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Educational Foundations  
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THE LAND AS THE FORGOTTEN TEACHER: HOW A NATURALISTIC LAND  
ETHIC, AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THOREAU, LEOPOLD, AND WILSON, INFORMS  
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION (260 PP.)

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This dissertation explores three key concepts: naturalism, environmentalism, and environmental education. The relationship between these concepts is non-linear. Not only does a naturalistic environmentalism facilitate land ethics, but land ethics point us toward a more naturalistic approach to environmental education, which further encourages a moral commitment to the land. This study, which explores environmental philosophy, ethics, history, and literature, is grounded in the environmental humanities and provides insight for environmental education.

This dissertation examines the lives and works of three American environmental thinkers: Henry David Thoreau, Aldo Leopold, and Edward O. Wilson and investigates the extent to which these three concepts are present within their philosophical writings and educational teachings in an effort to understand how moral knowledge came to be part of their naturalistic thinking. My intent was to show that naturalism as a philosophy deserves a more prominent place in considerations of land ethics. When it is given such a place in our understanding of such thinkers as Thoreau, Leopold, and Wilson, important implications for environmental education are revealed. Using their lives and philosophies as examples, I show how naturalism can facilitate environmentalism and inform the way

we teach about the land. While some environmental philosophers, including Leopold, J. Baird Callicott, and Holmes Rolston III, have previously conceived a naturalistic approach to environmentalism, no one has yet explored, in any depth, the relationship between naturalism, environmentalism, and education.

The ecological narrative of Thoreau, Leopold, and Wilson illuminates the significance of naturalism to environmental ethics and environmental education and reveals similarities in their pedagogical views and practices that could have direct implications for environmental education today. My study has shown that place-based learning, critical thinking, and the interconnectedness of knowledge characterized these individuals' naturalistic philosophy toward learning. These approaches represent practical methods that can be used in teaching for sustainability.