

Discovering, Including and Integrating Environmental Perspectives and Values in Multicultural Education

A Presentation by Running-Grass, Executive Director, Three Circles Center for Multicultural Environmental Education© at the 25th anniversary conference of the National Association for Multicultural Education, New Orleans, LA

Harriet Tubman



*Harriet Tubman (1823-1913)
nurse, spy and scout*

Purpose

- Explore the interactions of cultures and ecologies in relation to Multicultural Education
- Using examples from literature and academic studies to discover cultural-environmental perspectives and values
- See examples of how to include and integrate environmental perspectives and values into multicultural education.

Environmental Perspectives and Values

Discover (Challenge)

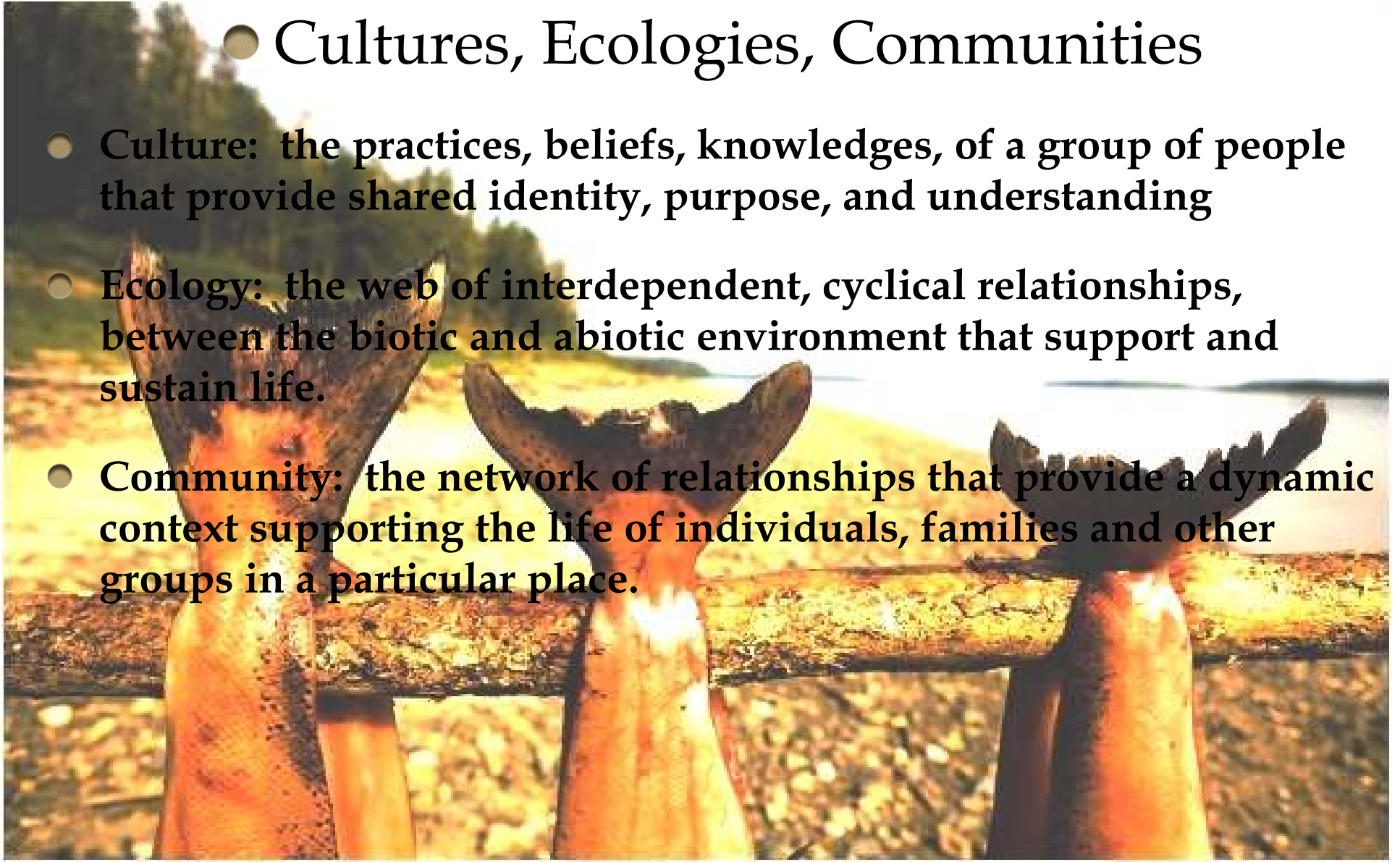
Include (Acknowledge)

Integrate (Empower)

Three Circles

● Cultures, Ecologies, Communities

- **Culture:** the practices, beliefs, knowledges, of a group of people that provide shared identity, purpose, and understanding
- **Ecology:** the web of interdependent, cyclical relationships, between the biotic and abiotic environment that support and sustain life.
- **Community:** the network of relationships that provide a dynamic context supporting the life of individuals, families and other groups in a particular place.



Three Circles: Three Interdependent Systems of Ecologies, Cultures and Communities

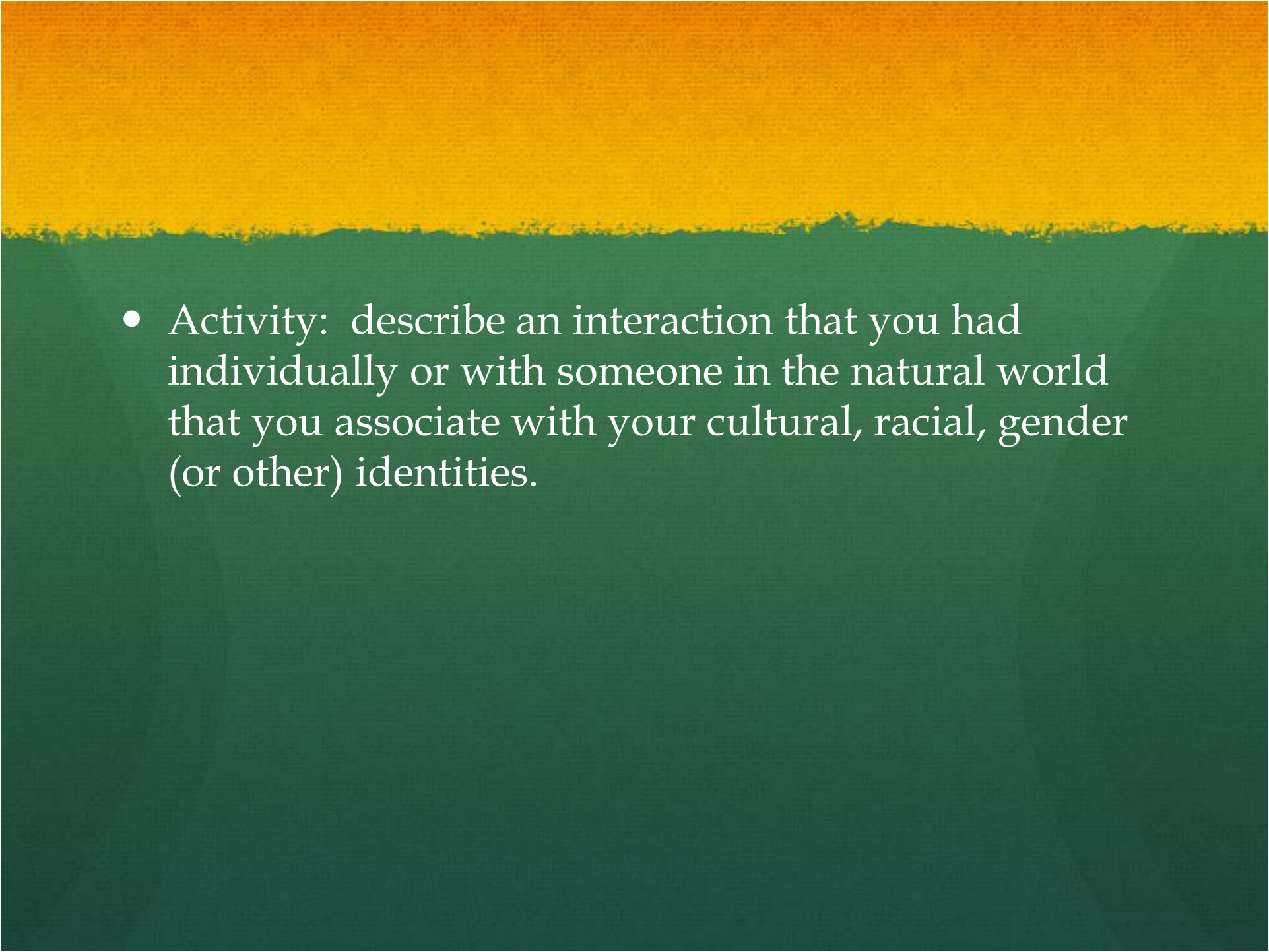
The diagram consists of three large, overlapping yellow circles arranged horizontally. Each circle contains a white text label. The background is a dark green gradient with a horizontal band of lighter green and yellow at the top.

ecologies

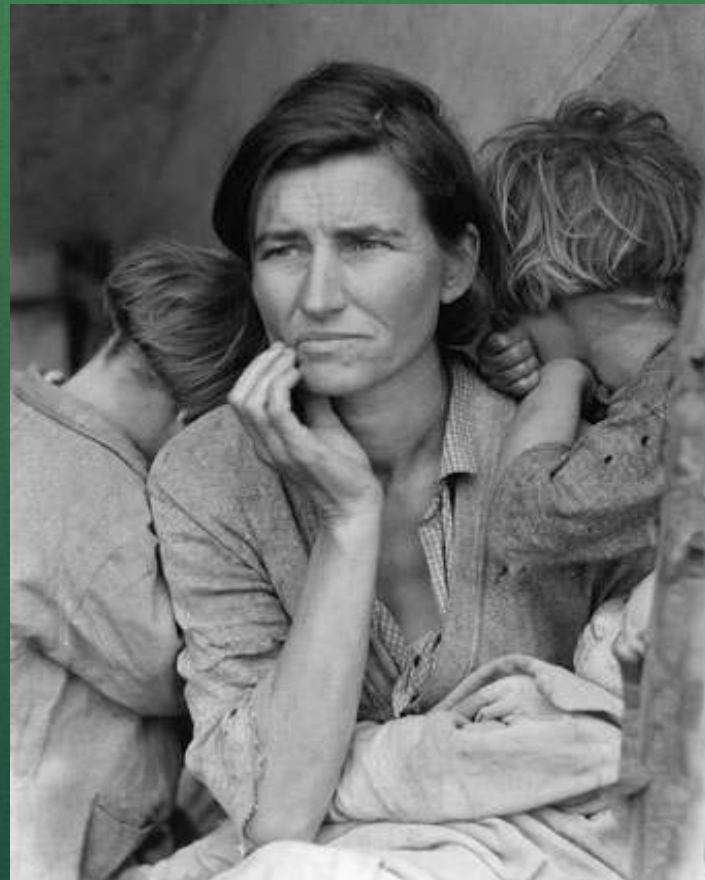
cultures

communitie
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- A story from the Iron Triangle.....

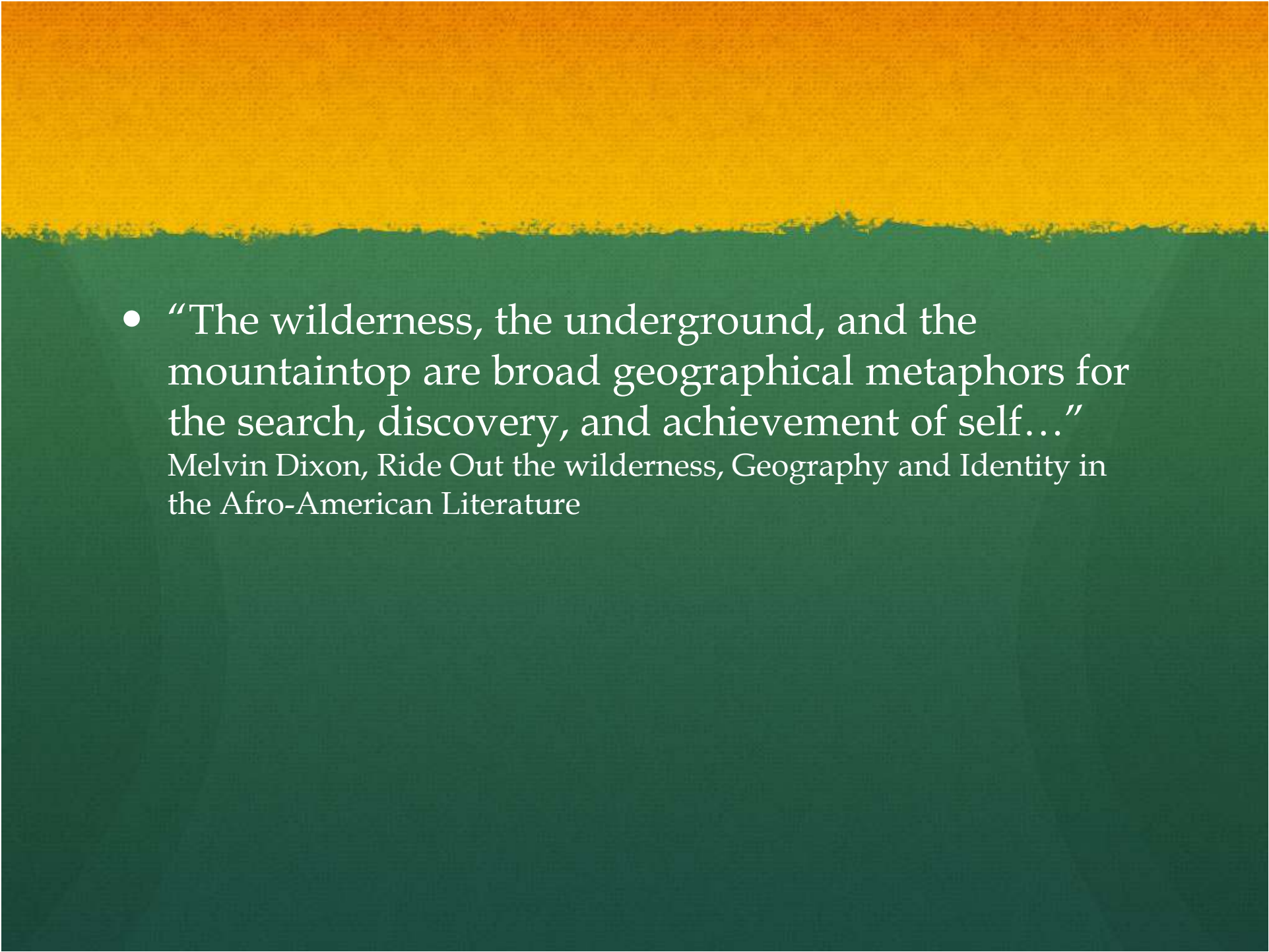
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- Activity: describe an interaction that you had individually or with someone in the natural world that you associate with your cultural, racial, gender (or other) identities.

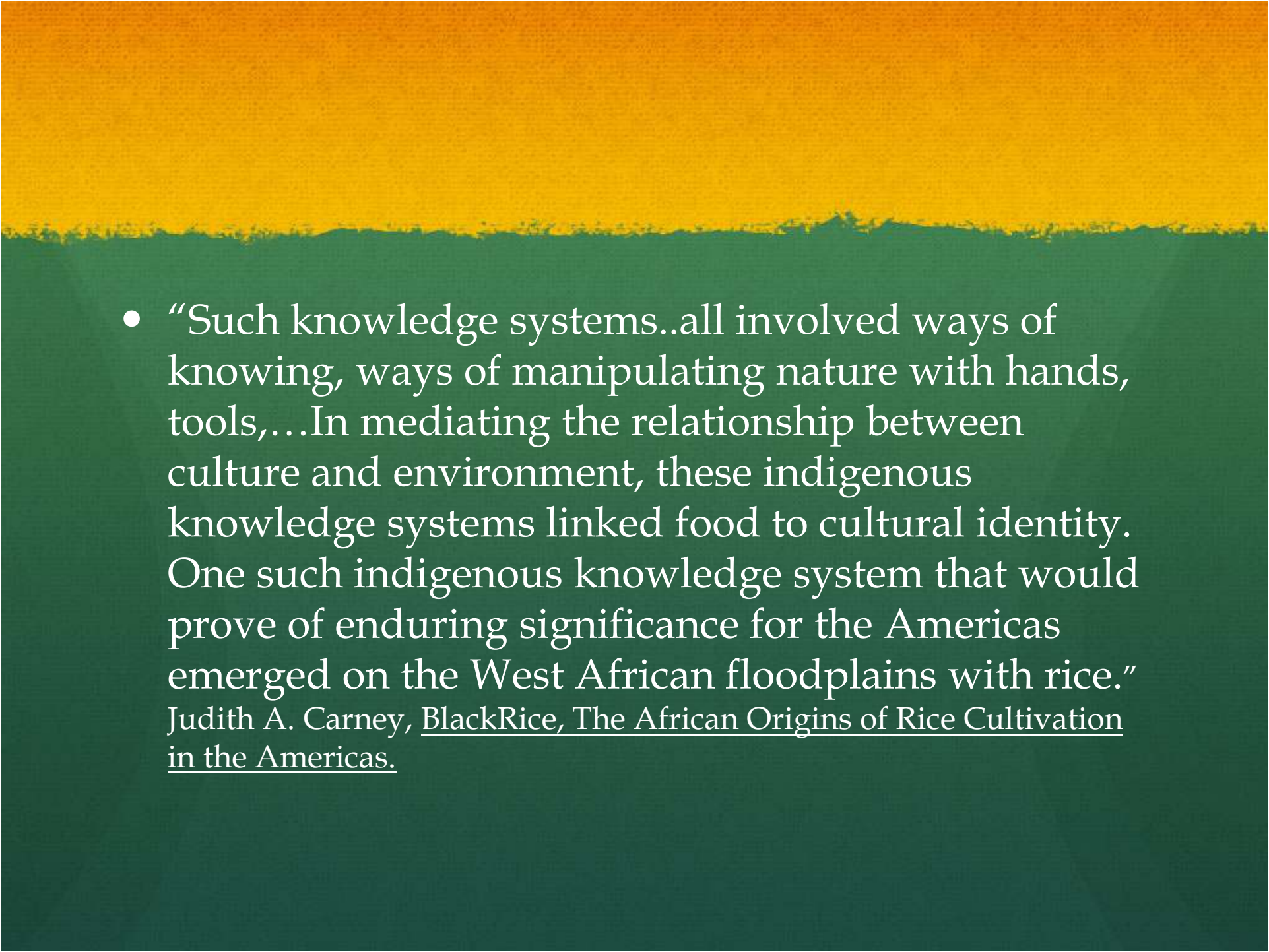
Dust Bowl



Movement for Environmental Justice

- **Environmental Justice** calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives. --First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, 1991

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- “The wilderness, the underground, and the mountaintop are broad geographical metaphors for the search, discovery, and achievement of self...”
Melvin Dixon, Ride Out the wilderness, Geography and Identity in the Afro-American Literature

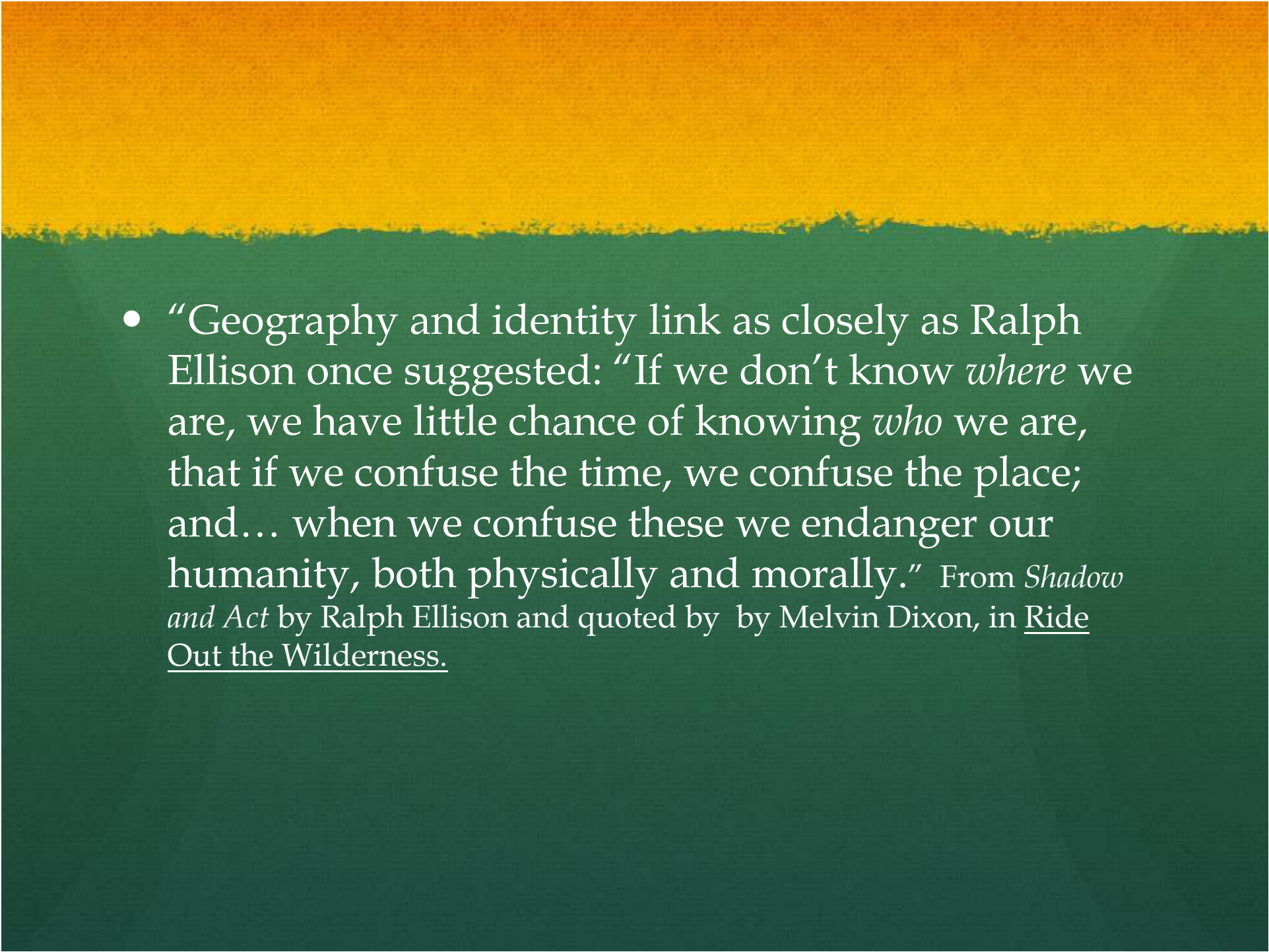
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- “Such knowledge systems..all involved ways of knowing, ways of manipulating nature with hands, tools,...In mediating the relationship between culture and environment, these indigenous knowledge systems linked food to cultural identity. One such indigenous knowledge system that would prove of enduring significance for the Americas emerged on the West African floodplains with rice.”
Judith A. Carney, BlackRice, The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas.

Agrarian Roots of African-Americans



A Tradition Continues...



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- “Geography and identity link as closely as Ralph Ellison once suggested: “If we don’t know *where* we are, we have little chance of knowing *who* we are, that if we confuse the time, we confuse the place; and... when we confuse these we endanger our humanity, both physically and morally.” From *Shadow and Act* by Ralph Ellison and quoted by Melvin Dixon, in Ride Out the Wilderness.



Chippewagon: Daniel Johnson-Green

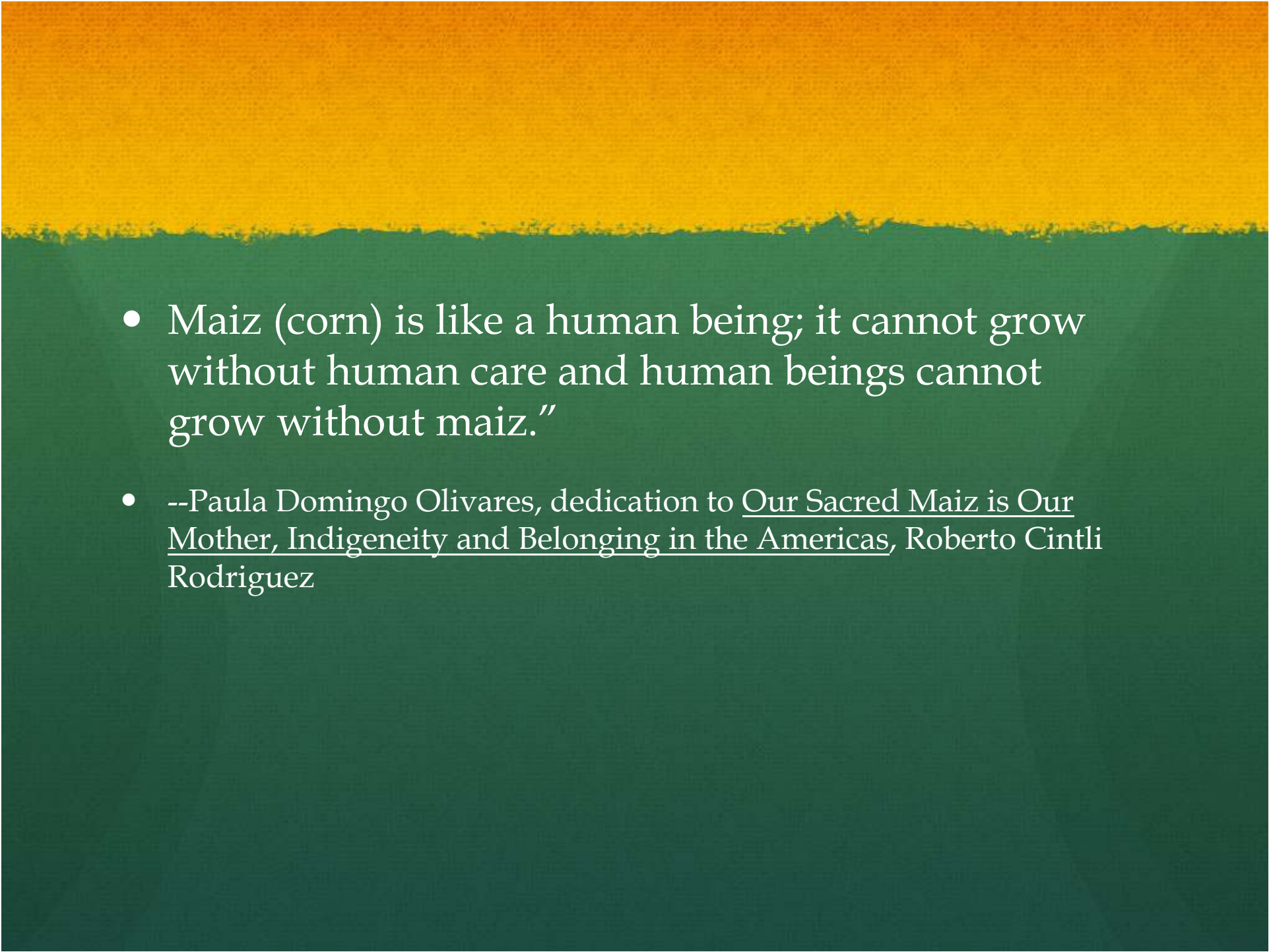
Salmon in the Smokehouse, Alaska



- Shungiku
- Edible chrysanthemum/ from the garden./ I bite it thoughtfully/ and the mint taste/ spins time and distance/ until I'm face to face/ with my Yamato origin.
- --Hiroshi Kashiwagi, Swimming in the American, A Memoir and Selected Writings

Edwin Chota



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- Maiz (corn) is like a human being; it cannot grow without human care and human beings cannot grow without maiz.”
 - --Paula Domingo Olivares, dedication to Our Sacred Maiz is Our Mother, Indigeneity and Belonging in the Americas, Roberto Cintli Rodriguez

Surfing Innovators, Hawaii






Our Human Heritage



Towards a Multicultural- Environmental Education

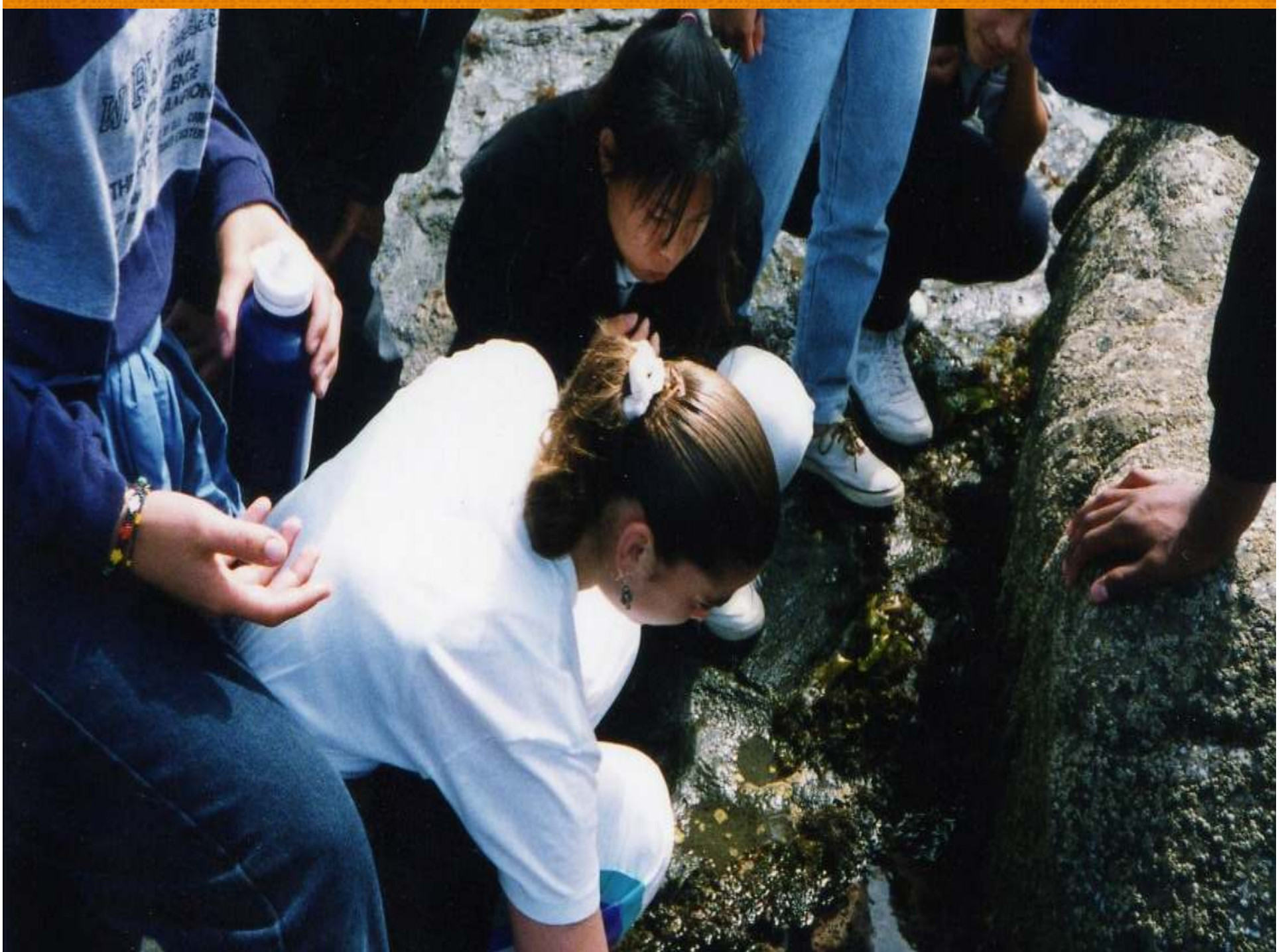
- Multicultural Environmental Education illuminates the idea that all cultures have relationships with their environments from which they and others can draw understanding and inspiration.
- Multicultural Environmental Education uses the teaching opportunity to assist students in becoming aware of, understanding, accepting and valuing other cultures and their environmental experiences and traditions.

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- “...this appropriating and humanization of the landscape is the sine qua non of being human, and free...’The way we see, the way we hear, our nurtured sense of touch and smell, the whole complex of feelings which we call sensibility, is influenced by the particular features of the landscape which has been humanized by our work.’ Thus, human shape, or cultivate, the landscape, while it in turn shapes, or cultures us.”
 - Mimi Sheller, Citizenship from Below, Erotic Agency and Caribbean Freedom quoting George Lamming











Cultural Ecotone Walk
Exploring the Borderlands of the
Central the International Districts



The Purposes of the Ecotone Walk

- Provide another method or lens of exploring and documenting a community;
- Sharpen awareness of the interplay of natural formations and the built environment;
- Introduce the concepts of ecotone and “culture shed” and apply them to your community of focus, the Central District.
- Develop this activity as curriculum that can be used with high school students and community members, taught and facilitated using Geneva Gay’s definition of *Culturally Responsive Teaching* and Running-Grass’ *Principles of Multicultural Environmental Education*.

Our Activity:

- The Central District and its Ecotones. Based on research you are conducting in preparation for the walk, explore the Central District and adjacent districts, International and Capital Hill, with resources such as Google, Bing, EJSSCREEN, C-FERST, EnviroAtlas, USGS topo maps and others. Using these resources, and especially topographical maps, attempt to identify significant natural formations, ecological shifts and cultural distinctions within and between districts. Observe, record and interpret the interplay between the built and natural environments.
- Identify The Central District's shared boundaries with the International District for our focused exploration through a purposeful walk. What observable natural, built and cultural markers delineate the boundaries between the districts?

☰ international district X

International District, Seattle, WA

Photos · Search nearby



Sign in

