

INTRODUCTION: ARE WE 'GREEN' YET? AND THE VIOLENCE OF ASKING SUCH A QUESTION

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Encountering shared histories

The immediate impetus for this book comes from the moment when both of us joined the academe at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University, The Hague.¹ Our work connects activism, policy and academe, albeit in different ways. The origins of the book go back years to the advocacy, joint research and personal connections among some of the authors, particularly linked to Wendy Harcourt's work in international policy and research and Ingrid Nelson's connection with feminist political ecology (FPE) activist academics. The book came out of several historical processes.

The wider background to the book is feminist engagement in creating connections and knowledge on environment, gender and feminism at an international level. Put simply the book attempts to address the gap between 'gender and development' and feminist issues focused on human rights, economy, environment and violence against women, as well as exploring the queering of development and environment and links to sexuality and technology. From our observations (and engagement), whereas there were earlier books and debates by activist scholars on feminism, environment and development in the early 1990s around the UN Conference on Environment and Development, in the last two decades the issue of environment fell out of the gender and development arena of concern. International-level sustainable development agendas sidelined gender and environment as technical and an add-on interest, even as academics published important analyses. In particular the book *Feminist Political Ecology*, edited by Dianne Rocheleau, Barbara Thomas-Slayerter and Esther Wangari (1996), served as a founding text for thinking through gender politics and feminist theory in environmental projects and among impoverished communities working for grounded environmental protection and knowledge and against

bureaucratic and modernist approaches to environmental protection programmes (Rocheleau and Nirmal 2015).

In the early 2000s, for a variety of reasons (Harcourt 2009), many feminists working in justice movements decided to split from the UN as a pivotal point of reference, with many gravitating towards the movement-based World Social Forum (WSF) (Desai forthcoming; Vargas 2005). During the mid-2000s, around the WSF processes, academic work on feminist political ecology converged with a resurgence of interest and questions about feminism, economy and ecology in the context of the current 'green economy' debate, which became a buzzword eroding sustainable development in an increasingly neoliberal world. Several of the authors included in this book met at the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Uppsala, Sweden, in 2008 to revisit FPE in light of the need to resume academic and movement work. At the Uppsala meeting Wendy Harcourt proposed writing an edited book to be published by Zed – which had approached her with the idea of a gender and environment series. Of the participants at the Uppsala meeting, only Dianne Rocheleau, Giovanna Di Chiro and Wendy Harcourt contributed to this current book. Others in Uppsala contributed to subsequent meetings and writings, but then, in the end, were not able to contribute to this book. The road since the Uppsala meeting has been a long one involving meetings in New York, Luxembourg, Bolsena and The Hague, and involving other sometimes complementary and sometimes conflicting writing, teaching and policy-related activities.

In this six-year process it was difficult to work with the urgency of activist and advocacy agendas, and at the same time to find the space and time to deepen reflective academic analysis. The sense of what counted as an outcome – a good conversation, a policy brief, a book, an advocacy strategy, sharing information, personal connections, research proposals and institutional recognition – became divisive. Other questions also dogged the process, such as: who had the authority to speak and for whom, what were the priorities, what processes ensured validity of the conversations, how could diverse people from different contexts build continuity and even friendships without excluding others. We enjoyed the food, the conversations, the fun and the environment – whether it was the snow in Nordic forests or lakes in central Italian sun (Harcourt 2012). However, as often occurs in long and underfunded processes, the dynamics in the

group changed as participants lost jobs and loved ones, moved on to other spaces, and new priorities crowded in. The question in all of these conversations has continually been about finding space and time to reflect as well as to keep continuity and to decide where to invest the energy of individuals, not all of whom felt they could act collectively coming from such different terrains.

This book finally took shape through the academic terrain of ISS. The last event leading to the book occurred in The Hague at the ISS in November 2012. On the occasion of the publication of *Women Reclaiming Sustainable Livelihoods* (ibid.) the ISS and Hivos (a Dutch humanist foundation) contributed funds to invite people to consider the issue of gender and the green economy in the wake of the twenty-year review of the Rio Summit (Rio+20). Together with Josine Stremmelaar and Eva van der Sleen of Hivos, we organized the meeting ‘A Colloquium on Bodies, Technologies and Resources: Deepening conversations on gender and the green economy’ as one of two ‘gender’ colloquiums in a series on the green economy during the 2012/13 academic year.²

The colloquium built on several issues in the most recent discussions around FPE. We were able to bring together academic activists who normally converse on- and offline in different networks, including those from Uppsala, with a network of feminists publishing on the new FPE in academic journals. The debate held at the ISS over two days examined current ecological and economic crises and their impacts on diverse genders and the communities and ecologies where they live. Although conceived in the wake of Rio+20, the discussion moved well beyond the current policy debates on the green economy to look at colonial history and literatures on decoloniality, and how to link concerns around cultural violence, queer movements, activism, technology, teaching practices and environmental justice.

The debate revealed how different women’s organizations and networks within and outside environmentalist movements are rethinking economies and lifestyles and in the process redefining how we can live collectively sharing and understanding our common ‘naturecultures’. The debate looked at how specific practices linking life, nature and gender in particular sites – for example, ‘*buen vivir*’ – travel beyond their birthplaces to sites of current global environmental struggles such as high-level UN panels, the Rio+20 meetings, the kitchens and farms of the Slow Food movement and the woodlands of Mozambique.

For example, contributor Catherine Walsh (see Chapter 3) expressed concern about how activists outside the Andes quickly appropriated ‘*buen vivir*’, which comes from a very specific cultural context and worldview of the Andes. Which elements of ‘*buen vivir*’ are lost in translation as ‘*buen vivir*’ travels to new sites and contexts? Appropriation can force practices into contexts that would be reprehensible from the perspective of those who initially gave life to a cosmovision. There are also worries about academics and others extracting ‘*buen vivir*’ as a tool or object as one might extract and exploit a rare plant’s genetic information. Gifting and sharing diverse worldviews are important acts in FPE, but such practices can transform into practices of appropriation or exchange for exclusive benefit such as with intellectual property claims. How can and does ‘*buen vivir*’ travel, what does it do and when is it ethical to take inspiration from ‘*buen vivir*’ as an example, and when does it become appropriated or a stolen technical object? Sacha Knox raises a similar point (Chapter 10) when she queries the use of Ubuntu by foreigners eager to appropriate an ‘African’ cosmovision. The question we want to raise here is: in what way do specific cosmovisions or practices travel and what are their effects as they move to new contexts?

Given the interest and engagement in the two-day colloquium, we revived the idea of the Zed book and participants were invited to continue the discussions by contributing their papers, conversations or new work inspired by the event that we have now gathered together in this collected volume.

Having provided a short history of the book we situate the book in the current discussion on FPE, highlighting what we see as the book’s contributions to FPE ‘in process’ before turning to a discussion of how we are ‘staying with the troubles’ (Haraway 2007). And how we understand that ‘Response-ability is staying with the knots, staying with the trouble, inheriting the damages and the achievements ... Getting at “loss” is a part of response-ability’ (Haraway 2013, quoted in Di Chiro’s Chapter 7).

Where we situate the book

In The Hague ISS colloquium and in the title of the book we highlight ‘the green economy’ as one of the entry points into current discussions about feminist political ecology and environmental justice movements. This is the broader and current political context and

discourse in which we are living our lives. While Christa Wichterich in Chapter 2 presents a strong critique of the green economy policy discourse, the broader aim of the book is not to support or engage directly in the theory or policy on the green economy. We aim to speak instead about what these discussions on ‘the green economy’ mean and do in our own and in others’ lives. We aim to look at issues such as climate change in a way that moves the discussion away from climate scare talk – with deceptively simple charts and graphs and scientific explanations that ignore people, power and gender – and away from engaging life and the Earth in silos of ‘energy’, ‘water’, ‘agriculture’, etc., as if they are not connected. We take climate change and other urgent issues seriously, but we are critical of analyses and approaches that, as Nelson argues in Chapter 4, create ready spaces for heroes or saviours to assume the authority to intervene in addressing environmental issues. Playing and assuming an expert role measures individuals and communities against visions of environment and well-being that are not of their own making. This can be a form of violence and a perpetuation of colonizing practices.

At the same time, we are trying as feminists and environmentalist advocates not to repeat populist journalism, NGO or activist campaigns that perpetuate harmful and essentialist images of women as victims of climate change or of defiled landscapes with the people who inhabit them depicted as the primary culprits of ecological damage. We are uncomfortable with how these images erase women’s histories and lives. We feel that while women do experience changes/disasters differently it is not because they are women per se, but rather because of the structural inequalities they endure, and those pictures and broader narratives silence their voices, knowledge and lived experiences.

A wealth of well-written work by feminists and environmentalists that engages a diverse audience on creative as well as academic and feminist political levels also influences our work.³ This includes the process of writing the book as provoked by the critical lens of queer ecology and queer theory and the challenge of decolonizing our own minds. As we wrote together and met in different places in the process, we managed to thrive with reflective and responsive emails, and through face-to-face conversations full of those elusive but rejuvenating ‘ah!’ moments. As we seek out lurking and lingering questions and concerns we practise building an epistemic community

that can break out of dominant ways of thinking about environments, economies and societies.

Connecting insights, contentions and conversations

In going beyond the green economy discourse the book sets out current FPE analysis of multi-sited ecological and economic crises and their impacts on diverse genders and the communities and ecologies where they live. The contributing authors explore and ‘trouble’ through these themes in connection with their lives. What emerges from all of the chapters is a sense of modest concern about our own positionality and situated knowledge as we stay with the troubles and sense of discomfort around our different activities in everyday life, whether in our roles as teachers, researchers or activists, and where all of those roles overlap. We are building our understanding of FPE as process from our engagement, our encounters and our embodied learning and praxis. While we realize there are bodily limits to knowing or understanding certain specific issues (such as formulating theories/strategies for living on this planet under climatic conditions never experienced before), our collective aim is to open up the space to learn through the body and other epistemologies and cosmovisions, recognizing that this form of knowledge has been suppressed by Western approaches to scientific inquiry.

All of us are interested in what decoloniality has to say in this regard as it challenges hegemonic knowledge, production and exchange. Our interest in decoloniality is the reason we have taken on naturecultures, post-humanism, emotions and performance of feminism and environmentalism, as ways to challenge ourselves as we rethink and search for cracks and fissures in identities, dualisms, living with other species, landscapes and sense of scale.

Staying with the troubles

This edited collection is the fruit of scholars and activists who for the last two years have laboured, in all too familiar hunched positions, in front of their computer screens, struggling not only with writing but also with deep and contradictory emotional responses to the world we are living in and experiencing. One of these emotional contradictions is recognizing that the authors gathered here are not able to represent all positions and voices. The desire to represent others is something we continue to *unlearn* through our different

generational, professional and other experiences. These and other embodied emotions inform much of this book.

As we wrote our chapters based on our shared environmental justice goals we inevitably imagined particular desired future worlds of environmental and social being. Following Donna Haraway's (1989) idea of situated knowledge, such acts of imagining 'green' or 'just' futures come *from* the privileges, status and other features of the individual or community doing the imagining. Who within particular environmental, feminist and justice movements asserts which imagined futures? Whose voices are silent or silenced in these visions and goals? The elephant in the room is not who has the 'agency' to speak but who has the authority to speak – global South, global North, young, old, woman, man, white, black?

For example, in Chapter 1 Dianne Rocheleau presents the paradox of feeling 'simultaneously called to witness and report, yet forbidden on the basis of race and colonial legacy'. She describes the awkward moment of sharing findings from her research in Kenya as part of the launch of the co-authored *Feminist Political Ecology* book (1996) with Barbara Thomas-Slayter and Esther Wangari, which she had thought would be a celebration of the fact that such findings were finally entering and debunking problematic academic political ecology discussions and theories that ignore women's 'agency, innovation and success', among their day-to-day challenges. But women who identified with the 'borrowed or donated stories' in the book expressed anger at the thought that they might have to cite the book when writing about its themes, which were stories that they had known from direct experience. That difficult but necessary confrontation prevented Rocheleau from writing a second book in the way that she had imagined.

Acknowledging and then addressing the effects of privilege is important in order to be open to (and subjected to) the challenge about our viewpoints and to work out ways to build connections and shared visions across differences and in the process to question our positioning of privilege. This move, begun by decolonial and post-colonial scholars (such as Lugones 2008 and Mohanty 2003), opens up possibilities for becoming something and someone different – rooted in place and history – and connected to envisioning alternative futures *with* and among broader communities. There are, however, significant limits to one's own abilities to recognize patterns in our behaviour and

discourse within our various academic communities and movements. We may inadvertently ignore or fail to speak about an important daily practice because it seems ‘we already know this’ because ‘we do this every day’. Indeed, perhaps we do not speak about certain obvious practices for fear that we might perpetuate a stereotype or come to be seen as banal, everyday or obvious ourselves.

By calling attention to such awkward and telling moments we focus on the frictions that have led to deep divisions within international feminism and environmentalism around the divides of North/South, academic/activist and generation. We recognize that there is an unstated privilege enjoyed by those (for example, Northern-based white environmentalists) who can ignore the injustices produced by and within ‘justice’ and environmental movements.⁴ So we begin immediately by asking, ‘With what sort of “troubling”, “risk” and “loss” can FPE engage in terms of our emotions, energies and other efforts to unpack privilege?’ Do we draw attention to these divisive issues or do we and our readers prefer that we sweep them under the carpet, given that feminist, environmental and decolonial theorizing and activism still occupy a relatively marginalized position in global conversations about environment and the economy?

Our question is rhetorical, but it challenges ourselves and our readers to keep in mind who gets to speak and what types of practices and forms of speaking and doing get performed. There are many corporations, bureaucrats and other ‘experts’ who are in a position to calculate our level of green achievement for us, using metrics defined within a globalized and neoliberal economic system. In the face of these technocratic practices, feminist political ecologists offer counter-visions to powerful problematic framings of justice and ‘green economics’.

Right from the outset, we want to acknowledge that in making our counter-assertions, we too run the risk of producing our own set of violences, of worlding and imagining that marginalizes others. Indeed, as the conversation involving Larissa Barbosa da Costa, Rosalba Icaza and Angélica Ocampo in Chapter 9 and other chapters in the book attest, marginalization is part of the problematic history of the emergence of many social, environmental and feminist movements. While we analyse our research, family and life experiences and try to practise alternative ‘counter’-visions we are aware first that these attempts are partial and always in a state of becoming – we can never

be fully ‘green’ or ‘just’ or escape contradictions. And secondly, we are aware of the frustrations and difficulties of being or acting in a world that already feels so violent, and is so threatened.

We have chosen different ways to express how we live and practise feminist political ecology – through stories, narratives and analysis from many different parts of the world. The group has come together through the different networks and connections of the two editors, but what is driving all of us is the desire to engage in just processes of change as feminists and ecologists, while at the same time being acutely aware of the ‘burden’, potential impacts and the non-impacts that we carry as writers and practitioners. By ‘burden’ we mean our (and others’) uncomfortable histories, realities and memories that inform our critical praxis in decolonial projects, in anti-racism, in feminism and in environmentalism. Readers may well ask why we want to make such disclosures from the outset. Would development policy experts take the extra time to read a nuanced development report rather than a carefully crafted bullet-point summary? Why is it that such experts require so much scaling ‘down’ of complexity in reports while they demand that research results be scalable ‘up’ into development tools that erase the very ecological, historical and political variations that will make or break the success of such decontextualized tools? In which moments do justice movements stop and assess their own internal contradictions and injustices? It is precisely by recognizing and exploring such discomfiting questions that we ‘stay with the troubles’, as Haraway asks positioned actors to do.

We know that a broad audience might want a nicely presented set of arguments and descriptions that say, ‘Here you are, check these boxes and you will do environmental justice better now that you know what feminism, anti-racism and ageism are about.’ But this book aims to examine the contradictions and the emotional and embodied struggles by sharing different conversations and insights into the praxis of ‘doing’ FPE as a way to guide our collective action and collaboration in the future as we move towards our visions of environmental justice. We feel that FPE is a process of doing environmentalism, justice and feminism differently.

The following section provides our particular take on the troubles that we as editors see as connecting insights, contentions and conversations among the book’s contributing authors. There can be many other ways of seeing the tensions and connections. We have chosen

not to dwell on arguments that we and the other authors generally tend to support; rather we emphasize some of the ‘troubles’ within and beyond FPE today where we would like to invite further conversation, research and ways of practising FPE. We share many concerns, but not a normative logic, and we hope that this opens up possibilities for practising FPE in the present disturbing ‘green economy’ context.

Trouble 1: Challenging neoliberal logic and narrow analyses of neoliberalism

TAMA (there are many alternatives) We are acutely aware of the fact that we are writing after the Rio+20 event, which saw the idea of ‘sustainable development’ being overtaken by the ‘green economy’. We argue that we need to question this green economy buzzword by retracing colonial and neoliberal histories and who practises them in the present and how. In Chapter 2, Wichterich illustrates how the neoliberal logic within both sustainable development and more intensely in the ‘green economy’ includes women and vulnerable groups as long as they perform ‘productive’ (moneymaking) tasks cheaply (efficiently). Just as we should be cautious about anything marketed or labelled as ‘green’ or ‘natural’, so too should we look carefully at what we celebrate or label as ‘empowerment’ or ‘inclusive of women and vulnerable groups’. Based on her insights grounded in her activism within transnational as well as European green, feminist and social movements, Wichterich argues that these dynamics are converging, particularly within multilateral negotiations on climate change and biodiversity conservation. As we listen to experts warn us of tipping points and climate and ecological disaster, this opens up spaces for technocratic or other new hero figures to swoop in and claim the authority to save others from a dire fate (see Nelson in Chapter 4) and to label others as not sufficiently resilient to save themselves unless they adopt new practices that fix them in a local place, accept the obliteration of government support and eviscerate their current strategies of mobility that draw on social as well as ecological diversity (see Nightingale in Chapter 6).

Rather than wait around for a hero, or assume personal responsibility for fixing broader structural failures, or wait for a single consensus on how to completely transform society, Wichterich supports a TAMA-principle approach (there are many alternatives) to intervening with multiple strategies, as neoliberal logics will infiltrate, co-opt and

instrumentalize new strategies through the practices of anyone from a young entrepreneur from Silicon Valley to a World Bank gender analyst. Care work, the commons and sufficiency (enough) are key sites of refusing or troubling these sorts of efficiency and growth logics, and they offer spaces for the TAMA principle to replace ‘green and leftist blueprints’ that dominate anti-capitalist responses to the ‘green economy’. Wichterich provides examples such as communities living near airports asserting their right to a restful sleep, babies having their own temporality of feeding that neoliberal intrusions should not interfere with, and demonstrating that speculative investments (e.g. gambling) in food crops and the life expectancy of residents in homes for the elderly are ecologically and morally untenable.

We see connections here between the TAMA principle and the work on community economies by J. K. Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006, and Gibson-Graham et al. 2013). TAMA draws from activist and policy networks, while feminist community economy theories and practice draw heavily from theory and academic circles based on grounded collaborative research. Rocheleau (Chapter 1), Harris (Chapter 5), Di Chiro (Chapter 7) and Harcourt (Chapter 8) also critique neoliberal approaches to the green economy in ways that draw on Gibson-Graham and others, yet not explicitly ‘TAMA’. Di Chiro works with her students and community activists to co-create their course and community objectives and learning activities, and Harris counters neoliberal framings of water as a resource with everyday, embodied and emotional relations that mechanistic economic frameworks insufficiently engage. Harcourt highlights the labours of love that both neoliberal logics and social movements tend to sideline or forget, and Rocheleau narrates her multiple encounters and attempted subversion of neoliberal logics towards decolonial practice (while Walsh in Chapter 3 chooses not to cite Gibson-Graham, who still compose their approach from their positions in the ‘global North’). All of these authors share an emphasis on counter-hegemonies and knowledge-making but would not use the same terminologies or theories to achieve their goals, which extend well beyond merely critiquing neoliberal logic.

Neoliberalism: a convenient demon? Scholars such as James Ferguson (2009) offer a challenging provocation to the extensive published activist and scholarly literature decrying neoliberalism. Beyond multiple

ways of describing how neoliberal logics produce victims, Ferguson (ibid.: 167) draws on Foucault's 1979 lectures on neoliberalism (2008) to argue for articulating what kinds of positive forms of power can be appropriated or taken up by 'progressives' by asking 'what do we want?' rather than listing everything that we do not want. Assuming that there is a coherent 'we' in the first place presumes an authority that Ferguson and other scholars repeatedly assume and presume. Many, though not all, feminist political ecologists question such an assumed 'we' from the outset. Another issue with this analysis is the assertion of a lack of articulating alternatives and ways of living and being and governing. Wichterich articulates alternatives through her focus on care and commoning and concepts such as 'enough', among the other contributors' arguments listed above. An FPE analysis of neoliberal logic is more than merely anti-(fill in the blank), it is a process of developing new practices, some of which articulate new arts of governing, but do so without necessarily presuming or pre-determining who 'we' are, as this is the situated and positional piece that requires careful analysis.

FPE continues to articulate alternative forms of living and governing among one another through a different and more nuanced lens than an all-encompassing 'progressive' class narrative. One focus involves questions of how to sustain livelihoods.

Trouble 2: Sustaining livelihoods, engaging technologies and queering ecologies

Sustaining livelihoods Going beyond the green economy means that we have to start from the level of everyday life, social reproduction and ongoing people's struggles for gender-aware ecological and social justice. This means engaging our bodies, emotions, everyday practices and relationships. For example, instead of 'greening' the economy we need to be 'sustaining livelihoods' to ensure nutrition, ecological balance, clean water, secure housing, gender equality, meaningful and diverse approaches to labour. The book points to some of the hopeful spaces in which FPE can contribute to ecological and social change which are not about broadening the green desires of the consumer market through green market products but rather about building just livelihoods and lifestyles.

In Chapter 1, Rocheleau speaks to gender, livelihoods and power relations also present in research processes and what she describes

as: ‘The principle of gender complementarity under uneven relations of power and the importance of parallel institutions and domains of knowledge and authority (defined by gender, or by culture) carried forward into my own work “in the field” and into feminist political ecology in the academy.’ Harris (Chapter 5) argues for an extended ‘livelihoods’ or ‘lived feminist political ecology’ approach, attentive to everyday needs, embodied interactions and labours as well as emotional and affective relations with the environments and natures where we live. She moves away from livelihood approaches that are construed narrowly as focused on economic needs and income; instead she focuses on everyday interactions and embodiments and emotions.

Nightingale (Chapter 6) shows the connections beyond one’s home and community that support and sustain livelihoods, but which become recrafted under different resilience frameworks in Scotland and Nepal. In Chapter 8, Harcourt considers the different embodied experiences and emotions in the conflictual interactions of the Puntí di Vista community in the small town of Bolsena as different livelihood priorities of local farmers, the Catholic Church and the tourist industry can clash with environmental movements working for social justice.

While FPE pays close attention to sustainable livelihoods and the problems of conflicting livelihoods, the issues of the role of new technologies and repurposing old technologies and learning to love strange ‘others’ remain a significant challenge within a livelihoods approach.

Engaging technologies The trialogue between Barbosa da Costa, Icaza and Ocampo in Chapter 9 examines approaches to sustaining academic and activist livelihoods within a decolonizing project of learning and practising with others. They highlight creative uses of online technologies such as websites with Quechua, Spanish and English language content and new universities for practising alternative and indigenous education. They discuss three technologies of violence, however, including devices of torture used on women’s bodies, *retro-excavadoras* or backhoes for extracting soil and resources and the extractive voice recorder device. Technologies are rarely categorically ‘bad’ or ‘good’. Their application and appropriation offer creative and abusive possibilities. FPE approaches various technologies with cautious curiosity and experimentation in coalition with others. In

Chapter 3, Walsh recalls the process of officially recognizing ‘*buen vivir*’ and ‘*pachemama*’ in otherwise hostile ‘government’ realms and the ways that such recognition created opportunity for new modes of exploitation and asserted decolonial worldviews and practices.

Rocheleau has subverted and appropriated technologies of mapping in her agroforestry work with significant care and reflection, as Da Costa, Icaza and Talero demonstrate with their conversation about the uses and abuses of the voice recorder. Cameras, social media platforms and other technologies all demand respect for and among others, and practising research and learning through coalition. In Chapter 8 Harcourt wonders aloud how we can live with these technological changes as she considers technocultures and questions whether we can grow to ‘love the hybrids we are creating’. She asks what to do with all the ‘nasty stuff’ and how to navigate the futures we are facing as we live FPE.

Queering ecologies These concerns come out further in conversations on queering ecologies. One common limitation of sustaining livelihoods and engagement with certain forms of technologies and the refusal of other extractive technologies is a tendency to refuse or exclude the ‘contaminated’, ‘exposed’ and other bodies that exist as a result of technologies deemed dangerous and repugnant from within sustainable livelihoods approaches. Queering ecologies asks FPE to examine how to build sustainable livelihoods and just movements that refuse violence and ecological devastation without also refusing the polluted, the abject, the hybrid seed infiltrated with GMO genes, and the exposed bodies and beings that we must learn not only to live with but to love (see Harcourt, Chapter 8, and Di Chiro 2003, 2010).

The conversation in Chapter 10 among Harcourt, Knox and Tabassi explores differences among generations and identities when speaking about queering ecology. Harcourt writes that ‘Queer ecology helps us to move beyond that in looking at fluidity, movements across species, divisions of cells as life, technologies that show new possibilities of love, of healing, and of living with non-human others. At the same time there is a huge darkness – humanity is fast destroying environments, ourselves and others – militarism, fundamentalism, epidemic disease – climate change – inequalities that deepen, extractive violence against natureculture.’ Queer ecology, like FPE, is a way of doing/ thinking, but it can also provide sites of new markets and violence.

Wichterich's chapter cautions us about the new international markets in clinical body work (women serving as surrogates, etc.) for queer men, which can be seen as extraordinary practices of reciprocity and queer living and community, but can also offer troubling spaces for new forms of consumerism (see Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson 2010). Queering ecologies and cyborg perspectives challenge how we think of sustaining livelihoods and building new sustainable livelihoods, and we hope FPE continues to pursue these critical yet turbulent themes.

Trouble 3: Appropriation and naming and claiming FPE

Telling others' stories and the travels of rooted worldviews and practices The different chapters explore specific sites of practice and ask: what are the ethics, possibilities and risks of worldviews and strategic rooted practices travelling beyond their originary contexts? We also ask, 'what do we know and who are we'? The politics of presenting/representing what is 'known' is something that intersectional thinking can help us work on in alignment with a broader decolonial project, and this has to do with the ideas of situated knowledge and positionality. All knowledge comes from somewhere, but we should not assume that we can see all that is to be known from within that somewhere. It is through conversation and articulation and staying with the troubles that multiple positionalities help generate richer, more complex theories and understandings beyond a simplistic and hierarchical God's-eye view and 'ground-up' view. The question of disclosing/sharing/representing what is 'known' is complex.

In her contribution, Walsh describes the Andes as 'my place of thinking, being, and becoming, of the ways past and present that Nature, gender, and life are intertwined'; she looks at 'the ways imperial/modern/colonial matrices of power' have led to 'new learnings, prospects, considerations, conversations, and articulations'. She sees women playing a very key role in the 'otherwise' realization of ecological, cultural, economic and social arrangements. As we mention earlier, Walsh is simultaneously concerned with the appropriation of *buen vivir* in Europe and elsewhere and to what end and Knox is concerned about appropriating Ubuntu out of its southern African context. This relates to Rocheleau's experience of the pushback in response to her telling others' stories through the publication of the 1996 book. If FPE sees its task as one of encounter (as discussed by

Barbosa da Costa, Icaza and Ocampo in Chapter 9 in particular) then the ‘we already know this’ statement in response to ‘telling others’ stories’ is harder to sustain, as many professional women claiming to represent the rural poor in their own countries are very far from the realities of the subsistence field and waterhole. A refusal to articulate these realities and ‘knowns’ discloses the class dynamics between professional women performing their role as developed and modern vis-à-vis the poor in need of improvement. This suggests there is still a space for an ‘outsider’ to relate and play some role as witness and other roles in these encounters, and in writing about them produce a kind of ‘encounter-knowledge’ that can undo/unpack assumptions made by professional elites in-country or out of country. The ethics of peeling back these complexities through such encounters are quite serious, however, and require ongoing reflection and discussion (see Nelson in Chapter 4).

Silence about other stories and other worldviews can be necessary. Rocheleau has indicated moments when silence was necessary: ‘Given the explosion of corporate biopiracy at the time ..., we did not publish the detailed results on the medicinal plants’ (Rocheleau, Chapter 1). As Knox in Chapter 10 states: ‘we need to be careful about and responsible for what we contribute to/co-create, not simply reverting to procedural or well-established forms of knowing. I think that the act of articulation will always be one of reduction (a violence both in terms of itself and how it plays out in “practice”) but instead of seeing this as something stifling, I see it as empowering – it means, for me, that we need to be critically aware and that we have even more (rather than less!) responsibility to “own up to” what we articulate.’

Naming and claiming FPE In addition to telling others’ stories, FPE scholars and activists have at times claimed to be ‘inclusive’ of those who do not call their work FPE (see the discussion of this theme in Hawkins and Ojeda 2011). In Chapter 10, Tabassi raises a key question about inclusion: ‘I appreciate Wendy’s call to open up feminism, yet also worry about the language of inclusion. Inclusion assumes an interest on the part of the formerly excluded to join, legitimize or assimilate to a system built upon the fragmentation and segregation of peoples and bodies – feminism being one such structure. How can we, instead, dare to recognize the connections between the multiple

bodies under attack by discourse, economic systems or militarism without returning to identities we stand behind for strategic purposes, which simultaneously restrict us?’ Decolonial feminism also questions inclusion narratives (see Walsh) and so do many feminist economic perspectives (Wichterich).

As the whole volume demonstrates, and as Rocheleau encourages readers to see, FPE is a ‘work in process (not progress) and hopefully on a path, however circuitous, to decolonization’. The tensions and ‘troubles’ within FPE refuse a simplistic framing of FPE as a set of theories that merely reinforce older ideas or that insist on a singular imagining of only one particular desired state or future world of environmental and social being. Rather, the troubles highlight tensions and sites of generating or creating multiple imaginings and world-making.

Trouble 4: Naturecultures, response-able encounters and making coalitions

Damages and achievements One strategy involves building new coalitions through responsible encounters. Di Chiro in Chapter 7 argues that it is important for FPE to stray from business as usual ‘and experiment with lively critical analyses, action-based research collaboratives, and hands-on community development projects that can offer productive and life-enhancing possibilities’ as ‘engaged scholars that “trouble” conventional theories and practices’.

Staying with the troubles enables more in-depth engagement with the problematic division of nature and culture. The book takes up Haraway’s concept of naturecultures where she proposes that nature is not other to culture but rather the two inform and co-create each other. The book offers reflections on the challenge entailed in practising this natureculture concept in diverse contexts. Di Chiro in Chapter 7 describes how she has worked as researcher and teacher with the resources, motivation and space on different US university campuses in a way that starts from naturecultures rather than an assumed separation of nature and cultures. Her community action work with students and communities in Holyoke, Massachusetts, and in North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, demonstrates the ‘damages and the achievements’ (following Haraway 2013) involved in staying with the troubles and building coalitions between different positionalities and experiences. The work of listening and worrying and questioning

between community residents and university students allows for different naturecultures to be seen, experienced and shared. Naturecultures demand diverse handfuls of dirt brought together through difficult labours of love, struggle and cultural survival, not with a simple 'hero' student or other activist motivated with narrow but good intentions (see also Nelson's chapter).

Nightingale in Chapter 6 contrasts policy approaches with the complex relations of community to the environment and naturecultures that are rooted in place but not equivalent to place. She looks at the different people moving in and out of the environs, as the scale of community 'at times stretches to people who have long since moved away, and at other times is contained to those who live on tenant farms inherited from their grandparents' grandparents'. Nightingale is deeply concerned about the promotion of social capital and community-based networks as *the* solutions to local development. She seeks 'to show how people's sense of themselves and their place is often in friction with how resilience planners imagine they might foster social capital and harness networks into their disaster risk management schemes'.

Asking too much Loss and inheriting damages and risks of engagement/working with are issues that we think are among the most compelling features of staying with the troubles. Knox argues in the Chapter 10 conversation: 'I feel that there is something incredibly important, again, about the act/s of courage required to open ourselves up to the fear, anxiety, uncertainty and vulnerability that arise from the creation of new forms which could trump (rather than reinforce) the systems we are trying to work against. The ability to imagine – and therefore create – alternative assemblages, alternative material embodiments – more equitable forms – is, for me, the value of queer ecologies.' And Tabassi captures her response to Knox in Figure 10.4.

But there also comes a point where such anxieties, fears and sadness become too intense; quieting them becomes a preoccupation for maintaining one's ability to continue. Engaging anxiety is courageous, yes, but it could be deadly. This is not just referring to despair (e.g. feeling that there are no options or ways forward), but the noise of anxiety/fear being so much in one's mind that making everything stop is preferable to continuing in such a state of mind. While we seek comfort/curiosity and are challenged by the possibility of the

assemblage and staying with the troubles, there is a certain level of anxiety and other dangers that we cannot ask one another to risk because of the repercussions. Asking oneself and others to stay with the trouble in this sense is a big ask ... no matter how courageous an act it might seem. This relates to the privilege of notions of reflexivity and being humble.

On another note, we all have significant energies invested in our political, professional and other identities, and everyone has worked very hard to craft and achieve those identities. Asking for humility and questioning those identities is a big ask for women, who feel they have broken through gender, racial and other multiple discriminations, and who continue to fight against and survive and thrive in a racist academy and multiple others who are making their presence known and asserting their right to occupy previously and continually 'off-limits' spaces of authority and knowledge-making. This tension was very present in our colloquium in the ISS when there were unspoken and spoken concerns raised about generational, racial, professional and geographical differences among the women who attended. While there is appreciation for Northern-based white feminists unpacking and questioning their white privilege and adopting a more humble/situated approach, there is also a sense that women speaking from 'otherwise' positions do not need to be humble in their scholarship and knowledge production because of the ongoing discrimination in the academy and beyond. Thus, there is still clearly an identity politics of FPE as process. These are deep and dividing troubles indeed. If they show us anything it is that we cannot fully hide from, and that we do actively cover up, our own practices of contradiction.

Conclusion

Having introduced some of the 'troubles' that run throughout the book, in conclusion we first set out how we have organized the book, before coming back to our opening question.

Organization of the book The authors contributing to this book and to FPE praxis share specific overlapping interests and concerns. At the same time, there are significant disagreements and provocations in the text that we feel are useful for shaping future FPE work and reflection. A book full of contributions in complete agreement

would be boring. A book with chapters that completely lack connection would be confusing. We hope that while readers will not find a consistent method or logic among the chapters, the different voices and experiences within will resonate with readers' own experiences and engagements with various forms of FPE.

Given the different approaches, the chapters are necessarily written in different styles. Some are narratives that follow the lives and contributions of the authors to FPE. Others are based on academic studies in different locations from which the authors illustrate some of the latest thinking on FPE. Others are based on three-way conversations among the authors, raising questions about how they do FPE in and out of academe. The chapters illustrate how FPE builds on the stories and analysis from the many places – rooted, networked and connected – of feminist politics. For ease of reading and organization, we divided the book into three sections, even though there are many overlapping themes among the chapters.

Section One: Positioning feminist political ecology The first three chapters introduce three major pillars of debate and thinking in practising FPE today. The first is the reworking of feminist political ecology as an action- and research-based 'discipline'. The second looks at feminist ecology and economy analysis situated within historical and current contexts. The third explores decolonial feminism rooted in social movements and intellectual theory from Europe and the Americas. These opening chapters speak to the need to remake continually our foundational thinking and strategies for practising FPE as a multi-sited process.

Rocheleau sets out how FPE was established by feminist scholars and activists within academe and social movements. She introduces her own pathway of learning, different moments of contention and troubles when doing research in Africa and Latin America, her engagement in the US academy moving towards a decolonial turn in FPE praxis, and her interest in Chiapas. Rocheleau demonstrates that the tensions and 'troubles' within FPE refuse a simplistic framing of FPE as a single set of theories or a single project.

Wichterich looks at the 'persistent paradoxes and ambivalences' of 'mechanisms of inclusion of marginalized and poor groups like women in transnational value chains and new market-based instruments' and 'the speedy process of economization of nature and financialization of

environmental policies'. Wichterich discusses how FPE can go beyond the green economy by documenting debates between feminist political economy and ecology through her own thinking on care, commons and degrowth, building on the work of feminist economists, critiques of the green economy and engagements of ecofeminists.

Walsh outlines the decolonial project from the Andes from an academic engagement as an insider-outsider – and someone who has followed and engaged in Ecuadorean politics. She offers ways to understand life, nature and gender 'otherwise' and explains the 'decolonial' turn that many of the chapters are interested in taking up and pursuing in future FPE processes.

Section Two: Rethinking feminist political ecology Section Two takes up key areas in discussion in the 'new' FPE represented by a younger generation of FPE now working in academe.

Nelson focuses on risky yet hopeful spaces – including key sites of identify performance and emotion – for transforming environmental practices and politics in Mozambique. She examines what making and 'celebrating as hero' *does* vis-à-vis the contradictory practices of a range of ordinary and not-so-ordinary actors in the woodlands of central Mozambique. Through a series of contradictory and awkward encounters, she explores how logging bosses, log haulers, local leaders, environmentalists and others become and make heroes amid an intensifying illegal logging trade linking Mozambique and China.

Harris considers the potential of an FPE approach that considers the everyday, embodied and emotional relations to resources and 'natures'. In her discussion of water from an FPE perspective, she examines key questions related to uneven access to water in green economy debates as green technologies play out unevenly in gendered and racialized terms (drawing on her work in south-eastern Turkey and recent projects within and connecting through her academic institution in Canada). Looking at how these shifts (dis)connect populations and places and hide key relationships and interconnections, she shows how feminist and post-colonial theory are helpful in rethinking natures and feminist political ecologies otherwise.

Nightingale examines questions of resilience as they connect to livelihoods and rural economies in the face of climate change based on her research on the west coast of Scotland and in the hills of Nepal. She probes how the framing of resilience within mainstream debates

is at odds with the kinds of relationships, practices and aspirations of local people. Her chapter interrogates how scale is enrolled as both a limitation and an emancipatory factor when people assert new socio-environmental notions of ‘the local’ and ‘connection’ in a world where time-space compression seems to be ubiquitous.

Section Three: Living feminist political ecology Section Three turns to everyday living of FPE from different generations of feminists reflecting on their years of activism and academic work in candid explorations of their own lives as they have engaged in the theory and practice of FPE.

Di Chiro speaks to naturecultures and the discomforts and achievements of building coalitions by ‘staying with the troubles’ in her teaching and scholarship with communities and students in Holyoke, Massachusetts, and North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the United States. She illustrates her ‘bridge crossing’ with students, communities and her outsider/insider role. She gives examples of her activist and teaching practices in the communities where she has lived, exploring the naturecultures of violated landscapes and lives and engaging and making worlds without losing hope, but taking on and accepting various kinds of uncomfortable loss(es) as part of response-able engagement, including the loss of assumed authority.

Harcourt describes three particular moments which shaped her embodied experience of living FPE to illustrate what she calls place-based globalism where global realities are played out in place and where actors bring the concerns and experience of place to events/ places that claim global importance such as the UN, and in so doing transforming and shaping globalization processes. She looks at how change happens via networks that build solidarity, support and creativity, and her own experiences as a student, advocate and activist as part of interacting global networks that have created an alternative, complex and performative sense of social inquiry that makes up FPE.

Dialogues The last two chapters are ‘dialogues’. The first conversation among three activist researchers questions their worldviews in their intellectual and personal travels through academic research. Their dialogue reflects what they have learnt and what they found inspiring in thinking about lives, nature and genders in their work

in different places in Latin America. They look at the role of the academe when thinking about alternatives to ecological violence and in questioning their social locations and their research practices, perspectives and tools.

The final triologue is a textual and pictorial conversation around queer ecology, different ideas about queer theory and experiences from different locations – Europe, the USA and South Africa – issues about what it is to be human, post-human and to be uncertain about the future. With reference to a host of literatures and personal stories about embodiment, art and planting, the conversation opens up questions about how the authors face the difficulties, fears and hopes of living in ‘these end times’.

Back to the opening question and what we mean by asking it This book has evolved over different historical and political economic moments linked to neoliberalization and the ‘greening’ of the economy with accompanied assumptions about naturecultures. The book aims to set out how FPE re-engages and rethinks neoliberal extractivism and violence through our analysis of our experience of diverse naturecultures as part of a collective and ongoing process of decolonizing development practices, political ecology and feminism. There is no standard by which we wish to measure ourselves as ‘green’ or ‘ecological’ or ‘feminist’ or ‘political’ enough. We want to learn how to cope with the complexities and difficult times we are living in via a candid examination of our own positions, practices and questions that trouble and engage us. It is a deliberate countering of the arrogant assumption that we ‘politicians’, ‘experts’, ‘activists’ know how to solve the ongoing violences of neoliberal arts of governing and logics, including the move towards green economic development and marketization of nature to deal with economic and ecological ‘crises’.

As the authors show, such countering is built on creative engagements as we stay with the troubles we experience in different places, without attempting to build a normative blueprint or one single vision of where we are heading. We see FPE as networked and expanded feminist endeavours that deal with the social relations of power and justice connected to cultures, ecologies and economies.

The book is, then, one of several ongoing, and we hope expanding, academic, practical and rooted feminist endeavours that are in ‘constant circulation of theory, practice, policies and politics, and

the mixing of various combinations of gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, ontologies and ecologies, with critique of colonial legacies and neoliberal designs' (Rocheleau, Chapter 1). Our collective commitment is to move beyond the damaging rhetoric of 'the green economy' as we join others 'to construct new economic imaginaries capable of supporting concrete struggles against neoliberalism and designs for alternative economies' (Escobar 2010, quoted in Harris, Chapter 5). We see FPE as rising to the challenge of engaging in decolonial thinking and politics, in the politics of becoming otherwise.

Notes

1 From 1988 Wendy Harcourt worked in advocacy and research as a feminist researcher and editor in Italy at the Society for International Development. She joined ISS in November 2011. She met Ingrid Nelson at ISS in 2012 when Nelson, a feminist and environmental activist and researcher working in Mozambique, came for a year of postdoctoral research at the ISS before moving to the University of Vermont.

2 For more details on the colloquium, including who attended, please see the report on the ISS website: www.iss.nl/research/conferences_and_seminars/previous_iss_conferences_and_seminars/environmental_studies_colloquium_series_critical_engagements_with_the_green_economy/environmental_studies_colloquium_series_critical_engagements_with_the_green_economy/ (accessed 9 August 2014).

3 Some key references for feminist theory in development studies are: Kabeer (1994); Rai (2008); Visvanathan et al. (2011); feminist geographies: Nelson and Seager (2004); transnational feminist movements: Baksh and Harcourt (2015); post-colonial theory: Loomba (1998); feminist environmentalism or ecofeminism: Paulson and Gezon (2005); Scott Cato (2013); critical perspectives in development: Sachs (1992); Escobar

(1994); Rahnema and Bawtree (1997); Cornwall and Eade (2010).

4 Many movements draw from restrictive identity claims – such as 'women's movements', 'indigenous movements', 'peasant movements', etc. We start by looking at how to blur these categories in order not to exclude and restrict while recognizing the frictions.

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