The end of the world and a promise of happiness: Environmental education within the cultural politics of emotions

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June 4, 2015, A newsletter in my mailbox:

Every year, the “new words” of the year are published. These words enter dictionaries while other, outdated words disappear. In 2007, the term “climate anxiety” was published with the definition “anxiety for a threatening climate deterioration.” This was followed by a wealth of related expressions: “climate threat,” “climate smart,” “climate-proof,” and “carbon-diet.” Of course, it is not only climate anxiety that fills our lives – other expressions turn up [in the Swedish language], like “entourage” (“companions to a VIP-person”) and “pimping” (“to make more luxurious”), among others – glitter terms about dubious dreams of success. They might seem contradictory, but they reflect the world we live in. On the one hand, we have become increasingly aware of the environment, yet on the other hand, we consume more than ever. And perhaps this dilemma is the origin of climate anxiety. /…/

As far as I know, there is no specific psychotherapy for worries concerning environmental degradation. We have to take care of that in another way – by hand – like living more environmentally friendly. It is a task for us all. We can’t be satisfied with complaining to people in power. We all need to do our bit, but it is easy to feel resignation. While recycling bottles and milk cartons and cycling to work in the wind and rain in our own personal war against pollution, everyone has probably wondered what our small actions can accomplish – when factories and coal power plants billow and darken the sky. It is then that we need to think about how our small gestures are more important than we think.

One big gesture is to teach school children to take care of the environment, and so we turn to you teachers who are reading this. …The word “teaching” will never be consigned to the corridors of oblivion. The word "summer" is also old and proven – and is always as enjoyable. We at Kunskapsförlaget wish you a lovely one!
The pastoral power of Environmental and Sustainability Education

From climate anxiety to the wish for a lovely summer holiday. From fear and despair to happiness and hope – all without the need for psychotherapy. The letter materializes how Environmental and Sustainability Education (ESE) operates as a promise of happiness and how this can be reached by doing things: “Small gestures are more important than we think,” as stated in the email. In this discourse, children’s fears for an unsustainable future can, and should, be transformed into hope and happiness through practical work.

This letter, and its emphasize of small gestures from everyone must be understood in its specific context. ESE is an answer to the environmental crises that humankind has lived through and is currently experiencing. In Sweden, the origins of ESE can be traced back to the 1960s and the environmental movement. However, at that time it was mostly practiced by environmentally engaged teachers, it wasn’t stated in national curricula. But from early 1990s, it has been an important part of policy – nationally as well as transnationally. ESE states as an interesting example of Global Educational Policy, upheld and distributed by organizations such as UNESCO and UNEP. Pedagogical policies and practices in the name of sustainable development have – through UN initiatives like a “decade” and more recently a “global action plan” for education for sustainable development – emerged all over the world. In common is the aim to educate students into awareness of how social, ecological, and economic problems are related and how one can work for sustainable development for everyone, everywhere, now and in the future. The global – as well as the Swedish – policies are thus underpinned by the idea that every human being needs to contribute in order to more or less save the world. Rhetoric of doomsday organizes the discourse, as well as the need for salvation.

In the ESE discourse human sins and problems can be washed away through education (Popkewitz, 2008; Tröhler, 2012). The ESE policy, as well as the cited newsletter, are here understood as materializations of what Michel Foucault conceptualized as pastoral power, a governing technology operating through fabricating humankind as in need of salvation (1983, p. 213 ff). This is done through pointing out the individual as responsible for not only one self, but also the flock now and in the next life. The responsibility for future generations is a repeated theme in the talk of sustainable development and through this a desired citizen is fabricated – the one who is willing to act. The commonsensical cultural thesis of the engaged and vigorous environmental hero is hard to resist in times of climate change and other sustainability threats. However, in this chapter I intend to unpack and problematize what happens when this doomsday/salvation narrative is moved into educational
contexts, and there translated into an idea of what students must do to “feel good” and be optimistic at the same time as they carry the responsibility of a threatened planet on their shoulders.

Typical for pastoral power technologies is that they are targeting the soul, the interior of the mind. The governing of the soul in ESE is not at least done through emphasizing emotions. Erica Burman (2009) claims that education in general has gone through an “emotional turn”. Feelings and affects – emotional literacy – have been given a prominent place in the educational culture. Even beyond the hegemonic psychological discourse claiming the importance of internal motivation and other psychological understandings of education, we can talk about a therapeutic culture in which emotions are supposed to be domesticized. Not at least can we see this in recent research about ESE that studies relation of emotions and learning in different ways (e.g. Manni, Sporre & Ottander, 2016). To learn – that will say to change into a more sustainable understanding of the world – requires that you feel something, that you are “struck and shaken” (Bennett, 2001, p. 4).

On the surface, this seems to contest ideas of objectivity and reason in education. Jane Bennett (2001) even proposes a need for human beings to be enchanted as a way to escape the modern society’s perception of rationality, and develop new ethical approaches to environment. But in line with Burman (2009), I claim that the “emotional cultural turn” in education functions alongside its binary opposite, scientization. In this entanglement of feelings and rationality, some emotions become considered productive for learning, while others are simply disturbing. For instance, the quoted letter distinguishes between a feeling of true happiness (doing good for the world) and a superficial, worldly kind of happiness (consumption, glitter and entourage). This distinction between appropriate and sinful emotions, as well as the doomsday/salvation theme, expresses the double gesture of hope and fear embedded in what Popkewitz (2008) describes as the cultural theses of cosmopolitanism which orders modern schooling. In this discourse, the child as an unfinished cosmopolitan carries the hopes of a bright future, but also the fear of decay and hopelessness. The child needs to be rescued from the category of a dangerous population, which threatens the world with its way of living. In this text I explore how this is done through defining what feelings that are culturally attached to those who are inside the environmentally friendly community and those who are positioned as the problems on the outside of the same. In other words: how is the good intention of saving the worlds operating as a double gesture of inclusion and exclusion? What does it mean for the construction of sameness and otherness that ESE is embedded in a very specific system of emotions?

**Sticky feelings and affect aliens**
This book chapter examines ways of talking about emotion in texts (research articles, newsletters, movies, etc.) about (education for) environment and sustainability (ESE).
I consider these texts as archives, in which stories of how an environmentally friendly person should – or shouldn’t – feel and act are filed (Ahmed, 2012). The archive can keep different kinds of narratives. Some of them are horrible stories of what will happen to those who not align to the standards of the environmentally friendly person. Other stories are uplifting like the quoted newsletter and even other are scientific texts with proven results; “the body of knowledge” about how to educate citizens striving for sustainability. Together the archives make up, and confirm, how one can live inside the limits of normalcy – e.g. through talking about emotions. I explore how boundaries between reasonable or unreasonable citizen are made up by defining appropriate and wrong feelings for an environmentally friendly person in and through these archives. For this analysis I turn to critical race theorist Sara Ahmed’s work on cultural politics of emotions. Emotions are often described as individual and even intimate, but Ahmed (among others) sees them as socially organizing the world. She aims to escape the psychological view of emotions as something which comes from the inside, entering the outside – the “inside out” perspective. Further, she distances her work from a group psychological perspective, the outside entering the inside – the “outside in” perspective. Instead, she states:

…emotions create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place. So emotions are not simply something “I” or “we” have. Rather it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the “I” and the “we” are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others. (Ahmed 2014a. p. 10)

Ahmed describes emotions as “sticky”; they glue communities together, which is essential for the pastoral governing of the individual and the flock. But at the same time, emotions position the Other on the outside. This Other she calls the affect alien – the one who feels the “wrong” thing at the “right” time or the “right” thing at the “wrong” time (Ahmed, 2010). In other words, emotions are about attachments, about what connects us to such categories as “reasonable” or “empowered” and that which “holds us in place” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 27). Emotions do things on a cultural level: they set up the distinctions between normalcy and those who need to be included into that. Some emotions are elevated and seen as signs of cultivation and reason, while others are signs of the opposite – which could be either too strong or too weak feelings for a “reasonable” citizen. Notably, the latin word, passio (suffering), is the origin of both ‘passion’ and ‘passive’, two characteristics often seen as the opposite of reason and the ability to control emotions. Below, I will discuss how these two opposites both operate as abjecting the affect alien in ESE.

**Activation and responsibilization of the free citizen**

To understand how the well-intended practice of ESE makes up environmental heroes as well as affect aliens, I build on theories on power, governmentality, and systems of reason (e.g., Foucault et al., 2007; Rose and Miller, 2010; Popkewitz, 2008). Rose and Miller (2010; 2008) elaborate on the notion of governmentality as a way of governing
not against, but through individuals’ free will – a kind of regulated freedom. Human beings are not governed by prohibition and force, but through desires and the willingness and obligation to fit into what counts as normal and reasonable (Foucault 1983). The “political” issue of for instance sustainability is then aligned to individuals’ will through desires to be a happy, responsible citizen. It must feel good to abstain joys and habits that cause emissions of carbon dioxide, such as travelling, meat eating and shopping. This alignment between the individual desires and the survival of the flock operates “through countless, often competing, local tactics of education, persuasion, inducement, management, incitement, motivation and encouragement” (Rose & Miller, 2010, p. 273). Expertise (also in the shape of education) has an important role in this kind of governing: through transforming political issues into incontestable and irresistible “truths,” self-regulatory techniques are instilled in the citizens, aligning politics with “free will” and making the “responsible choice” (ibid).

Inside this regulated freedom, the principles of activation and responsibilization are crucial since the will and the actions of the free individual must fit into the will of the nation. The individual becomes personally responsible for the security of the state – or in the case of sustainability and environment: the world. Everyone needs to “do something”, even if it is small gestures (activation), for the common good of the flock (responsibilization). The borders between the public and the private, the national and the individual, and the social and the personal become discursively erased (Miller & Rose, 2008; Popkewitz, 2004). For instance, in the environmental discourse the relation between the actions of individuals (e.g., buying organic food and recycling) and ecological sustainability is repeatedly emphasized. This feeling of being personally responsible for the common good is inscribed in individuals’ souls through different technologies governing how to be, feel, and act as a conscientious person (Rose, 1999; cf. Foucault et al., 2007).

The feeling of personal responsibility for the flock and the next life is embedded in the principles of the “citizen”. It is a technology of will. Pedagogy and education are ways to foresee that the citizen is/becomes willing in the right way (Ahmed, 2012:7). Sara Ahmed talks about this technology as a virtue of willingness; how willingness is conceptualized as crucial for a person’s actions, sense of responsibility as well as his/her own happiness. School thus has to protect society from affect aliens. Again we can relate to Foucault’s (1983) theories of pastoral power, how the salvation of the individual is tied to the work for a common good. Ahmed expresses it in similar way:

The will duty is a reproductive duty: the part must willingly take part, and must participate in the reproduction of the whole. The parts must also aim for the happiness and health of the whole. (Ahmed, 2012, p. 6)

The opposite of willingness might be willfulness – the wrong will – the one that, instead of keeping the flock together, threatens the societal body. Ahmed continues:
A willful part would cause the unhappiness or ill health of the body of which it is a part. The very diagnosis of willfulness provides a moral frame that allows some parts to be read as putting themselves before the whole. (Ahmed, 2012, p. 6)

If one puts oneself before the whole, maybe dreams of glitter and luxury before the climate crisis as in the newsletter above, “then one must learn to will right” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 4). The will can be tamed by education, but it must still be through free will. Here is where governing technologies of emotion become interesting: how can one conquer the right will to work for a sustainable world through one’s own will? In the next section I will provide an example of a, in the Nordic countries well-used, pedagogical model for this difficult task.

**The action-competent child**

Throughout its quite short history, ESE has (roughly speaking) changed from being a practice based on outspoken norms for the environmentally friendly ways of living in the 1970s, to today’s emphases of a pluralistic approach which aims to make room for different subjectivities (Öhman, 2006). The desirable child made up through the current discourse of ESE is the cosmopolitan child, the reasonable and empathic problem solver who listens to different opinions before s/he takes a stand and act. But ESE holds an inherent conflict; it aims to promote a pluralistic, democratic approach at the same time as it has an important and urgent problem to solve. This means that the child, through its “free will”, is supposed to voluntarily adapt to a certain way of thinking and living at the same time as a pluralistic discourse characterizes the practice. It is an illustrative example of inscribing responsibility through pastoral power: to make the individual will comply with the national will without any force.

From this point of the text, I will illustrate how this is done through technologies of emotions in a specific ESE practice: teaching for action competence. This pedagogical model was developed in the 1990s by a Danish research group in environmental and health education. The project was called the MUVIN program and became influential for ESE teaching, not at least in Denmark and Sweden. Teaching for action competence was developed as the answer to what the MUVIN group conceptualized as “manipulative environmental education” (Breiting et al., 2009: 16) – which is the same as the normative, outspoken, state-promoted ways of living an environmentally friendly life. The distinction of “modifying” students’ behavior is a recurring theme in the texts from the same research group (e.g., Jensen & Schnack, 2006). On the contrary, the aim of teaching for action competence was (and still is) to develop students’ skills for handling environmental issues and to prepare them for an uncertain future with new problems demanding new solutions (Breiting et al., 2009, p. 56). Action competence is explicitly said to involve the student’s “entire personality, including many of the mental performances and dispositions” (ibid, p 50). The target is not the environment in itself, but rather, the
individual and his/her interior mind and in the prolonging; the individual’s “free will” to act. Notably, this way of teaching became popular in the Nordic countries at the same time as they went through a political shift from a strong welfare state to a neoliberal politics. I won’t elaborate here on state politics, but it is clear that also ESE went through an individualistic, neoliberal turn at this historical moment. New norms became inscribed into the environmentally friendly student.

In an often-used definition of teaching for action competence (Mogensen, 1995), different kinds of goals are stated. Besides more “classical” educational goals such as “knowing about the issue”, “knowing how to do”, “searching for normative argument” and “being aware of arguments communal potential” – there are “personally related goals” to fulfill. These are “Have the courage and feel responsible for action” and “have preparedness and inclination to act”. These goals emphasize that students not only need to develop knowledge about an issue – like climate change – but also develop a feeling of being responsible, brave and prepared to act. The “free will” is governed by the technologies of responsibilization and activation. It operates through a plea for rescuing the world, but also through connecting the action to emotions of willingness, hope, happiness, and empowerment. As Rose and Miller also describe (2008, 2010), and as mentioned above, activation and responsibilization of the citizen is done through technologies of emotion attaching the political to individual desires of happiness. The cosmopolitan, action-competent child is the happy and empowered child, willing and able to contribute to the common good and a better future at the same time as s/he feels good (Ideland, 2016). Other ways of feeling are attached to the figure of the affect alien, and abject those who don’t belong to the flock.

The elevation of personality-related goals makes the idea of teaching for action competence interesting to study in order to understand how emotions are socially organized by, but also organizing, an educational practice. In the upcoming sections, I problematize how these standards shape and fashion the desirable action-competent citizen and the affect alien. This is done by focusing on how feelings of willingness and happiness are made up as crucial for sustainability in texts promoting “teaching for action competence.” How does the common will – the destiny of the environment – become entangled with individual wills? How is the happy mood of students during doing responsible things assembled with environmental effects? How are negative feelings displaced in and through the educational discourse? And what are the consequences in terms of bonding communities and constructing Others – affect aliens?

**Teaching willingness and the willful affect alien**

At the core of teaching action competence is the aim to foster “action-minded citizens” (Breiting et al., 2009). Important in the pedagogical model is that students should feel responsible and encouraged to take action (Mogensen, 1995). What we can see in these questions is a way of thinking about how to make the willing child
who is prepared to join the community that works for sustainability – not because s/he is told to do so, but because s/he wants to (c.f. Ideland, 2016). Through what Ahmed calls “archives of willfulness” such as fairy tales, folklore, fiction, curricula, and moral philosophies, the willful child has throughout history been fabricated as the affect alien – the frightening example of what happens to children not willing to adapt to the institutional, common will. In these – often scary – stories the Other simultaneously operate as a warning of a problematic behavior and as a confirmation of the norm. Ahmed (2012) takes an example of willfulness from Grimm’s fairy tale, “The Willful Child”. This is a story of a child so stubborn that neither her mother, God, nor any doctor could help her, so she got sick and died. However, even after her death, she practiced her own will by repeatedly raising her arm from the grave – until her mother hit it with a rod, and eventually the girl’s will was tamed. The problem was thus not the violent mother, but the willful child. Truly, this story is from a time long before discourses of empowered and action-competent children (Ideland, 2016). But today, similar (maybe more political correct) narratives can be found in movies and other types of fiction. In general, it is quite easy to see that fictional stereotypes for the willful subject, unwilling to adapt to the group, are often the same person who gets into trouble – or even gets killed. The affect alien in the shape of a selfish, greedy, or simply lazy person, with no interest in the common good is a risky person for society as well as for him/her-self. More specifically, in movies with an environmental theme, the unwilling person is a recurring character – and the one that needs to change for the salvation of the flock – today and in the next life (the future). In the movie Tomorrowland (2015), environmental crises can be solved only if mankind really wants to solve them and believe that it is possible, but there are stubborn, willful persons (mostly adults) who are not willing to follow and thus become – quite literally – threats to the world.

The horrible stories of what happens to the willful person, like in the Grimm’s fairy tale or Hollywood movies, might not be appropriate in the educational discourse of today. A less scary archive willfulness could be research about the dispositions of the successful and unsuccessful students in ESE: the promising citizen respectively the student at risk. These articles speak with the voice of expertise, translating cultural theses into scientific truths (and vice versa) (Rose & Miller, 2010). One obvious example of the targeting of the interior of the mind and the domestication of emotions is found in Swedish educational psychologist, Maria Ojala’s work. She has studied how the hope of a better future impacts the willingness of engagement in climate change and the degree of action competence (Ojala, 2015). One of the findings is that hope needs to be based on knowledge to function properly. Students who had hope about the world because they felt empowered to make a change through individual actions were – not surprisingly – also willing to engage. But students who felt hope because they denied climate change were, on the other hand, unwilling to change their habits. Some hope was not valued, but categorized as wrong. These willful students became affect aliens because they felt the right thing, but for the wrong reasons became positioned on the outside of the community and thus also objects of inclusion.
The story of willfulness is also reflected in success stories of willingness. The willful child is made up as the opposite of the willing child – the action-minded citizen, prepared to contribute to the work for a sustainable future by doing small things and feeling empowered and engaged. Above quotes from the publications of the MUVIN group emphasized the importance that students develop willingness, courage and responsibility to act. However, the activation and responsibilization of the willing ESE student can come in many shapes. Another example is a website where you can make “climate promises” (perhaps one of the new words connected to climate anxiety). In a pastoral spirit, this website functions as a confessional where one can perform willingness to change. Examples of promises that are possible to make are to bring your own tote bag to shops, pick your own mushrooms, arrange videoconferences, eat fewer empty calories and fly directly to your destination without changing flights. While making these promises – to yourself and to the world – the website shows how much carbon dioxide every action saves and how many people had made the same promise (www.minplanet.se). The sacrifice is quantified, and it becomes obvious that you are a part of a willing flock, a part of the societal body.

Environmental action and the happy child
Like a confession to God, the confession to the archives of willingness can be seen as a kind of salvation and protection from guilt. Guilt serves an important technology in the ESE discourse. It is constantly present through the individualization of environmental problems. For instance, due to the introductory quote the war on pollution must be accomplished by small gestures from us all. We can’t lay it in the hands of the ones in power. Personal guilt is knitted together with global threats and detailed individual activities are described as possibilities of rescuing the flock and the planet (Ideland & Malmberg, 2015; Lazzarato, 2010). But at the same time guilt works as a governing technology in the process of schooling. It is articulated as a feeling to avoid in the fostering of action-competent children, especially when it comes to the child that is seen as not yet contaminated by the adult world’s cynicism and capitalism. The child is seen as a “pure soul”, shapeable, as well as closely connected to the nature that s/he should protect (e.g. Ärlemalm-Hagsér, 2013). This pure soul must be protected from guilt. Ahmed (2014b) elaborate on how bad feelings of guilt can be displaced through archives of happiness. Success stories which operate as “up-lifting,” as displacements of guilt and despair are “allowing us to leave bad feeling behind, enables us to embrace a common good” (p. 11).

In the ESE discourse, this protection from, and displacement of, bad feelings such as guilt and even shame is shaped through collective action in a community. The individual will has to – as mentioned earlier – align with the will of the community. Thus, willfulness must be tamed in order to make the body whole (Ahmed, 2012). Participating in democratic, collective practices in education becomes a way to meet the standards for a responsible person, and in that way, cleanse the individual soul (Popkewitz, 2008; Tröhler, 2012). But it cannot be done by violence or force, but
rather, through the promise of happiness. It should feel good to do good, and if it feels good, it must be good. That is a mantra in a time of positive thinking. Breiting et al. (2009, p. 33), for instance, state that apathy and despondency combat the “ultimate goal of environmental education,” namely to “let students grow into action-minded citizens, capable of seeing beyond their own noses, and with the perception that they can have influence.” The engagement and action are attached to other emotions than despondency and its relatives: anxiety and despair. In a similar way, Ojala (2007, 2013, 2015) promotes ways of handling negative feelings, e.g. through a language of possibility in ESE – for example manifested in talking about historical progress rather than environmental degradation. If not coped with properly, negative emotions can stand in the way of what is seen as a necessary hope for the future and for environmental actions. The feelings need to be “optimized” and lead to “well-being”. Only the affect alien feels the wrong thing in the right situation. Within the research literature on ESE, it is possible to see the assemblage of rationality and emotionality. There exists a strong belief in the possibility to educate emotionally reasonable citizens who feel the right thing for the right reasons.

Back to my mailbox and the never-ending flow of inspirational mails about how to address environmental problems. Another newsletter directed at teachers serves as a further example of how the language of possibility operates in the ESE discourse. This time, it is from the environmental organization, WWF:

The world is too small! Today, the 13th of August, is Overshoot Day. From today, we will begin to consume the assets for next year. Keep your eyes open and help the students to understand.
Work interdisciplinary. WWF Education does what it can to support so more people understand and face up to the challenges.
Welcome back to school, important teachers!

The newsletter also offers ways to “face up to the challenges” in regard to humanity’s debt to the world. One suggestion is to let the school class participate in what is called Kartongmatchen (carton match); who can recycle the most packaging for milk, juice, and other drinks. An image of happy children “hunting” cartons accompanies the instruction for the carton match. The children do not look climate anxious at all, even though we reached Overshoot Day two months earlier than just a decade ago. At that historical point humankind (as a whole) became indebted as late as in mid-October and in 1970, the population of the world did not become indebted until December 23. One could imagine that this frightening development could open up for negative emotions – but that doesn’t go for the kids collecting cartoons.

The picture of happy, active children is common in the Swedish ESE discourse, where happiness and environmental action are assembled. This happy child can be compared to the child that the American historian Finis Dunaway (2015) describes in his book exploring the images used in the environmental movement – vulnerable children subjected to environmental threats. In contrast to these objects of fear, the Swedish
child in the educational discourse is made up as the active subject – the joyful, empowered child that is going to solve environmental problems rather than suffer from them. The modern Swedish child feels competent and does things, even if the actions often are symbolic rather than impacting the environment. These actions could be everything from making collages of recycled trash to collecting cartons or writing letters to powerful people. The action, in itself, becomes a boundary marker for the problem-solving child as long as it is done in a positive way. As well as the success stories about willing people, the actions in themselves are supposed to be “up-lifting”. The actions contribute to the displacement of the negative feelings that arise when subjected to looming environmental catastrophes.

Stories and pictures of happy children, as well as articles about how to successfully optimize emotions, are archives of happiness, according to Sara Ahmed. However, the problem for Ahmed is what she conceptualizes as a “happiness duty” to be positive instead of dwelling on negative experiences of racism and power relations. Happiness thus becomes a boundary marker delineating those who deal with societal problems in a reasonable way and those who deal with them in the wrong way – by being angry, furious, and protesting loudly. Emotions make up the boundary between the reasonable and the unreasonable subjectivities through defining the killjoys (Ahmed, 2014a). Killjoys are those who do not conform to the happy language of hope and possibilities. Instead, they disturb the order by their very presence and by their behavior. However, killjoys don’t inhabit the Swedish educational discourse on sustainability, environment, and action competence. We can find many examples of how children challenge the adult (environmentally cynical) world, but not by being troublesome or angry. Instead, the outspoken affect alien in the happiness discourse is the one in despair who is not able to engage. These Others who are described as lacking agency are, in the Swedish discourse, almost always positioned somewhere else, for example, in the southern and eastern parts of the world (from a European point of view). Stories about these un-empowered, non-modern people, always made up as objects of help, can be seen as archives of sadness. Through recurring stories of poverty, environmental catastrophes, and non-functioning governments in places somewhere else, the subjectivity of the empowered child in the North/West becomes even stronger. These stories are embedded in a traditional, postcolonial understanding of the world – in which emotions always have been a boundary marker for social categorizations. The reasonable, empowered white western man is constructed through making the Other, e.g. the woman or the “savage,” as the one with uncontrolled, unproductive feelings (McClintock, 1995). Like being in despair.

The archive of sadness is one more technology of emotions, making up a certain kind of citizen as someone whose positive attitude is entangled to an environmentally friendly way of living (which one definitely can question concerning the Swedish children). Other feelings, such as anxiety and “unwell-being,” which make sense in relation to the environmental discourse, are thus projected onto the affect alien. Emotions make up the borders for the saviors and those needing to be saved in a
double gesture of inclusion and exclusion: the competent, active problem-solver versus the passive (in the sense of unable as well as unwilling) problem to be solved. The focus on emotions in the work for a more sustainable and just world thus risks contributing to the establishment of an unjust social order rather than a common future for all.

A system of emotions and the unwanted killjoy
The happy and willing child is made up as the one that can be trusted to save the world. Citizenship is a technology of will, and the common work carries a promise of happiness. In ESE, the making of the desirable citizen is embedded in a certain system of feelings, closely connected to a cosmopolitan system of reason, making up what counts as reasonable responses to serious problems. Embedded in the cosmopolitan cultural thesis is the idea that human reason and rationality change people and the world for the better, and that the future can be planned by ordering the present (Papkeiwitz, 2008). The cosmopolitan child is the empowered, problem-solving, free and reasonable child, but this also means that other ways of being are excluded. Angry, anxious, sad, and willful subjectivities become, through a double gesture, made up as affect aliens – those who not only feel bad, but also are seen as unable to contribute to the common good – to the salvation of the flock. In the category of an empowered population, there seems to be no room for angry, political activists who bring up uncomfortable issues such as challenging capitalism and the structural injustices that cause environmental degradation, as well as unsustainable social orders. This must be done in a nice way, mainly through responsible individual actions and with a smile on the lips—Don’t be a killjoy! You are threatening the world! Your will does not align with the common will.

This means that development of action-competence is not so much about what you do, but who you are and how you feel. Some actions are elevated and valued because of a person’s mood and intention. Other actions (or perhaps even inaction without intent, such as not being able to consume or travel) performed for the wrong reasons or in the wrong spirit are excluded from the ESE discourse and so is the child to whom these qualities are stuck. As discussed above, emotions glue communities together, at the same time as they construct the affect alien – the one with the “wrong” feelings who is disturbing and confirming the community at the same time. The cosmopolitan community can only host those who are recognizable as normal and rational. This renders it necessary for those with other understandings of happiness, schooling, and environmentalism, to give up their own attachments to become a part of the community. They need to be responsible and active parts of the community that is fighting for the world’s destiny. The problem is that inside the good intention to foster environmentally friendly citizens, some bodies and minds become containers of fear for the world. Thus, to be included in the category of ‘reasonable people’, they must change - their behavior as well as their emotional experiences. Otherwise, they cannot carry the promise of a happy future.
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References


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1 Svenska Kunskapsförlaget (The Swedish Knowledge Publisher) describes itself as "an independent and apolitical company founded in 1993." They freely distribute the well-used *The Nature and Environment Book* to schools throughout Sweden with help from business partners. (http://kunskapsförlaget.se). The translation of the letter is mine.

2 This chapter is an outcome of the project, *The eco-certified child: Fabrications of subjectivities in education for sustainable development*. During the work with that project, many types of texts inside the Swedish field of ESE have been analyzed: research articles promoting specific kinds of teaching approaches, policy material such as national curricula and global educational policy texts, textbooks, and other
teaching material and websites for organizations and companies working within ESE. In addition, in order to understand the cultural phenomena of ESE, I have been studying material not specifically made for education, but which turns to children and youngsters: movies, books, TV programs, games, etc. These have all been analyzed as a “system of reason” (Popkewitz, 2008), in which certain ways of thinking, talking, and acting are considered reasonable and true and thus condition possible subjectivities. The challenge has been to unveil the taken-for-granted reasoning and the subjectivities fabricated inside the system.

iii For further description and analysis of the MUVIN-project – see Ideland, 2016.
iv The translation of the letter is mine.