Decolonisation of Higher Education: Knowledge, Democracy and Values

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Here I stand

My name is Jowett

There is no knowledge

But I know it

I am the Master of this college

What I don't know is not knowledge

B. Jowett, Master of Balliol College, Oxford

"There is a radical departure in the politics of knowledge that we must recognize. Voice, protest, resistance, participation, and rights do not exhaust the framework of democracy. For that what one needs is a democracy of knowledges" Shiv Visvanathan, India

"The struggle for global social justice will therefore be a struggle for global epistemic justice" de Santos Sousa, Portugal

"As long as African intellectuals attempt to stand only on the shoulders of European thinkers, they will remain pidgin intellectuals" Wangoola, Uganda

The perpetuation of the class structure requires that the hierarchical division of labour be reproduced in the consciousness of its participants. Bowles and Gintis, USA

Introduction

I am a colonial settler whose great grandparents immigrated to what is today called Canada from England in the later 19th Century. My family and I were transformed from being landless poor to middle class through the acquisition of lands stolen from the Halalt First Nations, the Indigenous people who have lived in the Chemainus river valley for millennia on what is now known as Vancouver Island. I live and work on the unceded territory of the Lekwungen-speaking peoples,

the Esquimalt, Songhees and W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations whose relation to the land continues to this day.

Dispossession and knowledge

The geographer David Harvey has elaborated the concept of accumulation through dispossession to explain how capital, the basis of our dominant economic system, began to be accumulated (Harvey 2006). Dispossessing people of access to their land he suggests lies at the heart of early capital accumulation. The story of my family's transformation through the dispossession of the lands of the Halalt First Nations on my Island is a perfect example. Harvey draws attention to the processes in 14th-17th Century England, which removed people from their land through what has become known as the enclosures. He tells us of wealthy landowners who used force and even arms to transform the traditional open fields and communal pastures into private property for their own profit. A similar process similarly affected the clans of Scotland, which was so widespread that their dispossessions were known as the clearances. Each of these acts of dispossession left the majority of people without access to land and allowed for wealth to accumulate to those who were now known as private landowners. New categories of people were defined, the landed gentry, the workers in the estates and the land and the landless.

Lest you think that these acts went on unnoticed, let us recall the words of an English rhyme from the period.

The law condemns the woman or man
Who steals the goose from off the common
But leaves the greater felon loose
Who steals the common from the goose

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to spend a few days in one of the Oxford Colleges, a college that was created at the same time as the enclosures. I entered the college through a low doorway only accessible to students and fellows and their guests. The college was walled in and only accessible through one or two guarded entryways. While staying in the college, the linkage between the enclosing of previously common land for private purposes and the creation of walled places for learning became disturbingly apparent. The act of creating Oxford and the other

medieval universities was an act of enclosing knowledge, limiting access to knowledge, exerting a form of control over knowledge and providing a means for a small elite to acquire this knowledge for purposes of leadership of a spiritual nature, of a governance nature or a cultural nature. Those within the walls became knowers; those outside the wall became non- knowers. Knowledge was removed from the land and from the relationships of those sharing the land. The enclosing of the academy dispossessed the vast majority of knowledge keepers, forever relegating their knowledge to witchcraft, tradition, superstition, folkways, or at best some form of common sense.

These new academies came into being as well at the time of the rise of European science and through improvements in navigational aids and the wealth generated by the enclosures and the exploitation of silver and gold from Latin America, the hegemony of mostly white euro-centric knowledge spread around the world. Just as colonial political practices carved up the globe in the 18th and 19th centuries, knowledge, the intellectual energy by which humans operate became colonized as well. The process of dispossession of other knowledge is a process that Boaventura de Sosa Santos, has called epistemicide, or the killing of knowledge systems. I will come back to how epistemicide, linguicide and cultural genocide have been a product of western modern higher education, but first I want to continue my remarks with some stories about knowledge.

PRIA

In the late 1970s a young Indian academician by the name of Rajesh Tandon, educated in the elite universities of India and the USA found himself deep in rural Rajasthan working as a researcher with Tribal farmers on rural development issues. He found on every issue of rural development that he encountered, that the unschooled women and men in rural Rajasthan were more knowledgeable than he, not marginally, but deeply so. A few years later when he had the opportunity, he created the non-governmental research organization that today is known as PRIA, the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, with the aim of supporting the development of grass roots knowledge with the urban and rural poor for social change.

Honey Bee Network

In the late 1980s in the state of Gujarat in India, a knowledge network was created dedicated to countering what they noted as a pernicious culture of knowledge asymmetry. Knowledge

asymmetry occurs when the people who provide knowledge do not benefit from the gathering and organizing of that knowledge. “Knowledge”, they said, “has been extracted, documented without any acknowledgement to the source. The documented knowledge has not been communicated to the knowledge holder for feedback. These practices have not only impoverished the knowledge holders by pushing them further down in the oblivion, but also have hampered the growth of an informal knowledge system, that is robust in nurturing creativity”.

They called their project the Honey Bee knowledge network, based on the in the metaphor of the honey bee which does two things that scholars, often don’t do. It collects pollen from the flowers without exploiting or hearing a complaint and it connects flower to flower through pollination so that in the end life itself continues.

Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity

In the late 1990s, a Ugandan intellectual and civil society activist, Ndawula Wangoola returned home to his Kingdom of Busoga after 25 years of work in various parts of Africa and abroad to report on the state of the world as he had experienced it. His message to his Elders was this.

“You sent me out, one of the lesser young people of my generation, to gain Western knowledge and to work in the structures and organisations of the Western world. I have been to their universities, have worked with their governments, have created Western style organisations here in Africa and now I have come home to share what I have learned. I have come to tell you that we, the children of Busoga Kingdom, the children of Afrika will never realize our full potential as people in our communities and as contributors to the global treasury of knowledge if we continue to depend wholly on the content and ways of knowledge of the European peoples. Our way forward must be linked to the recovery, replenishment and revitalization of our thousands of years old Indigenous knowledge.”

With those words came a decision by Wangoola to withdraw from the western world economic structures, to return to a subsistence life style and to dedicate himself to the creation of a village-based institution of higher education and research that is today known as the Mpambo, Afrikan Multiversity, a place for the support of mother-tongue scholars of Afrikan Indigenous knowledge.

University of Abahlalhi baseMjondolo

In 2005 in Durban South Africa some of the inhabitants of the tin-roofed shacks of the city created a blockade on Kennedy Road to protest the sale of land originally promised to the poor for house building, to an industrialist for commercial purposes. This movement of those living in these shacks has grown into, Abahlali baseMjondolo, the shack dwellers movement. But what is unique to this social movement is that they have created their own University of Abahlali baseMjondolo, a space for the creation of knowledge about survival, hope and transformation where the shack dwellers themselves are the scholars, the Professors and the teachers. They create and share knowledge through song, 'live action debates' and discussions and document the knowledge in a web based archive.

Languages of the land

My final story begins with a young Indigenous woman from the Lil'wat First Nation in British Columbia. In the 1960s she was chosen by her community to work as a research guide for a non-Indigenous linguist who had expressed an interest in working on the development of an alphabet for the St'át'imcets language. She was successful in this challenge and her people have made use of this alphabet since that time. By these times, this woman has become a leading authority on Indigenous Languages in Canada. Her name is Wanots'a in her language or Dr. Lorna Williams. She has become the leading scholar of Indigenous language revitalization, but the fate of the language of her community and the fate of most of the Indigenous languages of Canada have not fared well. The impact of colonial domination of western language traditions has resulted in linguicide, the death or near-death of these carriers of our global cultural heritage.

Knowledge is the star

In each of the stories that I have just shared with you knowledge is central. Knowledge is the star of each drama. Knowledge is dynamic, active, engaged and linked to social, political, cultural or sustainable changes. PRIA's co-constructed knowledge is linked to a variety of social movements in India. Mpambo's mother tongue scholars are stimulating an unprecedented reawakening of Afrikan spiritual knowledge and sharing in Uganda. The shack dwellers of Durban and beyond have boldly taken the word university as their own and turned the knowledge hierarchies upside down in the service of justice for the poor. The Indigenous language champions working with the First People's Cultural Council have staked a claim to epistemological privilege over the western

trained non-Indigenous linguists. The healers from South Africa have staked their claims to knowledge superiority not to settle any epistemological scores with western science, but in their commitment to better serve the health needs of their people. These knowledge innovators have all facilitated various means of creating, sharing and accessing knowledge that is not part of what is often called the western canon. For a variety of justice, cultural, spiritual, environmental, health reasons, the application of knowledge from the western canon in each one of these stories was seen as insufficient. The contexts, conditions, values, uses, politics of knowledge in each of these stories called for opening outwards from our comfortable assumptions about whose knowledge counts and what the relationship between knowledge and life might be.

The four epistemicides of the long 16th Century

I am grateful to the work of Grosfoguel and Dussel who in addition to de Sousa Santos have helped me to understand how the ideas of white men from just a few countries of Italy, France, England, Germany and the USA came to dominate the world of knowledge (Grosfoguel 2013, Dussel 1993). How and when were the colonial structures of knowledge created? How we have arrived at this point in time when any of us could be parachuted into any university in the world settled into a social science lecture and be at home with the authors and ideas being discussed?

To understand that we have to look at what Grosfoguel has called the, "Four Genocides/Epistemicides of the Long 16th Century" (Grosfoguel 2013). It seems that the story of dispossessing the people from the ownership of their ideas in the medieval universities that brought ecclesiastical power to the new universities was just the start of our knowledge story. Grosfoguel pulls four distinct stories of epistemicide, stories almost always treated as separate historical processes, together. In doing so we learn in a powerful manner how intellectual colonization has emerged. The four epistemicides are the conquest of Al-Andalus, the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Europe, the conquest of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas started by the Spanish, continued by the French and the English and still underway today in the contemporary Western Hemisphere. The creation of the slave trade that resulted in millions killed in Africa and at sea and more totally de-humanized by enslavement in the Americas was a third genocidal knowledge conquest. Finally, the killing of millions of Indo-European women mostly through burning at the stake as witches because of knowledge practices that were not controlled by men. These conquests transformed Europe from itself being at the periphery of an earlier dominant Islamic centre of

intellectual power to taking centre stage. But in an historic irony Spain and Portugal, the leading military and intellectual powers of the 15th Century have been shut out of the post 16th Century Northern European monopoly of knowledge.

What is important for us to understand is that these four conquests were both military and epistemological/ideological. At the height of the Al-Adalus Empire in Europe, the city of Cordoba had a 500,000-book library. This was at a time when other intellectual centres in Europe would have had libraries of 5-10,000 books. The Spanish burned the library in Cordoba and elsewhere. They destroyed most of the codices in the Mayan, Inca and Aztec empires as well. Women's knowledge, which was largely oral was simply silenced as was the knowledge of Africa. African slaves were portrayed as non-humans incapable of Western style thought. Hegel for example in commenting on Africans says, "Among negroes it is the case that consciousness has not attained even the intuition of any sort of objectivity…the negro is the man as beast (Lectures 218)" (as quoted in Dussell 1993:70). The continued linguicide of Indigenous languages in North America and throughout the world today is evidence that the patterns established through conquest in the 16th Centuries is still deeply entrenched in our own minds and most certainly in our higher education institutions.

Knowledge democracy and global challenges

Knowledge is defined in several ways: the facts, feelings or experiences of a person or group of people, a state of knowing or awareness, and/or the consciousness or familiarity gained by experience or learning. Knowledge is created through research, through the experience of the wise, through the act of surviving in the world, and is represented in text, poetry, music, political discourse, the social media, speeches, drama and storytelling. Knowledge is linked to practical skills, to our working lives and to universal and abstract thought. Knowledge is created every day by each one of us and is central to who we are as human beings. Knowledge tells us who we are and who we are not. Knowledge tells us how the world is and how to interact with it, how to live and prosper, what to do in life and how to do it in order to succeed and be happy, and is even at the base of what we have collectively accepted by being successful. At this moment in history, where the perception of truth and the comprehension of what things are is largely given to

science, replacing the religious and traditional cosmovisions, the knowledge we value and the knowledge we manage (just a small part of the knowledge generated), lies at the basis of how we understand reality and how we live. During the last years of the 20th century, we saw a dramatic increase in the importance given to the role of knowledge. The main way in which knowledge and society have been linked has been in a much more instrumental, productive and money-for-value relationship. Peter Drucker uses the concept of a knowledge economy to express how we have moved from an economy of goods to an economy of knowledge (Drucker, 1969), where ideas and knowledge have an economic value and have become a fundamental driver of society. Scholars working on what was called 'new growth theory' strengthened the ascendency of knowledge as a critical factor in economic growth. Romer noted that 'knowledge is the basic form of economic capital, and economic growth is driven by the accumulation of knowledge' (Romer, 1986, 1990). This relationship is also expressed by the World Development Report of 1999–2000, as follows: For countries in the vanguard of the world economy, the balance between knowledge and resources has shifted so far towards the former that knowledge has become perhaps the most important factor determining the standard of living – more than land, than tools, than labour. Today's most technologically advanced economies are truly knowledge-based. National governments have, one after the other, taken up this language as they seek to build more skilled workforces, invest further in science and technological research and strengthen links between business and universities in the interest of global competitiveness. Higher education strategies around the world are often linked to the need to develop a workforce that would make a region or a nation more competitive within the global economy. As Sörlin and Vessuri (2007) suggest, there is a 'democratic deficit' in the notion of a knowledge economy that they believe is overcome by the use of the concept of 'knowledge societies'. The UNESCO World Report Towards Knowledge Societies (2005) defines this concept as follows: Knowledge societies are about capabilities to identify, produce, process, transform, disseminate and use information to build and apply knowledge for human development. They require empowering social vision that encompasses inclusion, solidarity and participation. There is growing attention to extending the discussions about the complex role of knowledge in our lives beyond the notions of knowledge economy and the knowledge society. Conceptual work linking knowledge, equity, democracy and engagement can be found in the thinking of de Sousa Santos (2006), Gaventa and Bivens (2011), Sörlin and Vessuri (2007), Hall (2011) and Tandon (2008).).

Gaventa and Bivens note that, ‘without cognitive justice, which focuses on whose knowledge counts, the larger struggles for social justice will not be realized’ (2011, p. 1). A term that is increasing used to describe an active, engaged and values-based understanding of knowledge is ‘knowledge democracy’. Knowledge democracy or cognitive justice is linked to the deeper transformations that our times appear to be calling for. De Souza Santos provides arguably the richest conceptual approach to an inclusive understanding of knowledge. The global lines that he is referring to are those that separate the visible constituents of knowledge and power from those who are invisible. For de Souza Santos, the way forward lies in the concept of ‘ecologies of knowledge’. An ecology of knowledge framework is centred on knowledge from the ‘other side of the line’, what others speak of as excluded knowledge. Knowledge democracy is in part the idea that knowledge is to be measured through its capacity to intervene in reality and not just to represent it. An intelligent society must be ready to generate knowledge (ideas, instruments and procedures) corresponding with transnational knowledge societies and networks. The idea of an intelligent society recognizes that all human beings have the capacity to create knowledge in the context of creating a new way of living or a new society. Now is the moment to widen the scope of knowledge in society and to move beyond creating socioeconomic well-being towards a true knowledge-based society, through engagement with citizenry as a whole, at all scales of activity, to dealing with the problematic issues of the day and the global issues (GUNi, 2009). Knowledge must contribute to society’s incorporation of sustainability shift paradigms. We need to connect different kinds and sources of knowledge and facilitate understanding between different cultures, forging links between knowledge and citizenship. This is necessary to breaking conformity of thought by proactively criticizing the world of ideas. The creation and dissemination of knowledge could contribute to transforming the paradigms and beliefs established in social, economic and political systems, and to moving forward to creative and innovative ways of thinking and imagining new realities. Knowledge could also help in ethical awareness and facilitate the civic commitment of citizens and professionals. It is an important moment for looking more deeply at the ethical, social and environmental implications of the advance of knowledge, and to increase the resources invested in analyzing the impact of science and technology in society. Knowledge is also linked with democracy, citizenship, inter-cultural relations, recognition of interdependence, new approaches to health and well-being, rights, mutual comprehension, peace-building and a deep understanding of life’s dynamics. Society

needs to incorporate complexity and uncertainty in the way problems are analyzed and assumed. We know there is a need to link multiple areas of knowledge that are complementary in the capacity to deal with complex problems and find solutions in the local and global context. Local needs require local proposals in global frameworks, and global challenges require global solutions that are locally acceptable. However, global solutions can come from local experience and vice versa. How we facilitate networking among a range of different social actors and levels of activity is also important. Coupling research, decision making and development to inform political decisions that affect large segments of population is a key issue to tackle for the collective well-being (GUNi, 2008).

Principles of Knowledge Democracy

In the work that Rajesh Tandon and I do within the context of our UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education, we continue to evolve our understanding of knowledge democracy. Our approach to knowledge democracy is understood in seven principles:

1. Decolonisation and the recognition of multiple epistemologies
2. Respect for the co-construction of knowledge
3. Broadening our research methods tool kits
4. Sharing research findings beyond the academy
5. Knowledge at the heart of transformative action
6. Recognising the rights of Indigenous communities and others to own, control, access and possess their own knowledge (OCAP)
7. Free and open access to most research findings.

Decolonisation and recognition of multiple epistemologies

Decolonisation begins with the understanding that the body of knowledge associated with European thinking of the past 500 or so years is but one way of knowing in a world where a multitude of other ways of knowing are still present. But how can we handle multiple epistemologies. The late Colombian Orlando Fals Borda created a revolutionary text in 1979 with his book on the Historia Doble de la Costa (Double History of the Coast). The work

assumes a dual narrative structure printed on opposite sides of the page. Channel A consists of narratives, anecdotes, and historical reconstructions based on oral, documentary, and published sources; Channel B, on the right, concentrates on theory, guiding concepts, the broader regional and national historical context, and the methodology that underlies Channel A. (Fals Borda 1979) His work privileges the knowledge of the Afro-Colombian and Indigenous grassroots knowledge keepers without abandoning Western science.

The philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah argues that the complaints of anti-universalists are not generally about universalism at all, but pseudo-universalism, "Eurocentric hegemony posing as universalism" (2017). When this happens, intolerance becomes intolerance for all things different. The illusion of the universal becomes a cry for the status quo. As a further illustration of the emergence of new voices of knowledge democracy, we refer to the National Inuit Strategy on Research produced by the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2018). The report opens with this statement,

"The relationship between Inuit and the research community is replete with examples of exploitation and racism. Research has largely functioned as a tool of colonialism, with the earliest scientific forays into Inuit Nunangat serving as precursors for the expansion of Canadian sovereignty and the dehumanization of Inuit. Early approaches to the conduct of research in Inuit Nunangat cast Inuit as either objects of study or bystanders. This legacy has had lasting impact on Inuit and it continues to be reflected in current approaches to research governance, funding, policies, and practices."

The co-construction of knowledge

If we take the principle that there are multiple ways of knowing seriously and we also acknowledge that there is epistemic privilege associated with persons who are living with issues of poverty, exclusion or marginality, then this implies two things. First it implies that all people create knowledge in the context of surviving, resisting, working for their families and communities and so forth. As Gramscii noted, "All men are intellectuals, but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals" (1999).

The second implication is that if we have an identify as an academic researcher and intend to work on issues beyond our personal locations and identity, working with those whose views are excluded as allies, then we need to think about principles of co-construction. Co-construction of knowledge means that as academics we work as equals with those with whom we are in partnership with. If we are working with young people on ideas of everyday democracy

for example, then we will engage with young people as co-researchers with us. We will work with our youth researchers to decide which methods to use and how best to move our findings to action. These principles have been elaborated in great deal over the years within the discourses of participatory research, community led research and participatory action research. (Hall, Tandon 2017).

Broadening our research methods tool kits

Once we become interested in supporting community and civil society sectors in the creation and co-creation of research on topics of their own priority with action and change as the goal, we open ourselves to the possibilities of using a much broader set of research methods. If our intent is to build community capacity to take action and articulate community needs as an integral part of the research process, then we are free to move beyond the more traditional quantitative and qualitative research methods that are most common in academic circles. Of course, in consultation with our community partners we may decide to include interviews and statistical data as part of our participatory research processes, but we are also free to draw on the very many social, participatory and expressive types of research methods. Clover has written extensively on the use of arts-based research methods within a paradigm of feminist transformative research. Her work explores the use of exhibitions, theatre, dance, poetry, graffiti and quilting as research methods. (Clover 2007). These approaches allow for the articulation of both affective and cognitive knowledge to be gathered. Wilson, in writing about Indigenous research methods, speaks of research as ceremony, a ceremony of knowledge and relationships. (Wilson, 2004).

Sharing research beyond the academy

Once we begin to work within the world of multiple epistemologies and ecologies of knowledge, we need to think about the best ways to represent knowledge that has been created within marginalised communities or co-constructed between communities and academics. It is a well-known fact that most articles in refereed journals are in fact never read nor cited. It is further known that research generated in the global South or within communities of the excluded North does not find its way into mainstream journals. It is further clear that if one is hoping for changes in a village, in a larger community, in policy or public opinion, that peer reviewed journal articles and academic conferences have limited value. What is the role of video? Can a community theatre piece influence the public? Can an exhibition of stories make an impact?

What about policy papers for local governments? What about demonstrations? When thinking about knowledge mobilisation or the dissemination of results, it is critical to think about how new knowledge might make the most impact.

Knowledge at the heart of Transformative Action

When we think of social movements as drivers of transformative change or local collective action and the struggle for community improvements, we often think about the structures of these forms of transformative action. Who are the persons at the core of the movements? How are they organised? What kinds of communication strategies do they take up? How do they situate themselves in the social and political conjuncture of the time? A knowledge democracy framework asserts that locally contextualised knowledge is itself a critical piece in the building of organisational capacity for change. Information on the nature of exploitation and its impacts on the lives of people for example can be an essential component in successful mobilising for action. Whether it is data such as that generated during the Occupy movement or that coming from an understanding of sexual harassment in the civil society sectors in India or the oral histories of Indigenous Peoples collected to stop extractive industries in Canada, knowledge is at the heart of the most successful transformative processes.

Ownership, Control, Access and Possession of Indigenous and other knowledge

The principles of ownership, control, access and possession (OCAP) were first articulated by the First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (2008) OCAP principles were articulated as a response to the profoundly negative impact of colonial research practices where Indigenous communities were treated as data sources for researchers who never returned any results to the communities. The key notions relate to the collective ownership of group information; First Nations control over research and information; First Nations' management of access to their data and physical possession of the data. Knowledge democracy calls for respect for and use of these principles when working with Indigenous communities. We also invite researchers to consider how these principles could easily be applied to other excluded or marginalised groups. Respect for the knowledge keepers of communities, movements and Indigenous peoples is a key to knowledge democracy.

Open Access to research findings

Open Access is the free, immediate, online availability of research articles combined with the rights to use these articles fully in the digital environment. Open Access means that persons who live everywhere that there is access to the internet can read or download books, research reports, peer reviewed journal articles, and technical reports for free. Most research funding comes from public research funding bodies. Academics further provide articles to journals for free without the expectation of compensation. This means that with the exception of findings that are held under agreement with Indigenous or other groups, that research results should be free and immediately available to everyone who would like to read or make use of them. This is particularly critical when we note that the cost of one book published in the USA or the UK might be sold through commercial publishers at a cost that might be as much as a month's salary in some countries in Africa or elsewhere in the global South. Our commitment with our UNESCO Chair for example is to publish all of our books, articles and other reports in an open access manner. Open access and open educational resources as critical contributors to the knowledge democracy movement.

Conclusions: Revolt of the Chorus

In the Greek tragedies the structure of the drama revolved around the pronouncements of the Gods. Gods would speak and then the assembled Chorus would amplify the intentions of the Gods. The Chorus, however numerous did not initiate their own conversations. Sometime about 500 years ago, that body of ideas that we refer to as the Western canon or Patriarchal European knowledge took on God like status with the majority of academic institutions around the world. The central discourses of the Western canon, articulated mostly by European men can be found almost universally within the higher education institutions where ever one looks. The structure of academic knowledge is identified through the disciplines. A test of the dominance of the Western Gods of knowledge is to take a look at the web sites of nearly any university in the world. We will see almost identical disciplinary structures. Humanities, social sciences, history, engineering of various types, biological and other sciences. Should you dig deeper into the course structures of any discipline, one might very well find the same core theorists at my university in Canada and yours wherever you live.

Decolonisation, knowledge democracy and value-based research are all concepts which are emerging as the Chorus, the multitudes of ordinary persons in the world are in revolt against

the Gods. Students demonstrate in South Africa for a break from the apartheid of white knowledge that has persisted even though politics of apartheid were broken many years ago. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada calls upon all universities in Canada to decolonise their curriculum, to include the stories of colonial cultural genocide perpetrated on the Indigenous peoples of Canada in the teachings so that all students can finally begin to hear the truth. Knowledge movements of women who say No to continued sexual exploitation, urban poor who create tent cities in the midst of wealth to draw attention to housing affordability and environmental and Indigenous activists all over the world who say No to fossil fuel extraction all understand the transformative power of knowledge to the success of their movements. The idea of knowledge, whose knowledge counts, how grass roots knowledge is gathered may be a compelling topic in a seminar in any university. But the creation of knowledge and the naming of the world is more importantly part of the a great turning that we are living through.

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