Embodiment, social praxis and environmental education: some thoughts

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The body has been neglected and devalued in Western philosophy. This neglect and devaluation of the body is rooted in dualistic reasoning that has its origin in Greek philosophical thought, and reinforced by philosophers of science during the scientific revolution of 17th century Europe. Dualistic reasoning is in part the cause of current global environmental crises. Moreover, it underpins different approaches to environmental education. In this article I explore the nexus of embodiment and social praxis generally and more specifically in relation to the construct of race. Difference (including race difference) has been given scant attention in environmental education literature in South Africa and I attempt in this article to give it some attention so as to move it into the spaces of our dialogues and conversations.

Introduction

In recent times there has been a renewed interest in the body in disciplines such as philosophy and sociology. Much of this work focuses on Western scholarship’s neglect and devaluation of the body and the consequences of such neglect and devaluation. Weiss and Haber (1999, p. xiii) point out that part of critiquing Western philosophy’s neglect of the body has been the troubling of the very expression, ‘the body’, and that its usage is increasingly being supplanted by the term, ‘embodiment’. Such a shift in expression corresponds to a shift from ‘viewing the body as a non-gendered, pre-discursive phenomenon that plays a central role in perception, cognition, action, and nature to a way of living or inhabiting the world through one’s acculturated body’ (Weiss & Haber, 1999, p. xiv).

There is also an emerging interest in embodiment evident in published literature on environmental education (see, for example, Payne, 1997; Bonnett, 2003). Payne (1997) argues that conventional approaches, notably the applied science, interpretive and critical perspectives, have not solved the problem of a theory–practice gap in
environmental education. In response to the perceived theory–practice gap he explores one component of what he refers to as a critical ecological ontology: how the body ‘might be used as a localized “site” for understanding, explaining and acting on “embodied” environmental problems, issues or matters’ (Payne, 1997, p. 134). The phenomenologically-based inquiry that he employs shifts the focus to the individual’s own responsibility and accountability for environmental problems and issues rather than the individual being involved in solving problems that are not of their own making. Payne’s (1997) empirical investigation involved students selecting an action-forming part of their daily routines and examining how the embodiment of that action over time and space impacts on nature. Some of the actions selected by students included: eating chocolate, using cling wrap for lunches, and wearing jewellery. Payne (1997, p. 149) reports that for the majority of students, ‘being-for-the-environment’ emerged as a heightened critical consciousness but only some showed evidence that a critical praxis had developed. In other words, students understood how their actions were part of the ecological crisis, but for many the comfort of a certain lifestyle or the paralyzing effect of the enormity of the global ecological crisis were constraints to critical praxis. Notwithstanding the constraints to critical praxis, Payne’s work makes an important contribution by opening up an alternative approach to more conventional approaches, so as to overcome the theory–practice gap in environmental education. However, his notion of critical praxis focuses on how individuals’ actions affect ‘nature’, and not on how interactions between human bodies enable or constrain critical praxis in relation to environment. My interest in this paper is to take the discussion beyond individual praxis to social praxis and its relation(s) to embodiment.

My discussion of embodiment here has four main components. First I explore the relationship between embodiment and social praxis. Second, I examine the relevance of the term embodiment to environmental education. Third, I discuss embodiment vis-à-vis race and its neglect in environmental education discourses in southern Africa. Fourth, I discuss embodied experiences in an environmental education project in which I participated in the late 1990s.

**Embodiment and social praxis**

The mind–body distinction is closely related to the theory–practice dichotomy. Theory (as traditionally used in the human and social sciences) is regarded largely as a product of mind activity, that is, concerned with the realm of ideas; whereas practice is concerned with the human body’s exercise of ideas—the putting into ‘practice’ of ideas. Perspectives on embodiment undermine both the mind–body and theory–practice dualisms. The work of Merleau-Ponty (1962), Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1999) and Johnson (1999) demonstrates that thinking cannot occur without the human–body structure—all thinking (theorizing) is embodied. Also, human bodies are not passively located in the world, but rather are productive bodies that are able to change social scenarios/conditions through ‘thought in action’. Perspectives on embodiment are therefore closely linked to the term ‘social praxis’ which also supplants the theory–practice dualism.
Praxis is different from the everyday notion of ‘practice’. Carr (1995, p. 68) neatly captures Aristotle’s distinction between praxis and poiesis:

Poiesis is a kind of making or instrumental action. It has an end in view or an object in mind prior to any action. It is activity that brings about specific products, and it requires a kind of technical know-how or expertise (techne’). Praxis is also directed at a specific end but its aim is not to produce an object but to realise some morally worthwhile good.

In other words, with praxis, the end in view can only be realised through action and can only exist in the action itself. Also, Schwandt (1997, p. 124) points out that the ends of praxis are not fixed but are constantly revised as the goods internal to an activity are pursued. Praxis overcomes the binary opposition between \textit{theory and practice} so that theory becomes practical and practice becomes theoretical. However, it is not individual bodies that change the world (social conditions), but rather that conditions of life are changed when such bodies engage action in relations(hips) with others—social life is changed when bodies with different powers become infused. Because of the social relational dimension I use the term ‘social praxis’ instead of just ‘praxis’.

But, what does the discussion so far have to do with environmental education?

\textit{Embodiment and environmental education}

The cause(s) of what is referred to as an ‘environmental crisis’ remains an issue of debate. It is, however, fairly widely accepted that the global environmental crisis has its roots partly in dualistic thought. Cartesian duality creates a binary opposition between nature and culture, rendering nature inferior to culture. This separation of human consciousness from nature in Western tradition has made it possible for nature to be controlled, manipulated and exploited for human greed. A consequence of human exploitation of nature over many years is a global environmental crisis, a global manifestation of environmental problems that have reached unprecedented levels. Much has been written about the global environment crisis and I shall not elaborate on it here, but rather briefly discuss environmental education as a response to the environmental crisis. Importantly, the human–nature dualism not only offers an explanation for human exploitation of non-human nature, but dualistic thought has also influenced different approaches to environmental education.

Three broad approaches to environmental education, education \textit{about}, \textit{in/through} and \textit{for} the environment, have been widely accepted since Lucas first coined this tripartite classification in his 1972 doctoral thesis. Education \textit{about} the environment emphasises knowledge about natural systems and processes. Education \textit{in/through} the environment emphasises learners’ experience in the environment as a means of developing learner competencies and values clarification capacities. According to Fien (1993) education \textit{for} the environment has an overtly critical agenda of values education, social change and transformation through action-based exploration and involvement in resolving environmental problems. Education \textit{for} the environment has served as the basis for more recent discourses that have developed within
environmental education such as education for sustainable development (ESD), education for a sustainable future (ESF) and education for sustainability (EFS) (see Sauvè, 1999).

The three approaches to education—about, in and for—have often been associated with ideological positions: neo-classical/vocational, liberal progressive and socially critical theory, respectively (Fien, 1993). The neo-classical/vocational orientation sees education as preparation for work. According to Fien (1993, p. 19) it is an education that uncritically accepts existing social structures and hierarchies, and may thus perpetuate elitism, injustice, class and gender inequalities, and privileges economic growth at the expense of environmental degradation. The liberal progressive orientation sees education as preparation for life, and values individual excellence and achievement. The socially critical orientation to education contends that education should not merely prepare learners for the world of work, but that education should engage society and social structures directly. A socially critical education develops constructively critical thinking, not just in individuals but also in group processes (Kemmis et al., 1983, p. 9).

The three approaches that I have discussed are not the only approaches to environmental education that have been described, and, importantly, each has been critiqued over the years. These three approaches have, however, been documented fairly widely and have been taken up in South African environmental practices and discourses, and I have therefore decided to use them as a basis for my discussion of environmental education, embodiment and social praxis. Education about the environment (as well as similar approaches with other names) reinforces dualistic thinking, including the mind–body distinction. Firstly, its emphasis on learning about natural systems and processes is based on assumptions that human beings/systems are separate from non-human nature and that humans are not involved in the way(s) in which nature is constructed. Also, learning about natural systems with this approach mainly becomes a mind activity made possible through didactic methods of teaching and textbooks that serve as sources of authority. The assumption in this regard is that if the mind is ‘fed’ with sufficient information about natural systems, the body will follow later with the ‘right’ actions to protect natural environments—‘mind knowledge’ will lead to ‘right bodily actions’. Education about the environment embraces to a large degree behaviourist approaches to learning.

Education in the environment is concerned with learners (human bodies) interacting with non-human nature so as to engender in them an appreciation of their oneness with it. Learners come to know in ‘natural’ environments through self-discovery and self-clarification of values. Teachers provide learners with support and put in place conditions that enable learning. Philosophies informing this approach include deep ecology and gaianism. This approach leans on constructivist learning theories, focusing on how individuals construct knowledge in their minds. Although the mind–body distinction is still evident, in this approach mind–body connections are more evident (than with education about), since learning takes place through sensory experiences of the body. Bonnett (2003, p. 651) points out that in our bodily intercourse with the world/nature, we engage with nature less with an ordering cognition and more through a responsive sensing. He quotes John Pass-
more’s words: ‘Only if men [sic] can first learn to look sensually at the world will they come to care for it. Not only look at it, but to touch it, smell it, taste it’ (Passmore, 1980, p. 189). The potential for praxis here is individual not social.

Of the three approaches described, socially critical education for the environment might best exemplify social praxis and embodiment. This approach to education engages environmental issues through/in action. It disrupts the theory–practice and mind–body binaries, since thinking and doing become one activity. Teachers and school learners (and other community members) engage with local environmental problems by actively and collaboratively investigating them in attempts to understand and solve them. Central to this approach is the interaction between bodies, that is, the establishment of social relations in efforts to change socio-ecological conditions. Corporeal presence is an essential element of social action aimed at addressing environmental problems. I go along with Payne (1997) that socially critical education for the environment may engage students in problems that are not of their own making. However, socially critical education for the environment does not negate the possibility of addressing environmental problems of students’ own making. Environmental problems produced in local environments may be the making of students and others who inhabit such local settings. Furthermore, the social/collective action embodied in the socially critical approach may overcome the disempowerment/paralysis individuals experience when confronted by the enormity of the global socio-ecological crisis (see my earlier discussion of the experiences of subjects in Payne’s research). My concern is this article, however, is with interactions between human bodies in processes aimed at improving environmental conditions.

Socially critical education for the environment has been taken up in several South African studies (see, for example, Lotz, 1996; Louw, 1996; Wagiet, 1996; De Lange, 1997; Swarts, 2002). However, these studies and southern African environmental discourses more generally pay scant attention to embodiment, that is, to what it means to inhabit the world through one’s acculturated body. I now turn to as discussion on embodiment and race, which is the interest that I pursue further in this article.

Embodiment vis-à-vis race

There are few references to race in the literature on environmental education in South Africa. The paucity of references to race in recent literature is surprising given South Africa’s history of institutionalized racial division under apartheid. Interestingly, it was an Australian academic who worked on environment projects in South Africa in the late 1990s who first pointed out the scant attention given to difference in literature on environmental education in South Africa. Gough (1999, p. 45) writes, ‘When I look through the recent and current literature on environmental education in South Africa I find few direct or indirect references to difference—to ways in which gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and even language constitutes curriculum, learning and teaching.’ All of the constructs that Gough mentions are important, but in this article I give particular attention to the construct ‘race’.
By way of one example, I illustrate how race has been ignored in environmental education research in South Africa. South Africa formed part of an international comparative study on how formative life experiences influence the development of environmental educators’ knowledge and concern for the environment (see Palmer et al., 1998). The mega-study and the research conducted in South Africa (as part of the broader study) excludes race as a variable that might significantly influence individuals’ knowledge of the environment and their development as environmental educators (see Palmer et al., 1998). In South Africa, as a consequence of apartheid policies, children’s exposure (or lack thereof) to environments was profoundly influenced by the race category imposed on them. An excerpt from a biographical account of mine might be illuminating:

My experience has been different from the stereotypical and reductionist views produced by Significant Life Experiences (SLE) researchers. I am not involved with/in environmental education as a result of significant childhood experiences in ‘outdoors and more or less natural’ environments (Tanner, 1998, p. 366). I have lived in an urban environment all my life. With the exception of a three-week school vacation in a rural area and the few drives our family took into the ‘country’ during my childhood, I spent very little time in ‘natural’ environments. Further, as a black South African, for most of my life I was denied access to many pristine environments; beaches were segregated, and many nature reserves and hiking trails were reserved for those who were classified ‘white’ under apartheid. I grew up associating natural environments and conservation issues with the world of ‘white’ South Africans. I certainly did not regard South Africa’s beautiful natural environment and its resources as the heritage of all South Africans. I cannot recall ever going on a fieldtrip during my schooling (with the exception of the compulsory visit to the Castle and the South African Museum, a propaganda exercise arranged by the education department) (Le Grange, 2001, p. 5).

But, what is meant by race difference? In answering this question I find Gutmann’s (1997, p. 163) distinction between ‘race consciousness’ and ‘contingent color consciousness’ useful. For her, race consciousness presumes the existence of separate human races and identifies race with essential natural differences between people that are morally pertinent. In other words, phenotypical (the body’s outward appearances) differences such as skin colour and facial features are accorded moral significance. For Gutmann (1997, p. 163) contingent colour consciousness (or just colour consciousness for short), on the other hand, rejects race as an essential, natural division among human beings and also rejects the idea that there are morally relevant differences that correspond to these racial divisions. Colour consciousness concerns an awareness of the ways in which individuals have historically become identified by phenotypical differences that serve as the bases for discrimination and injustices associated with race. Gutmann (1997, p. 164) writes: ‘Were we to lack color consciousness of this contingent kind, we would be blind to a basic source of social injustice.’ I agree with Gutmann that colour consciousness is a morally relevant awareness and suggest that Gough’s (1999, p. 45) reference to race difference corresponds to Gutmann’s notion of contingent colour consciousness rather than race consciousness.

The discussion on race links to embodiment in the sense that mind–body connections are evident in notions such as colour consciousness—consciousness (a
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Mind process (of a person's mind) is closely associated with how bodily manifestations such as skin colour have become historically constructed so as to give them moral significance. I will now use the idea of colour consciousness to reinterpret an example of pedagogical work that I performed with pre-service teachers at Stellenbosch University, South Africa in the late 1990s.

**Pedagogical work at Stellenbosch University**

One of the courses I teach at Stellenbosch University is a general science methods module for pre-service teachers. In 1998 I decided to integrate environmental concerns into the methods module for two reasons: South African government policy (post 1994) mandated that environmental education should form part of all education programmes; and my own interest in promoting environmental education. Environmental concerns were integrated into the course content by using sustainability as a central theme. Over a period of six months the pre-service teachers engaged in several activities centred on sustainability that included group projects, developing learning programmes, and so on. Each student recorded reflections on their own learning in personal journals. My interest was to find out to what extent student reflections provided evidence of what Payne (1997) terms: ‘being-for-the-environment’. As in the research reported by Payne (1997) the majority of students taking the module experienced a heightened critical consciousness in relation to self and environment, but there was little evidence of critical praxis (i.e. students engaging in actions for the environment). One student does write about actions she took such as re-using water, conserving electricity and so on. She writes:

> I started switching off lights, kept dishwater for washing cups later and so on. However, I still need to consider recycling and renewable resource use, e.g., what do you buy, a plastic container or one made with recyclable paper? (Student Journal Entry, 1998).

However, what I wish to focus on here is how the idiosyncratic nature of a particular pedagogical context presented constraints to ‘being-for-the-environment’.

**Pedagogical context.** Stellenbosch University is located in the centre of South Africa’s oldest town Stellenbosch. Traditionally it has been an Afrikaner university, but its monocultural identity has been challenged by imperatives for change in post-apartheid South Africa. As in most modernist institutions many of the lecture venues in the faculty are characterized by an arrangement of desks with a podium and chalkboard in the front of the room that reflects traditional hierarchical power relations. Such arrangements reinforce the role of the lecturer as the authority and information dispenser separated from passive learners (Slattery, 1995). In South African education generally and in Afrikaner institutions more particularly this arrangement has been reinforced by the ideology of Christian National Education and the philosophy of Fundamental Pedagogics (Ashley, 1989; Le Grange, 1999). To legitimize the ideologies of Christian National Education in South Africa, the educational ‘science’ of Fundamental Pedagogics was used (Rhodes University, 1998). The apartheid government used Fundamental Pedagogics to rationalize
structures and characteristics of educational processes in which passive learners were schooled to adulthood by teachers serving as authority figures and role models (Ashley, 1989).

**Biography.** When I was appointed to a full-time academic position in 1999 I was one of two Blacks to be appointed for the first time since the establishment of the Faculty of Education in 1918. As a black South African my social and political history was different from that of the majority of students I was teaching at Stellenbosch University. My formal school and university studies were disrupted by student political activities such as public demonstrations, lecture boycotts and mass meetings. As a schoolteacher I was involved in professional teacher networks aimed at transforming classroom pedagogy so as to subvert state pedagogy. I became in Gutmann’s (1997, p. 63) terms increasingly ‘color conscious’. My pedagogical disposition had also become critical. Socially critical education for the environment had great appeal.

My interactions (as a black South African) with students at a historically white Afrikaner institution gave rise to particular instances in my practice. For example, students shared that a striking feature of their classroom experiences (mentioned more times than anything else by students) was the informal classroom atmosphere, which encouraged debate, freedom of expression and opportunities for relationships to grow. Earlier on in the programme this seemed to have had a more profound effect on students than learning about the concept of sustainability. Students could not divorce the course content from a pedagogical milieu characterized by openness, freedom, sharing, acceptance and the close working relationships between lecturer and students. I am of course not suggesting that such classroom atmospheres only exist when black lecturers are present. Rather, I wish to point out how in this particular case more democratic classroom practices were enabled when a black lecturer with a different biography and history interacted with white students who might have been socialized in classroom milieus characterized by largely undemocratic and authoritarian practices. Some students found the classroom experiences novel and refreshing whereas others were initially uncomfortable with the informal situation. The pedagogical milieu was the main focus of the majority of the students’ reflections and only once they had worked through issues linked to it could they focus on environmental concerns. The pedagogical milieu was an important stimulus for student’s personal growth but in a sense retarded their progress towards ‘being-for-the-environment’, particularly when viewed in the light of time constraints—the module only had one contact session per week between lecturer and students. Viewed differently, the case demonstrates that ‘being-for-the-environment’ cannot be separated from qualitative dimensions such as social need, emotions, beliefs, relations and political factors.

Another issue that appeared to impede students’ progress towards ‘being-for-the-environment’ was race. Only two students (in)directly made reference to race in their reflections and I briefly share their narratives.
**Story 1.** The concept of sustainability had been familiar to M. She first heard the term during her undergraduate studies when visiting sites where sustainable farming was practised. Encountering the concept from the perspective of a science teacher was, however, new to her. Although our interactions around science and sustainability contributed to her professional development her initial area of growth was personal. She relates her personal growth to her first encounter with ‘black teachers’ whom she learns to respect and view as role models. She writes in her journal:

I grew up in a rural area where non-whites were always protesting. The media often covered stories of how people were necklaced and murdered. Although a very dear black woman Thombi reared me, I saw her differently to others. When I think back I was scared, I was scared that black people (I dreamt it as well) would attack our house at night and kill us. I must make it clear that I was not reared to be a conservative AWB\(^1\) supporter. In contrast I never heard my parents say anything discriminatory of non-white people. Yet there were no black or coloured people with me at school, not on the school playground or park, not in the church and not even in shops or on beaches. From a child’s point of view I will say it is indeed strange. To shorten a long story. It was at university that I first really made contact with coloured and black people. Although this was a positive experience, it was superficial because conversations were superficial. Students are often superficial—I think it is our escape because the university as institution is so SERIOUS, FORMAL and RIGID. However, what I want to come to is that you Lesley and Chris opened my eyes. I don’t know how to say it better, but at this stage it has been of greater value than what I have been academically enriched. To have respect and admiration for your knowledge and skills. By the way, also the best human relation skills of any lecturer ever, are for me something great and wonderful. That’s how I want to be—open-minded and critical (translated from Afrikaans).

Story 1 can be read in different ways. The sceptical reader may interpret the narrative as the student flattering the ego of her lecturers. Read in abstract the latter reading may be plausible. However, in the South African context another reading might be more plausible. The white student had, like many white South Africans, been isolated from black persons (bodies) for most of her childhood and young adult life, as a consequence of apartheid policies. Her only close contact with a black person was the maid (for others it might have been a gardener, petrol attendant, and so on) in her home. Outside of her relationship with the maid, she constructed negative images of blacks through the South African mass media as barbaric, murderous and uneducated. Her first encounter with black lecturers whom she describes as knowledgeable, skilful and with excellent human relation skills (‘the best human relation skills of any lecturer ever’) comes to her as a ‘culture shock’—blacks, according to her earlier construction, are not supposed to be knowledgeable and have good human relation skills. I share the student’s narrative not as an exercise in self-aggrandisement but to look at what we can learn from it about race in environmental education processes, particularly in view of the silences on race in environmental education discourses. The student had to come to terms with her first encounter with Black lecturers, reflect deeply on this encounter before she could take action(s) towards ‘being-for-the-environment’.
Story 2. C was one of two Black students in the class. She related her encounters with fellow white students in the general science methods class:

Where I grew up I only had contact with Coloured and Black people. I went to school in Mitchell’s Plain [‘Coloured’ township] and experienced political unrest and police shooting teargas at us. When I came to Stellenbosch it was different and I became more aware of race. In the big lecture halls you sit with people of your colour. The general science method class was small and so I had more contact with students. They [white students] are actually just as I am. Although there are things that they take so for granted. It is just accepted that everyone is going overseas, everybody goes to university, everybody lives in a hostel—it is taken so for granted. It is as if it is just there. For me money is not always there. The [white] students in the class were very nice. I just sometimes wonder whether they are actually so nice or whether they are just trying to be nice.

In her narrative she describes her difficulty with ‘fitting in’ with other students at the university. She relates her struggle to ‘fit in’ to the fact that she is black and that the majority of students at the university are white. She notes that in the large lecture halls white students (bodies) sit together with other white students and black students sit together with blacks. Although everybody is free to sit wherever they wish, the tendency is for students to sit in segregated groupings based on race. In the general science method course she was challenged to work more closely with white students because the group was smaller and also because the contact sessions mainly involved cooperative group work activities. She experienced discomfort as she interacted with the white students and was not able to engage in their middle-class discourses about travelling overseas and so on. She is not only black, but also has a working class background with cognate discourses that would certainly not involve engaging in talks about travelling overseas, for example. Her story highlights the nexus between race and class that is also evident in the broader South African society.

The two narratives might indicate that there is a need for greater attention to be given to race in environmental education practices as bodies of different colours increasingly interact with one another in South Africa. Failure to recognize this may impede collective action towards ‘being-for-the-environment’.

Conclusion

Deconstructing environmental education discourses so as to highlight silences on issues of difference is important. However, issues of difference such as race should be brought into the spaces of our dialogues and conversations and probed more deeply in environmental education research in South Africa—we need heightened colour consciousness. Given the silence on race in environmental education literature in South Africa the brief narratives of students that I shared begin an important process and research agenda that needs to be pursued in South Africa. The students’ narratives suggest that working through issues of race should of necessity be made integral to environmental education processes in South Africa.

Education about the environment is a limited framework for integrating issues of
race into environmental education processes. Learning about something teaches the lesson of hypocrisy—that it is good to know about something without having to do anything about it. Education in the environment, which focuses on the individual body's interaction with non-human nature offers limited possibilities for focusing on difference. Focusing on individual differences based on race could lead to simplistic stereotyping. Socially critical education for the environment offers more viable possibilities for integrating issues of race into environmental education (research) processes. However, it needs to incorporate Payne's notion of a critical ecological ontology—the two are not mutually exclusive. Socially critical education for the environment does not per se engage issues that are 'out there' and can focus centrally on issues of individuals' or groups' own making. The social processes embodied in socially critical education for the environment provides the only possibility (of the three perspectives) for people of different races to work through issues of difference in ways that are integral to a process of 'being-for-the-environment', in post-apartheid South Africa.

I have explored in this article the nexus of embodiment and social praxis giving particular attention to the construct of race (or more appropriately colour). In Kappeler's (quoted in Lather, 1991, p. 30) words: 'I do not really wish to conclude and sum up, rounding off the argument so as to dump it in a nutshell on the reader. A lot more could be said about the topics that I have touched upon.' I have rather attempted to bring the issues of embodiment, social praxis and race into the spaces of our discourses on environmental education in southern Africa.

Acknowledgement

I thank the two reviewers for offering helpful suggestions on an earlier version of this article.

Notes

1. I use the term 'black' in the manner consistent with the Black Consciousness usage of the word, that is, as including Africans, Indians and Coloureds (Apartheid categorisations). 'Black' in this context developed as an oppositional discourse which both refused to accept the apartheid categorisations and indicated the common oppression of Africans, Indians and Coloureds. I did my schooling in the decade of the 1970s, a period in South African history when discourses of Black Consciousness were taken up by many students. Even though the apartheid categorisations are seemingly being accepted by many in post-apartheid South Africa I am unable to do so.
2. By Afrikaner I mean white and Afrikaans-speaking. Currently the University of Stellenbosch is still predominantly white and the medium of instruction at the university is mainly Afrikaans.
3. AWB is the acronym for Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (Resistance Movement), which is a right-wing Afrikaner movement in South Africa.
4. As Latour (1999, p. 12) explains: '… why burden this solitary mind with the impossible task of finding absolute certainty instead of plugging into the connections that would provide it with all the relative certainties it needed to know and act?'
5. I have placed the terms 'contextualise' and 'participatory methods' in scare quotes to indicate that I am not necessarily against contextualization or participatory methods—I am
merely critiquing a particular interpretation of these terms. For a discussion of an alternative interpretation of these terms, see Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2003).

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