. Then the fieldwork will be supplemented with analysis informed by other research. The study's limitations include: small number of participants, minimal available research on the specific topic, and complexity of emotions. This proposal acts as a foundation for the actual ethnography that will be completed next semester as my senior project.

My scholarly aim in crafting this project is to better understand how eco-anxiety affects adolescents and young adults as they continue to experience and influence their environment. This research seems interesting not only because of how ecological anxiety impacts a generation that will live to see impacts of climate change that older generations will not see, but also because this age group is still growing and developing physically, mentally, and emotionally. How one experiences their environment, whether it's urban, suburban, or rural, also plays a role in how they perceive their natural environment. Combine this with complex ecological problems, such as climate change, there presents a variety of ways that individuals and collectives may process their environment. For the purposes of this study I wish to focus on anxiety so as to not

go too broad, but I welcome the exploration of other emotions as related to anxiety. Ultimately to answer this research question I will need to ground this work in scholarly texts.

Robbin's and Moore's article on *Ecological anxiety disorder: diagnosing the politics of the Anthropocene* introduces the concept of ecological anxiety and observes how it impacts humans, as well as, delves into combating this issue. This text defines eco-anxiety as, "either a fearful response to: 1) the negative normative influence of humans on the earth (anthrophobia) or 2) the inherent influence of normative human values within one's own science (autophobia)" (Robbin, Moore, 2013, 4). Anthrophobia is concerned with, "an undeniable sense of tragedy, urgency, or perhaps more often: panic.... We have destroyed something worth preserving; recovery, restraint, and control are imperative" (Robbin, Moore, 2013, 8) and autophobia is concerned with, "a panicked political imperative to intervene more vocally and aggressively in an earth transformation run amok and an increasing fear that past scientific claims about the character of ecosystems and their transformation were overly normative, prescriptive, or political in nature" (Robbin, Moore, 2013, 9). The article goes on to name a case study done at island sites in the Indian Ocean to determine how to embrace the novelty of this issue and ends the piece by calling on the importance of "naming the politics of intervention and admitting the struggle... [so] we might conquer our phobias and dispense with imaginary places to which there is no hope of return" (Robbins, Moore, 2013, 16). This article has identified some of the reasons why people experience ecological anxiety disorder and it's important to acknowledge where this anxiety may stem from. It's interesting how this text frames these two aspects of eco-anxiety (anthrophobia and autophobia) as it will be important in my ethnographic research to identify where my participants may fall. Presenting the hope of academics acknowledging eco-anxiety, as

well as, giving it a name to participants that may not even realize it can help overcome these phobias by “embracing the novelty” as Robbins and Moore suggest.

While addressing ecological anxiety disorder in the sense of how it affects the public, scientists, policy makers, etc. requires more attention in research, this article fails to address how eco-anxiety impacts individuals that are experiencing the effects of environmental issues, such as climate change, but feel powerless in mitigating or adapting to the issue. In the documentary, *Plastic China*, the story follows a young girl at a plastic processing center in rural China as her and her family burn all of the plastic they received from America. This documentary not only communicates that plastic burning has led to immense pollution in their waterways and air, but the adults in the factory are aware of the fact that they are powerless in a complex issue they participate in. This documentary demonstrates how eco-anxiety is not always experienced in an abstract way. They are not hyper-aware of something that they are actively destroying (their air and water), but rather the eco-anxiety stems from environmental issues that lead to very real issues in their personal lives (such as health problems). They are aware that plastic burning has led to their health problems, but cannot close down their factory because they need the money. For many people, such as the family depicted in *Plastic China*, they have already reached this place, “which there is no hope of [returning]” (Robbins, Moore, 2013, 16) because their health problems are fatal. My ethnographic study will address this aspect of eco-anxiety that Robbins and Moore fail to recognize.

Another important aspect of understanding ecological anxiety is exploring how individuals and communities perceive and experience their environment. Candis Callison’s ethnography, *How Climate Change Comes To Matter*, is a collection of various fieldwork studies on how different communities discuss and engage with climate change. In the first chapter

Callison interviews a prominent locally elected official of the Inuit community she is in; he said, “Climate change... we don’t really talk much about that. It's more something they talk about on CNN. It’s out there. It’s not what *we* talk about” (Callison, 2014, 44). Despite Callison being at a conference to discuss the environmental and social issues within that community, they were not discussing it in terms of climate change, despite this community dealing with melting glaciers, negatively impacted caribou, and other effects related to climate change. This community also had a large youth presence at this conference because rates of suicide among that age group due to these environmental issues were increasing at an alarming rate. Without the ability to hunt caribou, these young people are missing out on an important aspect of their culture, so it unfortunately impacts their mental health (Callison, 2014, 49). Understanding how the environment impacts an individual emotionally and psychologically requires a look into how environmental issues impact the economy, culture, social issues, and more. The language used to discuss these environmental issues also plays an important role in comprehending how one’s environment is perceived and experienced. How young people participate in social and environmental movements will also inform how they engage with their environment.

Zeynep Tyfekci's reading on *Twitter and Tear Gas: The Power and Fragility of Networked Protests* demonstrates how the internet has rapidly grown social movements, but most of the time, fails to make the change it sets out to do. In many of the examples she brings up, such as the civil rights movement, she discussed the slow, but necessary process in organizing (such as large scale marches, multiple protests, and so on). They require time, attention, resources, and coordination. Current movements are not lacking in spirit or aggressiveness, rather they are in need of the collective capacity to answer what comes next. Social media has given this false sense of participation in a movement because online these

movements form rapidly with little organization and fail to make policy demands or properly mobilize. This certainly plays into feelings of eco-anxiety since social media has become a source for news and information. When participating in a movement online that fails to make progress this can add to feelings of, “an undeniable sense of tragedy, urgency, or perhaps more often: panic” (Robbins, Moore, 2013, 8). In my ethnography it will be important to keep in mind the various ways adolescents and young adults may be responding to their environment and environmental issues. Callison demonstrated how environmental issues impact one’s personal life, while Tyfekci communicates how engaging with social and environmental movements online as a response to these issues may be unsuccessful. To develop meaningful fieldwork it will be necessary to use these texts to inform my interviews.

To answer my research question I will interview at least 15 to 20 people from the ages of 15 to 25 about how they understand and interact with their environment, as well as, how they identify with ecological anxiety. I will put emphasis on these first hand accounts, especially since I found that missing from the literature research I conducted, and I will supplement it with ethnographic analysis as informed by other research. I hypothesize that my participants will identify with eco-anxiety as related to the economic, social, etc. issues that impact their personal lives. I suspect that not every person will be hyper-aware of how aspects of their lives contribute to environmental issues, rather aspects of their personal lives (eg. finances, health, etc.) that are related to environmental issues may be the source of their eco-anxiety. I also hypothesize that they will align themselves with anthropobia as opposed to autophobia unless my participants are actively involved in the science and/or policy behind these environmental issues which in that case they may feel a bit of both. Unless the participant is aware of current policies and scientific findings, then autophobia may not be their ecological anxiety response. Ultimately

there are multiple ways to respond as a result of experiencing eco-anxiety and this ethnography aims to better understand the ones my participants exhibit.

The interviews with my participants will be one-on-one to focus on the specific first hand accounts of each person. I will ask a series of questions for each participant (eg. How do you identify with the term “eco-anxiety”?), but as they answer my questions I will likely deviate to further develop an understanding of ecological anxiety and their perception of their environment. After the interview I will transcribe relevant sections, so that I may compare and contrast them to other participants’ interviews. Once I complete all of the interviews I will analyze my fieldwork with my scholarly texts to determine patterns, as well as, deviants from the data I collected. Then I will write an ethnography to explain whether or not my hypothesis was correct. My study is ultimately limited by the number of participants, limited research available, and complex emotions displayed by the participants. While I desire to have the one-on-one focus, this limits the number of participants I can interview. The data will be complex as I will delve into detail of their experiences and emotions, but I cannot interview hundreds of people without a team and years to collect data. In addition to this limitation, the analysis for the data with hundreds of participants will likely take even longer, so while I desire to gain a sense of ecological anxiety among this age group, it will not be a good representation of all young people that experience eco-anxiety. Unfortunately the research, especially from first hand accounts of young people, has been extremely limited. This on top of the fact that ecological anxiety is not the only emotion experienced with environmental issues makes it difficult to ground this ethnography in sound scientific literature. Depression, anger, etc. may be experienced alongside anxiety and the way to determine how these complex emotions relate to one another is through data collection.

This proposed ethnographic study aims to understand ecological anxiety in adolescents and young adults. I integrated valuable research to comprehend how one experiences and identifies with their environment. This has led me to realize the importance of listening to first hand accounts of eco-anxiety to better grasp all the complexities of this topic. I am limited by data size, previous research, and complicated emotions. Ultimately more research, such as the one I am proposing, needs to exist to improve our understanding of ecological anxiety.

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Closing Reflection

In this course I learned about the importance of accounting for multiple perspectives when looking at environmental issues. I also value personal experiences significantly more as result of in class discussions. The course material was helpful in developing my critical thinking skills to understand what the author's main point was, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the argument, and where I align with the author's opinion. In Week 4 I found myself very critical of *The Tragedy of the Commons* and *An Ecomodernist Manifesto* because I did not find that either author had properly accounted for how various communities experience environmental issues in their solution proposals. By the time I reached Week 15 I found myself criticizing Elon Musk's Master Plans based on what I had learned in previous weeks. This could not have been possible without the in-class discussion. Listening to others that were intimately engaged with the course material allowed me to remain open minded when they shared their thoughts, opinions, and experiences. Even when I did not align myself with someone's point of view, I still benefited from listening to their educated opinion. I found it to be the most valuable aspect of this class. I took what I learned in class into my writing and I felt that I was able to develop my writing skills significantly. I found that these texts pushed me to develop my own thoughts and opinions on them and it was rewarding to explore that in my writing. I was excited to do outside research related to the topics I was writing about to inform my argument and I learned how to make my argument stronger through my research and analysis on course material. This class was an enriching experience for me and I am eager to continue engaging with this subject, as well as, continue to develop the skills I used in this class.