BEYOND CRITIQUE TO ACADEMIC TRANSFORMATION: RECONCEPTUALISING RURALITY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

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ABSTRACT Critique is taken to mean an analytical examination of a text or a situation whether political or economic or social. Although critique is commonly understood as fault finding and negative judgment, it can also involve merit recognition, and, in the philosophical tradition, it also means a methodical practice of doubt. This reasoned judgment or analysis, value judgment, interpretation or observation is different from the pragmatic imperatives to action, in this case policy action; and in the South African case transformative policy action. Where the academy is concerned there is a radical difference between critiquing the academy and finding practical solutions to endemic problems ingrained not only in the philosophy but in the cyclical practice that drives it and the disciplines that emerge from it. This article takes its cue from the urgent need to go beyond ideologies which are neo-colonial, Eurocentric, abstract or individualist, to a discourse which engages in sustained action beginning with the academy. Since the universities in Africa remain mired in fundamentally Eurocentric views and interpretations, we need to find deep analyses and come out with propositions that have the ability to transcend the battle between scholars and academic paradigms to transformative imperatives that can put pressure and raise the bar for the academy to consider changing its ways.

KEYWORDS rurality, transformation, Africa, indigenous knowledge, traditional medicine, patenting

Academic Transformation in South Africa
Following the intensive policy formulation processes occurring in South Africa since 1994, the shift in the agenda in higher education has taken two major trajectories. The first was the expansion of access to previously excluded and marginalized students. The second was the extensive restructuring that followed, beginning in the late 1990s and continuing into the first five years of this decade.

The first is a quantitative achievement which is slowly beginning to change the demographic profile of the institutions of higher learning in South Africa. It is an achievement of its own for which the country can be proud. The achievement of the second was in altering the institutional form of this sector. This was a painful but irreversible exercise which has produced the size and shape of the existing institutions.

In the third episode of the evolution of higher education in South Africa, the time is now right to begin to tackle the content of academic offerings (in the case of teaching and learning); and paradigms of knowledge production (in the case of research); and the quality of our graduates (in the case of both undergraduate and postgraduate training).

The agenda for the transformation of the academic systems demands that attention is paid to the default drive of the academic system itself. Here, Transformation is seen as distinct from Reform and Restructuring in that it draws attention to the basic cultural structures around which our systems of thought have been constructed across all the disciplinary domains, and aspires to change what Howard Richards, citing Charles Taylor, has called the "the constitutive rules" (Odora Hoppers & Richards 2012).

How is the university going to respond in the call to reorganise itself by reorganizing the very institutional form of universities which has not been touched by simply restructuring? Concomitantly, how can the numerical access and quantitative gains be turned into intellectual outcomes that can bring about transformation in the way we think about issues facing society in the twenty first century? How is plurality of insights coming from all systems of knowledge to be brought to bear in the selection of research agenda, research paradigms, and propositions that we make towards the betterment of life and livelihood of all?

The South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARCHI)
The South African Research Chairs Initiative was created by a parliamentary dispensation in 2007 as a strategically focused knowledge and human resource intervention into the South African Higher Education system. Its mandate is to tackle questions such as those outlined above; to advance the frontiers of knowledge, create new research career pathways and stimulate strategic research; and to fast track leadership building through postgraduate training.

It is positioned and funded by the South African Department of Science and Technology and administered by the National Research Foundation, (South Africa's national research funding body). This provides the special context for the transdisciplinary chair I hold, and it is against this background that I explore the issues of transformation raised in this paper.

Revisiting UNESCO's 2000 call
The UNESCO World Conference on Science for the Twenty-First Century and its Declaration established the efforts that should be invested to make science advance in response both to social expectations and to the challenges posed by human and social development. Among other things, it reiterated the commitment to scientific endeavour, especially to finding solutions to problems at the interface between science and society. Especially pertinent to the issue of knowledge systems which goes straight to the strange-hold of the exclusive and detached Eurocentric perspectives that bedevils the academy are the pronouncements contained in Section 3 of the Science Agenda: Framework for Action entitled 'Science in Society and Science for Society'.

'The Declaration emphasises that all cultures can contribute scientific knowledge of universal value, and thus that there is a need for a vigorous, informed and constructive intercultural and democratic debate on the production and use of scientific knowledge. It urges the scientific community to open itself to a permanent dialogue with society, especially a dialogue with other forms of knowledge.

'It affirms that modern science does not constitute the only form of knowledge, and closer links need to be established with other forms, systems and approaches to knowledge for their mutual enrichment and benefit, in order that better ways

are found to link modern science to the broader heritage of humankind' (Unesco 2000).

Implications of the Challenge to the Sciences
This paper asserts that 'knowledge' and the way it is viewed is at the heart of the decolonial movement in the 21st century. Coming vividly to mind is Visvanathan's assertion that the most important criteria of developing this new compact and fraternity (I would add, and sorority) among forms of knowledge are cognitive justice, and the right of different forms of knowledge to survive – and survive creatively and sustainably in public. An experiment in cognitive justice therefore, can turn what was a hierarchy among ways of seeing, so embedded in the Western logic, into a circle. The search becomes not just one for equality, but for a method of dialogue.

This fraternity/ sorority at the cognitive level is born only with a method for exploring difference, and providing for reciprocity and empathy. It is therefore not just about respect for the indigenous knowledge systems. It is about understanding of life forms, and of livelihood as a way of life. This cannot be done in the classical academic manner of theory alone.

This SARCHI Chair takes it as its anchoring imperative the belief that what the university needs is reciprocity / mutuality at the epistemological and ontological level. It is cognitive justice as a fraternal, or to use another word, collaborative act that will hold the future of the university (Visvanathan 2000).

This search for reciprocity–of a 'space of coexistence' – is itself an ethical choice that carries some real implications. It implies affirming the richness of the 'Other', regardless of their material poverty. It implies affirming that this is not a matter of quantity but of quality of life, and that all helping is reciprocal, just as learning must be reciprocal. This respect for the "Other" implies acceptance of dissension, of loss and of death, which is translated into life for the Other (Verges 2002).

This is particularly important given current situations in which craftsmen, tribal elements, traditional experts and women are not seen as part of the citizenship of knowledge, and especially when it is still assumed that the history of knowledge

begins with one's entry into the university; in other words into the Western frame of mind!

The development of ecology of knowledges takes it as its starting point the acknowledgement and critique of the fact that modern development tends to privilege scientific knowledge over other forms of knowing. Science tends to hegemonise other forms of knowledge either by museumising them into ghettoes, or by treating them as occult or oriental or primitive superstition (Visvathanan 2000).

The objective would thus be precisely to return life to these forms of knowledge and to restore their place in the livelihood of communities so that they can, without coercion, determine the nature and pace of the development they require.

From this point of view, the absence of bicultural experts at the epistemological level has made it next to impossible to break the cycle of hierarchisation of knowledge endemic in the structures of the university, the prejudice of science and the pitfalls of modernisation in general. It has made it difficult to create a systems-level dialogue, to identify and articulate systems difficulties, systems limitations and new possibilities building on combined strategies anchored in multiple knowledge systems (SARCHI Framework and Strategy 2009).

In other words, 'fraternity' cannot be reduced to community-level hosted programmes or summer visits. Local knowledges, tribal knowledges, civilisational knowledges, dying knowledges all need a site, a theatre of encounter which is not patronising, not preservationist, not fundamentalist, but open and playful. The university must encompass not merely dissent and diversity, but it must also tackle the question of violence relating to the "Other" beyond the fence or border (Visvanathan 2000).

Talking "Rural" at an epistemological and a cosmological Plane
All this would not be possible to handle pragmatically without bringing to urgent attention the meaning of the word "RURAL". To begin with, the word "rural" introduces in the mind of most of us who have gone through the education system of the Western type, a strange mixture of disdain and paternalism, as well as, for those who have thought long and

deep, a weird sense of urgency. It is the reality and a truth to be negated, to be forgotten; and yet to be confronted within another paradigm.

"Rural" also brings out the unforgettable image of the square building amidst round huts. To that can be added what Herkovitsh called the "keyhole to the treasure trove" (Herkovitsh 1962) of human existence. Leaving the round huts and going into the square building denotes the first stop on the assimilation pathway. This is the first step in a systematic process of delegitimizing local collectives (Fuller, 1991). It is also the beginning of the curious love-hate relationship with a system so well known to many Africans as one that generates personal development and which turns that personal development into hatred and a denial of the self.

On entry to the system that associates the non-western, the non- "developed" with "bad", it quickly becomes known to African children that what is relevant for the West, its insights, its values, its tastes and eccentricities alike, become the model for the world: an otherwise local and otherwise provincial perspective is transposed large and writ universal (Taylor 1986). From then on, everything one does, thinks is defined and compared using western norms, leaving all else bundled together as the "other".

This "other" refers to the cosmologies of Africa, the Native American, Saami from Scandinavia, Asia and Latin America – otherwise known as the "Third World". In fact we can still recall that it took less than 20 years since President Truman launched the concept of "underdevelopment" in his inaugural speech in 1949 (Sachs 1992), to make two billion people define themselves as such (Illich, 1981). We also recall that with the launching of this concept, all social totalities were minusculed into one single model; all systems of science into one mega science. All development was seen as growth relating to GNP, and in fact to the western self-image of homo-economics.

This reductionist vision of the world determines the academic and military psyche, defines knowledge, and even truth. In its deep commitment to the "scientific", cosmologies that do not fit into the rational, linear construction are ridiculed and dismissed. These become submerged along with

the knowledges of "other" peoples and that of women (d'Souza 1992). Most of the conceptions of the "rural" and "community", like the conception of "Third World" that assume it to be a passive, backward and a generally incapable entity, have its roots in this kind of framework.

Having drawn a clear line between who is subject and who is object, those "others" can then be measured, managed or manipulated. Data on them are collated, fragmented, and arranged to fit into categories, language and concepts so confusing that at best it has nothing to do with reality. At worst, it is inconsumable by anyone except a select group of scientific researchers, the "club members", who submit their findings to authorities ever higher to use it for purposes of control, manipulation, as well as their own professional certification. Value neutrality, preserved by creating this distance between the subject and the object, the observer and the observed, and by fracturing the human self from human knowledge, makes it impossible for already marginalized people suffering from particular aspects of a problem to ever use the fact of this pain as a starting point for participation in a research oriented towards seeking alternative, perhaps liberating frameworks (Weskott 1979, Odora 1993a and 1993b).

It is with this in mind that in my writings, I have joined others who have challenged the world to take Africa and Africans as they are, and not as the West would like it to be. It is also with this in mind that a grassroots empowerment perspective would build on the strength and validity of local, democratic, and participatory knowledges free from external coercion and authoritarianism (Ake 1988)—what has been termed "cognitive justice" (Visvanathan 1997).

Yet, as development practice still attests, the problem is far from resolved, in fact, resolution has barely begun. The attitude to the "rural", sometimes referred to as "community" in development jargon, still bears, like father, like son, the hallmarks of this subjugative paternalism.

Another Look at 'Rural'

There are several reasons why greater and respectful, quality attention should be given to 'rural'. First of all, 'rural' is important because it constitutes a numerically significant portion of the

population. In Africa and Asia, rural populations constitute 62% of the total population (UN 2000). Rural inhabitants are important players in ensuring livelihood for a sizeable proportion of people. The food that we consume today can be considered as the ultimate product of invention or development of natural plant resources from various regions of the world over centuries. The development and invention of these foods originated mainly from the indigenous people who reside in rural areas. The significance of health benefits of indigenous food is today being recognized worldwide.

There is also a significant unity in the recognition that rural communities in Africa and other parts of the 'Third World' have profound and detailed knowledge of the ecosystem and species (the natural environment) with which they are in contact. They have also developed effective ways of ensuring that this knowledge and the physical resources of the environment are used sustainably (Williams & Muchena, 1991).

Traditional knowledge used by rural communities is essential to the food security and health of millions of people in the developing world. Moreover, the protection of the land, the use and continuous development by local farmers of local plant varieties, the sharing and diffusion of these varieties, and the knowledge associated with them, play an essential role in sustaining agricultural systems in developing countries (Odora Hoppers 2004).

Rural women for instance, are key holders and mediators of knowledge in the rural areas. They are also the environmental educators of children. By the age of 6 or 7, a child growing up and nurtured in a full cultural and ecological context possesses a repertoire of knowledge about plant, animal, insect life, food systems, and proverbs that contain life codes, which schools scarcely take into full account at point of entry.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no recognition of prior knowledge in assessment systems anywhere that enables indigenous knowledge that children acquire from the community prior to entering educational institutions, and throughout life, to get validation. Instead, curriculum developers in Africa have attempted to disguise their cultural preference behind the mask of internationalization, efficiency, or whatever smokescreen

has been applied to maintain a clearly exogenous and largely Eurocentric worldview and conceptual categories.

In many countries, traditional medicines constitute the base for healthcare for the majority of rural populations. Sometimes this complementary health care system represents the only affordable treatment available to poor people. In "developing countries", up to 80% of the population depend on traditional medicines to help meet their healthcare need. The role of the 200 000 traditional healers in South Africa who are the first healthcare providers for nearly 70% of the country's population in rural areas cannot be ignored (Hon T. Msimang, 2004).

Furthermore, knowledge of the healing properties of plants has been the source of many modern medicines, and is at the core of many innovations in the pharmaceutical industry. Weaknesses in systems of benefit-sharing, coupled with exploitative patenting regimes, have allowed the corporate west to derive billions of dollars from the intellectual property of rural people without providing recompense (Posey & Dutfield, 1996; Mugabe 1999). While this continues, we sit discussing this amazing cycle of poverty of rural communities that is seemingly without end.

Rural is therefore more than just an entity that is refractory to the gaze of urbanity. Neither are rural inhabitants simply an immiserized lot, devoid of substance. For that matter, neither can poverty be discussed as if it were a pathology. The exposition of the constructed nature of this poverty and the role of the academy in legitimizing the discourses that deny people will and agency, have to be the centre of focus in effecting a new social contract for the full restoration of dignity to rural communities.

To restore dignity is to tackle some confronting questions. What does it mean, for example, when rural people insist that development should build on what they have? What does it mean when formal education is viewed as an extroverted, exogenous entity, and rural communities seek an education that is grounded? What does it mean when rural communities want education for "self-reliance"? What does participatory democracy mean for the people in rural areas, and what does full and effective citizenship participation in education entail?

Conversely, under what conditions do people, upon whom all manner of denigrating concepts have been heaped (primitive, savage, ignorant etc), become active participants in the Freirean project of 'naming the world'?

Another key question to be faced is that of the role played by power (i.e. power to name, label, categorize, research, diagnose, and determine prognoses,) in entrenching disempowerment and disenfranchisement of rural people. Can the possibility exist for those who have been busy bracketing and taxonomizing those silent majorities under various pretexts, to admit that what they have been doing to 'those people' was to achieve an overkill on a wide disenfranchisement highway that had been long paved by social Darwinism, racist anthropology, Rostovian sociology, the vivisection mandate of the natural sciences, and the Baconian edict?

As it stands, a slow motion standoff is being witnessed in the relationship between rural communities and researchers from formal institutions. Linda T. Smith captures the most poignant expression of this face-off:

> ...The term "research" itself stirs up in local communities a silence, conjures up bad memories that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity.... It galls non-western societies that western researchers, intellectuals and scientists trained in that tradition can claim to know ALL that there is to know about other societies, on the basis of brief and superficial encounters with those societies. It often appalls indigenous societies that Western science [and researchers trained in that tradition] can desire, extract, and claim ownership of people's way of knowing, and then simultaneously reject those people who created those ideas, and deny them the opportunities to be the creators of their culture and own notions (brackets mine, Smith, 1999:1).

A Roundtable hosted by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (UN-HCHR) and the World Intellectual Property Rights (WIPO) in Geneva, in 1999, noted that apart from the problem of basic attitude of the scientists, Indigenous people all over the world have stated that their medicinal plants and products, arts, crafts, sciences, literature, medicines, music,

heritage, have been made the *subject* of research and eventual commercial exploitation by others, while they are denied not only the financial benefit, but also the respect and official recognition. Contractual agreements made by corporations are concluded with local universities or scientific research institutions. Indigenous or local communities are usually not mentioned in these agreements, and there is never any guarantee, or legal, or moral obligation that they should ever be consulted (Boukedin 1999: 8).

In case you are beginning to wince at the preposterousness of these ungrateful ingrates, place the above against the following hard data backdrop:

1. That academic researchers rarely acknowledge their full source of information from rural communities [as they quite willingly do when they cite their fellow scientists], and that no institutional or profession-based rules exist for affirming rural-based ownership of knowledge;

2. That the annual world market for medicines derived from medicinal plants discovered from indigenous peoples amounted to US$ 43 billion in 1985 (Posey & Dutfield, 1996, p. 3);

3. That of the 119 drugs developed from higher plants and on the world market today, it is estimated that 74 % were discovered from a pool of traditional herbal medicines (Laird, 1994, p.145-149; Mugabe, 1999, p. 102);

4. That at the beginning of the 1990s, world-wide sales of pharmaceuticals amounted to more than US$130,000 billion annually;

5. That plant-derived prescription drugs in the US originate from 40 species of which 20 are from the tropics.

6. The 20 species from the tropics generate about US $4 billion for the economy of the U.S.A (Mugabe ibid: 102);

7. That the only payments to the communities (less than 0.001% of the profits) were for the manual labor involved (Posey & Dutfield, cited in Mugabe ibid: 103);

Much can therefore be said about attitudes from the scientific community, researchers and the financial and intellectual property "rip-off". Perhaps we can take a look at how policy and literature have been viewing 'rural'.

As it is in Policy and Literature: the Concept of 'Rural'
For a term that, in McDonagh's words, 'trips very easily off the tongue', the meaning of rural has proved elusive. Attempts have been made to define it, categorize it, propose alternative definitions to its use, or do away with rural altogether. The slick way to do 'rural' is to indulge in the so-called *peasant model*, by which is meant the over association of rural with agricultural development. Here, 'rural' endures a narrow scale of analysis, and an over-concentration on the effects, rather than the causes of social and economic change. Only in recent years, and this is particularly in a small part of Europe, has there been a shift from looking at rural development as an adjunct of agricultural policy, to seeing it as an area of policy concern of its own (McDonagh 1998).

Even then, this has not translated into any degree of theoretical breakthrough. In Africa as is the case also in many parts of the developing world where research is externally oriented and aimed at gaining endorsement of the North (Hountondji, 2002), assumptions embedded in the definitions of poverty bypass critical terrain by always equating frugal subsistence with poverty. It makes things so much simpler!

Thus rural is equated not only with the peasant, but peasant is closely knit with poverty, which is a good income raiser when peddled on the right bandwagon. Once this point is reached, it is but a short step before rural is equalled to absolute ignorance *à la* social Darwinism, with very little in the grey areas to demarcate realities such as frugal subsistence, which is a way of livelihood. There is also little by way of breaking the rural-equals-poverty equation by, for instance, introducing concepts such as "knowledge rich but economically poor" (Shiva 1997, Gupta 1999).

It is often noted that constructive theorization is not an easy task to undertake within the present distorted set of conceptual and attitudinal tools that populate the scientific landscape. Thus while a theoretical grounding needs to explore the developing experiences of rural places and people due to changing regulations in production, consumption and the new commodification of the countryside, conceptually, discourses on the rural have remained quite comfortable with descriptive terms.

Real business and real money are found in dealing with statistics, hard numeric facts and the policy- relevant information on population, family size, income levels, farm size, farm outputs and the like. There is little ambition towards developing new insights or heightening awareness of the social and cultural marginalization and experiences of rural lifestyles (McDonagh 1998).

In the descriptive approach according to Halfacree (1993), rural is described in relation to its socio-spatial characteristics concentrating on variables that are observable and measurable as for example, land use, employment, and income levels. This approach articulates specific aspects of rural - rather than define the "rural" and is criticised for attempting to fit a definition to what is already intuitively considered to be rural. Such definitions also focus on space, not people, and thereby overlook the obvious truism that it is people, not places that have problems, and that different people in the same area may have different problems. Even if the issue was space, rural cannot be seen as one single space, but rather as a multiplicity of social spaces that overlap the same geographical area, with each social space having its own logic, its own institutions, as well as its network of actors. (McDonagh 1998, p. 49).

One of the most striking things about the rural-urban debate to note of course is the fact that urbanity appears as the 'invisible norm', like the male factor in the institutionalization of gender relations; and has proceeded virtually without comment in relation to rural. In other words, there is not one instance where urban is viewed from the rural lens, plotted, measured or dissected according to rural based norms and values the way the urban norms are imposed on the rural.

Framing the discourse and discourse institutionalization
Postcolonial theorists draw attention to what Rein and Schon have said about the concept of `framing'. This is the way of selecting, organizing, interpreting and making use of a complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analyzing, persuading and acting. A `frame' is a perspective from which an amorphous, ill-defined problematic situation can be made sense of and acted upon. According to Rein and Schon, embedded in policy frames are the stories, or narratives participants are disposed to tell about the policy situations (Rein & Schon, 1993).

Once a discourse coalition, discourse institutionalization and framing have been achieved, rhetorical persuasion and various rhetorical devices or `tropes', such as metaphors, metonymy and irony are applied to explain, to inspire public visions and to recommend actions (Thogmorton, 1993).

The role that these formations play in determining the manner and style with which policy issues are created and are made to assume strategic status in the policy arena is, of course, a matter of concern in a context of unequal relations. What would be the next step after critique?

Rethinking Thinking

It has been argued that the intractable problems of modernity cannot be solved within the paradigms of modernity (Odora Hoppers and Richards, 2012). Worth noting is the assertion of Ashis Nandy that the meek do not inherit the earth by meekness alone. They have to have categories, concepts and even defences of the mind with which to turn the West into a reasonably manageable vector within the traditional worldviews still outside the span of modern ideas of universalism. The first concept in such a set is "… suffering… a reality for the millions who have learnt the hard way to live with the West during the past two centuries." (Nandy 1997, p. xiii).

The second concept is Empowerment. Empowerment is the process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy in communities through identification and removal of conditions that reinforce powerlessness. But in this analysis 'empowerment', which is usually more about resuming power (because power is never voluntarily relinquished), Venter's version is instructive. He argues that it is recognized that shifting of power without a clear shift of paradigms of understanding that makes new propositions about the use of that power in a new dispensation, leads to vicarious abuse of power by whoever is holding it – old or new (Venter, 1997). That was what happened when African countries first tasted liberation from colonialism five to six decades ago.

Cooptation, without a shift in authority, power and control, is empty. Transfer of symbolic power has usually been about change of actors without changes in the structures of privilege, power and oppression and an understanding of the attitudes

that sustained those systems, leaving new incumbents behaving 'just as the masters did', with new tensions emerging as fellow members from the previously oppressed groups continue to hold expectations of change and socio-cultural justice. We have to change from this notion of liberation to cognitive justice and second-level Indigenisation.

From this perspective, liberation implies contestation and rejection of all forms of domination, including domination over the means of knowledge production and the social power to determine what is valid, or useful knowledge. Cognitive justice is based on the recognition of the plurality of knowledge and expresses the right of the different forms of knowledge to co-exist without duress. Additionally, second-level Indigenisation questions the rules of the game, and proffers alternative or complementary plots to the drama. It engages the paradigmatic frames; the apparatus for value coding; and the constitutive (i.e. not the regulatory) rules of systems.

At last, 'rural' can be seen as a bearer of knowledge capital, a player in the development arena and a creator of valuable traditions which it can sustain. At this moment, our role as scholars or as policy workers would extend beyond the obligation to produce objective knowledge alone [in the case of scholars], or blind delivery of policy packages [in the case of policy workers], to becoming critical agents in the identification of a nexus between the development of knowledge and the transformation of societies.

New Pragmatic Directions in Postcolonial Theory and Practice

Universities need to break the current vicious cycle by providing the heuristics, the methodological discipline, and the non-dominative, non-fundamentalist space that this reform strategy needs. Its work goes beyond critique, and combines the ethical and the political, a theory of the "Other" as a form of life.

We need to promote a theory of development that does not end in the disaster of serial displacements that we have seen over the past five or six decades. The university must provide an enabling environment in which the "Other" can articulate its conceptions of an alternative world and its vision of the university in it. Out of this will evolve a theory of the West within the ambit

of an alternative vision of the world. This is not part of an effort to incubate reverse assimilation, reverse hegemony or cultural imperialism. Rather, it is part of a search for co-existence, co-determination and co-operative action on a transnational and trans-societal level. It is time for a rapprochement, an integrative coming together of world views in a way that is not just pluralistic tolerance and respect, but goes beyond that to effect transformation in the sense of emergence of a new synthesis that incorporates the existing diversity of world views (Fatnonwa & Pickett 2002)[1]

The South African Research Initiative's Chair in Development Education affirms that the knowledge paradigm of the future is beginning to develop by reaching out to those excluded. It is a compassionate but strategic evolution through contemplation during which the outer voice of possibility meets the inner voice of disenfranchisement (Odora Hoppers 2009)

Significant and intimate connections are then made between the pain and the creative impulses essential for the transcendence, which then become the very touchstones of healing and creativity.

Conclusions: tasks for the university in a reconstituted paradigm

This essay has argued for the urgent need to go beyond ideologies which are neo-colonial, Eurocentric, abstract or individualist, to a discourse which engages in sustained action beginning with the academy. Since the universities in Africa remain mired in fundamentally Eurocentric views and interpretations, we need to find deep analyses and come out with propositions that have the ability to transcend the battle between scholars and academic paradigms and achieve transformative imperatives that can put pressure and raise the bar for the academy to consider changing its ways.

The task here is not to critique the west without any direction as to where all the evidence gathered should lead us. In my opinion, we have to take Unesco's call seriously on behalf of those who do not have voice, and make sure that the universities take a different and a much more expanded role from the present time. These roles include ensure the verification, validation and legitimation of IKS locally and internationally through sustained dialogue. Scholars must establish a process

for the emancipation of the indigenous voice, with an emphasis on the Commons in Africa and other parts of the world.

The university must address transformation, redress and equity with respect to the political economy of public space and knowledge production. This entails examining the allocation, use and utilisation of public space from an Indigenous Knowledge point of view. 'Public space' refers to the human, financial, infrastructural resources available to public institutions, including the academy, the policy domain and community-based organisations.

The university must weed itself out of the closed loop of existence and initiate a dynamic, two-way, equitable dialogue between the academy the Indigenous knowledge holders: the commons and the grassroots. This should result in the identification of high level priorities from both sectors in research, validation and institutional transformation in relation to knowledge systems.

More widely, the university must create within its strategic objectives a process in which the marginalized have a "presence" and "voice", and cognition goes beyond liberation, and on to emancipation, to injecting and infusing fresh, innovative ideas and propositions for the rest of the world. It is through this affirmation of the multiplicity of worlds, and the recognition that forms of knowledge other than that sanctioned by science exist, that it becomes possible to redefine the relationship between objectivity and representation, and between subject and object (CODESRIA 1998) – the healing moment (Nouwen, 1972) in this long chain of vicarious disenfranchisement.

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