Doing, Redoing, and Undoing Masculinity in Environmentalism

BY

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Abstract

Conventional and traditional visions of masculinity idealise and glorify, violence, aggression, and destruction while undermining more caring traits such as altruism, empathy, and compassion. These gender scripts inform men's perception of themselves, others, and the world around them as they seek to adhere to and fit in with the surrounding culture. These notions of masculinity are subject to extensive academic and media attention, while comparatively less attention is paid to the men who challenge or reject these harmful traits. Traditionally masculine values stand in tension to environmentalism, prioritising money, power, and profitability above care and respect for nature. Previous research suggests that traditional ideas of masculinity can be a deterrent to pro-environmental behaviours due to a perceived link between 'green behaviours' and femininity. But as of yet, there is a dearth of empirical research on those men who overcome such barriers to engage with environmentalism. This study therefore draws on in-depth interviews with 14 pro-environmental men from across America, Britain and Canada, to understand their experiences navigating the gendered terrain of environmentalism. This research complicates our understanding of performativity within environmentalism, as the men in this study show both complicity and resistance to hegemonic gender structures within the scope of their environmentalism.

Key Words: *Masculinities, Doing Gender, Environmentalism, Ecofeminism*

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I.   INTRODUCTION

"Achieving masculine status makes sense only in a social context. The top managers of the corporations pouring out greenhouse gases and poisoning river systems are not necessarily doing so from inner evil. Perhaps these men love babies and puppies and would sing in a church choir if only they could find the time. But they are working in an insane elite world that institutionalised competitive, power-oriented masculinity, and they are doing whatever it takes."

– Raewyn Connell, 2017

"[The] powerful social construction of [contemporary] masculinity [maintains] that the way to prove one's manhood is not to test oneself in nature but to destroy it."

– Mark Allister, 2004

In 2002, Nobel Laureate Paul Crutzen boldly suggested that we were entering a new epoch in planetary history, the 'Anthropocene'. An epoch is a unit of time determined by the Earth's rock formation – when the rock formation changes significantly, we enter a new epoch (National Geographic). Officially, we remain in the Holocene which began 11,700 years ago with the end of the last ice age, but some scientists suggest that human activity has changed the earth system so much so that humanity is now reflected in the Earth's rock formation, hence the emerging discourse of the '*Anthro*pocene'. Indeed, the recent discovery of a new rock laced with plastic, appropriately termed 'plastiglomerates', seems to support notions of the 'Anthropocene' (Corcoran, Moore, Jazvac 2013).

Fast-forward a little over a decade and the conversation has shifted, for in a 2014 op-ed published in *The Guardian*, ecological economist Kate Raworth pondered whether in fact the tentatively named Anthropocene should instead actually be termed the '*Manthropocene*', or even the '*North*ropocene,' to reflect the disproportionate environmental degradation accomplished by men and systems of the 'Global North.'[1]

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[1] In this context, 'Global North' refers to the geopolitical region, not geographical, consisting the richest and more industrialised countries in the world.

The dawn of the Anthropocene, (or *Manthropocene* or *Northropocene*) can be traced to the mechanisation of the industrial revolution, which set humanity on a path of unparalleled social and economic expansion. In her book *The Death of Nature*, ecofeminist scholar Carolyn Merchant (1980) argued that the machines which revolutionised the industrial world also fundamentally reshaped humanity's conception of, and relationship to, nature, as nature became a tool and resource for the expansions of nation, state, and economy. But as gender scholars suggest, the nation, state, and economy are fundamentally gendered structures – that is, masculine structures (see Connell 1993; 2005b).

For a long time, scholars have addressed gender issues and environmental issues separately in isolation. But beginning in the 1970s, ecofeminist scholarship began to address the dual subjugation of both women and nature at the hands of masculine structures and ideologies. Ecofeminism links feminist thought to environmental issues by introducing gender into the conversation of anthropocentric environmental degradation. It specifically directs our attention toward how Western patriarchal gender relations, entrenched in exploitative, destructive, (neo)colonial systems, are central to understanding environmental and social injustices (Plumwood 2003). Fellow ecofeminist scholar, Sherilyn MacGregor (2014) argues that what is presently required of ecological feminist discourses is a critical analysis of "the historical forces, hierarchical power relations, and value systems that have caused, and are standing in the way of addressing, the current predicament" (p.627). MacGregor (2014) rightfully stresses the need to conceptualise gender, "not just as an empirical category (ie. men/women)", but also as "a discursive construction that shapes social life" (p.630). Understanding gender as a 'discursive construction', MacGregor (2014) invites us to think critically about these gendered power

relations which lie at the heart of and shape how we observe, approach, and address environmental and social issues.

Conceptualised as being 'closer to nature' (see Ortner 1972; Plumwood 2003; Warren 2015) and socialised toward qualities of care, nurture, relationally and altruism, women have become the 'natural' caretakers of the environment. Conversely, the dominant Anglo-American narrative of masculinity, which exists in diametric opposition to femininity (Kimmel and Kaufman 1993), emphasises and encourages qualities of competitiveness, control, power, emotional detachment, and individualism, which enable and contribute to social and environmental injustice. Consequently, environmental destruction and degradation becomes a means to an end for achieving masculinity (Connell 2017; Pulé 2007; Pease 2019; Twine 1997).

At the macro, institutional, political level, large scale environmental destruction (i.e. fracking, deforestation, industrial agriculture…etc.) is closely intertwined with capitalist, industrial, masculinist, modernity (Anshelm and Hultman 2014). Therefore in the face of a worsening climate crisis, the very concept of environmentalism, which demands "an overhaul of [the] modern industrial society" upon which modern hegemonic masculinity rests, poses a critical threat to the patriarchal gender order (Anshelm and Hultman 2014:91; Hultman 2017; McCright and Dunlap 2011).

At the individual, micro interactional level, we see this manifest as an 'eco-gender gap' (Hunt 2020), in which women are overrepresented in environmentalism. Scholars suggest that men shy away from, or indeed reject, pro-environmental behaviours on the premise that the qualities inscribed in such actions are branded as 'feminine' and antithetical to masculinity, thereby rendering their participation emasculating (Brough et al. 2016; Connell 2017; Breunig and Russell 2020). Research from social psychology and sociology has found differences among

men and women in terms of their relationship to the environment (see Brough et al. 2016; Swim et al. 2020; Stoddart and Tindall 2011). For instance, men have been found to show less concern for the environment (Brough et al. 2016; Zelezny et al. 2000), be more involved in environmentally destructive practices (Brough et al. 2016; Pease 2019; see also Gonda 2017), and yet at the same time, are overrepresented in environmental politics (MacGregor 2010).

Ecofeminist scholarship has largely been focused on the experiences of women, and the small body literature addressing men, masculinities, and nature has thus far largely focused on how and why men are overrepresented in the destruction of nature. Herein emerges a gap in the literature as the experiences of men who *are* involved in the environmental movements have been largely unaddressed, especially not empirically. Utilising a qualitative approach consisting of in-depth interviews with 14 self identifying 'pro-environmental men', this study directs attention to the experiences of men currently active in environmentalism.

I approach this study from a doing, redoing, undoing gender theoretical framework (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2009; West and Zimmerman 1987; 2009) to address how gender is done, redone, and possibly undone in the context of environmentalism. I investigate how men account for and perform gender while engaging with environmentalism against the backdrop of the dominant narrative of Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity. I furthermore explore the potential for environmentalism to offer a site of resistance to the hegemonic gender order. Doing so aims to advance our understanding of the socio-structural gender based barriers to men's participation in environmentalism, and sheds light on how environmentalism simultaneously produces acts of resistance to the hegemonic gender structure.

This approach offers as useful framework for studying how men negotiate masculinity in the context of environmentalism as it provides a micro-interactional analysis of gender relations,

shedding light on how gender structures are reproduced and/or resisted within everyday social interactions. By stressing the role of social interactions in the reproduction of gender, the 'doing gender' approach has moved the conversation away from the functionalist and essentialized explanations of gender difference and persistent inequalities. However, while there is ample research documenting the ways in which hegemonic masculinities are manifested in society, what is lacking is research on the instances in which hegemony is resisted and challenged (Deutsch 2007). Feminist scholars have therefore called for greater attention to sites in which change occurs – sites in which gender is 'redone' and 'undone'. As Risman (2004) points out, gender norms and ideologies are created through a process of repeated, ritualised embodied actions – therefore if we aim to work to deconstruct gender structures, we must identify the sites and processes which interrupt its reproduction.

In chapter 2 of this study, I offer the reader a review of the relevant literature of gender and masculinities, and introduce the doing, redoing, and undoing gender theory which serves as the guiding framework for this study. I then offer an overview of previous studies pertaining to the intersection of gender, masculinities and environmentalism. Chapter 3 then presents the reader with a description of how this study has been approached and conducted, offering insight in the methodological underpinnings used to collect, evaluate, and interpret the data. Chapter 4 then presents the findings of this research. Divided into two principal themes, I first explore how the pro-environmental men participating in this study perform masculinity in-line with hegemonic systems in the context of their engagement with environmentalism. I then move on to an analysis of the ways in which environmentalism is shown to offer a site in which hegemonic masculinity can be resisted and undermined. Chapter 5, the conclusion, then brings together the findings of this research and discusses its wider implications.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research follows Risman's (2004) contention that gender is itself a social structure which shapes and informs human practice. Drawing on Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration, Risman (2004) directs attention to the dynamic interplay between structure and agency in the experience and enactment of gender. Structuration theory (Giddens 1979; 1984) argues that while people are socialised to conform to social expectations, they are not confined to them and indeed have the agency to challenge and defy them. The question of structure and agency is not an either/or question, and proposes instead there to be a 'duality of structure' (Giddens 1979; 1984). Giddens (1979) suggest that the 'duality of structure' refers to the self-repeating nature of social structures, in which "the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitute those systems" (p.69). This illustrates how while individual behaviours are constrained by social structure, it is those same behaviours which reify and reproduce said structure (Giddens 1984; Shilling 1991). After all, structures do not merely appear, they are a product of repeated human action. Risman (2004) therefore suggests that gender acts in the same way, whereby gender shapes social practice and is simultaneously (re)produced by social practices. Since gender norms are a routinised as taken for granted dimensions of social life, the structural nature of gender is not readily visible, yet its effects nevertheless permeate all matters of social life (Risman 2004).

Doing Gender

Among the most influential approaches to gender is West and Zimmerman's (1987) *Doing Gender,* which offers an interactionist, social constructionist lens to gender theory. It proposes that gender is constructed through social interactions, suggesting that gender is not something one is or has, but rather something one *does,* something to be 'performed' and

'achieved'. West and Zimmerman (1987) conceptualise gender as "an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements, and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society" (p.126). This implies that gender is constituted through the everyday (inter)actions, which signal one's gender identity to others. 'Doing gender' involves performing "complex…socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micro-political activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures.' (West & Zimmerman 1987:126). As such, doing gender is a routine accomplishment of everyday life. People attach meaning to particular actions, label them as masculine or feminine, and then perform said action to express socially constructed gender identities.

West and Zimmerman (1987) moreover proposed that people, as a result of social policing, orient their behaviour to perform gender in such a way that is congruent with their sex category to garner social approval. This illustrates the influence of the tensions between structure and agency in everyday life as people are held '*accountable'* to perform gender in a particular way that is deemed socially acceptable, regardless of personal will. Indeed, West and Zimmerman (1987) write that "the 'doing' of gender is undertaken by women and men whose competence as members of society is hostage to its production" (p.126). In this way, gender performances are constricted by and to the social norms against which they are measured. What is important to note, then, is that doing gender is fundamentally about 'doing difference'; it is about maintaining strict oppositional binary presentations of male-masculinity and female-femininity. It is in this system of socially prescribed measures of gender achievement and social accountability, that gender inequalities are sustained, reproduced, and legitimated (Deutsch 2007; West and Zimmerman 1987).

Redoing and Undoing Gender

West and Zimmerman's *Doing Gender (1987)* thesis is among the most salient gender theories today, prompting thousands of studies to utilise its framework to showcase how gender norms are sustained and reproduced at the interactional level across various situations and spaces (Deutsch 2007). Towards the end of their article, West and Zimmerman (1987) suggest that the constant monitoring and evaluation of gender performance makes it inescapable "because of the consequences of sex category membership" (p.145). This leads them to ponder whether gender can ever not be done. This notion of the inescapability of gender accountability has been a point of contention for a number of feminist scholars (Butler 2004; Deutsch 2007; Risman 2004; 2009) who criticise the self-imposed limits inherent in the approach. Indeed, Risman (2009) argues that the 'doing gender' approach has been all too frequently 'misused' to showcase the persistence of gender structures, rather than shed light on instances in which such structures are challenged or subverted. And Deutsch (2007) argues that the 'doing gender' thesis "undermines the goal of dismantling gender inequality by, perhaps inadvertently, perpetuating the idea that gender system of oppression is hopelessly impervious to real change and by ignoring the links between social interaction and structural change" (p.107).

Consequently, some gender scholars (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2009) have pushed back against the seeming rigidity of West and Zimmerman (1987) and ask whether, in fact, gender can be undone – that it, whether the binary structures of accountability can be deconstructed and done away with. Deutsch (2007) and Risman (2009) call for researchers to focus on the possibility of change to gender structures at the interactional level. Deutsch (2007) specifically calls for scholarship to pay attention to instances in which social interactions become less gendered (1), the conditions under which this occurs (2), whether all such interaction produce

inequality (3), how change might be produced at the structural level (4), and interaction as a site for change (5). Meanwhile, Risman (2009) adds to the undoing gender debate by building on her previous work, *Gender as Structure (2004),* to suggest that while individuals are shaped by the social world, they are not necessarily determined by it. Risman (2009) suggests that rather than label behaviours which don't adhere to the norms of one's gender identity as an alternative masculinity or femininity, we should instead treat these instances of non-conformity as instances of 'undoing' gender, of destabilising the seemingly stable parameters of gender behaviour.

Following Deutsch's (2007) and Risman's (2009) articles, West and Zimmerman (2009) responded to their critique, asserting that gender cannot be 'undone', but that what is perhaps more appropriate is to instead address how and when gender is 'redone'. West and Zimmerman (2009) argue that what Deutsch (2007) and Risman (2009) term 'undoing gender' is in actuality "a change in the normative conceptions to which members of particular sex categories are held accountable" (p117). West and Zimmerman (1987; 2009) stress the dynamic malleability of gender as a social construct, 'unanchored' to any fixed set of specifications. As such, gender constructions are constantly in the making over the course of one's lifetime *in response* to changing gender norms, opening up space for renegotiations of gender, but not its abandonment (West and Zimmerman 2009).

Regardless of their different interpretations, Deutsch (2007), Risman (2009), and West and Zimmerman (2009) ultimately call on scholars to pay attention to and highlight the sites in which gender norms are challenged, resisted, undermined, and/or changed. Doing so is critical if we are to escape the confines of binary thinking in which males are masculine and females are feminine, and perhaps more importantly, the inequalities that they perpetuate. Risman (2009) points to young people in particular as vehicles of change due to their ever-growing social

freedom and desire to challenge gender norms and inhabit qualities not traditionally associated with their gender presentation. Discontinuity of gender norms is becoming increasingly permissible as the lines between masculinity and femininity blur, and masculine and feminine traits increasingly transcend the male and female divide. A recent instance of this came in December of 2020 when singer Harry Styles became the first man to appear solo on the cover of Vogue magazine, wearing a dress no less (Mcnamara 2019). The cover drew wide-spread attention and garnered praise for its public depiction of an expanding boundaries of masculinity.

As a result of men's position as the dominant group in society, and subsequent role as 'gatekeepers' of equality (Connell 2003; 2005b), studies focusing on men redoing and undoing gender are particularly necessary because such reformulations away from notions of essentialized difference work to undermine the hierarchical gender order and women's subordinate status relative to men and masculinities. After all, inequalities are sustained and reproduced by embodied actions (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2004; West and Zimmerman 1987), therefore it is the actions of men which will require most attention. Indeed, even the most banal actions which cast difference between men and women can reproduce inequalities. Understanding where and how inequalities are produced, challenged, and reduced, is crucial for the advancement of gender equality.

Risman (2004; 2009) and Deutsch (2007) ultimately ask whether those who defy the sex, sex category, and gender symmetry are in fact undoing or redoing gender. This line of thinking provides the theoretical foundation upon which this research emerges, as it interrogates the role of environmentalism in the deconstruction, reshaping, or reformulation of Western hegemonic masculinities. By paying attention to the relationship and interaction between structure and agency in the construction of gender, Risman (2004) argues, we can identify sites in which

change occurs – sites in which people interrupt and alter the routinised gender norms. Indeed, Risman (2004) writes that "gendered institutions depend on our willingness to do gender, when we rebel … we can sometimes change the institutions themselves" (p.434).

Masculinities

In order to understand the intersection between gender structures and men's participation in environmentalism, the concept of masculinity and its influence on men's lives must be addressed.

Masculinity, in its simplest definition, refers to the process through which gender is performed – "the practice through which men…engage in gender" (Connell 2005:71). In Western patriarchal cultures, masculinity is held and constructed in opposition to femininity, and is coded to represent notions of power and privilege (Kimmel 2008). The kinds of behaviours men engage in and how well they are performed informs how their masculine identity is constructed and perceived. Those who do not adhere to socially acceptable masculine practices are often compelled to find other avenues through which to construct a viable masculine identity. Masculinity scholars have pointed out that there is no single masculinity, and argue instead that there exist a multitude of masculinities which vary according to other intersecting identities such as race, sexuality and class which affect one's experience of masculinity (Carrigan et al. 1985; Connell 2005; Kimmel 2008). However, while individuals construct their own versions of masculinity according to other identity markers and contextual influences, men must also contend with the dominant narrative of masculinity against which they are measured and scrutinised (Kimmel 2008), what Connell termed 'hegemonic masculinity.'

Hegemonic Masculinity

The term 'hegemonic masculinity' is derived from Gramsci's concept of 'cultural hegemony' which refers to the way in which the values, ideologies and beliefs of the reigning culture comes to be accepted as the default norm of the wider society, in turn elevating and legitimising the dominant group's interests (Connell 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explain that hegemonic masculinities are not a fixed form of masculinity, but rather should be thought of as a theoretical tool to refer to "the currently most honoured way of being a man", requiring "all other men to potions themselves *in relation* to it" (p.832, emphasis mine). Indeed, Connell (2005) defines hegemonic masculinity as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (p.77). It *subordinates* socially devalued masculinities and *marginalises* men based on racial, class, and sexual identities, among others (Connell 2005). Those who do not fit with the category but who benefit from its power and fail to challenge its oppressive implications are deemed *complicit* in its structure (Connell 2005). Male dominance is not inherently stable, therefore practices are employed to maintain patriarchal hierarchies, including 'policing' other men (Coles 2009; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Kimmel 2005; 2010) and excluding and devaluing women and femininity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Importantly, Connell (2005) stresses that these categories are not character types, they are configurations of practice generated in a specific point in time and space, and therefore are relationally defined and configured (Connell 2005).

Hegemonic masculinity is predicated upon homophobia and heterosexuality, and entails an oppressive relationship between men and women (Coles 2009; Donaldson 1993). It most often manifests as white, able bodied, heterosexual, non-feminine, and devoid of emotionality

and vulnerability (Brown and Ismail 2019; Donaldson 1993; Fuller 1996, cited in Lupton 2000)[2].

Colloquially referred to as 'the man box' (Kivel 2007), this dominant and normalised vision of masculinity imposes upon Western men a set of rigid expectations about what it means and what it takes to 'be a man'. These broad stroke conceptualisations are disseminated through transnational channels such as popular culture, media, and literature (Connell 1993; 2005; 2005b; 2012), thereby dominating discourses surrounding manhood and masculinity. These narratives therefore play a central role in the local construction of identities (Stets and Burke 2003). Hegemonically masculine men are not necessarily culturally visible and institutionally powerful, but they are always on the receiving end of institutionalised power – what Connell (1995) called a "patriarchal dividend" (p.82). It is therefore in one's interest to adhere to hegemonic masculinity in order to benefit from its power. As such, it operates as a big-picture vision of masculinity against which men are measured, thus informing surrounding gender relations and shaping men's experiences, thoughts, and actions (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). The concept has been critiqued for failing to capture the true variety of men's experiences (for critique see Demetriou 2001), but nevertheless is important in understanding how men locate themselves within the gender order.

In order to understand the local, Connell (2005b) argues we must ground it within the wider cultural and historical context because "locally situated lives are (and were) powerfully influenced by geopolitical struggles, Western imperial expansion and colonial empires, global markets, multinational corporations, labor migration, and transnational media" (p.71-72; see also Connell 1993; 1998; 2016; Ouzgane and Coleman 1998). Each of these global forces are

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[2] Not all men participate in hegemonic masculinity, and moreover, broad categories of men are excluded from it. Black men, gay men, and poor men are notably excluded (Donaldson 1993) since the matrix of domination and oppression is formed of interrelated axes of gender and sexuality, race, and class (Collins 1990).

themselves gendered; therefore, when deployed they have structured local level relationships in a gendered manner (Connell 2005b). It is within such gendered, capitalist economic structures that masculinities are constructed (Connell 2005b). The role of the neoliberal capitalist market in the construction of masculinity has been deemed particularly important because it has impregnated masculinity with a capitalist hue in which all actions are shaped by the broader market ideology of development, expansion and self-interest (Connell 2005b). It is therefore important to remember that construction of gender and gender relations cannot be separated from the structural, historical and institutional context from which they emerge (Connell 1993). These historical processes have played a pivotal role in shaping the construction of contemporary Anglo-American masculinities and continue to inform how individuals situate themselves in the social order (Connell 2005b).

Hegemonic Masculinities and Politics of Care

With manhood traditionally conceptualised in opposition to femininity and its associated emotionality, compassion, care, nurture and dependence, men tend to shun these traits in an attempt to achieve a viable and culturally salient masculine identity (Kimmel and Kaufman 1993). But as Elliott (2016) points out in her exploration of 'caring masculinities,' emotionality provides personal nourishment and gratification and is a critical component for men's engagement in gender equality. Elliott (2016) draws on feminist care theory and hegemonic masculinity to propose a practice based model of 'caring masculinities'. This model focuses on men's active practices of care and looks at how these practices are instrumental in the fostering positive change in masculine identities. By embracing narrative of care, Elliott (2016) suggests, men are able to move away from the toxic effects brought on by the rejection of emotionality, empathy and care, and promote detachment from domination embedded in hegemonic

masculinity. For feminist scholar bell hooks (2004), domination and masculinity are not inseparable forces. hooks (2004) suggests that a non-dominant culture is not one devoid of maleness, but rather is one in which "men become disloyal to patriarchal masculinity" (p.117).

Masculinities and Gender Capital

Although traditionally understood in economic terms, French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986) extended the concept of 'capital' to describe that which facilitates social mobility. Bourdieu conceptualised three broad categories of capital – economic (i.e. financial), social (i.e. social networks) and cultural (i.e. culturally valuable symbols, ideas and tastes [e.g. fine wine, art, educational diploma]) – each interconnected into a complex system of assets which can be transformed, exchanged, and transferred within and across different fields (i.e. social spaces) (Moore, 2012). Cultural capital is important for the context of this study, referring to accumulation of culturally valuable "dispositions of the mind and body" (*Embodied Cultural Capital*), "cultural goods" (*Objectified Cultural Capital*), as well as recognition from institutional bodies, such as academic credentials and professional qualifications or positions (*Institutionalised Cultural Capital*) (Bourdieu 1986:17).

Bridges (2009) draws on both Connell's and Bourdieu's works (both of which draw on Gramsci's theory of hegemony) to develop the concept of 'gender capital' to refer to "the knowledge, resources and aspects of identity available – within a given context – that permit access to regime-specific gendered identities" (p.92). 'Gender capital' incorporates the various forms of cultural capital to understand the cultural value of gender, and more specifically, gender presentations and performances (Bridges 2009). Bridges (2009) writes that gender capital ultimately describes "the value afforded [to] contextually relevant presentations of gendered

selves" (p.84). As with other forms of capital, gender capital too is "interactionally defined and negotiated", therefore exists in a state of constant flux (Bridges 2009:84).

The body, while not the origin of gender, does function as a primary means through which gender is performed, expressed and conveyed, and as such is an important facet of the gender experience (Halberstam 1998; Lorber 1993; Schilling 1993). For Western, Anglo-American men, above average height and physical strength[3] (Connell 2005; 1993; West and Zimmerman 1987; see also Mason 2013), as well as participation in physically demanding sports and occupations (Shilling 1993) construct a masculine image and identity. Bodies that possess relevant values in a field have been suggested to function as 'physical capital' (Shilling 1993), meaning that contextually exalted bodies function as currency in social situations, and hold the potential to situationally bestow prestige, status and power onto the individual.

Bourdieu (1984) suggested that the body to be a physical representation of the social self as it responds to our day-to-day activities. For instance, a muscular body will be perceived as masculine because it would imply participation in masculine activities (i.e. sports or manual labour), functioning as a social marker of masculinity (See also Ashcraft et al. 2012). And, since men are the culturally exalted gender, it follows that the visibly masculine body acts as a vehicle of privilege and power in society. However, as with other forms of capital, its production and value is mediated via other social characteristics such as class and gender (Holroyd 2002) and is convertible into other forms of capital (Shilling 1991).

Gendering Nature and Environmentalism

Attention to the intersection between gender and environmentalism gained traction in the late 1970s with the emergence of ecofeminist thought which shed light on the role of patriarchal

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3 However, it is worth noting that while physical differences certainly exist, the differences are magnified and deemed meaningful as a result of social conditioning (Lorber 1993).

structures on the exploitation and subjugation of both women and nature. Notable ecofeminists include Carolyn Merchant (1980), Karen Warren (2015), and Greta Gaard (1997), all of whom have been seminal in the production and advancement of ecofeminist thought. This strand of feminist thought recognises the widespread inequalities perpetuated at the hands of men and masculine structures and aims to spark social movements toward a more just and egalitarian society (Miles 2018). Ecofeminism stresses how women's historical association as being 'closer of nature' (Ortner 1972), stemming from both biological and social arguments equally rooted in a patriarchal desire for control, positions women and nature as subordinate to men, marking them as the symbolic 'Other' (Gaard 2004; Merchant 1980; Plumwood 2003; Stoddart and Tindall 2011; Warren 2015).

All human social practice carries a gender dimension to it (West and Zimmerman 1987), including pro-environmental behaviours. 'Environmentalism' is a broad and all encompassing term referring to the concern for the environment, and the pursuit of actions which benefits the natural environment (Elliott 2020)[4]. Under a patriarchal structure, men are encouraged to show strength, competitiveness, aggression, and dominance over others in order to claim their spot at the head of the social hierarchy. Conversely, women are encouraged toward characteristics of emotionality, compassion and altruism in order to perform caring duties in the domestic sphere. As such, environmentalism which emphasises qualities of care and nurture over control and domination have been typecast as feminine (Brough et al. 2016; Swim et al. 2020), culminating in a gender gap in environmentalism.

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[4] Environmentalism may be performed through behavioural changes to environmentally destructive behaviours, such reducing the consumption and waste of meat, plastics, and other natural resources; or by supporting environmentally beneficial economic and political stances designed to reduce humanity's impact on the environment. Pro-environmental behaviour (PEB) describes the intentional behaviours which aim to reduce the environmental impact of one's lifestyle, such as switching to a vegetarian diet, and reducing energy consumption or pollution.

Brough et al. (2016) conducted a series of studies which found there to be a cognitive link between 'greenness' and femininity, which they suggest "may motivate men to avoid green behaviours in order to preserve a macho image" (p.566). Swim et al. (2020) build on Brough et al. (2016) and use quantitative surveys to look at the social consequences associated with 'gender-bending' pro-environmental behaviours (PEB). They found that environmental behaviours inform people's perceptions of the individual's sexuality, resulting in social consequences for the actor. Swim et al. (2020) therefore suggest that people will participate in PEBs which align more closely with their own gender identity and are likely to abstain from particular gender incongruent PEBs for fear of the social consequences they might entail. The gendering of PEBs appears to be widely internalised as these studies show that the 'green-femininity' association affects both social judgement and self-perception.

Swim et al. (2020) explain that PEBs (or any behaviour) is not merely about accomplishing an action, it is about making a statement about oneself. As West and Zimmerman (1987) suggest, "a person engaged in virtually any activity may be held accountable for performing that activity as a woman or a man," whereby gender may "legitimate or discredit" particular behaviours (p.136). In a practical sense, this means any social action, like PEBs, are part of a person's gender performance and therefore individuals are encouraged, or indeed constrained, to only act in ways which validate and/or confirm their gender identity. Interestingly, both Swim et al. (2020) and Brough et al. (2016) found both men and women to be aware of the gendered nature of PEB's and experience consequences from gender-bending behaviours, but that men struggle to engage in gender non-conforming PEBs far more than women.

Avoidance of PEB as an Identity Maintenance Framework

A number of scholars exploring masculinity and environmentalism have suggested that avoidance of masculinity functions as an identity maintenance framework whereby avoiding PEB allows them to preserve their masculinity and masculine image (Brough et al. 2016; Gonda 2017; McCright & Dunlap 2011; Pease 2019; Swim el al. 2018; 2020). Fear of stigma is a powerful motivator for avoiding pro-environmental behaviour as men are socialised to adhere to culturally constructed masculine scripts which discourage those feminine traits characterised by PEBs. Kimmel (2005; 2010) explains that men in particular are subject to intense gender policing from their peers, resulting in a protective disposition of their gender identity and a greater sensitivity to gender cues. Whereas women have benefitted from feminist movement, which encouraged moving beyond the socially prescribed confines of rigid femininity, men have not benefited from the same kind of liberation, leaving them largely bound to the confines of mainstream hegemonic structure of masculinity (Carrigan et al. 1985; Connell 1990; Kimmel 2008).

Pease (2019) and Twine (1997) both suggest that for men to engage in PEB entails surrendering a degree of their masculinity and a deviation from the masculine norm which encourages power and dominance over nature. The fear and threat of stigma is heightened among men because of the social power embedded within masculinity which carries greater social value than femininity (Coles 2009; Connell 1983; Willer et al. 2013). In practice, this means that men stand to lose more if/when their masculinity is diminished. Therefore, since masculinity and pro-environmental behaviours appear to stand in tension, masculinity acts as a barrier to pro-environmental behaviours among men (See Brough et al. 2016; Stoddart and Tindall 2011; Swim et al. 2020).

Ecofeminism, Hegemonic Masculinities and Environmentalism

Women and femininity have historically been associated with nature, constructed in a hierarchically subordinate binary opposition to men, masculinity and culture as a result of the social circumstances prescribed by patriarchal society (Mellor 2000; Merchant 1980; Plumwood 2003; Ortner 1978). Still today, concepts such as 'Mother nature' and 'Mother Earth' personify the planet as a feminine, nurturing entity. Since the 1970s, ecofeminist scholarship has largely focused around addressing the observed dual subjugation of both women and nature at the hands of hegemonic, patriarchal masculinities, and by extension the men who internalise and reproduce these systems. They argue that men's domination over women and nature – the symbolic 'Other' – functions for the advancement of a patriarchal capitalist societies which sees the exploitation of women and nature as justified in the pursuit of human progress and modernity (Anshelm and Hultman 2014; Plumwood 2003; Pulé 2013; Stoddart and Tindall 2011; Mellor 2000; Merchant 1980; Twine 1997; Bloodhart and Swim 2010). Ecofeminists further argue that men's dominance in society has created structures and norms which normalise, and indeed encourage, behaviours which reproduce male superiority over women and nature (Plumwood 2003). As such, ecofeminism advocates that, as outcomes of the same system of oppression, environmental and gender injustice should be addressed together (Sturgeon 1997; Plumwood 2003; Warren 2015).

These patterns of male domination over both women and nature are widely understood as emanating from the ideology and practices inscribed hegemonic masculinity (Pulé 2007; Merchant 1980; Stoddart and Tindall 2011). Indeed, we see that wealthy White men in the Global North are disproportionate investment in environmentally destructive industries and practices, largely concentrated in the extraction, commodification, and sale of natural resources (see Daggett 2018; Hanson 2010; Pease 2019).

Ecofeminist scholars have suggested these patterns of patriarchal domination over nature emerge from a complex history of the role of nature in the trajectory of colonial, imperial, and capitalist processes (Adams and Mulligan 2003; Merchant 1980). Merchant (1980) documents significant shifts in conceptions of nature throughout the Western scientific (1540s-1680s) and industrial (1760-1840) revolutions, in which Western thought transitioned from an organic to mechanical conception of nature. Spreading technological innovations of the industrial and scientific revolutions around Europe overrode organic conception of nature, paving way for nature to be reframed as "dead" and "passive", something to be dissected, deconstructed and harnessed for the advancement of Western civilisation (Merchant 1980:xvii). Nature came to be seen as a means to an end, something to be exploited in the pursuit of power and money (Adams and Mulligan 2003; Plumwood 2003). Advances in Western civilisation occurred at the expense of nature, as is still the case as many of today's biggest industries are rooted in environmental and ecological destruction and degradation (Daggett 2018). Additionally, cultural and economic lifestyle shifts in the post-industrial era pushed humanity indoors, fundamentally changing the relationship between humans and nature (Hultman 2017; Twine 1997; Pease 2019 Merchant 1980). Nature comes to be understood as separate and hierarchical rather than integrated and reciprocal – as something to be "regulated by bureaucratic control" (Adams 2003:43).

Yet while nature and environmentalism have long been considered feminized, it is also in nature that men go about proving their masculinity through forms of domination and destruction (Allister 2004; Kimmel and Kaufman 1993). Indeed, nature has simultaneously become a site in which men retrieve the 'inner king' and 'warrior within' (Kimmel and Kaufman 1993). Known as the mythopoetic men's movement, men have long been encouraged to journey into 'into the wild', embrace the 'wild man' mythscape, in order to get in touch with their 'natural' side

(Kimmel and Kaufman 1993). This journey is framed as "a retrieval of heroic archetypes as models for men" thereby promoting the idea of a single, essentialist model of manhood and masculinity (Kimmel and Kaufman 1993). The narrative of the mythopoetic men's movement problematically encourages forms of domination over nature such as hunting and logging, thereby reinforcing a hierarchical relationship between men and nature. In a similar light, Kimmel (2003) finds links between right-wing extremism and environmentalism in Scandinavian countries in which male White supremacists embrace environmental stances as a means to 'cleanse' the modern state of its 'impurities' and 'perversions'.

Today, Anglo-American Western men's relationship to the natural world in particular has been warped by overarching, patriarchy and hegemonic value systems which encourage environmental destructiveness and prioritise the economic profitability of natural resources above their innate value. Masculinities scholar Raewyn Connell (2017) writes:

> "The top managers of the corporations pouring out greenhouse gases and poisoning river systems are not necessarily doing so from inner evil... they are working in an insane elite world that institutionalises competitive, power-oriented masculinity, and they are doing whatever it takes" (p.6).

What Connell is getting at here is that not all men are power hungry money driven businessmen, but rather illustrates that people are a product of their culture, socialised to conform to its social rules. In the Western gender order, which privileges the needs of men above those of women and nature, masculinity stands in opposition to nature which is seen in terms of its extrinsic market value as opposed to its intrinsic natural value.

Environmental Masculinities

The literature on the experiences of pro-environmental men is as of yet underdeveloped. Connell's (1990) article, *A Whole New World: Remaking Masculinity in the Context of the Environmental Movement,* appears as among the first to broach the topic and effectively began

the conversation surrounding men, masculinity and environmentalism. Connell (1990) followed six Australian men through their journey to environmentalism and suggested that environmentalism may act as sites in which masculinity is challenged, deconstructed, and renegotiated. Since then, a relatively small number of empirical studies have emerged specifically exploring the intersection between masculinity and environmentalism (see Brough et al. 2016; Chan and Curnow 2017; Gonda 2017; Stoddart and Tindall 2011). This has been accompanied by a larger body of theoretical work (see Anshelm and Hultman 2014; Hultman and Pulé 2018; MacGregor 2010; 2014; Pease 2019; Rome 2006; Twine 1997). From this literature, two patterns emerge: Whereas some studies find environmentalism to produce pro-feminist responses from men (Connell 1990; Hultman 2017; Stoddart and Tindall 2011), others find evidence of a reproduction hierarchy and inequalities (see Bell 2016; Chan and Curnow 2017; Hultman 2017).

Environmental Men and Pro-Feminist Change

Both theoretical (Twine 1997; Pease 2019) and empirical research (Connell 1990; Stoddart and Tindall 2011) has suggested environmentalism to be a site of change to the masculine conception of self as a result of exposure to, and engagement with, feminist politics which open their eyes to gender inequalities (Connell 1990; Pease 2019; Stoddart and Tindall 2011; Twine 1997). Connell's (1990) research in particular suggests that engaging with the environmental movement challenges mainstream hegemonic masculinity and encourages a critical re-evaluation of both personal identity and the broader gender order (Connell 1990). Connell (1990) writes that:

> "A combination of the ethos of environmental radicalism, pressure from feminism, and a variety of personal triggers launched a project of reform...The main initiative taken by these men was to separate from the mainstream

masculinity they were familiar with and to attempt to reconstruct personality, to produce a new, nonsexist self" (p.466)

These scholars suggest that gender inequality becomes visible as men see past the blinders of their privilege. Stoddart and Tindall's (2011) qualitative study found men in the environmental movement hold pro-feminist attitudes, however, they could not definitively conclude engagement in environmentalism to be the motivator.

This literature emerges from an understanding of masculinity as fluid and dynamic as opposed to fixed and static and therefore conceive that men have the capacity for positive transformation, maintaining that men can and should be part of the solution to the environmental crises (Pease 2019; Twine 1997). Indeed, Twine (1997) suggests ecological politics to be an effective tool for pro feminist men to challenge and "subvert" hegemonic forms of masculinity and simultaneously provide an avenue for men to renegotiate their relationship with nature toward one that is more egalitarian and devoid of power structures (p.6).

Environmental Men and the Reproduction of Inequalities

Conversely, other scholars have drawn attention to men's reproduction of inequality within environmentalism. The two empirical studies demonstrating this both drew on participant observation of environmental groups to show how unequal gender structures are discursively reproduced. Chan and Curnow (2017) found that men performed hegemonic masculinity through exclusionary conversations designed to deliberately keep the rest of the group uninformed, thereby introducing a dominant/subordinate power dynamic to the group. And in a similar light, Bell (2016) observed the overwhelmingly White male leaders maintain an unquestioned position of superiority by taking up most of the speaking time and by dismissing others' ideas. Their use of participant observation offers useful insight into the *practices* of hegemonic masculinity employed by men within environmental group settings, but without being able to contextualize

respondents nor gain access to their perspectives, they miss the nuance of the meaning and motivation behind individual's behaviours and perceptions of their practices. This present study research therefore aims to deepen our understanding of the meaning and motivation behind men's gender performativity within the context of environmentalism.

Theoretical work by Hultman (2017) and Hultman and Pulé (2018) dubb these 'ecomodern' masculinities – effectively greenwashed industrial masculinities (Hultman 2017; Hultman and Pulé 2018). These are characterised by the acknowledgement of the destructiveness of industrial practices and recognition of climate change as a problem but are averse to doing anything substantive about it. The ecomodern man appears to be caught between a desire to live out a more environmental and less destructive masculinity, and a nagging need to prove their masculine identity in the only way they have been taught how, through wealth accumulation and avoidance of feminine acts. This is similar to the identity maintenance framework previously discussed, whereby in order to maintain their status within the masculine field, ecomodern men compromise by maintaining some traits of dominant masculinity *within* the field of environmentalism to counteract the femininity associated with environmentalism.

This is far from an isolated phenomenon, as Lupton (2000) found that men who enter traditionally feminine professions often display hyper-masculine compensatory practices in order to counteract any stigma they may experience as men doing women's work. Lupton (2000) suggests that this is because gender is a performative concept, meaning that any social space operates as "an important arena in which masculinities are defined and maintained and challenged" (p.34). This is a result of the patriarchal society which values masculine traits more than feminine ones, thereby making it more advantageous for men to highlight their masculinity in feminine spaces. Willer et al. (2013) explain that when confronted with a threat to their

masculinity, men often seek ways to dominate because it provides a means differentiating themselves from others, and moreover, cementing their superiority over them too. Hultman (2017) argues that ecomodern masculinities deliberately aim to preserve the gender status quo, thereby functioning like a 'greenwashed' ecological masculinity (Hultman 2017).

The constraints imposed by the rigidity of mainstream hegemonic masculinity make men acutely aware of their sex-gender congruence, encouraging them to adopt the necessary dispositions which ensure they do not deviate too far from their gender norms and risk losing their social position and privileges. These performances of hegemonic masculinity reinforce a social hierarchy and power dynamics which garner respect and social rewards from fellow men, thereby counteracting any potential loss of status from being in an ostensibly feminine space.

Conclusion

The aim of this review is to help situate the reader into the literature upon which this research draws on and contributes to. I began by exploring and developing the doing, redoing, and undoing gender literature to develop the theoretical framework upon which this research draws on. I offer a brief overview of the relevant literature pertaining to studies of masculinities, and stress the importance of historical processes which continue to shape the structure and evolution of gender relations today. I then connect this theoretical literature to the emerging field gender and environmentalism, offering insight into ecofeminist scholarship. Finally, I offer a review of previous empirical studies within this field, highlighting their findings, contradictions, strengths and limitations.

III. METHODOLOGY

Interpretivist Paradigm

A paradigm constructs a lens through which to approach social research. Paradigms offer a collection of concepts, assumptions and propositions which inform how, and from which direction, the researcher approaches the research and ultimately interprets the data (Bogdan and Biklen 1998). This study is informed and driven by the interpretivist paradigm which "is committed to understanding social phenomena from the actor's own perspective and examining how the world is experienced" (Taylor et al. 2016:17). This approach is grounded in the assumption that realities are socially constructed as people assign meaning to and define their social interactions and surroundings, which in turn inform the actions of an individual (Taylor et al. 2016; see also Berger and Luckmann 1966). Douglas (1970) explains that it is one's personally held "ideas, feelings, and motives" which 'move' human beings as human beings, rather than as mere human bodies (p.ix, cited in Taylor 2016:17). With this in mind, research emerging from the interpretivist paradigm intends to analyse and understand particular social phenomena from the perspective of the individual themselves (Mackenzie and Knipe 2006; Taylor et al. 2016). Interpretivism therefore injects a dose of humanity into the research as it approaches its subjects as humans in a complex system of interconnected and varied systems.

This study benefits from an interpretivist paradigm precisely because it seeks to shed light on how agency is enacted against the gender structure. The long-term aim of the project is to assess whether environmentalism can function as a space for gender norms to be challenged (see Risman 2004). Therefore, how the men participating in this study see and make sense of the social world around them is key to isolating how and why they have chosen to defy conventional norms that might preclude men from actively engaging in environmentalism.

Qualitative Methodology

The interpretivist approach utilises qualitative methodologies designed to yield rich, descriptive data, such as interviews, participant observation or ethnographies. Qualitative methodologies are particularly useful for peering into other people's social worlds, as they encourage participants to explain how they experience, and moreover perceive, the(ir) social social world (Taylor et al. 2016). This is because qualitative research is principally concerned with the subjective meaning people attach to objective 'things' (Taylor et al. 2016). An advantage of qualitative methods is the ability to contextualize the lives of respondents, allowing the researcher to gain an understanding of the social forces shaping the lives and perspective of participants (Taylor et al. 2016). For instance, participants in this research were asked about the gender messaging they received growing up and the values that those imparted upon them in order to understand the context from which these men have negotiated and reformed their masculinities. Qualitative methods therefore not only reveal *that* a phenomena in fact occurs, it also makes solid inroads at uncovering and explaining *why* it occurs.

Interviewing

Interviews were used to attain a detailed understanding of the lived experiences of pro environmental men, as well as the meaning they make of those experiences. Taylor et al. (2016) stress that the interview should be understood and treated as a social interaction in which "knowledge and social meanings are constructed during the interview process" (p.131). It is the nature of research interviews to ask things that the subject has not thoroughly considered before, and therefore it is through reflecting on those questions that knowledge and social meaning is constructed within the interview process itself (Seidman 2006; Taylor et al. 2016).

In this study, the interview process was designed as semi structured, but the nature of the subject and the open-ended questions resulted in a slightly more unstructured interview process than originally intended. An interview guide was drafted to outline the themes to be addressed and open-ended guiding questions to facilitate natural discussions (see Appendix C). Phrases such as "tell me about a time when…" and "can you recall…" were used to encourage participants to reflect on their experiences, and in doing reveal their own thought and meaning making process. People are not often willing to share personal and private opinions and values when asked 'point blank,' yet are willing to share stories which reveal those underlying worldviews and values (O'Connor 2000, cited in Shiller 2020; Austin 1975, cited in Taylor et al. 2016). Interviews therefore allow the researcher to talk to people and listen to their stories and experiences, offering firsthand unfiltered insight into the social world of others. Ultimately, if we hope to understand the social world of others, those others must be given the freedom and space to reflect upon their experience, and also a platform through which to convey it (Seidman 2006).

Borrowing from Connell's seminal work in *Masculinities* (2005), I utilised a life histories approach during the interviews. Digging into participants' life histories helps to contextualize their experiences within the border sociocultural context from which they emerge (Connell 2005). Since gender is negotiated over the course of one's life, the life histories approach offers a more comprehensive view of the subject's experiences (Connell 2005). Connell (2005) writes that life histories reveal "personal experience, ideology, and subjectivity" but at the same time, also shed light on the "social structures, social movement, and institutions" at play in the construction of gender identity (p.89). This methodology therefore offers a rich contextualisation of how masculinity is informed and shaped by structural forces, yet at the same time leaves ample room for the emergence of narratives of agency, and fundamentally captures how

individuals construct their identity over time and with a particular historical and sociocultural framework (Connell 2005). This was particularly important as the majority of the other studies in this field have been conducted either quantitatively or through participants observation, both of which struggle to contextualize the background lives of their subject, making it hard to infer meaning and motivation behind individual behaviours.

Data collection

In order to be eligible to participate in the study, participants had to be American, British or Canadian, over the age of 18, male identifying , and be active within environmentalism. For the purposes of this study, the criterion of 'active within environmentalism' was deliberately wide because environmental engagement is manifested in an extensive range of actions and behaviours. Participants were asked to explain the ways in which they were involved in environmentalism, with answers ranging from personal habits (vegetarian diets, living zero waste or plastic free, etc) to political activism, philanthropic support, and volunteer work (ie. Beach clean ups) and formal employment (i.e. Regenerative farmer) in order to verify and assess their level of engagement.

While demographic information was easily verifiable, environmental engagement was harder to verify. Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) warn of the possibility that ineligible individuals volunteer for the study for some external benefit, and encourage the researcher to independently verify participant eligibility. Because no benefits were being offered and participants were asked to dedicate over an hour of their time, it was not anticipated that those who did not meet the criteria would sign up; however, this possibility was not discounted. Due to the nature and depth of questions included in the interview guide (see Appendix C), engagement in environmentalism was relatively easy to surmise. A total of 18 interviews were conducted, 4 of which were not

used in the final data analysis because individuals were deemed to have not met aspects of the inclusion criteria.

Recruitment & Sample

Participants were recruited using snowball sampling originating from two sources: environmental action-based Facebook groups and my own personal social network. A recruitment message (see Appendix A) was posted to a number of environmental Facebook groups describing the study and inviting those who meet the inclusion criteria to sign up using a google forms sign-up sheet which doubled as the informed consent sheet (see Appendix B). In addition, I reached out to a few personal contacts whom I knew to be active in environmentalism and whom I had worked with before, and after explaining the scope of the study, asked if they would like to participate or if they knew of others who might be interested. Further participants were recruited by asking those already recruited to forward the sign up/consent form and information flyer onto others from their personal networks who met the inclusion criteria and might be interested in participating, thus initiating the chain of respondents. After signing up and signing the consent sheet using google forms, they were emailed to set up a time to conduct the interview.

Like rolling a growing snowball, each referral expands the sample base as informants refer the researcher to the other informants. Snowball sampling offers a means of finding hard to reach populations and therefore deliberately ignores the most dominant and visible people in the field to instead uncover and access the peripheral sub-group of men who were the focus of this research.

However, there are drawbacks to relying on participants to provide further participants. Firstly, the researcher must relinquish a degree of control over the sample as future participants

are drawn based on others' referrals (Biernacki & Waldorf 1981; Noy 2008). Another potential drawback with respondent driven sampling is that each interview can affect subsequent interviews in that chain of respondents. Participants will likely discuss their experience of being interviewed through the process of referral; as such, a good interview can prove to be an advantage to the recruitment and interview process, but an ineffective interview, one where the researcher fails to develop a trusting relationship with the respondent, can become a hindrance to future interview and affect the results (Noy 2008). To avoid this, I provided respondents time to ask me any questions they might have both before and after the interview, and made it clear that they were free to decline to answer any questions they were uncomfortable with. I furthermore made sure to give respondents the freedom to speak their mind, trying to avoid interruption as much as possible, while still making sure they felt heard.

All interviews were conducted virtually over Zoom between November and December 2020, with the average interview lasting 52 minutes, the longest being 80 minutes and the shortest 27 minutes. Each interview was recorded to my personal, password protected computer for transcription. The sample was composed of 9 Americans, 3 Canadians, and 2 Britons. The sample was racially homogenous, with all respondents identifying as White. 13 of the 14 identified as heterosexual, with one participant identifying as queer. All participants held, or were working towards, undergraduate degrees or more, and about half of those had majored in environmental subjects (ie environmental studies, environmental science, ecology, agriculture… etc.), and all had at least taken some environment focused courses.

Table 1: Participant Sample

	Name	Age	Nationalisty	Occupation	Sexuality	Race	Environmental Commitment
1	Nigel	61	British	Retired	Heterosexual	White	High
2	Ian	24	American	River Rafting Guide	Heterosexual	White	High
3	Josh	34	American	Architect, Professor	Heterosexual	White	High
4	Matt	30	British	Ecologist	Heterosexual	White	High
5	Luke	27	American	Student	Heterosexual	White	Low
6	Sean	24	American	Student	Heterosexual	White	Low
7	Keegan	23	American	Unemployed	Heterosexual	White	Low
8	Sam	21	American	Student	Heterosexual	White	Low
9	Mason	26	Canadian	Unemployed	Heterosexual	White	Medium
10	Aidan	24	American	Part time Firefighter, part time nature guide	Heterosexual	White	Medium
11	Christian	22	American	Community Health Coordinator	Heterosexual	White	Medium
12	Fletcher	24	American	Engireer with Water NGO	Heterosexual	White	Medium
13	Kevin	32	Canadian	Agrologist	Heterosexual	White	Medium
14	Geo	25	Canadian	Outdoor educator	Queer	White	Medium

Data Analysis

Once the interviews were completed initial notes and impressions were noted immediately after the interview to keep track of recurring themes to look out for in subsequent interviews. At the end of the interviewing stage, each interview was transcribed using an automated transcription service, *Trint*, which provided the initial transcription but also required editing, as some parts were incorrectly transcribed. I personally went through each transcription and corrected any errors. Additionally, repetitive and superfluous diction (i.e. "and, and', 'you know' and 'um') were edited out for clarity, except when it was deemed to reveal a deeper meaning in the dialog (such as pensiveness and reflection). Transcripts were then uploaded to and coded using Atlas TI coding software. Key themes noted throughout the interviews were used in the preliminary coding, with codes such as 'environmental values', 'masculinity construction', 'negotiating masculinity' and 'doing masculinity" among others. Over the course of the preliminary data analysis the coding was altered to better represent the emerging themes.

Limitations

The lack of diversity in the sample introduces limitations to the findings of this research. The sample was made of all White, largely middle-class heterosexual men, the majority of whom were aged between 20-34 at the time of the interviews. As such, the findings from this research are limited to a discussion of this particular subject of the male population, preventing any insight into the experiences of more marginalised men in the movement.

Additionally, as with any research, the methodology used to conduct research has an effect on findings. Of the empirical research conducted in this field, interviews and participant observation are the primary methodologies, but each have yielded distinct results. Connell (1990) and Stoddart and Tindall (2011), who both used interviews as their primary methodology, identify environmentalism as a site of positive, pro-feminist transformation. Conversely, Bell (2016) and Chan and Curnow's (2017) participant observation studies find that pro-environmental men continue to reproduce gender power hierarchies and inequalities. The different picture painted by these studies appears to be, at least partly, the result of research methodologies. While the original hope for this study was to produce a mixed methods research utilising both interview and participant observation techniques to account for the methodological biases apparent in the literature, this was not possible due to ongoing COVID-19 restriction which have prevented close contact and interactions with multiple people.

Ethics

The methodology used in this research to find and select the sample, as well as the interview protocol, were all approved by the Wheaton College institutional review board (IRB) in October 2020 prior to initiation of the data collection procedure. In line with IRB guidelines, informed consent was collected from all participants by sending out the informed consent form

(see Appendix B) in a 'google form' which participants read and filled out prior to being accepted into the study. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality with the transcription and recording of the interviews held privately, seen only by myself, and stored on my private, password protected computer. Respondents were able to choose their own pseudonym, yet some respondents asked to have their true names included in the write up.

IV.   DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction*: Caught Between Two Worlds*

One of the defining features of the interviews was the emergence of a tension between internalised ideas about performing masculinity and their desire to participate in environmental behaviours which contradict the ideology of Kivel's (2007) 'man box' and Connell's (2005) 'hegemonic masculinity'. One participant, Christian, offered a story which illustrated this struggle to find a balance between the conflicting expectations of being a man who cares for nature and the environment. While working with an Indigenous community in Canada, Christian was exposed to more spiritual conceptions of nature which emphasise a holistic approach to the relationship between humans and the natural world. "*There's a lot of qualities of femininity that are put into that work, especially around these ideas of nurturing and mothering. Talking to plants, singing to plants, like being really gentle with how you move about.*" While out harvesting plants one day, Christian recalls being reprimanded for not being gentle enough with the plants, triggering an instinctive reaction in him to want to tell them to '*calm down, it's just a plant*'. Reflecting on this instinctive reaction, he explains:

> *I can feel and relate the origins of that to those masculine feelings of self, especially around the idea of providing, like being really quick and intentional to produce as much as possible, versus the idea of doing it right and potentially producing less in that particular outing… There are things that I do […] now […] that I can feel […] sometimes instinctively […] those internalised ideas of masculinity really rejecting them, while I'm doing it. (*Christian, 22)

He describes the nagging pull of what scholars would term hegemonic capitalist, breadwinner models of masculinity within him, which he acknowledges having internalised yet conceptually rejects. As Hultman and Pulé (2018) point out, 'the time-space compression' inscribed in capitalism renders care for nature difficult (p.175).

Other men in this sample shared Christian's experience, as many spoke of a desire to operate beyond the limits of masculinity, but simultaneously feeling a nagging pull to remain within the socially prescribed bounds of gender accountability. Another participant, Aidan, sums it up well:

> *I'm constantly having to rewire and kind of examine the way I engage with the world and look at the world...Because from such a young age I have been codified by others as masculine, and you forget...Your whole worldview gets shifted.* (Aidan, 24)

The salience of these dominant narratives of masculinity, coded in a rationalist and capitalist framework, instils in men ideas about what masculinity is, and moreover, what it requires of them, placing limits on social behaviours. Christian and Aidan both illustrate the internalisation of this masculinist ideology, and moreover highlight the internal struggle to 'rewire', as Aidan puts it, their position in, and relation to, their surroundings.

Drawing on the doing, redoing and undoing gender literature (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2004; 2009; West and Zimmerman 1987; 2009), I explore how men 'do', 'redo' and 'undo' gender in the context of environmentalism and their pro-environmental engagement. The 14 pro-environmental men who participated in this study each reveal a complex system of conformity, negotiation, and resistance to the dominant Anglo-American narratives of what masculinity 'should be'.

'Doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987) involved a dependence of traditionally masculine conception of masculinity for the production of what Bridges (2009) terms 'gender capital' which was then 'deployed' to masculinise forms of pro-environmental engagement. This was achieved through participant's physicality – how they physically present and *use* their traditionally masculine bodies – and occupational positions and relations, that were relied upon to construct masculine subject positions. While this offered them avenues of engaging with environmentalism in meaningful ways, they do not necessarily step outside the limits of gender

hegemony to do so, and moreover, it often involved reproducing reductive notions of essentialist gender difference in the process.

Complicating these findings, however, where the instances in which participants demonstrated active resistance to the hegemonic gender status quo and defied normative Western binary frameworks of gender accountability. Participants pushed against conformity to masculinist structures and expectations, thereby challenging binary gender dualisms (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2009). Pro-environmental engagement was found to enter men into a process of creating distance from hegemonic structures and fostered an ethic of care and reciprocity with the natural world. Environmentalism therefore emerges as a site in which gender structures are resisted, challenged, and undermined.

In recent years, there has been a marked uptake in empirical research centred around these questions of when and where people redo and undo gender, and if so, how – with more and more studies looking at various social spaces (see Bjork 2015; Kelan 2018; McDonald 2013). Here, the concepts of doing, redoing and undoing gender are employed in order to organize and make sense of the complex interaction and process of negotiation that men undergo while navigating the conflicting fields of environmentalism and Anglo-American masculinities. To illustrate the coercive pull of hegemonic masculinity ideology, we begin by addressing the ways in which masculinity was performed within the limits of dominant structures of gender accountability in context of environmentalism, and how such processes contribute to a (re)production of inequalities. This is then followed by an exploration of the ways in which environmentalism can also act as a site in which gender was seen to be redone, and enters into a discussion on the possibility and limits of change to the dominant, Western, heteronormative hegemonic masculinity through environmentalism

Doing Gender: *Sustaining Hegemonic Gender Relation within Environmentalism*

Over the course of the interview, participants reflected on their experiences and revealed instances in which they struggled to enact their environmental value system, often restrained by their accountability to the dominant gender narrative. What emerged was a struggle to reconcile their desire to adhere to personal environmental values, and a need to fulfil other social roles in life – times in which they found themselves in situations where commitment to environmental behaviour would involve a sacrifice, to some degree, of masculinity, and moreover, their 'patriarchal dividend' (Connell 1995). As Kevin explains: *"being perceived as emotionally motivated, rather than having a rational understanding, especially as a male, would be to risk some of the privileges frankly, if I have in my position as an educated white male."*

Consistent with previous research emerging from the doing-undoing gender literature, a number of these pro-environmental men drew on characteristics of hegemonic masculinity to perform gender in ways that minimise and mitigate the discordance between their gender identity and environmentalism, each with varying degrees of ambivalence and intentionality. I draw on the experiences of seven respondents in particular who most clearly demonstrated how 'gender accountability' (West and Zimmerman 1987) encouraged them to draw on hegemonic masculinity to negotiate gender in the context of environmentalism. I use Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) concept of hegemonic masculinity to refer to the *practices* which maintain men's position as dominant relative to others (Chan and Curnow 2017). To this end, they demonstrated two *strategies* for performing masculinity which saw them draw on masculine capital inscribed in their masculine bodies (AKA embodied or physical capital) and occupational statuses (AKA Institutional capital) to produce "contextually relevant... gendered selves" (Bridges 2009:84). In other words, these strategies were used to accentuate and draw attention to

masculine traits and practices, such as muscular bodies, demonstrations of rationality and control, scientific credentials, and occupational positions, to present themselves as visibly masculine despite their perceptually feminine forms of environmentalism.

Practices, such leaning into their physical stature and emphasising qualities of rationality, were used to emphasise masculinity and create a separation, and indeed difference, between themselves as men from the feminized, environmental 'Other'. Processes of masculine embodiment, which produce masculine capital, allowed participants to 'compensate' for non-masculine pro-environmental behaviours (deVisser et al. 2009). However, these same processes of masculine embodiment shield, or insulate, these men from experiences of oppression or discrimination, and therefore renders them unlikely to question or challenge the hegemonic gender order and the inequalities it creates (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2004). This section details the ways in which they remained 'accountable' to the hegemonic structures of Anglo-American masculinity as they performed heteronormative manliness as a way to conceal any discordance between their gender identities and environmental practices.

Embodied Cultural Capital – Physical Capital

Christian, a 22-year-old community health coordinator, grew up in a conservative Christian community in Colorado and has long been a member of various hunting groups, while also identifying as an environmentalist. Interestingly, it was hunting which opened up his eyes to environmentalism, as two of the hunting organisations he belongs to ('Pheasants Forever' and 'Ducks Unlimited') are dedicated to conservation and population management, which Christian himself described as *'paternalistic'*. Over time, however, especially after attending a liberal arts university and working with indigenous communities through his job, his environmental ethic has evolved to be more integrative and holistic than the paternalism found in the hunting world.

Christian described contradicting values and personalities found in hunting and in environmentalism, and describes relying on his performatively masculine body to manage how he is perceived within the hunting world.

> *Within the conservative conception of masculinity and in hunting, I'm somebody that presents very well within that group, you know, visually and categorically, and having grown up in that world I understand the lingo and kind of how things operate. And so that crowd is quite comfortable with me being there in terms of how I present and what my background is. People talk to me as if they would talk to anybody else within that world*. (Christian 22)

Christian here biologizes masculinity as he points to biological traits to demonstrate his manhood, rendering biological sex "an explicit facet of 'doing gender'" (Messerschmidt 2009:86). He remains accountable to and reinforces the alignment of a sex-gender binary in which male biology confers masculinity. Additionally, he draws on his cultural knowledge of the language and mannerism of the hunting world to remain accountable to local gender structures, as well as the overall social structures too. His embodied cultural capital – "dispositions of the body and mind" (Bourdieu 1986:17) – allows him to easily blend in with the group, affording him the ability to comfortably fit in and claim his place in that setting. Such situational performances of masculinity become a means of building, or amassing, forms of privilege across various spaces.

As his views have become more progressive he has learned to intentionally enact and perform gender 'appropriately' while in the hunting world. He invokes a situationally viable aspect of his self-identity which suits the present needs.

> *I often go hunting with these ex-military guys, and it would be me and somebody else, often very very conservative people, and I got a reputation on those trips of being very quiet, which is not really the case for myself generally.* (Christian 22)

He recognises the incompatibility of environmentalism in that space and adapts his demeanour to remain accountable to the local gender structures.

Luke, a 27 engineering PhD student from New York currently working to develop compact wind turbines out of reclaimed car parts has only recently begun to engage with nature and environmentalism beyond the scientific realm of engineering as a result of the influence of his mother and sister. Like Christian, Luke has long inhabited hegemonically masculine spaces as a competitive collegiate athlete and member of a university fraternity. When asked how his 'frat brothers' respond to his environmentalism, he explains:

> Luke*: Well, to be fair, to be honest with you, I don't want to talk to them about it.*
> Interviewer*: And why was that?*
> Luke*: I guess that's probably the basis of the relationships I had with those people. Like we didn't really have a relationship predicated on that, and so I guess I kind of wanted to just kind of keep it the same. And so I just, yeah, I just kept the relationship the same. And so they didn't bring it up. I didn't say anything...It's not like an intentional effort on my part, it just kind of has maintained that way. Like, I haven't really put in any work- Like, you know, I don't silence people if they're talking about environmentalism or anything [chuckle].*

Luke is tall, with an athletic build and facial hair, placing him well within Anglo American models of masculinity. The congruence between Luke's sex and gender presentation are mutually reinforcing, meaning Luke is unlikely to face challenges to his masculinity. Unlike Christian, Luke does not appear to be motivated by a fear of having his masculinity challenged or social exclusion. He explains his compartmentalisation as a matter of the relationships he has cultivated with his frat brothers and other social circles which are not predicated on topics of environmentalism. Whereas Christian explains his omission of his environmentalism as an active, deliberate practice, Luke contrastingly explains his as a passive experience, noting it to not be an intentional effort on his part. This can be explained by Luke and Christian's different levels of involvement and investment in environmentalism, as Christian demonstrated a deeper spiritual involvement compared to Luke who has only recently caught on. Luke's relatively lower level of engagement in environmentalism makes it a less visible and consistent facet of his life, rendering his separation of environmentalism away from certain group a natural, unthinking

process. Another element is that while both fraternities and hunting are seen as hegemonically masculine homosocial environments, the more overt violence inscribed in hunting functioned as an additional deterrent for Christian to share his environmentalism, as he explains hunting as a context in which *"I did not feel comfortable voicing a lot of my feelings around certain things."*

For both Luke and Christian, their actions arose as situational reactions. 'Doing gender' was "the outcome of reading and 'doing' certain situationally available gender practices" (Messerschmidt 2009:87). Both Christian and Luke demonstrate processes of compartmentalisation in which they draw on their conventionally masculine bodies and bodily practices to separate, or 'stow away' their environmental identities while in more traditionally masculine spaces in which it is not socially valuable. Indeed, we can see how physical embodiments of masculinity offer a means of exemption for men from having to integrate two potentially contradicting identities.

Keegan too implicates the body in his performance of masculinity, but focuses more on how his body, as a vessel for action, is *used* to demonstrate his masculinity.

> *Ultimately, I still think I'm fairly masculine. I do a lot of things that are considered more masculine quote, unquote. Like I enjoy being outside and chopping wood, that kind of thing, which is stereotypically masculine thing, which I don't necessarily understand. And like when I talk to other men who are definitely very much into, like, showing that you're a man, those are the things that they attach and see value in me doing. But what they don't see value in me doing is like, talking about things and the state of the world and what's going on in people's lives with other people. And I found that a lot of the people that are willing to do that tend to be female.* (Keegan, 23)

For Keegan, it is not so much about the form of the body but rather how it is used which demonstrates his manhood, explicitly pointing to the labour-intensive task of chopping wood. Additionally, Keegan recognises the value ascribed to him by other men and acknowledges the fact that he is accountable to other men's perceptions of him as a man.

Traditionally masculine bodies were also seen to facilitate individuals' ability to 'blend' into most social spaces, and moreover provided a form of 'immunity' or 'security' from challenges to their gender and sexuality. Aidan and Mason in particular offer strikingly similar accounts of their experience of gender with relation to environmentalism:

> *Nobody's accused me of being overly feminine because of my environmentalism and I think that's because on paper I'm too similar to most of these guys – they could size me up and, oh, maybe they want to say something, but as soon as you mention, you know, the work I do, that gets sidelined. It immediately puts me in such a category that very little that I do could be feminine at that point, short of wearing a tutu and like curling my braid… It becomes overshadowed... There aren't a lot of guys who would call me out for being non masculine.* (Aidan, 24)

> *I don't feel like I've been very explicitly called out, per se, for having environmental behaviours or like had my masculinity called into question. I think there is some privilege to like being both masculine, both biologically male and also other than my hair [which is long, below shoulder length], being quite male presenting, like I'm pretty tall, pretty muscular and have other masculine traits… Like, I'm like a hairy dude.* (Mason 24)

Both Aidan and Mason point to their traditionally masculine bodies as a source of masculine capital shielding them from challenges to their masculinity as a result of their pro-environmental behaviours. Importantly though, what distinguishes Aidan and Mason from other participants, is their awareness of the privileges their masculine bodies grant. They do not indicate that they cultivate their bodies for the explicit creation of difference, yet they benefit from the privileges provided.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) stress the dual role played by both social context and embodiment in the production and manifestation of social practice. Bodies are not mere objects of practice, they are active agents in the production of social practices, "the delineating courses of social conduct" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:851). Bodies direct the course of action by themselves being loci of gender capital which *facilitate* the production of other social practices. Culturally exalted masculine bodies therefore manifest as cultural resources which may bring about power and status in particular social settings. Physicality and bodily practices are not

merely constructed at the individual, personal level, they are symbolically constructed at the interactional relational level for the people and institutions around us (Connell 1995).

Participants demonstrate how bodies can be deliberately 'cultivated' to assist in the navigation of gendered politics of social interaction (Shilling 1993). Attuned to the gender cues which signal what is valuable in a given context and what is not, most demonstrate an *awareness* of their surroundings and a degree of intentionality in their individual, yet interconnected, constructions of masculinities. How they present and how they *use* their bodies signal masculinity and affords them a degree of gender freedom to engage with the more feminine sides of environmentalism. This is consistent with Coles (2009) and deVisser et al. (2009) who contend that men may counteract their subordinate masculinities by physically embodying conventionally manly characteristics. Furthermore, they use their bodies to retain a connection to masculine spaces, resulting in minimal risk of exclusion from masculine social capital and networks.

The role of the body is not something which previous scholars of environmentalism and masculinities have raised, and therefore the interviews were not structured to elicit further detail from respondents. Nevertheless, the role of the body in the experience of gender in environmentalism, as well as the role of masculine bodies in the separation of environmental selves from other identities and spaces, offer valuable insights into men's negotiation of masculinity in environmentalism, and furthermore presents a jumping off point for future research.

Institutionalised Cultural Capital – Occupational Capital

The second way through which pro-environmental men perform masculinity is through their reliance upon rationalised, scientific, and professionalized occupational positions. Doing so

emphasises one's masculinity in a field dominated by women and femininity, facilitating the construction of masculine subject positions. Men are seen to receive specific gender cues about how they should engage with environmentalism, which in turn contributes to a naturalised gendered division of labour rooted in essentialized notions of difference.

Matt, a 30-year-old ecologist from Devon, shows how the pressures to engage with environmentalism in discursively masculine ways emanate from TV and popular culture, his education, and occupational hierarchies.

> *One of the things that I have experienced that I think is potentially more unique to men in environmentalism than women, is, and I talked about it with a couple of friends who are very much more in my sort of level of environmentalism, that there's this big pressure to feel like you're going to make a big difference and that you need to be somebody. And I think that partly comes from the role models of what I saw growing up, and a little bit of the rhetoric from those male lecturers at university.* (Matt, 30)

Indeed, there is a lack of diversity in environmental leadership, as the majority leading environmental personalities are white males (David Attenborough, Steve Backshall, Chris Peckham…etc.). And reflecting on his academic and professional career, Matt states:

> *When I did my Zoology degree, it was 75% women on that course. So, you know, it's hard to feel like men were dominating in that area. But when I looked at the lecturers, I mean, many of them were men. And when I watched TV, it was a lot of men presenting nature programs. But then, when I started working for wildlife trusts, and I did my masters and I worked for ecological consultancies, it was a lot of women [but] the men in the more powerful positions. There was the odd woman in a powerful position, sure, but the head of the snake always did seem to be male.* (Matt, 30)

Seeing many more men in positions of leadership and authority signalled to Matt his place and expected trajectory in his environmental path.

Along with public figures, university lecturers, and occupational hierarchies, several respondents' pointed to the Boy Scouts as their initial exposure to nature, and it emerged as another site in which environmentalism is 'masculinised'. They recall environmentalism being reconfigured for specifically male appeal. 24-year-old part time firefighter and part time nature guide, Aidan, described the Boy Scouts as "a *very traditional, masculine kind of bastion"* which

taught him that *"traditionally, men are thought of as caretakers and providers."* This gendered role is inculcated into their approach to nature and environmentalism, as Aidan describes being taught that *"it is your duty as a man (*emphasised*) to take care of the environment."* Aidan describes how this played out in practice:

> *Growing up, that meant beach cleanups and making sure we would have competitions when we would hike: whoever could come back with the most trash in their pockets, just picked up off the trail, you know, and all of these things were taught to me in a very traditionally masculine way. You know, these things were introduced at the same time of, you know, don't show emotion about it, but pick up more trash because that's what men did, right.* (Aidan, 24)

While encouraging men to be more environmentally friendly, this rhetoric nevertheless reproduces essentialized ideas of men and masculinity by positioning environmental behaviours as a means of accomplishing masculinity. Here, environmentalism is practiced only through masculinised ideals of competition and physical strength. This takes away from the innate value of the action itself, and rebrands it as part of a social performance. The meaning of the practices becomes fundamentally gendered.

These means of rebranding environmental practices as masculine lends to a gendered division of how one is to engage with environmentalism, and reminds men especially that they are to do so in ways which follow conventionally masculine traits, such as rationality, strength, and competition.

Kevin, a 32-year-old agrologist from Canada offers an excellent example of just this. As a professional agrologist, the majority of Kevin's involvement in environmentalism is mediated through rational, scientific, institutionalised professional channels, offering him both social and professional advantages such as knowledge exclusivity, prestige, and status. Kevin demonstrated an internal conflict between his scientific, objective, rationalist approach to environmentalism and a deeper, more innate desire to engage in more emotional, even spiritual, ways. When asked

why has chosen such a science-based career, he explains being motivated by a desire to maintain a masculine, rational, scientific image and reputation:

> *I have a huge appreciation for activism, for people who go out and sometimes get arrested or who make the emotional argument, which I think often is the context in which an important change or decision might happen. But I think, I guess my outlook is part of me really would love to do that. But to do so, I think is a careful choice I have to make, because being perceived as emotionally motivated, rather than having a rational understanding, especially as a male, would be to risk some of the privileges, frankly, [that] I have in my position as an educated white male, and might undermine the way in which other people respect or perceive my rational argument. And so it's sort of like I've made a choice, recognising my privilege to pursue a flavour of environmentalism which can play to that strength, if you will. And there's a degree of sacrifice in that. I don't get to gratify my own emotions in an environmentalist context through acts of activism. Instead, I'm trying to improve the way we do mapping or change the way people interpret some data.* (Kevin 32)

Later on in the interview he elaborates on the importance of taking up a professional position:

> *It's provided me a space in which I can pursue environmental outcomes which I think outwardly aligns with masculine expectations – the professionalism, the science, the data…It gives me a space, which could be perceived as feminine, that I am able to engage in a masculine way. It gives me the permission (*emphasis added) *from society to engage in there because of the way I do it...we live in a culture where people are discounted for their emotionality,...And longer-term like, I would like to be able to demonstrate more emotionality as a male. But to do that, and to not lose the influence and the privilege that I might have through reason [...] I have to first demonstrate my competence, and then I have permission for an expression of emotion.* (Kevin, 32)

Kevin implies a perception of *incompetence* in a rationalised, professionalized scientific field as antithetical to masculinity, something which emasculates and subordinates. Such views were reiterated by others too, such as Josh (34) states that a facet of masculinity is "*not being able to be confused.*" Consequently, pursuits of distinctly rational, professional scientific channels through which to engage with environmentalism provide as a means of avoiding potential emasculation and the shame that often accompanies this (Kimmel 2003, cited in Hanlon 2012). This is unsurprising as professionalisation is a common means of demonstrating gender competence (Ashcraft et al. 2012). Ashcraft et al. (2012) point out that blue and white collar work which respectively required skilled bodies and minds are typified to men, whereas pink

collar work typified to women often deemed unskilled or semi-professional. As Phillips and Taylor (1980:85, cited in Ashcraft 2012:470) put it, "Skill is saturated with sex" with "skill ... increasingly defined against women".

Aidan (24) reinforces this as he too engages with environmentalism through his work as a part time nature guide, but also relies on his job as a firefighter to construct masculine capital and utilise it to masculinise environmentalism and encourage other men to get involved.

> *I've realised that I can kind of co-opt traditional toxic masculine traits and implement them in my favour. If people want to give me a hard time about my vegetarian diet, but then I'm there with the crew every day doing the workouts, doing the hard work. I run chainsaw for the crew, you know, I'm keeping up with every single guy next to me. And so when they start to comment about my vegetarian diet, you know, 'oh, well, you know, you're not getting enough protein', I can show through the kind of traditional masculine traits that I inhabit that you can do both. I can be concerned about recycling and still be a truck driving, whiskey drinking, macho man, right, they're not necessarily separate.* (Aidan 24)

Aware of the gender capital it creates, Aidan, like Kevin, leans into his masculine occupational identity to reinforce his masculine position, his 'gender capital' (Bridges 2009). And, similarly to Kevin, Aidan aims to reframe environmentalism as compatible with masculinity – as '*not necessarily separate*'. While this can be an effective means of getting more men involved in the environmental movement and to practice PEBs, strategies which depend on reframing the practice or behaviour as masculine has the potential to reinforce hegemonic masculinity (Fleming et al. 2014).[5]

Ashcraft et al. (2012) point out that "the nature and value of work is linked to the people aligned with that work" (p.470). With men persistently overrepresented in scientific and political realms of environmentalism they will continue to be valued according to their perceived gender

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[5] Fleming et al. (2014) discuss this in relation to health campaigns which ask men to 'man up' and get tested for STI's, aiming to bolster their masculinity to encourage behavioural change. "By asking men to man up and get tested, campaigns such as this emphasise and support the notion that STI testing is required to achieve a masculine status."(p1032)

configuration as opposed to their objective value. Therefore, so long as men remain embroiled in public, scientific, and political spheres and women in private and emotional spheres, environmentalism and climate change will continue to be framed as a scientific rather than ethical issue (MacGregor 2010). Consequently, both Kevin and Matt, among several others, demonstrated a fear, or uneasiness, of how they might be perceived if they do not engage through perceptually masculine realms and achieve masculine positions and measures of success.

The value of professional, rational, scientific roles dominated by men and masculinities is furthermore elevated and emphasised by marking them as categorically different from feminine, emotion-based ones (Ashcraft et al. 2012). Kevin does so when he acknowledges the importance and value of emotional labour when he states "*I have a huge appreciation for activism, for people who go out and sometimes get arrested or who make the emotional argument, which I think often is the context in which an important change or decision might happen,*" and yet goes on to contest its value as he discusses needing to '*first demonstrate [his] [professional] competence* [*to then*] *have permission for an expression of emotion*.' By contrasting the two and then privileging the importance of the rational, scientific approach, he constructs an elevated professional, occupational, skill based masculine positing, while simultaneously relegating emotional labour to secondary status. Indeed, rationality is constructed as the masculine binary opposite to feminine emotionality, and furthermore, is less valued and more frequently the object of criticism (Hill-Collins 2008). As such, Davies (1996, cited in Ashcraft et al. 2012:471) argues that professionalisation functions as "a specific historical and cultural construction of masculinity" (p.661).

Both Kevin, Aidan, and Matt demonstrate an awareness of these inequalities and policies themselves to conform to and replicate them. Reconfiguring environmentalism to fit within

masculine norms and privileging the rational, professional, scientific approach above feminine emotionality serves to reproduce gendered inequalities. Indeed, climate change and environmental discourses have increasingly been 'scientised' in recent years in response to the influx of scientific evidence, which has (perhaps unintentionally) shifted the framework away from ethical concerns toward scientific and security concerns that "require the kinds of solutions that are the traditional domains of men and hegemonic masculinity (MacGregor 2010:128). Yet research by Swim et al. (2018) contends that both scientific *and* emotional arguments are critically necessary within the environmental movement, therefore maintaining divisions of labour becomes unproductive in the pursuit of both gender equality and environmental progress.

Kevin hints at the origin of this while discussing his early childhood and path toward environmentalism, suggesting that his construction of a rationalist, professionalized masculinity in environmentalism through his professionalized work emanates from his experience as a child. He describes growing up gardening with his grandmother and developing a keen interest in nature and gardening, so much so that he was nicknamed 'nature boy' in elementary school. Kevin recalls "*there was a degree to which it was bullying, maybe, but I think that it gave me this expertise that was unusual… I could be both sort of bullied, and yet have respect at the same time.*" From a young age, being able to demonstrate skill and knowledge on the subject helped Kevin generate class based heteronormative masculine gender capital as he presented as an authority in the field, something which he has continued to utilise. Indeed, Ashcraft et al. (2012, in ref. to Larson 1977) contend that "knowledge exclusivity claims are political assertions of occupational worth" (p.478). This mirrors both Aidan's experience with the Boy Scouts and Matt's experience with TV programming, university lecturers, and occupational hierarchies.

Kevin, Matt and Aidan demonstrate an awareness of both the socially and politically

gendered context in which they operate, and moreover, to the gender capital created by their institutional, professional positions which grant access to "regime specific gendered identities" (Bridges 2009:92), or what I have here termed masculine subject positions. Their accumulation of gender capital *through* their institutional positions permits displays of masculinity in otherwise feminine fields, as Bridges (2009) notes, allows them to "purchase…temporally and contextually contingent gender identification and statuses" (p.94). This demonstrates that when mediated through one's occupation, especially ones which require advanced degrees and skills, are well paid, and which bestow authority onto the individual, environmentalism and PEBs are legitimated as 'masculine', conferring onto the individual greater 'gender capital' (Bridges 2009).

Hegemonic masculinity can be expressed via 'professional success in the labour market' because of how particular tasks are specifically characterised as a 'women work' or 'men's work' or as distinctly masculine or feminine (Kostas 2018:9, in reference to Carrigan et al. 1987). When Kevin chooses to pursue a professional, rational, scientific career in environmentalism, or when Matt's feels social pressure to climb the power ladder within the field of ecology, they get channelled into specifically gendered positions within the environmental world, thereby reproducing a power system which sees men and masculinist ideology as separate, and superior, to women and feminine systems.

As they construct themselves as 'masculine' subjects within environmentalism, they reinforce a normative binary gender order by reconstructing, or 'relabelling' (Pruitt 2018), forms of perceptually feminine environmental engagement as masculine. They mark themselves as different from the feminine other by reinforcing their masculine positions as rational, competent, science driven professionals. Abstaining from publicly engaging with emotional arguments for

the sake aligning their environmental efforts to their sex reproduces inequality by undermining the validity and importance of emotionality. Rather than challenging the hegemonic structure – they are seen working within it, using it to their advantage and consequently uphold and reproduce it.

This is consistent with the wider literature on gender dynamics of men in feminine fields (Hanlon 2012; Lupton 2000; Williams & Williams 1993), and more specifically, men in environmental fields (Bell 2016; Chan and Curnow's 2017). Hanlon (2012), Lupton (2000) and Williams & Williams (1993) discuss how men doing women's work, such as nursing (Cottingham 2014; McDonald 2013) or elderly care (Bjork 2014), often experience 'status anxiety' over being perceived as feminine. Consequently, men are likely to engage in compensatory practices designed to emphasise other pillars of hegemonic masculinity (i.e. rationality, control over others, technical and physical competence etc. [Connell 2005]) as proof of their manhood (deVisser et al. 2009; Cottingham 2014; Lupton 2000).

Discussion

Respondents demonstrated an awareness of the expectations placed upon them to appear 'manly', indicating an understanding of gender as an 'accomplishment' – something to be 'achieved' and something which individuals are held 'accountable' to (West and Zimmerman 1987). This is seen, for example, when Kevin states that *"we live in a culture where people are discounted for their emotionality… And there's a lot of behaviours, I think, like if you're more sensitive, we're trained as a society to perceive as being gay."* Masculinity is shown as a 'personal project' performed for and in relation to "the gaze of male peers and male authority" (Leverenz 1991, cited in Kimmel 2005:33). The feeling of being 'policed', by both themselves

and others, incentivising them to consciously engage in environmentalism in distinctly masculine ways.

Deutsch (2007) stresses that research on instances in which gender 'is done' must address the creation of difference and inequality (Deutsch 2007), for "to do gender is often to do power" (Brickell 2005:38, cited in Cairns et al. 2010). Participants did indeed raise notions of difference in the way in which they discussed their participation in environmentalism – from Kevin's privileging of masculinist rationality and objectivity in environmental work and discourses, to the ways in which others depended on their traditionally masculine presenting bodies (tall, hairy, muscular) to counteract assumptions of a perceived emasculation and to separate themselves from other notions of emotionality and femininity.

Differences and inequalities were created through the deployment of physical and occupation-based gender capital to differentiate themselves from mainstream feminine environmentalism, and to reconstruct themselves and their practices as masculine within a perceptually feminine arena. These men 'do gender' as they adhere to hegemonic Anglo-American, aesthetic, institutionalised and class-based models of masculinity which values physicality, money, rationality and science. They continue to do gender 'appropriately' and therefore "simultaneously sustain, reproduce, and render legitimate the institutional arrangements based on sex category" (West and Zimmerman 1987:146).

The security and freedom provided by these forms of gender capital *discourages* men from acts of resistance to the hegemonic gender order precisely because they are benefiting from said system. As Connell (2005b) reminds us, acts of resistance to the established order arise from places of domination and constraint, writing that "The inequalities of the world gender order, like the inequalities of local gender orders, produce resistance" (p.82). The masculine capital derived

from the physical and occupational embodiment of hegemonic masculinity renders them immune, or at least partially shielded, from such inequalities and therefore they do not find themselves in a position to need to question or challenge them.

These findings suggest that the act of performing and embodying Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity, both through occupational relations and physical bodies, enters men into a process of conformity and complicity as they engage with and benefit from the hegemonic system. The hegemonic narrative is internalised and subsequently reproduced because they stand to reap the social benefits of adhering to its system. In other words, not only does masculine embodiment allow men to claim and validate their masculine identities, it also facilitates access to the 'patriarchal dividend', that is, the advantages gained from sustaining and reproducing an unequal gender order (Connell 1995).

These interviews furthermore show how "subjectivity is informed by symbolic resources, [but] it is also conditioned by power and social structures" (Brickell 2005:38, in reference to West and Zimmerman 1991[1987]). Evidently, there are wide structural constraints which impose perceived limits on performativity which can be difficult to overcome, encouraging individuals to draw on 'symbolic resources' (such as institutional or embodied gender capital) to navigate the system. This returns us to Giddens' structuration theory, and specifically his concept of the 'duality of structure' (1979; 1984) which posits that "[s]tructures are not external forces which constrain social relations but sets of 'rules' and 'resources' which actors draw on, and hence reproduce, to facilitate social interaction" (Shilling 1991:666). In this case, participants, as a result of their institutional and/or embodied gender capital, show how they draw on the hegemonic gender structure when engaging with environmentalism, and in doing so, reproduce said structure. The 'rules' and 'resources' of Anglo-American hegemonic masculinity are "both

the medium and outcome" of men's social actions and practices (Shilling 1991:666). However, as will be elaborated on in the following section, many of the men who demonstrated a reproduction of hegemonic gender order also demonstrated displays of agency to move beyond the existing gender order.

Redoing and Undoing Gender: *Environmentalism: A Gateway into Unsettling and Destabilising Gender*

Men's engagement with environmentalism does not itself automatically challenge gender, as the above analysis and other similar studies have demonstrated that heteronormative hegemonic gender relations can be reproduced within environmentalism (see Bell 2016; Chan and Curnow 2017; Delessio-Parson 2017; Hultman 2017; Kimmel 2005). However, for each of the 14 men participating in this study, engaging with nature and their environments through progressive, liberal, anti-capitalist, holistic, non-hegemonic lenses opened them up to a process of resistance to the politics of domination that are inherent in Western, Anglo-American, capitalist hegemonic masculinity. Participants demonstrated the emergence of an ethic of care for nature and their environment once they gained knowledge, perspective, and understanding of their place within nature apart from discourses of natural resources, profitability and exploitation. The ethic of care shown by respondents is significant as it indicated their willingness to deviate from the traditional Anglo-American masculine scripts of emotional stoicism and apathy toward nature, in favour of a holistic, integrative model of masculinity.

While the previous section addresses instances and practices in which men remained accountable to the dominant hegemonic masculine ideology, this section highlights instances in which these pro-environmental men defy the traditional, hegemonic Anglo-American norms of masculinity through their environmentalism, and interrogates the meaning of such practices in

relation to the stability of gender. I first show how these men have sought to expand the limits of gender accountability to integrate an ethic of care into their environmental engagement. I then progress to discuss how environmental practices emerged as a means through which distance from hegemonic structures and ideology was achieved. Indeed, what is revealed is that, among the majority of the pro-environmental men participating in this study, environmental engagement fostered an ethic of care for the symbolic 'Other', and offered a means of creating distance from hegemonic spaces and ideologies.

Caring *for* the Symbolic 'Other'

Caring and care work are highly gendered, often typified as feminine and almost exclusively expected to be performed by women (Hanlon 2012). Men are encouraged to be discerning with how they express care and for whom (Hultman and Pulé 2018). One respondent in particular, Keegan, demonstrates learning the utilitarian approach to care from the gender messaging he received growing up in which "*the masculine thing was to provide financially for his family*" yet also to "*not really give a damn about other people.*" Keegan assumes that male care is reserved for the family and provided via financial rather than emotional channels. In a capitalist system predicated upon competition and an understanding of power as a zero sum game, men have been shown to place personal gain ahead of social and ecological care work (Hultman and Pulé 2018). To adopt a utilitarian approach to care, Hultman and Pulé (2018) argue, serves the purpose of creating a "cognitive numbing" to "enable repeated acts of cruelty" towards both human and nonhuman others in the pursuit of power (p176). Yet in spite of these scripts, multiple men in this study revealed how environmentalism acted as and intervention against the reproduction of such capitalist, masculinist, utilitarian approaches to care as they showed a developing awareness of the need to care for the 'symbolic Other'.

Personal Reflection and Changing Perspectives

Engaging with pro-environmental practices, discourses and spaces was indicated by participants to ignite a process of reflection, affecting how they see, interact with, and relate to the human and non-human world around them.

Luke, who has demonstrated strategies of compartmentalisation to separate his masculine and environmental identities/spheres (see previous section), nevertheless showed a profound process of personal reflection as a result of his exposure to environmental discourses and ideas from his mother and sister. He discusses how it is only after engaging with environmentalism that he began to see, and therefore appreciate, the complexity and interconnectedness of the world around him.

> *It really got me to look at nature. I mean if you give it a quick glance, like any forest or clearing or just anywhere where plants are growing, your brain kind of filters out all the little details. And basically, you see just green and brown, and some shapes, that's kind of how our brains are tuned to see, we don't really care that much about the background unless there's something new in the back. And so once I started to actually look, there's a lot of little detail that goes into it, like the self-similar patterns, and the fact that everything grows a little bit differently but together.* (Luke 27)

For Luke, the experience of seeing nature in a new light, looking past *"just the green and brown"* prompted him to get involved with environmentalism, becoming more aware of the vastly interconnected system to which he belongs and has an impact on.

Luke demonstrates his participation in, but also his divergence from, the anthropocentric metanarrative that Western cultures tend to adhere to (Hultman and Pulé 2018). This narrative positions humans as separate and above the rest, informing how we see, treat, and relate to the world around us. There is a basic awareness of nature, but not an appreciation. Indeed Merchant (1980) argues that industrialisation and mechanisation between the 16th and 17th centuries shifted humanity's view of the world around them from an organic cosmos to something which is dead and passive to break humanity's connection to the natural world and make it easier to

dominate. For Luke, it took engaging in environmental discourses with his mother and sister, and really spending time looking at the trees and forests around him to reforge that connection – an understanding of nature as much more than "dead and passive" (Merchant 1980). Later in the interview he explains how this awareness has changed his general outlook on life and influenced his relationship with others too:

> *Nature makes you confront certain things that people don't like to talk about, like, the cycle of life and death. Because that's something in Western society, people don't talk about. You just close your eyes and plug your ears then wait for the thought to go away. And so I think it makes you confront that in some sense. And that definitely improves relationships with people and nature...You actually start to really see and value them, it kind of makes you cherish relationships a little bit more [...] Yeah, that's definitely something that's come about in my life since I've started to become more active in environmentalism.* (Luke, 27)

Luke finds that his environmentalism has helped him open his eyes and unplug his ears to the world around him, and cites this has improved his relationships with people and nature. He suggests that it has improved his ability not only to see, but also to "*value*" and "*cherish*" relationships around him more. Luke shows a deepening emotional connection to the world around him, after previously having a more short sighted, myopic, worldview consistent not only with hegemonic masculinity but also with the wider Western dualistic approach to nature as 'Other'.

Christian found his relationship to nature had been wrought by his internalisation of breadwinner narratives of masculinity, prompting him to treat and value nature for its 'resource value' as opposed to its inherent ecological value. He described a time in which he was reprimanded for stepping on a bush and not being gentle enough while harvesting plants with members of the indigenous community he works with in Canada. While initially angry and frustrated with having been told off, but upon further reflection explains:

> *I can feel and relate the origins of that [anger and frustration] to those masculine feelings of self, especially around the idea of providing, like being really quick and*

intentional [...] to produce as much as possible to fulfil that, versus the idea of doing it right and potentially producing less. (Christian, 22)

Christian has been conditioned to approach nature as either a tool or obstacle to achieving masculine status via providing as part of the patriarchal division of labour. To do so, nature is constructed as dead and passive to create cognitive distance from the destruction imposed upon it – forms of destructions which satisfy patriarchal power orders predicated upon the systematic control of an 'Other' (Merchant 1980).

Other respondents gained perspective on the relational proximity between themselves and the natural world around them, and moreover, the impacts of their actions (see also (Hadenqvist 2020) as they engage with nature in a way not predicated upon domination. Kevin talks about developing a more spiritual connection, creating *"a relationship with the plants, soil, and space."* He explains *"I feel like the fabric of my body, the molecules that make up my hands, came from the food that I've eaten."* He talks about his experience living in Peru and France as allowing him to better connect with his environment because the diets are more local, and connects it back to his gardening.

I had the realisation... [that] the physical part of your being is from your environment and you can go back to being part of your environment, and so the act of gardening and growing things, is to me, almost spiritual, because you engage with that connection. (Kevin, 32)

Kevin's experience with gardening and growing food triggered a spiritual (re)connection to the natural world in which humans have been separated in the post-industrial, modern, capitalist, globalised, consumer culture. Kevin's *"realisation"* that he is a part of the natural ecosystem spurs Kevin to be more environmentally aware as he himself gained a newfound appreciation for nature as an organic living thing which he is intrinsically intertwined with and dependent on.

Two participants discussed a similar reconnect in relation to having recently read the book *Braiding Sweetgrass* (2013) by Robin Wall Kimmerer, about Native American traditions of

botany and ecology. Mason explains reconsidering his position in relation to the world around him:

> *It's given me a lot of language around how I view myself in the environment and myself in relation to the planet. And so I would say that I have been viewing myself a lot more as like a person on a continuum. Like I am here for a moment and I have a lot of legacy that I leave behind. Like everything that I consume, everything that I do has ramifications for the people after me...[Asking myself] how do I create a legacy for myself that I leave this place better than I found it.* (Mason, 24)

Mason signals a departure from individualist worldview as he begins to understand himself as "*on a continuum*" whose actions will outlast him. Sattell (1989, cited in Pease 2012), in writing about the politics of gendered emotions, argues that Anglo-European masculinities in particular have been conditioned toward detachment and individualism, as seen across a number of respondents, to "enable men who wield power to reduce their emotional involvement in the consequences of their practices" (p.130). Pease (2012) suggests that the process of distancing oneself from the impacts of their actions through emotional detachment is important for them to be able to reproduce practices of domination.

Ian similarly discusses reading *Braiding Sweetgrass*, as well as taking a university course titled 'Ecological Self', as having helped to *rework[] my relationship to the environment.*" He talks about the impact that they have each had on him like this:

> *Once I sort of went through that process, I haven't really looked at nature the same way. It's definitely affected the way that I think about nature, mostly just in terms of asking questions like 'what is my relationship to nature?' and 'what are other people's relationships to nature?' and those sorts of things rather than taking them for granted and assuming. And then in terms of my relationships, I think I've definitely come to a place where relationships, both with the environment and with other people, are like my highest priority, like I'd say higher than, like accumulating wealth, which is generally considered to be like, you know, everyone's highest priority. And I would attribute that rearrangement of priorities partially to the parts of me that I consider to be environmentalist for sure.* (Ian, 24)

Like both Christian and Mason, Ian has had to rework a lot of his internalised ideas and assumptions about the world around him in order to effectively enact his personal environmental 'ethic'. This leads him into a process of self-reflection, culminating in greater awareness and criticism about how he approaches both human and non-human interactions.

> *I try to make it about like, not about myself, like not just like doing things so that it benefits myself, but doing things so that it benefits like others and nature…Like I'm constantly trying to further develop the values that I have, and it comes down to the fundamental question of like, how do I live? Like how I enact my masculinity? How do I move through the world? Like, I see environmentalism as a question of like, how do I want to move through the world? And so, yeah, it's very entwined...I couldn't just drop that side of me that is environmentalist because that's like who I am.* (Ian 24)

Similarly for Christian, environmental justice is the necessary precursor to creating and maintaining healthy social relationships, explaining: *"I can't be detrimental to my environment in the pursuit of fulfilling roles of my other relationships because at the end of the day it's doing a disservice to those relationships as well."* For Christian, a just and reciprocal relationship to his environment *"is primary, and everything else is just an expression of that particular relationship. And so it's that relationship that I attend to first when I'm thinking about how I go about making decisions."*

These respondents explain developing a sense of awareness of the value of the natural environment apart from notions of domination. And, with a sense of awareness to the impacts of their own actions, they break form masculine scripts and become more caring, careful and deliberate with their actions, incorporating environmentalism more broadly and deeply into how they navigate the world around them. This can be seen as initiating a process of *dismantling* the individualistic, inward focused demands of hegemonic masculinity which invariably places the needs of men and 'man' above the symbolic 'other'.

The initial disconnect from nature has been suggested to stem from historical processes of industrial modernity characterised by rationalised scientific thought and a culture of individualism which justify domination and exploitation of natural environments in the name of social progress (Anshelm an Hultman 2014). In turn, this push away from nature has resulted in a separate rather than integrated and relational relationship, devoid of reciprocity (Merchant 1980). Ian showed an awareness of this disconnect, as well as the gendered elements to it, as he states:

> *I've spent a long time seeing nature as something to be like not overtly, but sort of like subconsciously seeing nature, something to be used, something for my benefit and something that's like outside and like I live inside and then nature is outside and I sometimes go there when I need things...I think men are very comfortable relating to the environment in those ways because it's still sort of a form of domination.* (Ian, 24)

Environmentalism can offer a point of engagement with the natural world apart from ideas and practices of domination. It can facilitate a divergence from conventional masculinist and capitalist understandings of the world around them, moving them away from ideas of power, resources, and individualism, toward a more profound understanding of themselves as *part of* a wider interconnected ecosystem.

Reciprocity

Another point of divergence from the hegemonic structure of gender relations emerged as men's shift away from individualistic gain through violence and domination, toward ideas and practices of reciprocity. Ian discusses the process of reworking his relationship to nature "*to be much more fluid and dynamic and thinking, about reciprocity, for instance.*" And in Christian's last passage above, we see reciprocity front and centre as he explains not being able to be "*detrimental*" to his environment in the pursuit of other roles and relationships because to do so would be a "*disservice*" to those relationships. He instead seeks out a balanced state of reciprocity between human and non-human systems. Reciprocity lies at the root of Matt's

environmental ethic too, as he talks about nature as *"giv[ing] me way more than I give it"* and describes how his work as an ecologist allows him to *"try[] to use the gifts it gives me to give the gifts back, which is what I think environmentalism is about."* Mason expresses a similar sentiment, reflectively asking *"And how do I do this in a way that intersects with, like, consuming and very caring ways and getting back in touch with the environment and the ecosystem in ways that really matter to me?"*

As has already been pointed out previously, ecofeminist scholars have long argued that nature, along with women, have long been 'othered' within the masculine, industrial capitalist modernity (Anshelm and Hultman 2014; Merchant 1980; Plumwood 2003). Such hierarchical separation legitimates and facilitates man's domination over 'Others' in the pursuit of power. Consequently, the concept of reciprocity, or 'giving back', has long been missing in men's relationship to nature and the environment (Merchant 1980). Indeed, one of the places in which Connell (1995) suggested that male domination is manifested and sustained is in the "emotional energy attached to an object" (p.74). Detaching from emotionality, treating man as separate from and above 'Others' functions to encourage and justify male superiority and violence (Demetriou 2001). As such, dismantling patriarchal patterns of male domination necessitates reconstructing masculinities to be predicated upon notions of reciprocity as opposed to hierarchy (Connell 2005).

By integrating ideas of reciprocity into their everyday lives, stemming from practices of care for nature, these men shift away from the unidirectional individualistic worldview centred around domination and control toward a more holistic integrative framework through which to approach the symbolic 'Other' (Pease 2019). These ideas of reciprocity surfacing as a result of

men's growing relationality counteracts and contests one of the basic underlying premises upon which hegemonic masculinity rests — emotional detachment.

An Opportunity for Growth

Significantly, several participants recounted experiencing personal development from their environmentalism. Since becoming aware of environmental issues and getting involved with environmentalism, Geo describes a process of *"personal development of emotional intelligence."* He elaborates on this:

> *I've become a more caring, compassionate person, and that means that my relationships are deeper.... Needs that I was unaware of or didn't feel comfortable voicing are better able to be fulfilled because I acknowledged them. I can communicate them.* (Geo, 25)

Geo attributes this to the ethic of care promoted in environmentalism, suggesting that by being encouraged to care for plants and nature encouraged greater levels of care in other areas of his life too. This emerged as a prominent theme across several respondents, each of whom found that their environmentalist engagement with nature in non-dominant ways fostered an ethic of care beyond themselves and their inner circle, instead extending out and expanding their capacity to and for care.

Similarly to Geo, Kevin described his involvement with environmentalism as *"an opportunity for growth."* As discussed earlier, Kevin has intentionally sought to emphasise and play into conventionally understood masculine traits of rationality and objectivity while suppressing feminine traits of emotionality to assert his status and power in the field. Yet he simultaneously finds environmental engagement to be a means of moving beyond the confines of traditional gender systems.

> *[Environmentalism] gives me the permission to explore an area of philosophy or being that is outside of the masculine expectation. It provides me some freedom personally […] yeah, it's personally freeing. And it helps me overcome some of the challenge of the destructive narrative of masculinity […] and demonstrate to men and women that there is*

>*more that we can be, that our gender roles have been way too narrowly defined*. (Kevin, 30)

Kevin here relates his environmental engagement as having a liberating effect, providing a space in which he can shed those hegemonic expectations. What's more, he explicitly expresses dissatisfaction with the limits imposed by masculine scripts, and identifies his environmental work as a practice which allows him to redefine the limits of gender accountability by demonstrating to others the possibility and permissibility of men's engagement with environmental practices which defy the traditional, Anglo-American, heteronormative binary order.

Christian too, who showed an internalisation of the hegemonic, capitalist, Christian (religious) narrative of breadwinner masculinity, offers a similar sentiment of progress and liberation.

>*The progress that I've made from the conservation ethic that I started with as a young person that was based in this traditional ideas of masculinity to where it progressed now [...] Progressing that environmental ethic has been an essential aspect of [...] I mean it's contributed to my being a happier and healthier person...I mean, not being free of it in the sense that I still have many of those internalised feelings, but progressively becoming freer of that*. (Christian, 24)

Importantly, Christian highlights how not all forms of 'environmentalism' are inherently freeing or liberating. He attributes his initial conservation environmentalism as growing out of his childhood in a conservative Christian community in Colorado, which did not offer an escape from patriarchal masculinity, but rather reinforced it. Indeed, it has been his time living with an indigenous community in Canada which has exposed him to the more 'progressive' and holistic environmental ethic that have *"contributed to [him] being a happier and healthier person."* Other respondents too spoke about various practices and processes which have contributed to fostering an ethic of care characterised by increased relational awareness, reciprocity, emotionality and vulnerability. For Geo, gardening helped him connect with the earth and soil in

new ways, Ian and Mason both talked about reading a book on indigenous American botany and ecology, while Matt and Josh spoke about their experiences engaging with nature in ways not predicated upon notions of domination as helping to rewire how they conceive themselves within the wider earth system Embracing and enacting these practices of care for nature were seen to help disentangle hegemonic gender ideologies and structures from men's lives, suggesting that engaging with particular aspects of environmentalism can function as a site of detachment from the hegemonic structures and ideology which feels "*personally freeing*".

Respondents also identified an increased emotionality and an ability to connect with others stemming from their environmentalism. Geo described environmentalism as fostering a *"personal development of emotional intelligence"*, explaining a better ability to connect and communicate his feelings. On the grounds that it signals weakness and vulnerability, men are often discouraged from expressing emotionality for fear that it will undermine their 'patriarchal dividend' (Connell 1995) "because it challenges the hegemonic expectation of male rationality and strength" (Coyle & Morgan-Sykes 1998, cited in Pease 2012:130). This was seen earlier notably with Kevin, who explained feeling pressure to pursue rational approaches to environmentalism over emotional ones for fear of losing legitimacy and status, highlighting for constraints imposed upon men's agency.

Predicated on difference and separation, achieved through dominance and destruction, hegemonic masculinities are 'centrally complicit' in environmental degradation, entrenching many men into a relationship with both women and nature (the symbolic 'Others') (Pulé 2007). Men 'achieve' masculine status and validation through practices of domination which reinforce and legitimise their positions at the top of the patriarchal pecking order (West and Zimmerman 1987). Ian acknowledged having internalised such notions of domination into his conception of,

and relationship to, nature (see quote above). Indeed scholars argue that male emotional inexpressiveness and detachment are a means to an end designed to distance men in positions of power from the consequences of their actions, allowing them to push ethical and moral boundaries (see Hultman and Pulé 2018; Pease 2012). Emotional detachment from the symbolic 'Other' has therefore been instrumental for the perpetuation of inequalities and forms of destruction and degradation.

Consequently, environmentalism, as a site in which individuals can be encouraged to cultivate a deeper appreciation, respect, and care for nature, encourages a process of reworking how they see themselves in the wider social ecosystem. Ian explains how he is "*learning how to relate to the environment in ways that aren't about domination…And reworking that [relationship] to be much more fluid and dynamic.*" Josh too connects the domination of nature to masculinity, recalling "*the idea of control, like really controlling the natural environment, I think definitely has tones of the way we think about masculinity. It is an idea like domination and that the natural world belongs to us. That we should control it.*" Both Ian and Josh point to an internalised understanding of nature predicated upon ideas of power and domination as emanating from hegemonic conceptions of what masculinity is (ie. Domination) and what it demands (capitalism, i.e. Profit and efficiency). This is possible because in large part today, nature remains conceptualised as "culturally passive and subordinate" (Merchant 1980) by mainstream Anglo-American society, making it significantly easier to dominate and harm. However, by embracing narrative of care, men are able to move away from the toxic effects brought on by the rejection of emotionality, empathy and care embedded in hegemonic masculinity.

Kevin illustrates this well, drawing on his own personal experience of feeling constrained by masculine expectations and the personal growth he feels after having challenged them, Kevin explains:

> *I think there are many men who have the capacity and probably the desire to be more loving, giving, harmonious than society encourages them to be and the male identity has been defined. And that to engage in a realm that is outside one's normal gender narrative is challenging, and I think that it is often disheartening, but it is an opportunity for growth, and that if you really want to be strong it's not about violent acts or emotional gratification, it's about self-cultivation, and understanding yourself as an individual. And I would encourage all men to be more consciously engaged in social activism or environmentalism to cultivate a more holistic perspective.* (Kevin 34)

Kevin stresses the positive impacts his environmental engagement has had on him in terms of "*understanding yourself as an individual*" and "*cultivating*" oneself toward a "*more holistic perspective.*" He encourages others to appreciate the whole multifaceted nature of the self, rather than prioritising and emphasising a select few limited aspects (ie gender presentation) which are deemed socially and culturally valuable by society but which offer littler personal growth nor freedom of expression.

Distancing from Hegemonic Masculinity

Participants consistently expressed a profound dissatisfaction with the state of contemporary Anglo-American models of masculinities, their accountability frames, and the limits imposed by them. A number of these men mention this rather explicitly. For instance, Kevin refers to the mainstream model of masculinity as "*reductive*" and "*a damaging narrative*" and Ian laments feeling "*very sad about the state of masculinity in general.*" They express their frustration with the restrictions placed upon them as men as they struggle to reconcile their desire to be more expressive and emotive, and the external pressure to adhere to masculine scripts. What is therefore particularly interesting, and indeed encouraging, is that they identify their environmentalism, and the environmental practices they engage in, as places in which they are

able to resist and subvert dominant, heteronormative Anglo-American capitalist models of masculinity, carving out for themselves new frames of masculinity.

Transcending Binary Expectations

Gender identity was seen to be persistently interwoven with sex category as several participants found their manhood to typecast them into specific traditionally masculine roles and opportunities while barring them from more feminine ones (West and Zimmerman 1987; Messerschmidt 2009). Kevin discussed feeling isolated from the environmental movement after reading ecofeminist literature discussing men's involvement in the patriarchal subordination and exploitation of both women and nature because of his sex: *"I felt like not only was I being socially told that I wasn't allowed to care, now, I was being told that, you know, because I'm a man, I can't do positive things… I felt like I was being shut out of the movement or the conversation because of my gender."* We see the interactional conflation of sex and gender, in which Kevin's biological maleness defined how he was expected to behave and be, reducing his gender performance and identity to the limits of an essentialized binary. Kevin finds himself typecasted according to essentialized binary understandings of maleness and masculinity, in which he sees himself portrayed as the inherent 'bad guy' because of his biological sex.

And Ian, who presents traditionally masculine as an athletic, heterosexual man, shared a similar experience while working as a river guide in Colorado, in which he found his outward masculine appearance an obstacle to his ability to enter non-masculine spaces as he became 'typecasted' as a stereotypical hyper-masculine man. He firstly highlighted how his motivations and priorities differed from those of his male colleagues: *"I was there was because I wanted to share the environment and nature with other people… [but] the men I found were not emotionally available, not willing to be vulnerable and not really interested in those things",*

describing it was much more of a *"frat environment"* predicated upon partying, drinking and making money. Conversely, he found his female colleagues to be *"super communal and protective,"* but was disheartened as he struggled to gain access to that space, explaining *"I don't think they saw that I was interested in those things too, because I don't think many of them had experienced men who were, you know, not like the fratty stuff."* Here, Ian is judged according his perceived sex category as opposed to his gender behaviour. He described the experience as *"pretty isolating,"* noting *"I didn't really walk away with a lot of what I considered to be strong connections."*

Both Kevin and Ian have felt excluded from environmentalism as a result of being typecast as 'stereotypically male' as a result of their sex, but each have also found ways to subverting this binary by performatively distancing themselves from heteronormative, mainstream masculine dispositions.

Kevin finds that his environmentalism, both his public sphere work and his private sphere practices, especially gardening, helps to separate him from the mainstream narrative of men as inherently destructive against nature and others. *"It helps me overcome some of the challenge of the destructive narrative of masculinity […] and demonstrate to men and women that there is more that we can be, that our gender roles have been way too narrowly defined."* He identifies the act of gardening in particular as having been instrumental in his self-conception:

> *The act of gardening and growing things is to me almost spiritual because you engage with that connection. And I think that's more perceived as the feminine role, and I really enjoy it, because it is outside of the narrative that men can only kill and destroy.* (Kevin, 32)

Kevin finds that engaging in gardening enables him to connect with nature and the world around him in distinctly non-masculine ways. He talks about how he sees others perceive it to be a feminine role, but contests this idea as he later goes on to state that *"it's like anyone is welcome*

to do it", not just a set category of person. He himself acknowledges the perception of femininity, and intervenes against its reproduction by himself engaging in it as a man, stepping out of the man box. Ian meanwhile sees environmentalism as facilitating a process of *'nullifying'* (Messerschmidt 2009) maleness:

> *I really don't want to, at all, come across as someone who's traditionally masculine. So like being involved in environmental work and like, you know, being open about that, if that makes me seem more feminine to other men, like I'm thrilled about that. Like, because I just- yeah. I'm so like- I just feel very sad about the state of masculinity in general.* (Ian, 24*)*

Ian and Kevin describe their experiences engaging in pro-environmental practices, and their perceived femininity, as offering a means of *'negating'* (Messerschmidt 2009) the limits imposed by masculinity by challenging the sex-gender binary, creating a space in which to redo gender – to redefine the parameters of masculinity. For Ian, showing care for nature as opposed to getting drunk and partying with his male colleagues emerges as a tactical means of de-emphasises his masculinity by creating an incongruence in the male-masculine binary. He is not attempting to pass as 'female', but merely aiming to downplay his maleness to gain acceptance among his female colleagues. Their bodies are inherently implicated in this process since it is through the corporeal body that environmental acts of caring and nurture for nature are performed.

Christian describes a similar experience to Ian and Geo, in which his masculinity is de-emphasised by his environmental practices, but expresses greater resistance to that process than Ian and Geo who demonstrate more eagerness. Christian explains feeling the need to embrace a more feminine demeanour in order to be able to connect with his environment in ways consistent with his personal environmental ethic. He explained environmentalism necessitating a personal reformulation of how he engages with his environment so as to not be "*detrimental [to it] in the pursuit of fulfilling roles of my other relationships*". In the process, he has learned to nurture a more balanced concept of gender in which he describes "*okay*" with "*being a little more*

effeminate because that is what I need [to do] to fulfil my relationship to the environment." Like Ian and Geo, Christian's desire to care for his environment according to his environmental ethic subverts the salience of his internalised ideas of hegemonic gender, but from a more reluctant stance, potentially explained by his own more conservative Christian (religious) background. Nevertheless, Christian, as with Ian and Geo, expands the limits of gender accountability (West and Zimmerman 1987; 2009) to fit within what he feels he needs to accomplish to fulfil his environmental ethic.

In a similar light, Matt and Fletcher too both let themselves be guided by their respective environmental ethics/values/ambition when they each decide to quit high ranking jobs in favour ones which align with their environmental values. Matt indicated an inner battle against an internalisation of hegemonic masculine culture of competition (see previous section), but proceeds to demonstrate the capacity for agency as he resists the dominant expectations of men in environmental professions.

> *There's a big pressure to conform to being a set where you're a set type of person, and whether you're judging that by your gender, or by your goals, in terms of what job you want, or you know, whether you only think you should do certain jobs because you're male or female, or whether you need to be higher up the hierarchy of power, because you feel like that's what a man should do. But, you know, all of that is bullshit. (Matt, 30)*

Matt quit his job working as an ecological consultant, working his way up the system, because it did not align with his environmental values. He described how his work involved being employed by developers who often disregard the importance of ecology and see the ecologist as a hurdle to overcome, and that his job was to enable that. Motivated by a desire *"to try and be more of the environmentalist I wanted to be"*, Matt chose to remove himself from that corporate culture, leaving his job and scaling down his work to only accepting local jobs which align with his values. His priorities shift away from a focus on money and competitive edge, back toward his passion for ecology. He adamantly rejects the gendered expectations, 'calling bullshit' on the

social pressures placed upon him as a man working in environmentalism. This was the same for Fletcher, an engineer, who quit a high status, well-paying job at Microsoft to work for an NGO focused on ensuring safe drinking water to rural villages in Northern India.

Whereas for Ian, environmentalism offers a way of conveying to other people that they are different from the hegemonic masculine culture, for Kevin and Matt, it is more about proving to *themselves*, as well as those around them, that they are not trapped in the confines of gendered expectations and that they possess the *capacity* and *agency* to be more than what the dominant narrative tells them they are or can be.

Inclusive Social Circles

Environmental engagement was also seen to help men achieve distance from the hegemonic order and hierarchy through the social circles it encourages. Several participants who demonstrated high environmental engagement discussed environmentalism as a passion central to their core social identity. With environmentalism intertwined with their core identities, several men described naturally gravitating towards social groups populated by similarly environmentally minded individuals. Matt described how environmentalism has shaped his friendship group, as people migrated away as their priorities and values diverged. He comments: *"I've got one friendship group that is very open and warm... And any other friends who're outside of that tended not to stick around very long"*. Nigel (61), a staunch animal rights activist and proponent of veganism describes how his friend circle has changed since immersing himself in animal rights and vegan communities.

> *One of the things that has changed since going vegan is my friend circle has changed a lot, I've got very few friends from before I was vegan [...] um, not intentionally, I just think that I'm more comfortable with fellow vegans because it just makes you feel, you know, more part of a- or less of an outcast, and that sort of thing.* (Nigel, 61)

And Fletcher, a 24-year-old environmental engineer, describes how environmentalism *"self-selects a very specific type of person… often [someone] who is very smart, who like doesn't want to make as much money but does things because they want to help the world...so like a very altruistic person."*

Those for whom environmentalism became impregnated into their entire social world, and not merely one identity segregated from others, the importance of environmentalism in friendship groups reshapes the group dynamics. With more people coming together with a shared care for nature and the environment appears to foster a space more open to demonstrations of care and emotionality. Ian explains:

> *The people who excel and like 'rise' in the social circles that are important to me are people who, like, deeply engage with critical dialogs about masculinity and about the environment. And so there's actually been a lot of positive social capital, like rewards, for men who are openly emotional and vulnerable. (Ian, 24)*

Ian suggests that the qualities of emotionality and vulnerability, which are traditionally shunned among men, are actively encouraged and valued in his friend group. Environmentalism emerged as a means to explore and practice emotionality and vulnerability.

Coming together under the banner of environmentalism appears to create a space which is more open to men's demonstrations of care, emotionality, and vulnerability because those qualities are inherently embedded in their environmental ethics. Within these groups, men found that the collective drive for or interest in environmentalism yielded a *"softer"* and *"warmer"* group of people, less focused on 'homosocial' displays of power, superiority and masculinity (see Kimmel 2005). In describing his friend group from college, for example, Josh describes feeling *"very validated in being a sensitive man"* when amongst his fellow male friends who are similarly environmentally conscious and who too are openly engaged in practices of environmental care. He explained *"not feeling like in order to be seen as cool among other men,*

that I need to be a lot of the things that are typically associated with masculinity." Instead, *"the idea of being good at listening and humble and sensitive and in touch with feelings and all of these things has been supported by that community."* Josh cites his friend groups as "instrumental" in his ability to be pro-environmental and show more emotion and sensitivity with both people and planet, helping him feel comfortable pushing the limits of what is traditionally assumed of what it means to be 'masculine' in Anglo-American society.

The commitment one has to an identity is largely shaped by the number of social ties one has to those who share that identity, as well as the depth and strength of those ties (Stets and Burke 2003, cited in Stets and Burke 2014). The more embedded one is in environmentalism the more committed they become to it they are likely to invoke that identity more often across situations. As commitment to environmentalism grows, their friendships groups are remoulded to reflect identity change and therefore become more exclusionary toward non-environmentally inclined people. This differs from the experiences of the men described earlier who demonstrated a lower commitment to environmentalism and who therefore either 'compartmentalise' their environmental identity from other non-environmental ones, or invoke their environmental identity as situationally needed. Without a consistent outlet in which qualities of care are accepted and encouraged, they are less likely to be able to embrace such qualities more often.

Disconnecting from Society

Several respondents found that engaging with nature offered a psychological detachment from the social expectations present in their everyday lives. In particular, Josh and Matt discuss how merely being in nature offers them a reprieve from what Matt calls the '*toxic soap opera*' of life.

> *I always found that being in and around mountains and being really in an area where there are fewer humans and other creatures, it always downplays the importance of those*

things and helps me- [...] it has helped me get perspective throughout life, like what is really important [...] I don't know [...] It's just that [...] like me being in nature probably has helped me get perspective, or distance myself from societal expectations of what I should be within that construct or within the culture that I am a part of […] helping me recenter who I am. (Josh, 34)

*I think your connection with nature, it's a way of very much escaping away from too much focus on you, and the importance of your own existence and life. I think it's a great antidote (*Emphasised*). When I'm really struggling, very often it's because I'm spending too much time in the toxic masculine, but also toxic human, soap opera as a whole, and not enough time in nature... Nature suddenly takes that away and makes you make all of that seem very small and unimportant. So yeah, it's been hugely important for working all of that out. (Matt 30)*

They both show how being in nature facilitates a process of deep reflection as they enter a process of questioning and contestation to the toxic dynamics of social life. As Josh and Matt discuss in the two above passages, they go into nature to recenter themselves into the wider planetary ecosystem from which they have felt separated from. By reconnecting with nature they separate away from the human social structures imposed in everyday life, including those of gender accountability which dominate mainstream society.

Discussion

Masculinities scholars have long noted the constraining effect of hegemonic masculinity on men, describing how adhering to its rigid scripts prevents displays and expression of emotionality (Elliott 2016; Pease 2012), impedes the construction of healthy relationships (Elliott 2016; Pease 2012), and contributes to unsafe and unhealthy decisions (deVisser 2009). Participants discussed their experiences of living within the confines of this narrative, noting the constraining effect it had on them and their desire to distance themselves from it. What was therefore particularly illuminating was the emerging pattern of achieving 'distance' from that ideology *by way* of their engagement with environmentalism.

Their participation within the field of environmentalism offers various means of distancing themselves, with various degrees of intentionality, from hegemonic structures. It is

seen to be able to act as a point of 'intervention' (Risman 2004) against the reproduction of said structures. Environmentalism is shown to provide these men with an alternative – emotional, caring, and reciprocal – way through which they can engage with the world around them, beyond the dominant narrative of what men should or can do. By offering a way to connect with nature not predicated upon destruction, control or violence, they are reminded that they are more than what society thinks men are or can or should be. It differentiates them from more traditional models of masculinity, and moreover, helps to "*liberate*" them from the dominant and overbearing ideology of a masculinity predicated upon and naturalised as violent and destructive (hooks 2004).

Importantly, respondents express how caring for nature and the environment has entered them into a process of renegotiating how they relate to the people around them too. They explain how their environmental engagement has fostered healthier relationships with people around them, and improved their ability to connect with others.

These men's accounts of the narrative of care emanating from their environmental engagement illustrate the process of deconstruction and reformulation of masculine subjectivity apart from hegemonic ideology. The respondents demonstrated an emerging ethic of care and reciprocity stemming from their growing awareness of the interconnected nature of the world around them which they have long been separated from. These findings suggest that environmental engagement facilitates a process of 'emancipation' (Martino 1995) from the hegemonic order which does not leave room for expressions of reciprocity and relationality, nor vulnerability and emotionality (Connell 2005). Elliott (2016; see also Hanlon 2012), in her work on caring masculinities, suggests that caring for others "require[s] men to resist hegemonic masculinity and to adopt values and characteristics…that are antithetical to hegemonic

masculinity" (p.254). The insight from the men in this study therefore position practices of care for the environment too can act as a site of 'intervention' (Risman 2004) against the reproduction of gender inequalities.

As Connell (2005) reminds us, forms of resistance to the established order rise from places of inequality, domination, and importantly, constraint. As this section highlights, the constricting confines of 'the man box' defining what masculinity is and should look like sets the stage for men to rebel against that very narrative. What these accounts speak to not only men's capacity to move beyond dominant notions of masculinity and tread into realms of femininity, but furthermore illustrates the ways in which engaging in environmental efforts can initiate and facilitate such a process. The men participating in this research demonstrated how, as a result of their engagement with nature, environmental practices and discourses, they developed a more relational and reciprocal perspective based upon qualities of care for the human and non-human world. This marks a significant point of departure from hegemonic masculinities which are premised upon a cult of individuality and indeed a utilitarian approach to care (Hultman and Pulé 2018).

Each interview ended with the question: "What do you want people to know about your experience as a pro-environmental man?" The vast majority of respondents expressed a desire to convey to other men the benefits they have experienced from their environmentalism. Ian and Kevin respectively described it as *"personally rewarding"*, and *"emotionally gratifying"*. Mason muses how environmentalism offers *"a real opportunity in being one's authentic self"*. And Matt urges others to embrace their authentic selves, stating: *"The more you can connect with who you are and what makes you happy and what makes you feel like you're contributing to the world and to nature, if that's important to you, then that should be your guide."*

Within the realm of the doing, redoing, undoing gender debate. Deutsch (2007) and Risman (2009) propose that unsettling the sex, sex category, gender binary results in gender being 'undone' or 'deconstructed', whereas West and Zimmerman (2009) conversely argue that this only results in a change to the parameters of accountability, not an abandonment of gender. The narratives offered by respondents across this study ultimately suggest that gender is being redone – that masculinities are being renegotiated – in the context of environmentalism, and not that they are being abandoned altogether. But regardless of terminology, Risman (2009), Deutsch (2007), and West and Zimmerman (2009) concurrently ask scholars to pay attention to the sites in which gender binaries are undermined and in which change occurs. This section sheds light on the potential for environmentalism to play a role in moving men away from the confines of 'the man box' and hegemonic gender structures. It reveals the nuance of how environmentalism can at times encourage a process of resistance to hegemonic masculinities and the inequalities they produce, even when at time reproduction elsewhere.

V.   CONCLUSION

The objective of this research has been to better understand how pro-environmental men navigate the gendered arena of environmentalism, and to ponder whether environmentalism can function as a site in which the salience and legitimacy of hegemonic gender order can be resisted, subverted, and altered. The findings highlight the multiplicity and complexity of gender performativity, as the pro-environmental men in this study demonstrated both complicity in, and resistance to, the structural constraints of the dominant Anglo-American capitalist gender system. We see how patterns of hegemonic masculinity can and do (re)surface even among those who have simultaneously demonstrated processes of resistance against its reproduction. We see the pull of structure and its system of heteronormative gender accountability, as well as an internal struggle to push up against the limits of these constraints.

With little empirical literature published to date on the lived experiences of pro-environmental men, this study adds valuable insight into how men account for, perform, and negotiate gender while engaging with environmentalism. The academic field of masculinities and environmentalism is currently underdeveloped, with much of the work developing theoretical insight (Hultman 2017; Hultman and Pulé 2018; Pease 2019; Twine 1997) and is focused on men's *avoidance* of 'green behaviours' (Anshelm and Hultman 2014; Brough et al. 2016; Gonda 2017; Swim et al. 2020). Thus far, few empirical studies (Bell 2016; Chan and Curnow 2017; Connell 1990; Stoddart and Tindal 2011) have applied qualitative methodologies to those men who do participate in environmentalism. Bell (2016) and Chan and Curnow (2017) studies gender dynamics in environmental groups in the UK and US, respectively, find that men rely on tactics of hegemonic masculinity to assert male dominance in those spaces. Conversely,

interview based studies from Connell (1990) and Stoddart and Tindall's (2011) from Australia and Canada both suggest that environmentalism may function as a site for feminist engagement.

Participants showed an awareness of the feminisation of some of the pro-environmental practices they engaged with, stemming from the gender messaging they had received growing up from friends, family, and popular media. Some described being teased for their environmentalism, and others described seeing men engaging in distinctly masculinised ways, such as through formal paid employment and in authority and leadership roles. This awareness of the gendering of pro-environmental practices culminated in a sense of apprehension as to how to navigate the gendered terrain of environmentalism. They were faced with balancing their outward gender presentation with their inner values. We see forms of compromise among participants as they sought to 'have their cake and eat it too', adapting their pro-environmental behaviours to hold onto and project a masculine image, remaining within the relative normative bounds of masculinity. Their desire to be more pro-environmental comes up against pressures to remain accountable to their gender, on the basis that remaining complicit allows them to hold on to structural patriarchal advantages – their 'patriarchal dividend' (Connell 1995).

The advantage of utilising a qualitative, interview based approach is that this research does more than highlight the tension between environmentalism and performing/achieving masculine status, as it also reveals how those tensions are mediated. We see men *accentuate* masculine traits inscribed in both the mind (rationality, science, data) and body (muscularity, hairiness, athleticism) in order to *reassert* their manhood and reconstruct for themselves masculine subject positions in an otherwise feminized arena (Bourdieu 1986) . These practices were read as forms of 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman 1987) – ways of performing traditional, culturally salient heteronormative masculinity. Participants drew upon hegemonic

gender expectations to single themselves out as demonstrably masculine while engaging in a perceptually feminine arena, marking themselves and their actions as different from feminine 'Other'.

Similarly to Brough et al. (2016) and Breunig et al. (2020), we see the physical and occupational embodiment of masculinity as being strategically employed as part of an 'identity maintenance framework'. Participants buy into and reproduce traditionally masculine positions to remain 'accountable' to the dominant gender order. However, unlike in Brough et al. (2016) and Breunig and Russell (2020) who found some men avoid environmentalism altogether to maintain a masculine identity, the pro-environmental men in this study devised strategies to maintain masculine image while engaging in environmental practices. They draw on gendered resources (physical bodies and institutionalized status) to mediate the incongruence between masculinity and environmentalism. They draw on their 'masculine capital' to protect their masculine standing while still being able to engage with environmental spaces, discourses, and practices (see also Greenbaum and Dexter 2018). This is significant as it offers insight into ways for men to move beyond avoidance of pro-environmental behaviours on the basis of its perceived femininity, encouraging other men to participate in the movement too, thereby 'chipping away' (Connell 2010) at the gender binary and setting an example for others.

Importantly, these strategies of performing heteronormative masculinity were drawn upon and deployed in order to reduce the possibility of encountering social challenges, and not as a deliberate means of subordinating women and femininity. It emerged as part of an identity protective framework to avoid the consequences of breaking from the binary order. Doing so offered an important first step for men to 'get their foot in the door' of environmental behaviours, but it is nevertheless important to recognise that doing so also inadvertently reproduces and

reinforces a gender order predicated upon notions of essentialized difference (Deutsch 2009; Risman 2004). They emphasise their manhood, emphasise their difference, with the expectation that it will garner favourable advantages. Therefore, we see that even in a feminized field which encourages men to take on 'feminine' traits, creating and naturalising differences acts as a means of casting difference for patriarchal gain.

And yet while they situationally reproduced differences, the majority of respondents simultaneously showed patterns of change away from dominant, hegemonic, Anglo-American capitalist, heteronormative masculine scripts. This was seen most prominently in the way in which they adopted an ethic of care for nature, and consequently experienced greater relationality, vulnerability, emotionality, and reciprocity toward both human and non-human relationships going against Anglo-American hegemonic masculine scripts. Interestingly, the ethic of care demonstrated by multiple respondents is shown to have emerged from their participation and engagement with particular pro-environmental discourses, practices, and epistemologies which emphasise the interconnectedness of humans in the earth system. While originating in care for nature, practices and dispositions of care were seen to expand out to influence their capacity for care and emotionality with people too.

By embracing an ethic of care typically categorised as feminine, these pro-environmental men began to undermine the binary ideology used to create and reinforce differences between masculine men and feminine women and their respective roles and positions in society (Deutsch 2007), and was seen to help disentangle them from the heteronormative gender order. These findings mirror Connell's (1990) work with environmental men in Australia in which she writes that "the main initiative taken by these men was to separate from the mainstream masculinity they were familiar with and to attempt to reconstruct personality, to produce a new, nonsexist

self" (p.466). Indeed, Connell argues that to enact meaningful change one must renounce mainstream masculinities, a sentiment since raised by other feminist scholars (see Elliott 2016; hooks 2004; Risman 2004). Their willingness to engage in the gendered politics of care serves as an important point of departure from hegemonic structure as it interrupts the reproduction of a rigidly segregated gender terrain. They push back against binary differences and destabilise the rigid parameters of the hegemonic masculine order. Engaging in environmentalism was furthermore seen to open up a space which encourages men to separate from – and enter into a process of resistance and contestation against – the hegemonic gender order. However, it is important to keep in mind that environmental engagement was simultaneously limited to practices which did not overtly challenge or undermine their standing in the localised gender order.

Promoting the qualities of care among boys and men has been deemed necessary for the achievement of gender equality by both masculinities and gender scholars (see Connell 2003; Elliott 2016; Hanlon 2012; Hearn 2001) and intergovernmental bodies (see European Commission 2006; Scambor, Wojnicka, and Bergmann 2013). Writing at an EU conference on gender equality, masculinities scholar Jeff Hearn (2001:17) states that qualities of care should be encouraged at the political level to "[refine] [care and nurturing] as normal for men." This research therefore ultimately argues that forms of environmental engagement, especially those which encourage an appreciation for the people and place around them devoid of hierarchical notions of power and domination, offer sites in which men can distance themselves from the patriarchal gender order and make inroads at processes of resistance and contestation against the dominant, heteronormative, Anglo-American hegemonic patriarchal masculinity. This is seen to be dependent on the kinds of environmental engagement one participates in, as it is practices

devoid of masculinist notions of power and domination, and which instead necessitated demonstrations of reciprocity, care, and gentility, which fostered the ethic of care and introduced these men to alternative ways of relating to their surroundings. This process of dissociation from hegemonic masculine ideology and embodiment is particularly significant as it presents a point of interruption against its reproduction as they incorporate environmental values antithetical to dominant masculine systems.

The homogeneity of the sample offered an interesting insight into the experience of those who stand to gain most from patriarchal institutional benefits, but the lack of diversity in the sample also presented limitations. With no racial diversity and the majority of participants identifying as middle class as well as heterosexual, this study fails to account for and address the intersecting layers of class, race, and sexuality which affect one's experience of gender. Future research would therefore benefit from drawing from a more diverse sample pool, allowing for greater understanding of how gender relations interact with other axes of power and inequality, such as race and class, in the twin pursuit of environmental and social justice. The lack of political diversity also introduced a limitation to this study as all participants identified as politically liberal and/or progressive, thereby skewing the generalisability of these results. Future research should aim to address this limitation by strategically drawing from a more politically diverse sample pool of both liberal and conservative environmentalists, and compare their respective strategies and practices of gender negotiation within environmentalism.

This study adds to a small but growing body of literature on the experiences and practices of pro-environmental men as they account for gender in their participation in environmentalism. Its findings therefore offer multiple jumping off points for future scholars. More research is needed on environmental masculinities from an identity theory approach to unravel the divergent

experience and practices of men for whom environmentalism operates as a role identity versus those for whom 'environmentalist' is a social identity (see Stets and Burke 2000; 2014). Another area of research necessitating further inquiry is the role of the body in men's experience of gender within environmentalism, as this research yielded limited, yet insightful data on the matter. And, while there is considerable quantitative literature on men's avoidance of environmentalism, there is yet a need for national level quantitative data on men's participation in environmentalism. There is also need for further empirical research on the politics of gender relations within environmental groups and political bodies, addressing how gender ideology is impregnated in environmental decision making, and the real-time impacts this has on vulnerable populations. Lastly, while this research suggests that social solidarity and collective contestation can facilitate greater resistance to gender hegemony, there is still a need for research into how this can be effectively facilitated and harnessed in practice.

This research complicates the doing-undoing gender literature by highlighting the complexity and multiplicity of complicity and resistance. Change to gender systems does not manifest as a neat process of resistance, rejection, and rebuilding (Kehler 2004). Instead, we see a dynamic interplay between acts of complicity and resistance playing out across social contexts and interactions. Environmentalism was seen to disrupt the reproduction of some pillars of hegemonic masculinity, while reproducing others.

VI. Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment message posted to facebook groups

Hello all,

My name is Lola Robinson and I am a senior at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. I am working on an honours thesis looking at environmental masculinity. I am interested in learning about what motivates men to participate in environmental activism and the tensions they may experience with their gender and environmentalism. I am looking to interview pro-environmental men about their experiences as a man in environmentalism. You must be 18 or older to participate, and either British, American, or Canadian. Interviews will be held over zoom and last from 40-60 minutes. If you are interested in being interviewed please read through and fill out the consent form attached below.

If you have any questions feel free to comment, PM me, or email me at
robinson_lola@wheatoncollege.edu
Also, please share with others who you might be interested in!
Thank You!

I am looking to recruit male environmental activists who are either British or American for a zoom interview lasting 40-60 minutes.

If you fit this criterion and are interested in talking to me about your experiences as a man in environmentalism, please have a look at the informed consent form attached below. There you will have the opportunity to sign up for the study if you do wish to be interviewed.

Feel free to message me on Facebook or reach out by email at
robinson_lola@wheatoncollege.edu if you have any questions.

Thank you all,
Lola Robinson
https://forms.gle/bx2fjd1VRnmogYXKA

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Study Name: Understanding Ecological Masculinities
Researcher: Lola Robinson
Sponsoring Institution: Wheaton College, Massachusetts

Hello,

You have been invited to participate in this study designed to understand the experiences of men within the environmental movement. This research is being conducted as part of an undergraduate Honours Thesis in Sociology from Wheaton College (Massachusetts).

If you choose to participate you will be interviewed about your experience as a man within the environmental movement and how this has shaped your masculinity. The interview will last between 40-60 minutes and will be conducted virtually using Zoom. I will require that the interviews are recorded (using Zoom's software). These recordings will be stored in the cloud and deleted as soon as the interviews have been transcribed.

In order to participate in this study you must be British, American, or Canadian, over 18 years old, identify as a man, and be able demonstrate active involvement in pro-environmental activism and/or pro-environmental behaviour.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may refuse to answer any questions you choose, and will be free to withdraw from the study at any time, before, during, or after the interview. Refusal to participate will not result in any repercussions, and if you choose to withdraw from the study, all personal records and data will be destroyed and the data will not be used in the study.

You will be offered a pseudonym to keep information gathered in this interview anonymous. I will store all data gathered from this interview on a password protected computer, and data will only be shared with my two thesis advisors who are both sociology Professors at Wheaton Colleges (MA). Any information gathered in this interview that appears in the final study will be attributed to you using this pseudonym, and no identifying information will be included.

There are no foreseeable risks or costs to you as a participant in this study. And you will not receive any compensation or benefits from participation.

If you have any further questions about this research you can contact me at robinson_lola@wheatoncollege.edu. If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant, you may contact the executive secretary of the Wheaton College Institutional Review Board (IRB) Teresa Celada at celada_teresa@wheatoncollege.edu

Email Address: _____
Name: _____
Age:_____
Nationality: _____
I have read to he Informed consent form:
- ❏ Yes
- ❏ No

I am over the age of 18:
- ❏ Yes
- ❏ No

I consent to being recorded during the interview:

❏ Yes
❏ No
I consent to participate in this study:
    ❏ Yes, I give my informed consent to participate in this study
    ❏ No, I do not consent to participate in this study.

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Life History: Involvement and Motivation in Environmentalism

1. To start, can you just tell me a little bit about yourself.
    a. How did you first get involved in environmentalism and why did you get involved?
2. Was there a time when you were not environmentally engaged?
    a. Can you tell me a bit more about what prompted that change?
3. What was it like for you when you first got involved with environmentalism?
    a. How did people react to this?
    b. How do you think people perceived your environmentalism?
4. I wonder if you might tell me a bit about your friend/peer group and how they might affect you experience as an environmental man
    a. How have the people you surround yourself in affect your ability to engage in environmentalism

Personal Environmentalism

5. In your own words, could you describe what environmentalism means to you.
    a. Probe: What characteristics qualities do you associate with environmentalism?
6. Can you tell me about the last environmental event you participated in.
    a. How did you feel while participating?
    b. What was it like being a man in that situation?
7. What kind of impact do you hope to have through your involvement in environmentalism?

Masculinity and Environmentalism

8. What do you think of when you think of masculinity?
    a. What does being a man mean to you?
    b. What does healthy masculinity look like to you?
9. Can you tell me about your experience with your masculinity?
    a. Can you discuss you own experiences of masculinity in relation to the traditional vision of it you just mentioned
    b. How does it feel to be a man in environmentalism
    c. How do you see your masculinity different from traditional or stereotypical notions of masculinity.
10. Some say that there is a link between how women are treated in male-domianted societies and how nature and the environment are treated. What do you think about this idea?

11. How do you think your relationship with nature and the environment have affected the man that you are today?
    a. How does your environmental work or PEB contribute to your general well being? To your spiritual well being? To your mental well being, thoughts and feelings? To your physical well being? To the well being of your family? Do you think it helps you find your life purpose?
12. Has engagement in environmentalism and/or climate activism offered an alternative way to 'be' in the world?

Gender Gap

13. Some suggest that women are more concerned about and involved in nature and environmentalism. In your experience, would you say this to be true?
    a. If yes, why do you think that might be based on your experiences interacting with men and women in the field?
    b. How do you think we can get more men involved
14. Some see environmentalism as a feminine interest. What's your take on that?
    a. How does that make you feel
15. Have you ever experienced a tension between your gender and your environmental work?
    a. And has this changed over time?
    b. Can you talk about your experience with this tension.
        i. What aspects of gender and environmentalism appear to be in conflict?
        ii. Can you talk to me about some of the ways you've tried to resolve this tension. Can you offer specific examples?
16. Final Question: Is there anything else that we have not covered that you want people to know about your experience as a pro-environmental man?

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