Shared Knowledge Conference

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Land, Society, and Justice: Reframing Geoscience Education Through a Storied Anti-Colonial and Environmental Justice Lens

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Geoscience has been paramount to the transformation and advancement of society, fundamentally changing the way we view, interact, and live with the surrounding natural and built environment. It is important to recognize the value and importance of this interdisciplinary scientific field while reconciling its ties to imperial and colonizing extractive systems which have led to harmful and invasive endeavors. To prevent future injustices and resolve inequalities in colonized communities, the future of geosciences must be pushed in a new direction and be framed through a decolonial, and anti-colonial, lens where possible. Additionally, geology and its tangential studies in geosciences must address the human fabric of the world and racial geologies they are inextricably informed by and influence. A new means of teaching geosciences must include both the human and inhuman, the scientific and social, and employ place-based education to connect students to a place and its peoples. As Kathryn Yusoff (2019) asserts, no geology is neutral, and the peoples and their human networks are as much a part of the landscape as the rocks, biota, and water that shape and define it. This pedagogical approach utilizes experiential learning and other methods to cultivate a richer sense of place within students and instructors. As such, it draws from stories, the natural and human landscape, and their histories and serves as an appropriate culminating learning experience for students. Despite the cornucopia of examples of injustice, dispossession, genocide, and violence exemplified through imperialist extractive projects, students should not find themselves discouraged; rather, they should be inspired to be makers of change within their respective geoscience fields to remedy these injustices and ensure that the future of geoscience not only resembles the communities it serves, but also benefits everyone no matter their place in the landscape.