

Towards Transformative Soil Science: Who am I in relation to my research?

Wiersma, W.; Lopez, D.E. (2024.0)

ABSTRACT ORIGINAL

The paradigm of modernity is associated with human detachment from soil as the agricultural and affective foundation of modern societies. The focus on soil as a resource has created increasingly exhausted landscapes. Soil science is well placed to (re)build the urgently needed connection between humans and nature by generating evidence for soil functioning and, perhaps most importantly, by establishing linkages with diverse types of soil knowledge and integrating them in collaborative solutions. Such transdisciplinary solutions can be achieved by transforming current ways of doing soil science, which begin with soil scientists. Anchored in feminist and critical thinking, we used the 'reflecting and doing' framework (Lopez et al., 2023) to demonstrate how reflexivity can help soil science to become a transformative space. By partially dissolving the mind–heart and human–soil dualisms, we can foster a way of generating soil knowledge that emerges from the relations within and beyond the human Self. Such an approach is relatively new in academic soil science, which relies heavily on the scientific method as a detached form of knowing that privileges mind over body, reason over emotion, culture over nature and production over reproduction. We argue that this journey starts with (re)positioning ourselves as soil scientists in relation to our research and advance a Transformative Soil Science that recognizes soil knowledge as situated and embodied and that identifies soil as the main ally for a sustainable world. © 2024 British Society of Soil Science.