Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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BA (University of Victoria, 2016)

“Multispecies Ecofeminism: Ecofeminist Flourishing of the Twenty-First Century”

Department of Sociology

Friday August 21, 2020
11:00 A.M.
Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Martha McMahon, Department of Sociology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. William Carroll, Department of Sociology, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Jamie Lawson, Department of Political Science, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Sara Beam, Department of History, UVic

Dr. Stephen Evans, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Ecofeminism has had a nonlinear developmental path. Although it was celebrated as a potentially revolutionary project in the 1970s, by the time climate change and environmental crises had worked their way into mainstream discourse ecofeminism had become practically unheard of. The purpose of this thesis is to reflect on the failure of early ecofeminism and to explore ecofeminism’s potential as a transformative project of the twenty-first century. This thesis is motivated by my own personal experience of ecofeminism as transformative and also by what I would call a recent resurgence of interest in ecofeminism by young students, budding feminists, and fledgling environmentalists that understand the climate and environmental crises as fundamentally linked to the oppressions of colonial capitalist-patriarchy. Recounting the origin, history, and marginalization of the project of ecofeminism, I explore the rift between materialist and spiritual/cultural approaches to argue that the effectiveness of ecofeminism is dependent upon a collaborative recovery from the damages done by extensive anti-essentialism critiques. The onto-epistemology of our current paradigm—defined by neoliberal capitalism and colonial patriarchy—limits response to the environmental crises of our times to that of incremental policy change that is more symbolic than substantive. I argue that, in order to escape the chains of the neoliberal/capitalist/patriarchal subject that are cast upon us by these predatory onto-epistemologies, we must envisage ways to be human otherwise; in reciprocal relationships with more-than-human nature. As a prefigurative project that centres the more-than-human yet maintains a comprehensive intersectional anti-oppressive framework, a contemporary ‘multispecies ecofeminism’ can endow us with this potentiality. In our times of immense ecological degradation and ‘point-of-no-return’ deadlines, ecofeminism is a needed ‘third story’ that resonates as revolutionary with young scholars of the twenty-first century.