



Feeling Environmental Policing: Possibilities and Challenges for Socio-Ecological Justice

*Kristen Schaffer
Sarah El Halwany
University of Toronto*

Abstract:

This is a conceptual paper that merges collaborative acts of storying with theoretical contributions from the *affective turn* (Clough, 2008) to illustrate ways by which mainstream forms of environmentalism (Klein, 2015) may inscribe normative ways of feeling and being with environments while policing others. Methodologically, we draw on our personal and collective storying-while-walking (Springgay & Truman, 2019) in and around the University of British Columbia (UBC) during the Canadian Society for the Study of Education 2019 conference. We consider how our encounters with/in nature are often disciplined by popular environmentalist discourses (e.g., recycling, greening, contaminating). In our walks/storying, we centre material agents (e.g., trash receptacles, kombucha bottle, tree) as part of *affective economies* (Ahmed, 2013) that align us to particular ways of feeling (with) nature, for example, embarrassment from not knowing how to recycle a kombucha bottle. We attune ourselves to this hegemonic environmental imaginary, in which certain humans assume control and dominion over nature and reinforce that control via green economies. This compels us to ask: in what ways do environmental efforts for cultivating more response-ability *towards* nature (Wallace, Higgins &

Bazzul, 2018) come to exceed our response-ability *with* each other *as part* of nature? How might we follow affective economies that discipline how we value, manage and save nature, and how might this open up pedagogical possibilities for relating differently with each other/nature? With science and environmental education and research in mind, we suggest *staying with emotions* that make visible acts of environmental policing for socio-ecological justice.

Keywords: environmental education; affect and emotions; nature

References

- Ahmed, S. (2013). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Routledge.
- Clough, P. T. (2008). The affective turn: Political economy, biomedicine and bodies. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 25(1), 1-22.
- Klein, N. (2015). *This changes everything: Capitalism vs. the climate*. Simon & Schuster.
- Springgay, S., & Truman, S. E. (2017). *Walking methodologies in a more-than-human world: WalkingLab*. Routledge.
- Wallace, M. F., Higgins, M., & Bazzul, J. (2018). Thinking with nature: Following the contour of minor concepts for ethico-political response-ability in science education. *Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education*, 18(3), 199-209.

Biographical Notes

Kristen Schaffer is a PhD candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. She is keen to learn more about socio-ecological justice and community-responsive research initiatives in informal science education.

Sarah El Halwany is a PhD candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. Her research looks at how science education is affectively enacted and embodied. She is also interested in pedagogical approaches that connect Science, Technology, Societies, and Environments (STSE).