

## TROUBLING 'FREEDOM': SILENCES IN POST-APARTHEID ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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The cultural history of South Africa in the transition from apartheid to democracy is a rich and complex story of the intricate inter-relations of education, (eco)politics, and social justice. As an Australian environmental education researcher working frequently in South Africa during 1998-99, I have welcomed the opportunity to explore these relationships in the light of South Africa's new 'freedom'. However, the freedom that has accompanied the constitutional abolition of apartheid implies a liberty beyond the world of legislative politics. South African educators have increasingly had the liberty to reject not only the determinisms of apartheid, but also to reject other social arrangements that supported its ideological machinery, such as patriarchy, sexism, ethnic nationalism, and class and language biases. Nevertheless, the literature of environmental education in South Africa remains for the most part silent on issues of race, class and gender. Thus, in this essay, I trouble the concept of 'freedom' in post-apartheid environmental education by asking: what are South African environmental educators using their newly found freedom for?

### WHAT TROUBLES A TRAVELLING TEXTWORKER?

During 1998 and 1999 I participated (with five other Australian academics) in an institutional links project funded by the Australian federal government to support environmental education in South African universities and colleges. I have specifically been involved in activities intended to enhance research capacity in environmental education, with particular reference to appropriate methodologies and supervision practices. Following Van Maanen's (1995:4) characterisation of different dimensions of qualitative inquiry as 'fieldwork, headwork, and textwork', I think of myself chiefly as a 'textworker'. Although I have explained elsewhere (Gough, 1998b) what 'textwork' means to me, I will briefly recapitulate some key aspects of my practice before focusing more specifically on some difficulties of being a travelling textworker. I believe I need to do this in order to demonstrate how and why the questions I am asking about the silences of post-apartheid environmental education are questions that arise for my practice as well as being questions that my South African colleagues might wish to address.

I call myself a textworker because I privilege narrative and textuality in the ways I represent and perform curriculum inquiry and environmental education research. Narrative theory invites us to think of all discourse as taking the form of a story and poststructuralist theorising suggests that all discourse takes the form of a text. My methodological (dis)position is to assume, as Stoicheff (1991:95) puts it, that "the world is a text that

is read, and our interpretation of our world is a function of our reading of texts".

I am thus interested in what we can learn by generating our own stories of educational experience, by thinking about educational problems and issues as stories and texts, and by subjecting all the stories and texts we encounter in our work to various forms of narrative and textual analysis, critique and deconstruction. As Derrida (1972:231) writes, deconstruction "has nothing to do with destruction" but, rather, involves "being alert to the implications, to the historical sedimentation of the language we use". Deconstruction is about exposing the structure of a discourse - showing how a discourse works and what it includes and excludes. I try to attend to gaps and silences in the stories I read and hear, and to identify what each story disregards, marginalises, suppresses and/or treats as unimportant.

A narrative perspective on inquiry draws attention to the embodied and socially embedded character of knowledge construction. Stories are fashioned by somebody, somewhere, and this has particular significance for my practice as a travelling textworker, because stories may be told and received differently when they are dislocated from the places in which their meanings are initially shaped. Until relatively recently in human history, the social activities through which distinctive forms of knowledge are produced have for the most part been localised. The knowledges generat-

ed by these activities have thus borne what Harding (1994:304) calls the idiosyncratic 'cultural fingerprints' of the times and places in which they were constructed. For example, the knowledge that the English word 'science' usually signifies was uniquely co-produced with industrial capitalism in seventeenth century northwestern Europe. The internationalisation of what we can now call 'modern Western science' was enabled by the colonisation of other places in which the conditions of its formation (including its symbiotic relationship with industrialisation) could be reproduced.

The global reach of the United States of America and European imperialism has given Western modes of knowledge production the appearance of universal truth and rationality, and they often are assumed to lack the cultural fingerprints that seem much more conspicuous in 'indigenous' knowledge systems that have retained their ties to specific localities. But, as Shiva (1993:10) writes, the universal/local dichotomy is misplaced when applied to Western and indigenous knowledge systems, "because the western is a local tradition which has been spread world wide through intellectual colonisation". One sign of intellectual colonisation is what Hawthorne (1999:121) calls the 'unmarked category'. For example, in the informational domains of the Internet, United States of America addresses are unmarked but every other country is identified by the final term: au for Australia, sg for Singapore, za for South Africa, and so on. Unmarked cultural categories, such as whiteness in most Western countries, are especially troublesome for those of us who reside within them because they designate power and privilege. In discussing 'blackness' and 'whiteness' in literary studies Morrison (1993:9-10) succinctly captures the dilemma we face:

To notice is to recognise an already discredited difference. To enforce its invisibility through silence is to allow the black body a shadowless participation in the dominant cultural body.

The invisibility of whiteness to those of us who are white is currently at the heart of a lively debate about the issue of racism in educational research within one of the scholarly communities to which I belong, namely the American Educational Research Association. Scheurich & Young (1997) invited debate on this issue in one of the Association's journals, *Educational Researcher*, and further contributions include responses by

Miller (1998) and Tyson (1998) and a rejoinder from Scheurich & Young (1998). Scheurich & Young (1997) outline four levels of racism: individual, institutional, societal, and civilisational. Racism in countries like the United States of America (and, by implication, Australia) is primarily seen as an individual phenomenon. That is, when my colleagues and I deny that we are racist we mean that we, as individuals, do not consciously have a negative judgment of another person based on their membership of a particular race. Scheurich & Young (1997:5) argue that "this individualised, conscious, moral or ethical commitment to antiracism is a significant and meaningful individual and historical accomplishment", but that it "restricts our understanding of racism to an individualised ethical arena" and is, therefore, "a barrier to a broader, more comprehensive understanding of racism". This will not, of course, be news to South Africans, all of whom have personally experienced in some way the effects of institutional and societal racism. In the United States of America and Australia, educational researchers have (and in some cases still do) use labels such as 'culturally deprived' or concepts such as 'at risk' or 'dysfunctional' to describe non-white students, reflecting an institutionalised racism through these entrenched (unmarked, invisible) organisational symbols and knowledges. On a broader social scale, entire societies may exhibit practices where one race is favoured or disadvantaged in relation to another, as in South Africa under apartheid. Societal racism persists in more subtle ways in countries like the United States of America and Australia, where the dominant culture's social and historical experiences (such as the white middle class view of 'success') are reproduced by the media, legal practices and government programmes, through a selective privileging of particular meanings of, say, a 'good leader' or a 'functional family'.

Scheurich & Young (1997:7-8) argue that civilisational racism exists at the deepest (and least conscious) level because privileged attitudes towards and beliefs about the nature of reality and the construction of knowledge are naturalised to the extent that they become everyday practical realities for the entire population, even though these attitudes and beliefs have been constructed historically by the dominant societal group. Said (1978) provides a compelling example of civilisational racism in his depiction of how 'the West' constructed and legitimated its ideas about 'the Orient' not only to Europeans but also to 'Orientals' themselves.

Epistemological racism arises at this fourth level when the social history of a particular group is privileged over others and their epistemic view of the world becomes dominant. Scheurich & Young (1997:8) argue that "all of the epistemologies currently legitimated in [Euro-American] education arise exclusively out of the social history of the dominant White race" and, thus, that this unduly restricts the range of possible epistemologies available to us, and makes non-dominant constructions of knowledge suspect, pathological, sensational, or simply illegitimate.

I find much of Scheurich & Young's argument very persuasive, although I also see several difficulties in taking up their position. For example, Donmoyer (1997:2) suggests that their view tends to 'essentialise the construct of race'. Mackwood (1999:1) raises some more awkward questions: 'How would one bring on a charge of epistemological racism? Under what circumstances? How can we claim to know epistemological racism when we read it?' Mackwood points out that while Scheurich & Young use Said's (1978) *Orientalism* as an example of reading epistemological racism, they do not address an important methodological question raised by his attempt to reveal how colonial European epistemology created 'the Orient' as an object for cultural appropriation and domination. In contrast to Scheurich & Young's (1997:10) call to "develop, and apply, 'new' race-based epistemologies", Said refuses to offer an alternative to Western representational practices, because this would mean accepting 'the Orient' as a 'real' object rather than as a fiction created to convince the West of its own supremacy. But, as Mackwood (1999:2) argues, the difficulty with Said's approach is "the methodological question of how he purports to separate himself from the dominant white racist epistemologies he claims [and Scheurich & Young claim] are so pervasive". In other words, is there anywhere 'outside' of epistemological racism that we can stand to examine it? These are troublesome questions for an anti-racist, anti-imperialist travelling textworker. My concern is not that I might 'import' racist epistemologies into South Africa (there is ample evidence that nations in periods of postcolonial transition need no outside assistance or encouragement in taking up the epistemologies of their former oppressors, sometimes with great enthusiasm) but, rather, that the methodologies and critical strategies that I use to deconstruct the false claims of 'universal' knowledges in the more familiar settings of my work may produce further distortions when

deployed in South Africa.

I have written elsewhere about the effects of globalisation and internationalisation on local knowledge production (see Gough, 1997; 1998a; 1999; in press) and it will suffice here to note that I follow Turnbull (1993; 1997) in adopting a position that understands all knowledge traditions as being spatial in that they link people, sites and skills. Turnbull's approach is to recognise that all knowledge systems (including Western science) are sets of local practices so that it becomes possible to 'decentre' them and develop a framework within which different knowledge traditions can equitably be compared rather than absorbed into an imperialist archive.

Through a number of detailed case studies, Turnbull (1997) demonstrates that such achievements as gothic cathedral building, Polynesian navigation, modern cartography, and modern (Western) science are, in each case, better understood performatively - as diverse combinations of social and technical practices - than as results of any internal epistemological features to which 'universal' validity can be ascribed. The purpose of Turnbull's emphasis on analysing knowledge systems comparatively in terms of spatiality and performance is to find ways in which diverse knowledge traditions can coexist rather than one displacing others. He argues that nourishing such diversity is dependent on the creation of 'a third space, an interstitial space' in which local knowledge traditions can be "reframed, decentred and the social organisation of trust can be negotiated". The production of such a space is, in Turnbull's (1997:560-1) view, 'crucially dependent' on "the reinclusion of the performative side of knowledge":

Knowledge, in so far as it is portrayed as essentially a form of representation, will tend towards universal homogenous information at the expense of local knowledge traditions. If knowledge is recognised as both representational and performative it will be possible to create a space in which knowledge traditions can be performed together.

Turnbull is suspicious of importing and exporting representations that are disconnected from the performative work that was needed to generate them, and I share his suspicions. For example, when I began working as a teacher educator in Australia in the early 1970's, much of the 'curriculum theory'

we taught at that time was imported from the United States of America. It included an emphasis on behavioural objectives for instruction and their classification by reference to Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. Many of my colleagues and students were mystified by the hyper-rationality of planning curriculum by reference to a register of behavioural objectives which, in retrospect, might be explained by our lack of a 'performative history' of objectives-based curriculum work. We had not experienced working with objectives as United States of America teachers had, first in the 1920's (in the wake of Bobbitt's work) and, later, in the 1950's (under the influence of the Tyler rationale). Nevertheless, many Australian teacher educators accepted the Tyler rationale, behavioural objectives, and Bloom's taxonomy as representations of a universal rationality. They persevered in 'performing' them, despite being received with bemused incredulity by many students and classroom teachers, who interpreted the teacher educators' persistence as further evidence of the chasm between 'theory' and 'practice'.

These considerations have led me to try to conceive my work in South Africa in terms of performing textwork rather than as representing (Australian, European, North American) research epistemologies and methodologies. That is, I have tried to find ways in which our different knowledge traditions can be performed together and coexist rather than one displacing the other. I will leave it to others to judge how successful that strategy has been, but some small signs of success include the growing and shared commitment of the Australian and South African partners working on research methodologies and supervision to focus on 'learning from within', to base the text materials we are developing on local stories and instances of textwork rather than developing South African 'versions' or examples of imported research paradigms.

These signs of success notwithstanding, I am puzzled by a number of silences in the stories we are compiling. These are the silences that impel me to trouble 'freedom' in post-apartheid environmental education.

#### SILENCES IN POST-APARTHEID ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

I share with South African colleagues an emancipatory interest in exploring the possibilities and

responsibilities that attend our freedom to make decisions and to take action in the particular circumstances of our work as educators. The recent history of South Africa has had a profound influence on the ways in which many people outside the country think about issues of freedom, justice, law and responsibility. This has been in no small part due to what Derrida (1987:1) calls the 'singularity' of Nelson Mandela and of the way in which he led the struggle against apartheid. The extent of Australian public interest in South African politics is indicated by a recent poll of readers of two of the nation's leading broadsheets, *The Age* (Melbourne) and *The Sydney Morning Herald*. As reported in *The Age* (1999:9), 4657 readers responded to a 'Poll of the Century' questionnaire in which one of the questions was: 'What were the most important decisions made by governments in the world [during this century]?' Leading this poll was 'formation of the United Nations', voted by 76% of readers, with 'ending apartheid' (72%) a close second. Only two other decisions received more than 40% of readers' votes, namely, the armistice ending World War I (55%) and the ending of the Cold War (51%). Complementing their interest in the ending of apartheid, readers voted that the second and third most important decisions made by governments in Australia were 'giving Aborigines the right to vote' and 'ending the White Australia policy' (75% and 73% respectively); 'giving women the right to vote' was ranked first in importance (88%). The popular interest in ending apartheid was underscored by the difference between the results for readers at large and for 150 'opinion leaders' sampled by the newspapers. The 'leading Australians' ranked ending apartheid fourth in importance (49%).

This populist interest has no doubt had some bearing on my reading of the cultural history of South Africa in the transition from apartheid to democracy as a rich exemplar of the complex interrelations of education, (eco)politics, and social justice. I thus welcomed the opportunity provided by the Australia-South Africa institutional links project to explore these relationships in the light of the nation's new freedom. However, I was aware that the term 'New South Africa' was coined by F.W. de Klerk in his famous speech on 2 February 1990 (Saunders & Southey, 1998:xxv) and that this 'new' entity was far too diverse and contradictory to be viewed as an unproblematic triumph of multiculturalism over racism.

For example, the erasure of the apartheid denomi-

nations of African, Indian, Coloured and White means that multiculturalism is now being negotiated and contested both between and within these arbitrarily marked categories. As Dolby's (1999, in press(a); in press(b)) ethnographic inquiries in newly multiracial schools in Durban demonstrate, 'whiteness' after apartheid is taking on different hues and is being remade in multiple forms. Also, with the collapse of the most visible forms of institutionalised racism, other forms of oppression can be seen more clearly, such as the extent of the discrimination against and hostility to women in South Africa that Unterhalter (1999) finds in the autobiographies of both black and white women. Thus, 'freedom' for many South Africans now refers to something much more complex and problematic than that which accompanied the constitutional abolition of apartheid. Jolly & Attridge (1998:2) write of a 'predominantly potential' liberty beyond the world of legislative politics:

South Africans during the period [of transition] have been and are increasingly at liberty to identify and to reject not only the determinisms of apartheid, but also the determinisms of those systems which, in addition to racism, were implicated in and supported the ideological machinery of apartheid: patriarchy, sexism, homophobia, class and language bias, ethnic nationalism, and so on.

Systems of land ownership and use, and of the exploitation and distribution of natural resources, were similarly implicated in the operations of the apartheid state. The history of legalised racism is as deeply inscribed in South Africa's landscape as it is in the nation's schools which, as Jansen (1998b:6) asserts, "remain fractured along racial and, increasingly, class lines".

Jolly & Attridge (1998) could be naming silences in post-apartheid environmental education: "patriarchy, sexism, homophobia, class and language bias, ethnic nationalism", to which we must still add racism, because dismantling one prominent edifice of societal racism has certainly not dismantled other structures of racism from the individual to the epistemic. Some of these silences may well be deliberate and maintained with good intentions. For example, silence about issues of race may be welcome to South Africans who have experienced the violent expression of racial difference that was endemic in the apartheid state. But I can see no good reason to maintain silence about other issues, such as sexism and what Unterhalter (1999:63)

calls "the ways in which patriarchal relations persist so viciously in South Africa, despite the many decades of schooling for girls". Silence about such issues cannot help us to develop ways of reading, representing and narrating difference without fearing or fetishising it, or to practise forms of inquiry that acknowledge and respond constructively to its effects in mediating educational change.

When I look through the recent and current literature on environmental education in southern Africa I find few direct or indirect references to difference - to the ways in which gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and even language constitutes curriculum, learning and teaching. For example, among the abstracts of papers presented at the 17th Annual Conference of the Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa (held at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa, 7-10 September 1999), I could find only two that referred to these issues. Much of the current literature emphasises the programmatic and procedural aspects of environmental education: curriculum development, curriculum frameworks, materials and texts, processes of deliberation, course structures, resource development, outcomes and competencies, assessment and so on. Clearly, this literature serves useful and necessary purposes but I worry that the laudable intentions of the people who produce it may be subverted by what they omit.

For example, *Developing Curriculum Frameworks Book 1: An Enabling Orientation*, is a sourcebook on environmental education for adult learners compiled by Lotz (1999) from the contributions and critiques provided by more than seventy participants in workshops conducted under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Environmental Education Programme. To the extent that this text explicitly promotes, exemplifies and problematises such orientations to curriculum work as 'participation', 'responsiveness' and 'informed critical action (praxis)', I believe that it could fairly claim to represent 'world's best practice' in environmental education curriculum development. But I also fear that this text in some ways lacks the courage of its compiling author's, editors' and contributors' convictions insofar as it hesitates to identify and name the differential constraints on the processes they valorise that arise from the continuing effects of racism, patriarchy, sexism, class and language bias, and so on. For example, the section on participatory learning in environmental

education raises some 'challenging questions about participation' in regard to "issues of power which may arise in course and curriculum development" (Lotz, 1999:27). These questions are illustrated by reference to role differentiation:

issues of power ... tend to come to the forefront when the roles of course co-ordinators and course participants are seen to be 'separate', each with their own function.

However, the text has nothing to say about power differentials among participants that might arise from their marked identities as, say, male or female, black or white, Zulu or Xhosa. Curriculum deliberation processes cannot 'enable' participation if some participants are disabled by overt or covert sexism, racism or 'othering' of any kind.

While I welcome the emphasis in *Developing Curriculum Frameworks Book 1* on "responsiveness to circumstances and context" (Lotz, 1999:15), one of the specific illustrations of the need for responsiveness that the text provides is a further example of the silences that trouble me. The text quotes from an account of developing training programs for the Karimojong communities of North East Uganda to demonstrate "the importance and the complexity of responding to participants in context" (Lotz, 1999:14). Part of this account includes the observation that:

the Karimojong ... exhibit a very patriarchal and dictatorial rule over the family, other warriors and neighbours. A Karimojong man will not tolerate democratic processes of decision making... [we needed to] gather experiences from the community to develop knowledge on how to work with people (Lotz, 1999:14).

As far as I can tell, this is the only reference to patriarchy in *Developing Curriculum Frameworks Book 1*. Readers may thus infer that patriarchy is a 'problem' that might be encountered when working with traditional communities such as the Karimojong. But patriarchy in southern Africa is not confined to traditional communities. Rather, as Unterhalter (1999) demonstrates, patriarchal and sexist attitudes and practices are a running sore in contemporary South Africa. I have personally encountered environmental educators in southern Africa who openly defend patriarchy and tolerate gender discrimination.

The account quoted above also troubles me because it invites equivocation on what might oth-

erwise seem to be core values of the text. The account informs us that a "Karimojong man will not tolerate democratic processes of decision making", but the text which precedes and follows this account does not remind the reader that democracy and social justice are part of a "broader view of environment/s" valorised elsewhere in the book (p.50). I cannot accept that "responsiveness to circumstances and context" means mere acquiescence to 'traditional' values. What are the options for environmental educators who find a Karimojong man's (or, indeed, a colleague's) "patriarchal and dictatorial rule" intolerable?

Jansen (1998a:327) makes a somewhat similar point in criticising the instrumentalist focus of Outcomes-based Education (OBE) which "side-steps the important issue of values in the curriculum":

Put more directly, OBE enables policy makers to avoid dealing with a central question in the South African transition, namely what is education for? For example, there is little evidence in the report of the Learning Area Committee for Human and Social Sciences that this question has been directly addressed. One would expect in this Committee that core values and commitments would be [evident] ... Yet there is not a single commitment to combating racism and sexism in society or developing the Pan-African citizen or on the role of dissent in a democracy. Of the seventeen learning area outcomes identified, the closest approximation to a value statement is the phrase 'participate actively in promoting a sustainable, just and equitable society', a statement so broad as to be meaningless, especially when this is unpacked in specific objectives such as 'display constructive attitudes' or 'participate in debate and decision-making'. These statements could have been written for Hawaii or Buenos Aires or Western Nigeria. They are bland and decontextualised global statements which will make very little difference in a society emerging from apartheid and colonialism.

The silences to which I refer are not, of course, peculiar to environmental education but have been endemic in South Africa's educational systems before and after apartheid. For example, Unterhalter (1998:360) notes that,

while forces associated with the apartheid regime were blind to the gender divisions in

society, those in the democratic movement noted some of their effects, but failed to conceptualise redress or equity with regard to the integration of education and training in ways that took account of gendered social relations.

Unterhalter (1998:359) reviews the policy framework for educational reform in South Africa between 1989 and 1996 and observes that "in not noting gender in areas where it has a significant impact upon education and training, the nature of the social relations commented on is distorted."

For example, policies on early childhood 'educare' note that "families of more than half the children in the country are poor" and that "migrant labour and domestic (and other forms of) violence affect these children". But these same policies are

silent on the ways in which both migrant labour and domestic violence have special and striking results for women that are different from those for men and hence have a differential impact upon children.

Moreover, although one policy framework notes sexual harassment and discrimination against women teachers, this perception is not carried into the discussions of teacher training nor the policy proposals for teacher management and development (Unterhalter, 1998:359).

Another form that the erasure of difference takes is detailed by Carrim (1998) in his study of attempts to desegregate schools in the Gauteng region. He argues that structural initiatives at the macro level may desegregate educational institutions but they do not deracialise them, "because they do not address the complexities and specificities of 'race' and racism [at] the micro level of the school, as experienced by people themselves". Carrim (1998:314) points out that the 'multiculturalist' practices in Gauteng schools "have tended to portray people of different racial groups as being culturally different, implying a shift from 'race' to ethnicity":

This is particularly evident in the fact that cultural diversity within racialised groups is denied consistently. It is easier to talk of a Zulu as being culturally different, as opposed to an Italian, in 'white' school settings, for example. This denial of cultural differences within racialised groupings lends credence to the claim that this type of

multiculturalism is a reconstructed form of racism itself.

Carrim (1998: 315) further notes that, the proliferation of cultural categories is applied mainly to 'blacks'. 'Whites' are considered and projected as being ethnically homogeneous ... cultural differences are highlighted only when applied to inter-racial group encounters.

He suggests that many multicultural educational practices

take on racist connotations when they highlight selectively when and among whom cultural differences are emphasised, when they construe people's identities in certain ways and when they ignore the power dimensions to questions of racism itself (*ibid*).

Carrim (1998:301) thus argues that, on both the macro and micro level, questions of identity and difference are central in developing a school (and societal) environment that is not only free from racism, but other forms of discrimination too.

The need for South African environmental educators to recognise and explicitly address issues of difference such as those raised by Jansen, Unterhalter and Carrim is emphasised by Chawla's (1999) report of implementing the *Growing Up in Cities* environmental education programme with children in Johannesburg. The programme involves children in drawing, talking and writing about how they use and perceive their environment, neighbourhood tours and other activities, and discussions about priorities for improving local environmental quality.

Chawla provides some results of activities with two groups of children, one of which came from a squatter area on the edge of the inner city. In the course of the project, the squatter families were evicted and resettled in an area of empty veld forty-four kilometres outside the city centre. Seven months after resettlement, seven children were asked to portray themselves in drawings as they saw themselves prior to and after working on *Growing Up in Cities*. Chawla (1999) writes:

As had been expected, all of the children used the relocation of their settlement as the dividing line in their drawn representations

of self. The two boys depicted better conditions at the new site (more room or less violence), and linked these new conditions to improvements brought about by the project on their behalf. The drawings of the five girls, however, depicted no personal capacities to explore and use the new environment, but in most cases contrasted positive images of their previous home and activities with different levels of personal disruption at the new site.

While several interpretations of these findings are possible, the evidence of gender differences in the children's readings of their environments is very persuasive, yet I have seen and heard little in the stories and texts of environmental education research in South Africa that attends to the implications of such differences. Chawla hints at other registers of difference but does not pursue them in the brief text from which I am quoting. For example, her report notes that discussions with the resettled children were in the language they preferred ("mostly English, but about 25% in Zulu") and that the project base for the squatter camp children had been an Islamic neighbourhood centre. Given that the purposes of the research were concerned with 'measurable beneficial psychological effects' in regard to 'self-esteem, locus of control and self-efficacy', I am a little surprised that aspects of culture that are clearly constitutive of personal identity (such as language) appear not to have been examined.

Brink (1998:14) suggests that 'the writer's primary engagement' is 'to interrogate silence', that "all writing demonstrates the tension between the spoken and the unspoken, the sayable and the unsayable". Brink argues that the idea of 'interrogating silence' suggests new possibilities for South African writers since the dismantling of apartheid, and emphasises that the kind of interrogation he has in mind 'is not a power-play but a dialogue'. I am concerned that we (and I deliberately include myself in this 'we') are leaving too much unspoken and unsaid in the stories and texts of environmental education research in South Africa. Brink's (1998:27) summation of the regenerative powers of South African literature thus provides a similar imperative for textworkers in environmental education research:

not simply to escape from the inhibitions of apartheid but to construct and deconstruct new possibilities; to activate the imagination in its exploration of those silences previous-

ly inaccessible; to play with the future on that needlepoint where it meets past and present; and to be willing to risk everything in the leaping flame of the word as it turns into world.

What inhibitions of apartheid remain that prevent us from naming racism, sexism and class biases as continuing constituents of our work? What are the possibilities for constructing anti-racist and class- and gender-inclusive environmental education in South Africa? What research do we need to undertake to inform such curricula? How should we conduct such research? These are difficult questions, but I cannot even hear them being asked at present. My purpose in this essay is to suggest that we should try to move them from the silent margins and suppressed whispers of our work into the noisy spaces of our dialogues and conversations. What is freedom for in the 'new' South Africa if it does not include attending to the differences that enable and constrain the ways in which all of its citizens can deploy that freedom?

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