



scholar

activism

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF THE
SCHOLAR-ACTIVIST THROUGH
ZINE-MAKING

Exploring the role of the scholar-activist through zine-making

To be a scholar-activist means to simultaneously have one foot in the academy and one foot in activist circles, whether they be grassroots community groups or international movements. More recently there is a growing acceptance of the dual role that many researchers occupy and even the need to engage with both rather than seeing scholarship and activism as separate. Scholar-activists embrace the idea that their research can lead to social change rather than seeing themselves as objective observers. This is particularly relevant in sustainable place-shaping research which engages with the multiple voices involved in transformative actions towards sustainability.

However, being part of both worlds isn't easy and often involves contradictions and compromise. How do we navigate this dual identity as scholar-activists and activist-scholars? Through this zine we open up space for individual and collective reflection around what scholar-activism means.

A zine is a self-published magazine, usually in the form of a collection of texts and images, both original and borrowed. As a do-it-yourself publication, it is based upon the (re)claiming and sharing of voice. Zine-making can be a tool for collective reflection as well as a means of recording our lived experiences as practitioners/activists/researchers in order to shed light on the concept of scholar-activism.

The pages that follow were created by susplace scholar-activists at the susplace Final Conference in Tampere, May 2019. They respond to three guiding questions:

(joy) what experiences in your academic or activist work encapsulates scholar-activism?

(challenge) which barriers, institutional or otherwise, have you encountered in trying to embody these two positions?

(theory/meta) is scholar-activism a useful or even realisable concept in the context of academia?

[Joy]

HAVE YOU HAD A SPECIFIC

EXPERIENCE WHICH YOU FEEL

ENCAPSULATES

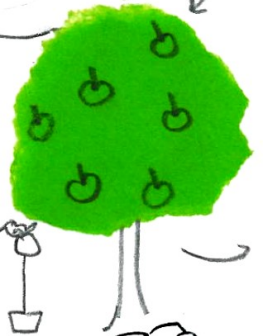
SCHOLAR-

ACTIVISM?

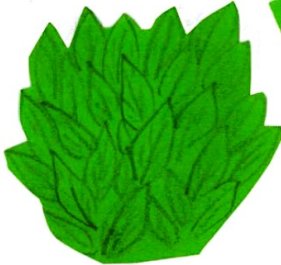
how can research/
activism bring



is it
REGenerative?



HEAD



HANDS

Tasty tips

How to write

about your activities / work / research
as a scholar-activist

- x do it with others!
- x talk about it with others!
- x publish it in different media
- not only ranked journals -
- x tell people about your background
& why you are interested in
writing this

others?

e.g. your
colleagues, buddies
people involved
in the research
or explicitly
not involved in
it! They will
all have valuable
feedbacks!
& contributions

- x write about failures. If we dare
to speak more honestly about
our problems + conflicts within
research, it can only help and
be a relieve within a world that
has to "function".

Joyful !

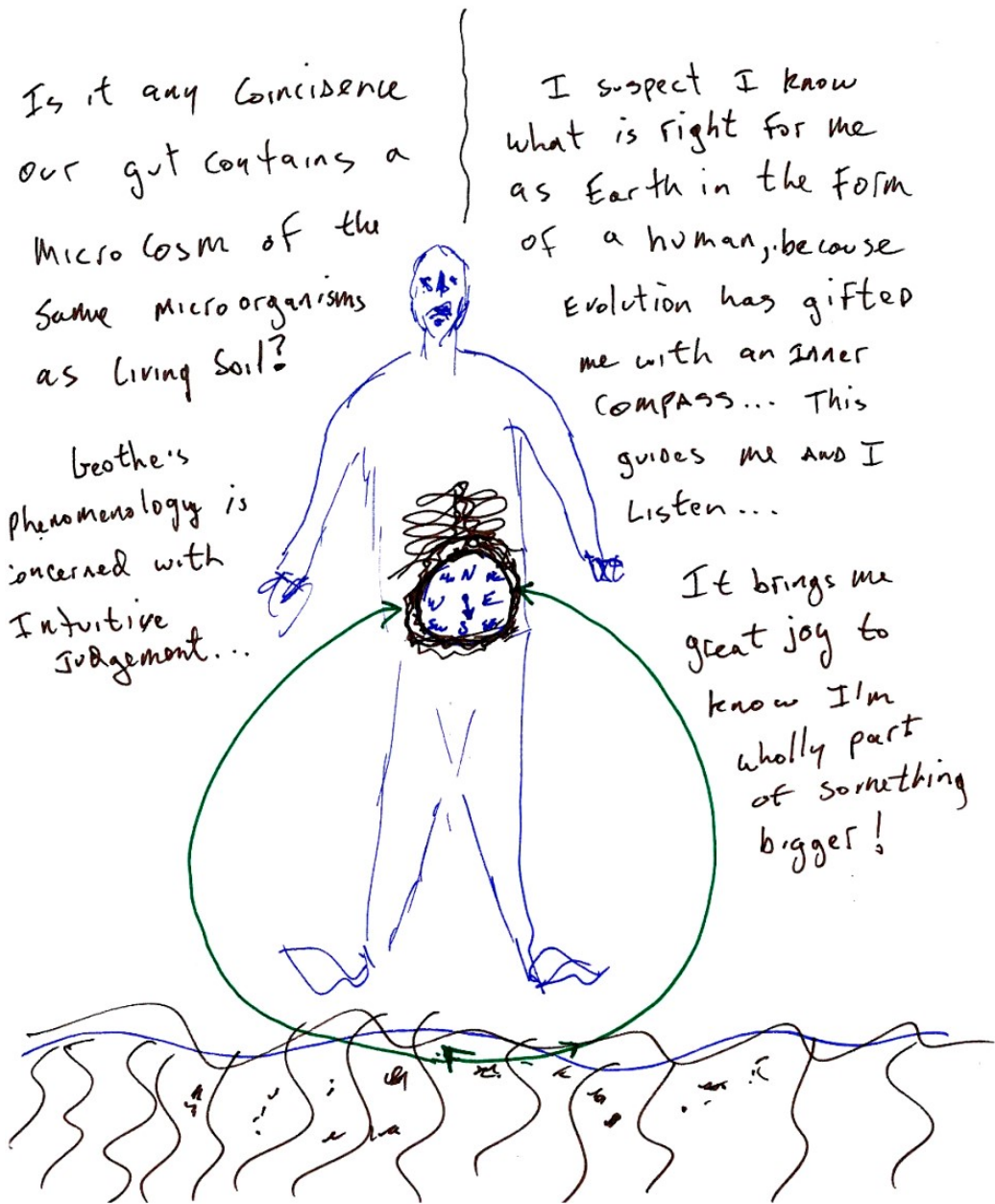
INNER COMPASS

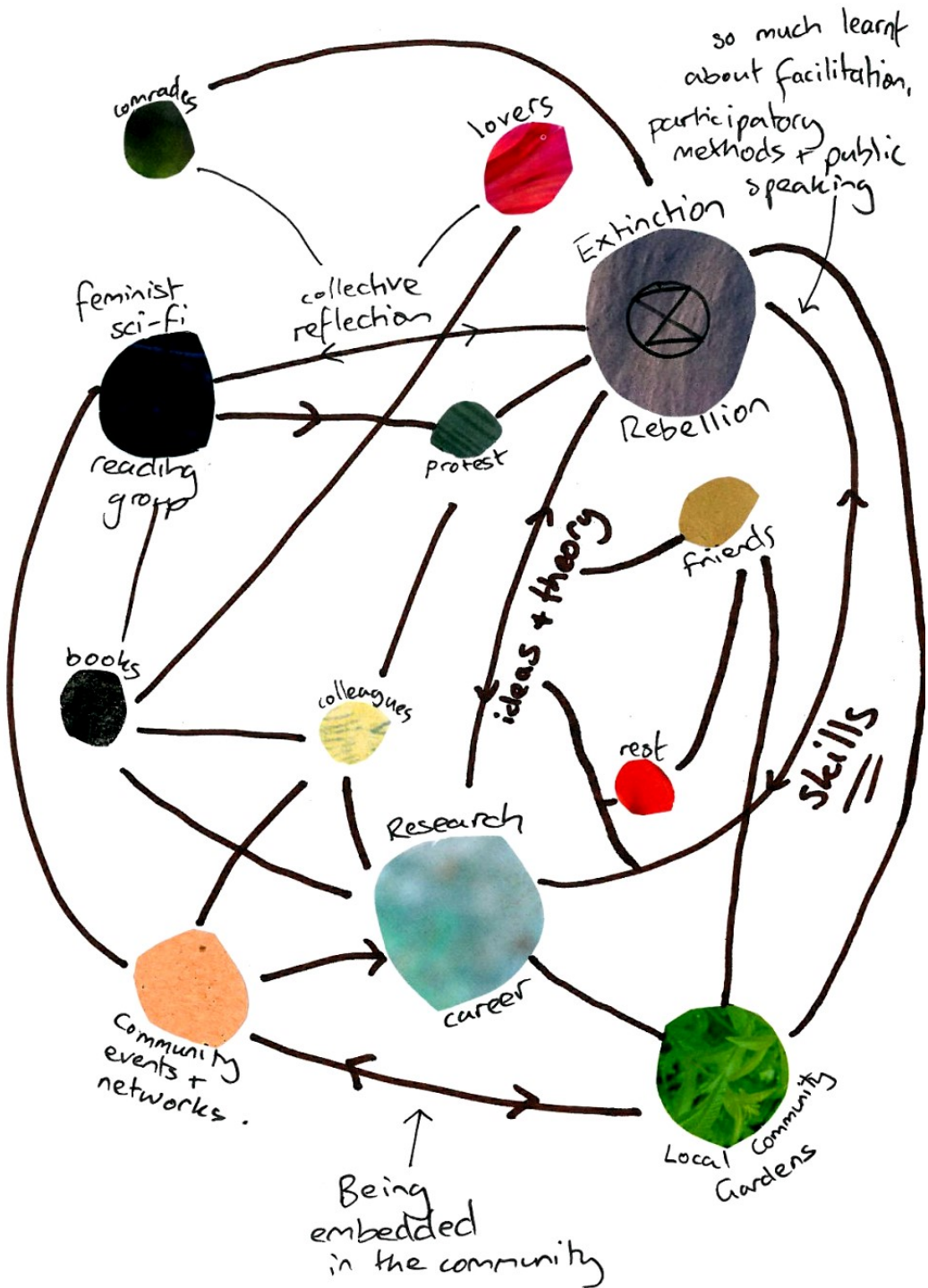
Is it any coincidence
our gut contains a
Microcosm of the
same microorganisms
as living soil?

Beothe's
Phenomenology is
concerned with
Intuitive
Judgment...

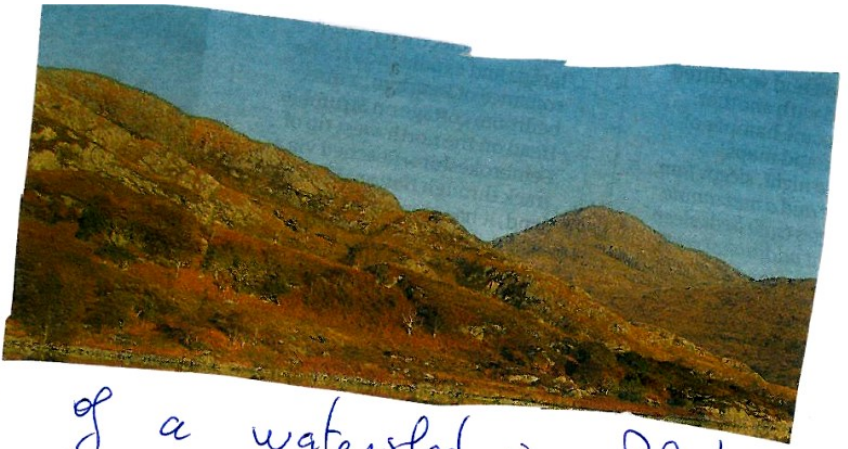
I suspect I know
what is right for me
as Earth in the form
of a human, because
Evolution has gifted
me with an INNER
COMPASS... This
guides me and I
listen...

It brings me
great joy to
know I'm
wholly part
of something
bigger!





This is
the story



of a watershed in Bhutan
where people
were in
conflict



SIGN HERE

After 3
years of collaborative
activities, they signed an agreement
for **water sharing**





Peasants and
Researchers from
France & Africa
united
to preserve and sow
biodiversity in
the fields!

joy of

animating a
event &
Participatory
research work
Sharing my
with all the stakeholders



autonomy & resilience
= seeds
facing climate change

THIÈS,
SENEGAL
Nov. 2018



Let's
imagine
the future
of our collaboration

IT'S IN
THE
MESS...



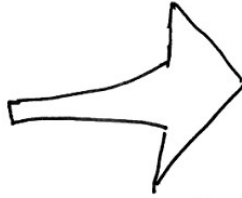
... WHEN
SOMETHING
JUST
CLICKS ...

(AND
WHEN YOU
SEE SOMEONE
PULL UP A
POTATO FOR
THE FIRST TIME)





Listen
to the stories



Research does
NOT has to
be a lonely
task.

TAKE
A
STEP!



[CHALLENGE]

WHICH BARRIERS,

INSTITUTIONAL OR OTHERWISE,

HAVE YOU ENCOUNTERED IN

TRYING TO EMBODY THIS DUAL

POSITION?

How to sit in the
discomfort of not
hiding behind
big words but
also not hiding
behind the
busy-ness of
activism . . .

TO WINNER THOUGH!



CHALLENGES

**From
to the**

feeling that good things are
happening within
a research project...

need to put it all in "nice"
words in order to **publish** it
in a well ranked journal
that no one reads in
order to keep your
position...

I work with community gardens →



This is their focus as an output (well, one of them)

HOW TO GET A BALANCE BETWEEN RESEARCH OUTPUTS WHICH ARE REQUIRED BY YOUR INSTITUTION

Will anyone read this?

RESEARCH "OUTPUTS"



AND THOSE THAT ARE USEFUL + ACCESSIBLE TO PARTICIPANTS

Your standard lengthy PhD thesis

WITHOUT JUST DOING TWICE AS MUCH WORK?!

I
Don't want to
know anymore... no more
facts, figures and frightening statistics!

ENOUGH!!!

Inspire, mystify and motivate me...
Give me awe, magic, enchantment!
Move to fully be who I am...
Empower everyone to be fully human...
So they share their unique
gifts with the world
In service
of
Life



In the "field"

Aha, so you came here to do research about the local community and xyz... !?

Yes, that's right!

Oh, so many expectations and ascriptions to science

OR:

VERSION ①

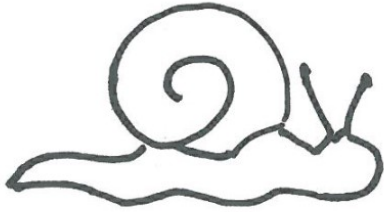
But how come, you are not from here, right? So how should you understand how things go on? You will not be able to change anything any ways ...!

VERSION ②

Wow, super! Let me tell you... so you will help us do xyz!!

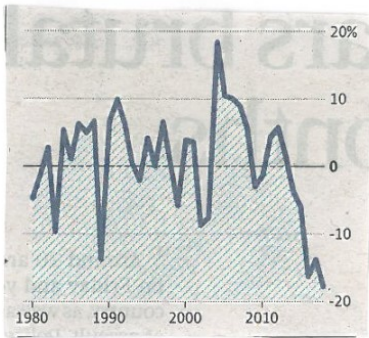


Academic results vs. Changes in society



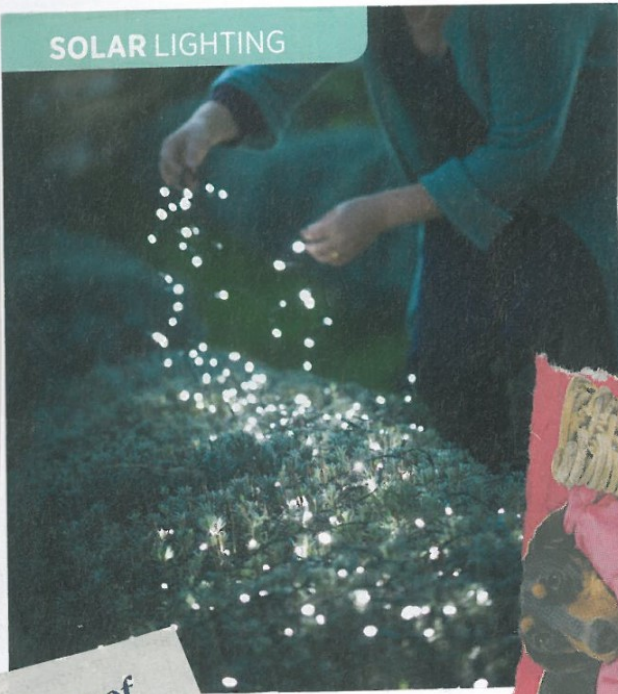
reports

Life



SOLAR LIGHTING

fear threat



'There's a sense of relief IN

presence,



am
wc

changing the rules

in a nutshell

Market forces

Economy

education bubble



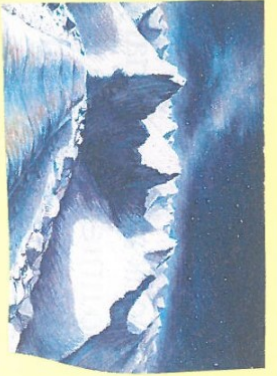
[THEORY/META]

DO YOU THINK SCHOLAR-ACTIVISM

IS A USEFUL OR EVEN

REALISABLE CONCEPT

IN THE CONTEXT OF ACADEMIA?



TENSION

Ego,

CENTRIC



Logic



if [scholar] can be

an opportunity ...






WHAT IS ACTIVISM ANYWAY?

Is it Greenpeace?

Is it gardening?



Is it standing up
for yourself?

Is it making change
until you burnout?



Is it supporting each other?



IF NOT



SCHOLAR-
ACTIVISM,

THEN WHAT
ELSE?

CURATED BY

POPPY NICOL (NICOLP@CARDIFF.AC.UK),

ALICE TAHERZADEH (TAHERZADEHA@CARDIFF.AC.UK)

AND GLORIA GIAMBARTOLOMEI

