

Higher Education, the Politics of Knowledge and the Challenges of Popular Education and Social Movements¹

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"If the only tool one has is a hammer, then everything begins to look like a nail" Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb

Introduction

This paper is an initial and partial thinking through, from my own experiences of some dimensions of a politics of knowledge. Specifically, it has offered me a chance to think about the role of the university in the creation or validation of knowledge, the role of the university as a site of struggle, and the relationship between the university and popular education and other social movements. I write this, not from a point of view of detachment and neutrality, but as one who believes passionately in the importance of understanding how learning, the creation of knowledge and social action interact in transforming existing unjust relationships in a world in crisis.

I share aspects of my own background and current location as that is critical to interpreting my remarks and may make eventual dialogue easier.

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In 1970, fresh from a Ph.D. programme at UCLA in Comparative Education and African Studies, I went to Tanzania where I worked as an evaluator and researcher with the Institute of Adult Education in Dar es Salaam. I went to Tanzania because of the attraction of the ideas of Julius Nyerere related to the role of adult education in social transformation. It was there that I came to know Paul Mhaiki, Marja Lisa Swantz, Marjorie Mbillinyi, Kemal Mustapha who lived and worked there. I also met and briefly worked with Paulo Freire who visited with us for some time. It was there that I began to work with the ideas which would later become known as participatory research. In 1975, I spent a year in England at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex reading Marx and finding out about a variety of British and European scholars, activists and forms of activism. From 1976 to 1979 I was the research officer of the International Council for Adult Education, where I started the Participatory Research Network. From 1979 to 1991, I was head of the International Council for Adult Education, a large and broad-based international non-governmental organization active in a variety of issues related to learning and social movements. In September 1991 I took up a full-time academic appointment in the Department of Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I am currently working with a number of university and community-based colleagues on the creation of a Centre for Community and Global Transformation Studies which is based on creating different kinds of community-university relationships.

Throughout this journey I have been deeply involved with a host of related and complex questions: what is knowledge; who produces knowledge; whose knowledge counts; what is the relationship of knowledge to democratic and transformative change; what forms does knowledge take; what is the role of social movements in knowledge creation; how do universities maintain their monopoly roles in knowledge production; what is poetic knowledge; what are the mechanisms by which knowledges of the majority of the world's people are rendered marginal or invisible; what different shapes or forms does knowledge take; what are the mechanisms by which knowledge and power are related; how is knowledge gendered; how is knowledge classed; how does race, culture, different abilities, sexual orientation, age effect knowledge production? I could continue this list, but I believe that the point is made...this is an endlessly fascinating, troubling and difficult terrain. It is rendered even more troubling and difficult by the fact that

I am rooted in a movement of women and men who use education to deepen democratic practice at both local and international levels. The answers to my questions are not sought in order to remain in the classrooms, the journals or the conference sites of our academic societies; they are sought because people that I work with in my own community may be able to benefit from our finding out. The answers are important also because we all need to know how to work within higher education in ways that will begin to, at the very least, reduce the damage which we are doing in the world through structures of knowledge which are literally killing the vulnerable majority of people and possibly now the very bio-sphere we inhabit.

I share my ideas through a series of stories, poems, journal entries and readings of other writers.

I begin with a poem which I wrote after returning to the University after 20 years working in community settings or non-governmental settings in several countries.

Of Towns and Gowns

Part I The Non-Governmental Organization

Ring ring

Ring ring

Find the money

Find the money

Find the money

FIND THE MONEY

Ring ring

Ring ring

Yes

No

No

No
Maybe
Maybe
Oh my God

Ring ring
Ring ring
Chile
India
My son's teacher
Brazil
Sweden
Can we pay the rent?

Ring ring
Ring ring
send me this
Send me that
Send me the map to
Where its at

Ring ring
Ring ring
Not with her
Not with him
Not with them
Just me
Just we
Just us
Just once

Ring ring
Ring ring
You mean it worked?
You mean it worked?
All of us and
All of us and
All of us and
All of us and
WE DID IT?

PART II The Academy

No knocks upon the door
No door on which to knock
No calls
No pets
Ain't got no paradigms
Discourse of course
Discourse and domain
Insurrection of subjugated knowledges
Hegemony
Hegemony
Hegemony
Hope
Nope not just yet
Voices from the margins
Radical dichotomizing
Communicative interaction
blocs of history
hysterical blocs

Be civil society

Be coerced

And consent

Patriarchy

Patriarchy

Linked to violence?

Linked to violence?

Race

Race

Race

Race

Run

Class

Class

Class

Class

Done

The anthropological sleep

Sleeping beauty

Beautify sleeping

Commodified

Orchid-rooted

Luxuriating

Wonder creating

Wonder answering

Speak to us in as many syllable as you can

WHY IS MY WORLD INVISIBLE?

On coming to the university, I was surprised, disappointed and just plain lonely because the materials of the global adult education movement which I had been working in from a variety of locations were largely absent from the discourse of the university. And this was in Toronto where the Department of Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education is located only 15 minutes walk from the offices of the International Council for Adult Education. The reports from World Assemblies, research reports, publications from adult educators in many other parts of the world that were the core of a collective project for over 15 years were for the most part not to be found in the course reading lists, on the shelves of my colleagues or even often in the Library. The knowledge to which thousands of popular educators, adult educators and non-governmental activists in scores of countries were resonating and contributing was not in a form that made it possible to use in the university. Or this knowledge was not seen to be useful to the work of the university. The feeling that many of my social movement colleagues had about the marginality of the university to democratic transformation was evidently the other way round from the university side. My new colleagues in the university see the role of the university to be at the "cutting edge" of new transformative thinking.

The Paulo Freire Birthday Conference

Let me share another story with you. In December of 1991, a conference was organized in New York City to celebrate the 70th Birthday of Paulo Freire. Originally the event was conceived to have been a conference for mostly Northern white male 'insiders', who had worked with or written about Paulo Freire (of whom I was one). Workshops and papers were to be presented in respectful, ordered and for the most part quite conventional ways. Somehow community-based organizers and educators learned about the event and transformed the conference into a celebration of much more than Paulo Freire's Birthday. In crowded and often angry sessions the voices of difference and diversity, armed with the courage of Friere's own convictions, directly

challenged the academic canon. In the large assembly hall of the New School for Social Research in New York City, where the first worker's education in the United States had been held in 1932, young women and men from the community asked Paulo why his language and the language of his intellectual colleagues was so difficult? And when Paulo tried to explain that learning was hard and that one musn't be lazy about learning, the community broke their emotional bonds with him, stopped treating him like a Saint and began treating him like a Brother. But in that moment was pain for Paulo, pain for those from the community who had expected salvation, and pain for those of us who have loved Paulo. But in that moment also was the power of newly constituted knowledge and the realization that at least in that room all voices really did count.

Later in that evening a panel of non-dominant race and gender educators challenged people of the dominant white culture to let go of their fear and speak to the flesh and blood of real oppression and to join with others in working towards a new politics of liberation.

With heads spinning, we slept. The next day in one of the morning workshops, I and three other male university-based scholars presented our reflections on a variety of community-based projects. When we were finished with our presentations, our Chairperson opened the floor for questions. A Latina woman standing in the back corner of the room said with passion and force, "When will you University people finally leave us alone?" None of us answered then, but I know that I have thought often about the history, the analysis, and the practices that lay beneath her words.

Participatory Research and the Academy

In the early 1970s when a number of us began to challenge the positivism in adult education and international development research, we used the term participatory research. I believed then, that we had a possibility to create an alternative canon, one which would give voice to those whose ideas have not been heard. Our optimism was perhaps naive because while our by now substantial body of work along these lines has proven to be of great value to many, the

legitimacy of the Academy in knowledge production has really not been loosened very much. In fact universities have been able to take up the ideas and nascent theories generated in community and workplace based locations and developed them further in isolation from the communities and movements which spawned them. Does this matter?

What should be or could be the role of the academy in an alternative community-based practice such as participatory research? What has the academy done with participatory research? What is the status of the knowledge generated in a participatory research process? Participatory research originated as a challenge to positivist research paradigms as carried out largely by university based researchers. Our position has been that knowledge generated in what dominant society describes as the margins; amongst the poor, with women, with people of colour, people from the South needs to have more visibility. Experience had shown us that it was difficult to achieve this kind of process from a university base hence the need for the creation of alternative structures such as community-based networks or centres. But how can this be reconciled with the fact that so many of those who have written and published about participatory research are university based?

If the research process is under the control of sectors of the community or workplace which are experiencing forms of domination then the risk of inappropriate use of the information is reduced. The difficulty arises because there are different uses for knowledge in the academy. Knowledge within the academy serves a variety of purposes. It is a commodity by which academics do far more than exchange ideas; it is the very means of exchange for the academic political economy. Tenure, promotion, peer recognition, research grants, and countless smaller codes of privilege are accorded through the adding up of articles, books, papers in "refereed" journals and conferences. Academics in the market place of knowledge know that they must identify or become identified with streams of ideas which offer the possibility of publishing and dialogue within appropriate and recognized settings. Collaborative research or at least collaborative publishing is informally discouraged because of the difficulty in attributing authorship. Collaborative research with persons who are not academics by the standards of the academy is not common. And while academics in fact gain financially through accumulated publications of appropriate knowledge,

community collaborators seldom benefit from such collaboration in financial terms. Academics are under economic, job survival or advancement pressures to produce in appropriate ways. And it is this structural pressure which plays havoc with academic engagement in the participatory research process. Is it not possible that in spite of personal history, in spite of ideological commitment, in spite of deep personal links with social movements or transformative processes that the structural location of the academy as the preferred location for the organizing of knowledge will distort any alternative project such as participatory research ?

Does this mean that there is no role for university-based women and men to be engaged in a participatory research processes? Arguments exist on both sides of this questions. Participatory research is a tool which social movements, activists, trade unionists, women on welfare, the homeless or any similar groups use as part of a variety of strategies and methods for the conduct of their work. If they wish to invite a university-based group to become involved they need to set up the conditions at the start and maintain control of the process if they wish to benefit as much as possible. Countless groups make use of processes which resemble participatory research everyday without naming it or certainly without asking for outside validation of the knowledge which is produced.

Participatory research deserves to be taught in universities, and is increasingly being taught. The academic community deserves to discuss and challenge and be challenged by these and other ideas which raise questions of the role of knowledge and power. Adult educators, community workers, social workers, primary health care personnel, solidarity cooperators, cooperative movement workers, multi-cultural workers, teachers and countless others who begin working after a university education deserve to study, read and experience the ideas which make up participatory research.

Academics also do not cease to become members of the community by going to work in a university. There are countless community issues whether related to toxic dumping, homelessness, high drop-out levels in local schools or unfair taxation policies which engage us

all as citizens. Academics clearly have skills which can contribute to social movement needs. But important dialogues about the nature of knowledge, the appropriation of knowledge and ways of avoiding extractive relationships need to take place.

The Revolt of the Chorus: Knowledge and Social Movements

In the Greek Tragedies, it was the custom to have a chorus of the poor, the marginalized, the blind and otherwise subservient voices in the background responding only when the playwright needed an echo or a support for the main characters who were most often Gods.

Universities are having to respond to a 'revolt of the chorus' as the voices of diversity and difference are coming forward in the form of social movements, riots, and challenges to the hegemony of the university itself. New voices are demanding to be heard even while the power of the status quo expands each day through structures of globalization and cultural homogenisation. These new voices speak from concerns of the destruction to the earth itself, from ancient forms of knowledge, from the centredness of women, of African people, of the homeless and the victims of torture. This revolt of the chorus raises challenges which will not end until the Academy is reinvented in new ways which will both suppress these new voices and provide new spaces, new cracks in the hegemonic structures for deepening democratic practice.

Emerging Voices

Eco-feminism

The ecological movement contains some of the most powerful and diverse voices we are hearing from. The work of Vandana Shiva, feminist, ecologist, and botanist, is particularly eloquent and persuasive. She has been influenced deeply by the women of the 'Chipko Movement', the movement of women of Garhwal Himalaya which came to public light in 1972 in which women organized to protect their forests from being cut by hugging the trees. From her book Staying Alive,

The two central shifts in thinking that are being induced by women's ecological struggles relate to economic and intellectual worth. The first relates to our understanding of what constitutes knowledge, and who the knowers and producers of intellectual value are. The second involves concepts of wealth and economic value and who the producers of wealth and economic value are...The intellectual heritage for ecological survival lies with those who are experts in survival...By elbowing out 'life' from the central concern in organizing human society, the dominant paradigm of knowledge has become a threat to life itself.¹

Vandana Shiva argues that the Age of Enlightenment and the idea of progress gave rise to the two sacred categories; modern scientific knowledge and the concept of economic development. And in the process of codifying and organizing around these concepts the importance of life, earth processes, nature and its conservation have been lost. For when the new ideas of science came into the world they were not neutral. Combined as they were with Northern Europe's newfound relative wealth in the 16'th and 17'th Centuries, the idea of science and economic growth spread throughout Europe, the Americas and throughout the world. And as they spread, they turned competing visions of life and the world into enemies. So women's intuitive and life-sustaining household knowledge became witchcraft. Traditional knowledges of ancient peoples were converted into religious blasphemies. Again she writes,

Seen from the experiences of Third World women, the modes of thinking and action that pass for science and development, respectively, are not universal and humanly inclusive, as they are made out to be; modern science and development are projects of male, western origin, both historically and ideologically. They are the latest and most brutal expression of patriarchal ideology which is threatening to annihilate nature and the entire human species.

A Cry from Within

Herman E. Daly is an economist employed by the World Bank. In response to growing ecological awareness, he and John B. Cobb, a theologian have written on the need to make fundamental changes in the way in which economics is understood and practised. His cry, coming from a western white male economist within the dominant world is worth noting as well. Writing in For The Common Good, he says,

But at a deep level of our being we find it hard to suppress the cry of anguish, the scream of horror--the wild words required to express wild realities. We human beings are being led to a dead end--all too literally. We are living by an ideology of death and accordingly we are destroying our own humanity and killing the planet.²

Daly and Cobb build an argument around the distortionary factors involved in the centring of economics as a university-based academic discipline. They refer to the fallacy of misplaced concreteness in economics and other disciplines, to directions for a new economics based in genuine community and to steps to be taken if, in their opinion, there is to be any hope at all. Among the points made are:

The problem does not arise from personal weakness; it arises from the nature of academic disciplines in general and from the nature of deductive sciences in particular.³

We are proposing a dethroning of the disciplinary organization of knowledge.⁴

Alfred North Whitehead in even called upon to lend credit to their critique of economics and the universities that shape economics. In writing about the dangers of abstraction, one of the principles which western rational scientific thought is based on, Whitehead is quoted as saying,

The disadvantage of exclusive attention to a group of abstractions, however well-founded, is that, by the nature of the case, you have abstracted from the remainder of things. Insofar as the excluded things are important in your experience, your modes of thought are not fitted to deal with them (emphasis added).⁵

These words, from the heart of patriarchy and science simply underscore the messages of the community educators in New York and the women of Chipko.

Voices from Cultural History

Edmund V. Sullivan, of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, is the educator and writer most closely associated with the relationship of education to cultural history and ecological thought. He has been working in recent years particularly closely with the cultural historian and theologian, Thomas Berry. In an important work in progress, Sullivan issues a challenge to the academy including all educational structures with the following three assertions:

- 1) In the twentieth century the glory of the human has become the desolation of the earth.
- 2) The desolation of the Earth has become the destiny of the human.
- 3) All human institutions, programs and activities must be judged primarily by the extent to which they inhibit, ignore or foster a mutually enhancing human-earth relationship.⁶

Sullivan further asserts that all educational institutions, insofar as they prepare people for the current industrial order, are part and parcel of the planetary crisis that we are experiencing at present.

His work emphasizes the recovery of a sense of enchantment of the earth, the importance of the telling of 'the universe story', the emancipation from privilege, the role of sacrifice, and the recovery of the voices of the silenced.

An adult education voice

Mechtild Hart, a German-born scholar working in Chicago has written a remarkable book, Working and Educating for Life, which looks at adult education from a class and gender framework within both an environmental and an internationalist framework. Her book is the first such effort to develop feminist and international perspectives of adult education in this depth. The limitation of her work is that it is a reflection and commentary on and from the industrialized United States, but there are important considerations for our larger quest for understanding the role of knowledge in transformation. Interesting to note is that both Hart and Vandana Shiva make important use of the work of the German feminist economist, Maria Mies. For Hart,

Knowledge does not come from any one single source, and it is not monopolized, owned or guarded by one particular individual or institution. Rather knowledge has multiple sources, combines in manifold ways, forever attuned to the particulars of the situation. It is knowledge that is alive, contracts and expands, alternately adjusts to the contours of its object.⁷

Compare this statement with Paulo Freire's description of knowing in the recent book of conversations between he and Myles Horton of the Highlander Centre in Tennessee,

Knowing for me is not a neutral act, not only from the political point of view, but from the point of view of my body, my sensual body. It is full of feelings, of emotions, of tastes.⁸

Hart goes on to elaborate a new concept, based on feminist principles, which she calls subsistence knowing.

...The epistemology that can be developed out of the experience of mothering is characterized by non-dichotomous relationships between the knower and the object of knowing, between the natural and the social, between critical judgement and empathetic intuition, between reason and emotion and between the subjective and the objective.

Because of this respectful, preserving attitude, I have called this way of knowing subsistence knowing. Such subsistence knowing also stresses complexity and change rather than linearity and stasis, and it implies and structures non-dominating forms of interaction.⁹

The voice of difference

The death in early 1993 of Audre Lorde marked the passing of a towering intellect who more than anyone in North America brought the positive challenge of difference to intellectuals both within and without of the academy. African-American Woman, lesbian, in a relationship of mixed race, socialist, poet and friend of so many, she captured so often in her poetry, the anguish, the fear and the bright new beauty of difference recognized and cherished. In her poem, "Litany for Survival", she said,

and when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid

so it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive

Cornel West, African-American theologian and cultural commentator, writing in a 1991 collection on the cultural politics of difference, summarized his position of the project of these new voices from *The Chorus* as follows,

We promote a prospective and prophetic vision with a sense of possibility and potential especially for those who bear the social costs of the present. We look to the past for strength, not solace; we look at the present and see people perishing, not profits mounting; we look toward the future and vow to make it different and better.¹⁰

Popular Education and Social Movements: Knowing How to Change

Popular education is a relatively new term in the English language. It has been used in France since the late 19th Century and is currently used in Quebec adult education circles. The usage in English is derived most often from the Spanish term 'educacion popular' which has been a label of choice for a great many Latin American adult educators since the late 1970s. Popular education, sometimes referred to as people's education refers to an educational process which makes a preferential option for working with the poor towards practical social, political and economic changes. Popular education begins with the daily lived experiences of women and men in their communities and places of work. Popular education validates people's knowledge and uses knowledge generated by people working together to strengthen resistance to oppression and build organizations for collective action. Popular education has drawn much on the earlier work of Paulo Freire and has spread to all communities and corners of Latin America. Its dissemination and exchange has been strengthened by formal and informal networks of popular educators. The network, ALFORJA, based in each of the Central American countries has been one such influential and dynamic networks. CEAAL, the Latin American Council for Adult Education based in Chile has brought popular educators from all parts of Latin America from the Rio Bravo on the Mexican-U.S. border to the southern tip of Chile. Carlos Nunez of Mexico, Francisco Vio Grossi of Chile, Moema Viezzer of Brazil, Francisco Cardinal of Nicaragua, Jorge Osorio of Chile are just some of the activist educators whose names are known outside Latin

America. There are thousands of others in small and large organizations in each part of the continent whose work remains outside the framework of those who do not work in Spanish. In some ways one could equate popular education to educational theory in a way that the theology of liberation relates to general theology.

In Canada and the United States, the term is being taken up by more and more groups and individuals that are looking for a way of differentiating their intentions from a broader based adult education which in many ways tries to be all things for all people. Popular Education is apt to be used instead of the concept 'adult education for social change' increasingly. The fact that there are two new North American organizations which link adult educators on a continental basis is evidence of the growing interest. North American Popular Educators (NAPE) is an organization open to all individuals interested in learning more about popular education on the North American continent. It is coordinated by John Hurst who lives and works in Berkeley, California. In addition, the North American Alliance for Popular and Adult Education (NAAPAE) provides a framework for popular education organizations to come together for common strategic work and sharing. This later organization is coordinated by the Argentinean-born community educator, Maria Elina Dufau-Kramarz from Toronto, Canada.

The organizational base of the popular education movement in both Latin America and North America are the hundreds of community or workplace-based centres which are found in all parts of the continent. With the exception of the Highlander Centre for Education and Research located in Tennessee which has a continuous history since 1932, most of these centres are fairly recent and operate without longterm stable funding. Knowledge generated by these community-based centres and networks is exchanged through a complex and often informal network of groups which for the most part are interested in people in other places who are trying to do the same things they are. Computer-supported electronic networks are used in a very sophisticated way by the environmental groups among them. The work of these groups and individuals is almost always done in the context of specific issues that arise with groups of people in community. Some groups may focus on violence against women, others on toxic waste, others on literacy and still others on cultural recovery. These popular educators, both in Latin American

and increasingly in North America are rooted in efforts to work towards understanding oppressions and structures of dominance and in efforts to support deepening democratic possibility.

But, with the exception of Paulo Freire of Brazil and Myles Horton of Tennessee, few of the names are known in Universities. And quite frankly, few University names are known in the popular education circles. In Latin America the level of theorization of popular education is much deeper than in North America in part because of the political situation where in countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Nicaragua, whole generations of university trained intellectuals have been either forced out of the universities or have made a choice to work for political transformation. But the imperialism of the English language works to exclude the writing and participation of these scholar activists from all but the most obscure locations of knowledge legitimation. The crisis of knowledge in the academy will not be overcome, if it will be at all, in closed debate within the walls. The practice of popular education and the networks which support it are an important area which deserves close examination in our search for truth.

Social Movements as sites of learning

I am indebted to Michael Welton of Dalhousie University for his insights into the theoretical understanding of social movements as learning sites and creators of knowledge. The importance of social movements such as local autonomy, ecology, women, and peace, as sources of transformational knowledge, vision, energy and action have been increasingly recognized by social theorists. I would argue that social theory has followed the invention and use of social movements, just as it followed the early development of capitalism. In the political life of both the community and the academy there has been a debate over the central role of the working class or social movements as prime movers of social change. In the International Council for Adult Education for example, in 1982 it was decided to structure the World Assembly of Adult Education in Paris along 'social movement' lines in acceptance of the notion that social movements were the sites of major transformative possibility in both local and global terms. So

the themes of the World Assembly were not functional ones which might have looked at approaches to adult education, adult education at different levels, uses of technology in adult learning and so forth. Instead there were working groups which examined adult education as a part of and contributor to women's emancipation, peace, solidarity, workers and their organizations, and primary health care.

Social movements offer the possibility of collective identity, a common political project and a means of taking action which have taken full advantage of both grass roots organizing and action broader community and international linkages. Social movements which have been able to develop broad political support have been able to articulate a clear critical and utopian vision of direction, have been able to 'name' the antagonistic forces and have been able to develop ways of struggling for space within civil society in opposition to dominant forces. As Michael Welton says,

It is on this common ground of opposition to a threatened natural and social existence that new social movement actors work out their practical strategies and shape their subjective dispositions.¹¹

Social movements challenge all of society, including universities and researchers and professors within them. But at the same time they offer a location for collaboration and mutual support. They are at once creators of new forms of knowledge and places where new thinking can be used. The structuring of social movements offers a means by which new forms of knowledge can be shaped and tested through a combined test of practicality to locally determined grass roots needs and fit within a nationally or internationally framed problematic.

The flourishing of new centres of knowledge

In part because of the perceived rigidity, bureaucracy, and social distance of the university; in part because higher education may very well play a counter-transformative role in much of social

change; there has been a flourishing of new centres of reflection and community-based social movement research throughout the countries of the South and within the industrialized nations as well. Some of these new centres of knowledge have gained considerable international visibility such as PRIA, Participatory Research in Asia, which has a staff of 40 or so researchers and activist organizers who work all over India and in some other parts of Asia with social movement based non-governmental organizations. They publish within NGO circles, are involved in a dizzying number of networks about critical social issues and devote their full attention and support to strengthening the base of grass roots democratic change.

In Latin America, Centro El Canelo de Nos is a similar centre located on a farm on the outskirts of Santiago in Chile. El Canelo is a centre which supports a wide variety of actions which are based on supporting grass roots knowledge generation and validation. New knowledge in popular education, organic farming, peasant technologies, popular culture, women's oppression, human rights and health promotion are disseminated through local television, magazines as well as seminars and workshops. The 100 or so staff of El Canelo are active as well in a wide variety of Latin American and international social movement networks.

In Toronto, where I live, there are over 800 community-based groups, networks, centres and organizations. They are generating new thinking each day about how to deal with the economy. For all practical purposes, the Provincial and Federal governments have abandoned economic possibilities other than more efficient restructuring for work in the global assembly line and the global market. Green economic recovery, community economic development, local economy, women and housing and scores more of loose networks of working and engaged women and men are working towards transformative objectives in practical and visionary ways.

In the field of popular education, one of the Toronto centres, the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Social Justice, has sponsored over the past eight years a project known as "The Moment" project. Based on Gramscian notions of conjunctural analysis as originally developed in Central America by groups working with ALFORJA, The Moment project, under the leadership of Deborah Barndt has created a process for activists across a wide spectrum of social movements to come together

over the years to analyze the 'cracks in hegemony' of modern capitalist society to see best how to move forward strategically on a variety of social issues. Again, like other similar centres in other parts of the world, "The Moment" project publishes a newsletter and networks with an extremely wide variety of other social movement activists within the city and in other parts of the world.

In Africa, I am aware of other impressive centres of local reflection and wide networking capacities based in Uganda, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Nigeria.

Concluding remarks

The question of the Latina woman to us in our panel in New York City, "When will you University people finally leave us alone?" is one which those of us in higher education must take very seriously. More than ever before in history, our very survival depends upon the reinvention of all our human institutions. The modern conception of the university is not so old that it cannot be transformed. If we first recognize that something is deeply wrong, second work at understanding how power is maintained within specific and particular structures of higher education and, third begin to explore democratic, respectful, supportive and non-extractive relationships with those women and men working in other locations of critical knowledge creation, then we will move towards the sustaining of life and away from death.

As Mechtild Hart has said,

Neither externally given, 'objective knowledge', nor the knowledge contained in individual experience are sufficient for arriving at the truth about the whole of society. The effort of truth-seeking is a profoundly transformative one, where knowledge about ones's self and about the world is constantly recreated in view of a future society.¹²

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