

EMERGENT INTELLECTUAL FORMATIONS: POSITIONING UNIVERSITIES AND REGIONAL CULTURES IN A POST-COLONIAL ERA¹

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INTRODUCTION

When discussing the "complexity of hegemony", Raymond Williams states that "educational institutions are usually the main agencies of the transmission of an effective dominant culture" (*Problems* 39). Hegemony following Gramsci constitutes a process of "deeply saturating the consciousness", permeating all practices and expectations, not least of all institutions. This presentation examines universities in post-colonial societies as agencies transmitting the "effective dominant culture", and then focuses on new intellectual formations within post-colonial societies that challenge Western cultural hegemony in these institutions and, consequently, challenge dominant Western paradigms as institutionalized knowledge.

While many argue for an opening of the social sciences or against the artificial barriers of disciplines, our presentation calls for a more fundamental transformation of "institutionalized knowledge" and a recognition of the university as a hegemonic institution that limits the possibilities of emancipatory praxis. We are entering this discussion through the prism of knowledge that has been transplanted to post-colonial societies as part of the continuation of Western cultural hegemony. Is it possible to break or rupture this inherited legacy embedded in conquest?

ELABORATING CULTURE

Williams defines culture as "signifying systems" and "discursive practices" through which "a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored" (*Culture* 13). Culture is not merely a system but rather a wholly lived process. In any given society "there is a central system of practices, meanings and values, which we can properly call dominant and effective" (38), and it is these that we describe as hegemonic processes.

Two points are important to underscore in relation to these processes: first, that the Western tradition is neither singular nor homogenous but there is some coherence in its *effects* on colonized or subjugated peoples; secondly, that "what has been handed to us in the colonial world as 'the Western tradition' is none other than the standpoint of the dominant classes in the West" (Mamdani, *The Social* 361). In spite of the complexities and contradictions in the so-called "Western cultural tradition", the coherence in its effects results in part from the assumption, implicit or otherwise, of "the West" as the universal or primary reference point in theoretical discourse (Mohanty).

While "Western tradition" has, paradoxically, what Nandy calls a "critical self", a dissenting tradition which protests especially against the "modern West", the colonized world received and continues to receive primarily the *dominant* Western tradition. It is possible, Nandy

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suggests, “to opt for a non-West which itself is a construction of the West” (*The Intimate* xii). Similarly, there have been Western intellectuals who all along went against the dominant stream. “The standard opponents of the West ... are not outside the dominant model of universalism. They have been integrated within the dominant consciousness -- typecast, if you like -- as ornamental dissenters” (*The Intimate* xiv). In addition, the colonizers’ effects are so deeply implanted in “the sphere of the psyche”, in the ideology and cultural practices, that long after they have physically departed their legacy remains even more aggressively (see also Alvares).

“Colonizers ... came from complex societies with heterogeneous cultural and ethical traditions” (Nandy, *The Intimate* 12). However, they built the legitimacy for colonialism by *selecting* what practices, meanings and discourse of the West would be transplanted. The deliberate effects of what Williams calls the “selective tradition” shaped the legacy of post-colonial culture in profound ways. What we understand and can observe empirically is that the indigenous cultural practices, meanings and discourse of the “colonized peoples” were consistently marginalized, negated or excluded. The colonizers selectively implanted their culture, particularly through transplanted institutions and language.

Central to our concept of culture is language, language particularly as “actual social practice” or “practical consciousness”. Language in practice impinges on the struggle to confront “a hegemony in the fibers of the self” (Williams, *Marxism* 212). Following Bakhtin, language is an “activity” rather than simply an “expression” or “formal system”. Language whether spoken or written is “the product of a complex social situation in which real or potential audiences, earlier and possible later utterances, habits and ‘genres’ of speech and writing, and a variety of other complex social factors shape all utterances from the outset” (Morson 83). The *social* fact of language challenges both formalism and the subjectivist idea of the “inner psyche”. In attempting to understand “inner” speech as practical consciousness, this internalized grasp of reality “derives its meaning from signs” which are in an active social relationship.

In terms of understanding Western cultural hegemony, we know that colonial cultural intrusion brought with it the imperialist language, certainly as formal “outer” speech in all dominant domains of public life, which carries over as “activity” in post-colonial societies. What becomes evident in most post-colonial societies is that there is simultaneously an “authoritative discourse” and an “internally persuasive discourse” (Bakhtin 342-48). “Authoritative discourse” embodies various meanings, such as “authority”, “acknowledged truths”, “the official line” and “located in a distanced zone”; “internally persuasive discourse” is the area of our consciousness which “awakens new and independent words, . . . it organizes masses of our words from within, and does not remain in an isolated and static condition” (345). “The struggle and dialogic interrelationship of these two categories of ideological discourse are what usually determine the history of an individual ideological consciousness” (342).

Without undoing the nuances of Bakhtin’s meaning, we interpret “authoritative discourse” as the complex process related to the transmitted colonial or imperialist discourses while the “internally persuasive discourse” as the processes corresponding to the languages, discourses or utterances of resistance and liberation in post-colonial societies. How the two are “dialogized” as practical consciousness and activity provides insight into the intellectual’s social self as representative in the process of struggle to liberate from the hegemonic. Understanding this notion of language came gradually to me when I studied two non-European languages, Yoruba and Urdu, for practical use.

We understand “cultural hegemony” as a general theoretical concept, and situate Western cultural hegemony as a specific process within post-colonial societies. Our concern is with the dominant hegemonic processes that have disadvantaged peoples, that have marginalized whole knowledge systems of subjugated peoples, that have stifled creative thinking and that have devalued their life meanings and values. Our emphasis is on the processes and tendencies that are shaping emergent intellectual formations in post-colonial societies in such a way as to constitute a break with Western cultural hegemony. Universities and institutionalized knowledge are important domains in which dominant hegemonic culture is being challenged; some understanding of “institutionalized knowledge” is thus required.

DEFINING INSTITUTIONALIZED KNOWLEDGE

Institutionalized knowledge or formal knowledge is distinguished as "specialized knowledge that is developed and sustained in . . . higher education, organized into disciplines, and subject to a process of rationalization" (Friedson 225). However, this knowledge is not some "fixed set of ideas or propositions . . . that is then mechanically employed by its agents" (217). Knowledge transmission and reception are full of complex and often contradictory processes, even when located within hegemonic institutions. As an active process, there may develop a tension between what is "authoritative" received wisdom and "another consciousness" located in practical reality. Knowledge is continually adapted and even transformed by its interpreters. Furthermore, institutionalized knowledge, the full baggage of what constitutes "legitimate" knowledge in the institutions, is not neutral nor is it in a passive relationship with those being taught, its interpreters. It is part of the cultural-intellectual process of selectivity, incorporation and exclusion reproduced in these institutions during the process of imperialist expansion. Dominant cultural authority and legitimacy rested in the West and what was instituted as "knowledge" is connected to -- though not necessarily a function of -- the economic and political power of the West.

To unravel the levels of complexity, recall that Gramsci, in his sections on education in *Prison Notebooks*, suggests that one develops a critical perspective of "institutionalized knowledge" in order to challenge it not to assimilate it, despite the cooptive pressures of the dominant. He also tells us that there is an "active and creative" (42) relationship between what is being taught and the student. In this sense knowledge has a dynamic, transformative quality for the learner. Gramsci's notion of hegemony suggests that organic intellectuals committed to this critical aim understand the dominant ruling culture and its ideology as embodied in its institutions in order to transform it. And certainly the critical tendency, the tradition of dissent is part of the Western intellectual tradition, which may get transplanted. We are therefore dealing with a complexity of phenomenon whereby Western traditions of rationality have a process of dissent within their traditions, which enables cooptation and control of opposition ideas, values and meanings. However, for nearly four decades, there has been a growing literature which attests to the stifling of creativity as a result of transplanted Western paradigms dominating institutionalized knowledge (see Ake, Goonatilake, Carnoy, Altbach and Kelly among others) in the educational institutions of post-colonial societies.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT (THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIVERSITIES)

Our analysis of universities first locates the historical context in which universities were established and then attempts to explain how and why they continue to persist as purveyors of dominant Western culture. It is important to recall that between 1500 and 1900, many regions of the world were under European domination. The legacy of colonial plunder and European penetration is deeply rooted in post-colonial societies, as has been well documented in several books by Goonatilake (particularly in *Crippled Minds*), Chatterjee, Amin (*Eurocentrism*), Rodney, Jallée (1966), Abdel-Malek (*The Transformation*), among others. These writers illustrate how indigenous systems of knowledge and learning in former colonies were delegitimized, devalued or more often thought simply not to exist.

Christian missionaries, emphasizing Western moral education, and European colonizers, needing low-grade civil servants, proceeded to inculcate "superior" European or Western norms, values and practices to the "ignorant" peoples of the colonies. Educational institutions were essentially set up to serve the needs of the colonizers (well-documented in Altbach and Kelly), to the advantage of the ruling class to ensure social control and authority. The "legitimate" superior systems of knowledge were conveyed as those from the West. History, all forms of inventions, scientific discoveries and creativity were selectively confirmed to be born in the West (Goonatilake, *Aborted; Toward*). The general historical context in which most universities in the post-colonial societies were established was one of overt imperial domination by Western systems of knowledge.

Sir Eric Ashby in his classic works, *African Universities and Western Tradition* and (with Mary Anderson) *Universities: British, Indian and African*, has recounted how Western models of universities were exported to the colonies with the same narrow assumptions that existed in the West: institutions are to be detached from the state; to be narrowly specialized in their content and to be restricted to the elite (*African Universities*, 12). In most instances, they were authoritarian structures established to ensure continued control by the ruling classes. Debates between humanistic and utilitarian systems of education were part of the on-going process to "liberalize" the institution. Similarly, there were debates, particularly leading up to independence, between the expatriate staff at universities who sought to keep universities autonomous and free from state interference, and then those who favoured what came to be known as "indigenization" of the staff and more involvement by the state in linking the university to the independence or anti-colonial movements. While the latter tendency won out in most circumstances, the result was a change in appearance but not in substance or in the formal organization of the universities. The university "continued to be largely a copy of the Western university and it became a basic problem to develop an independent culture under these conditions" (Rajaonson quoted in Abdel-Malek, *The Transformation* 17).

Several universities were established in India in the 19th century. In Latin America, "universities were founded by Iberians in Mexico and Peru" as early as 1551 (Goonatilake, *Crippled* 149). In Africa, for example, Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone was founded along with various religious institutions as pre-colonial sites for learning. However, most African, Asian and Latin American universities, as we know them today, were established after World War II, on the eve of nominal independence for most colonial societies. From their beginning, it was consciously stated by the colonialists that universities were there to ensure an indigenous ruling class, essentially Western in values, norms and behaviour. In fact, more than one colonialist stated that "we must . . . form a class of interpreters . . . Indian in blood and

colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (cited in Goonatilake, *Crippled* 92). Ashby reminds us that in the discussions to establish the universities in African countries, the educated "been-to" Africans, those who had studied abroad, also argued strongly for a replica of the British university at its best (*Universities* 79).

There was no self-projected image of colonized history or culture within the universities during this early stage. What was dominant, as related so convincingly in Said's *Orientalism*, which was built on Anouar Abdel-Malek's earlier formulation of this dominating framework of knowledge (see his "Orientalism in Crisis,") was a construct, "a system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness and later, Western Empire" (Said, 3). Re-interpreting and re-affirming a history *from the perspective of the colonized* only began to take shape and gain validity during the post-colonial era.²

An effective and dominant culture is dependent on a real social process, a process of incorporation (Williams, *Problems* 39). In this situation, the dominant culture chooses selectively which practices and meanings are to be given importance and which are to be neglected and excluded. The colonizers as carriers of an effective dominant culture -- "Western, European and capitalist" as stated in Samir Amin's *Eurocentrism* -- had perpetuated a process that was "continually active and adjusting". They legitimized themselves over centuries by destroying the sense of culture and history of those colonized (Memmi, 91-2), and imposing selectively elements of dominant culture. They educated an elite, ruling class to carry on the tasks of spreading this dominant culture even when they were not going to be directly involved after the nominal independence of these countries.³

This is not to suggest that resistance did not occur at earlier stages. History is replete with examples of resistance to cultural domination but what we are discussing very specifically are the systems of dominant institutionalized knowledge in higher institutions. Resistance took the form of an awareness of the imitative nature of the institutionalized knowledge and the exclusion of local social realities, particularly during the period of protracted anti-colonial struggles in most of these societies. Institutionalized knowledge within the universities in its origin was imitative of what existed within the universities of Britain, France, or Belgium, or other former colonizers.

The corpus of institutionalized knowledge transmitted into post-colonial universities is dominated by mainstream paradigms of Western thought (the "effective dominant culture" of the colonizer). "No sustained independent school or paradigm has emerged" (Goonatilake, *Crippled* 106). Transplanted, imitative and dependent patterns of thinking from the West continue to dominate in the universities. Goonatilake summarizes by stating that "what became subsequently the 'social sciences' and what is learnt as such in non-metropolitan countries are but some of the questions and some of the answers produced over the last few centuries in the West" (190).

In spite of nearly four decades of nominal independence and attempts at indigenization of the teaching staff, the universities continue to reflect and transmit the values, norms and behaviour of dominant Western paradigms. The selective tradition at work in the universities, excluding or

² There were earlier intellectual efforts but their influence or presence within the university curricula was minimal. When it did begin to enter, it anticipated the work of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and other writers concerned with the problem of cultural representation in the contemporary post-modern literature.

³ In many cases, however, they were directly involved. See Alvares (7) where he notes that "American experts sat on committees to formulate the First Indian Five Year Plan", as one of many such examples that continue up to today.

ignoring local realities, echoes the continued dominance of Western paradigms in content for all disciplines. Legitimacy is determined not through local approval or validation but by the Western (metropolitan) intellectual practices, the former colonizers' knowledge/traditions or the current strains of neo-colonialism (the American paradigms). Whether it is in scholarship, research, teaching or institutional organization of the universities in post-colonial societies, meanings and practices are transmitted from the West. And the West's dominant knowledge, as is well documented in numerous works (Said, Goonatilake, Amin, Asad and Copans), is Eurocentric.⁴

Joseph et al illustrate how "(t)he categories and approaches used in European academia help to maintain the political and intellectual superiority of Europe. The continuing presence of such academic constructs is a by-product of a widespread Eurocentric bias in the production, dissemination and evaluation of knowledge" (Joseph 1). Goonatilake speaks about these contextual conditions in which post-colonial intellectuals "are imprisoned within a set of paradigms that are established elsewhere, a system of legitimization and reward that is determined elsewhere, and a system of science which is by nature imitative and noncreative" (*Colonies* 433). Others elaborate "the emergence of the phenomenon of 'intellectual captivity' among the educated elite in the former colonial cultures" (Joseph 3). This 'intellectual captivity', they state, "is marked by unthinking imitation of the West, an incapacity to raise and solve original problems and a failure to generate concepts which are relevant and productive in the local context" (4). Knowledge continues to be imitative of Western institutionalized knowledge, serving the interests and transmitting the values of the Westernized ruling elite (see also Joon-Chien). Inherited patterns of behaviour and established institutions from the colonial past continue, related to vested interests of elite groups within the Third World which depend for their continued power and influence on their links with the culture of the West. Together with this historical legacy being continually adjusted but not broken is the persistent use of the colonial language, which binds the universities through a neo-colonial dependency and perpetuates the "effective dominant culture."

ELABORATING THE CHALLENGES

According to Goonatilake,

breaking down these prison walls demands recognition of their existence, of the reasons for their existence, and the twin processes of legitimization and disqualification. Breaking out implies a rejection of the preemptive perceptions of the handed-down Western tradition . . . and a reconnection with the valid inquiries of the hitherto ignored heritage. (*Colonies* 434).

⁴ "The underlying assumption of this general perspective . . . is that there is a world order of knowledge paralleling the world economic order" (Goonatilake *Colonies* 416). "The key point in the creation of a colonial [or neo-colonial] structure of knowledge was the emergence, in the sixteenth century, of the European-dominated colonial world" (417). "Eurocentrism has, in varying degrees, permeated all social science disciplines" and "grew out of the historical process of western colonial and economic dominance" (Joseph, 1).

Challenges or alternatives to this process of hegemony are emerging very faintly within the universities: the simultaneous processes which Williams describes as "residual" and "emergent" are largely occurring *outside* the universities in autonomous research centres (for example, the Centre for Basic Research in Uganda or the Research Department of Peoples Bank in Sri Lanka or Lokayan in India) and other intellectual groupings, such as the African Political Science Association which has been stressing the development of alternative paradigms more creatively derived from examining and legitimizing the experiences, thoughts, meanings and practices of the societies in which they live.

In this respect, the establishment of the independent social science research network, the Council for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa or CODESRIA as it is more commonly known in the early 1970s was of particular importance.⁵ With offices in Dakar, CODESRIA grouped many exiled African intellectuals who were unable to work in their own countries due to the intolerance of dissent, often both by the state and the university. Other intellectuals in their countries looked to CODESRIA as an important network which struggled to be a space or an opening where "Africans could define their own parameters, agenda and terms" with the stated conviction "that African social sciences must engage in fundamental research on Africa and that this required active involvement in conceptualization and theorization of the African problem" (Mkandawire 17).

They sought to break or at least to challenge the monopolies by the intellectual centres of Paris, London and New York. Challenges took various forms, notably what was referred to as the "Resistance Front" which "resisted not only the political and economic domination of Africa by European powers, but questioned the pervasive hegemony of the former colonial powers on different aspects of African societies" (Mkandawire 14). Another active debate focused around the "indigenization" of social sciences in Africa ranging from "know thyself" to the "the problem of reconciling the 'universal' with the specificity of the African experience" and in the process overcoming "the burden of received knowledge" (17-8). Not surprisingly, their direct alternative or opposition discourse took on political overtones and they have frequently found themselves in conflict with the state or the university institution, resulting in exile or assassination.

One such example of particular interest is the experience of the leading intellectual and active member of CODESRIA, Mahmood Mamdani formerly based at Makerere University in Uganda. After peace was restored to Uganda in 1986 following the take-over of power by a guerrilla movement, there was strong pressure by the Western-educated university elite to return Makerere to its "old glory". However, Makerere was now situated within an altered political context and many found its worn-out imitative vision of the British tradition inappropriate to the new post-colonial realities. A pocket of resistance within Makerere had been centred on the work of the Group for the Study of Labour under the direction of Mamdani. He and the others in the Study Group found it increasingly difficult to continue their alternative intellectual work within the confines of the university. After years of isolation and often petty bureaucratic harassment within the university, in 1990, Mamdani resigned from the University and transformed the Study Group into the Centre for Basic Research, an autonomous progressive

⁵ The work of Lokayan in India also a forum of intellectuals and political activists could have served to illustrate the point we are asserting. It was established in the early 1970s at the same time as a host of other disaffected intellectuals in all regions of the post-colonial societies sought to establish alternative forums. See their publication, the *Lokayan Bulletin*.

centre for alternative intellectuals engaged in challenging the basic Western paradigms which have been the imitative framework for analyzing their societies

Paradoxically, at the political moment when the post-colonial state in Uganda is more open to alternative discourse (see The Kampala Declaration on Academic Freedom, 1990), the university there continues to be locked into hegemonic Western cultural praxis. In an article about democracy, Mamdani states that "received theories of democracy often clash with contemporary African realities" (*African* 313). He goes on to suggest that the "Tension between theoretical assumptions and existing realities can either lead to sterile attempts to enforce textbook solutions or to rich, creative reflection" (313).

Throughout post-colonial societies, intellectuals are in the process of transforming or challenging the institutionalized knowledge or existing body of knowledge focusing on the social sciences. Some of this work does enter the universities but it is seldom dominant and generally takes place in associations or institutions (autonomous research centres) or formations outside the university. The examples we give are in no way exhaustive; they are meant to be illustrative of the tendencies we see in the new emergent formations within the regions of post-colonial societies as a response to the dominance of Western paradigms.

EMERGENT INTELLECTUAL FORMATIONS

We are concerned with emergent intellectual formations, which critically challenge the dominant cultural paradigms. The distinction between traditional intellectuals and organic intellectuals as discussed in Gramsci and Williams is our basic framework for examining intellectuals. In the post-colonial societies we are discussing, traditional intellectuals were those who taught the "established canons" from the West, thereby carrying out the continued mission of the colonialists. Organic intellectuals are those who attach themselves to the struggles of the community, peasants and workers, to attempt to form counter-hegemonic practices and break with the imperialist legacy within the cultural domain.

Following Said (*Representations* 11), "the intellectual is an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude or opinion to, as well as for, a public. And this role has an edge to it, and cannot be played without a sense of being someone whose place it is publicly to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma."

Within post-colonial societies, there is a discernable process towards new formations of intellectuals who are actively engaged in challenging the legacy of imperialist penetration -- Western cultural hegemony. To confront that process often requires an alliance between shifting traditional intellectuals and organic intellectuals.

New formations or groupings can be traced through a range of selective intellectual responses corresponding to what Williams calls "discursive practices" or "signifying signals" (*Culture* 207-8). Whether or not these intellectual responses constitute a "new intellectual class" is questionable. But the central thesis of this paper is to state that there is an identifiable intellectual movement, comprising a network of formations, emerging within all regions of post-colonial societies. Williams reminds us of the difficulties of analyzing formations (especially "alternative" or "oppositional" formations), as opposed to formally established institutions which have a clear corpus of characteristics (*Culture* 69-70).

This movement, though incipient and fragmented, suggests common tendencies in its search for an "authentic liberation" and a discarding of the "suffocating blanket" (Goonatilake). The new formations or groupings are also evolving concurrently with the internal break or fracture within the Western hegemony itself (evidenced in part by intense self-doubt in the West, discussed in Capra and Goonatilake). Furthermore, to arrive at a fuller understanding of these new formations, it must be emphasized that this process of intellectual transformation or restructuring is taking place on a world scale, and that these formations are part of other simultaneous though uneven processes.

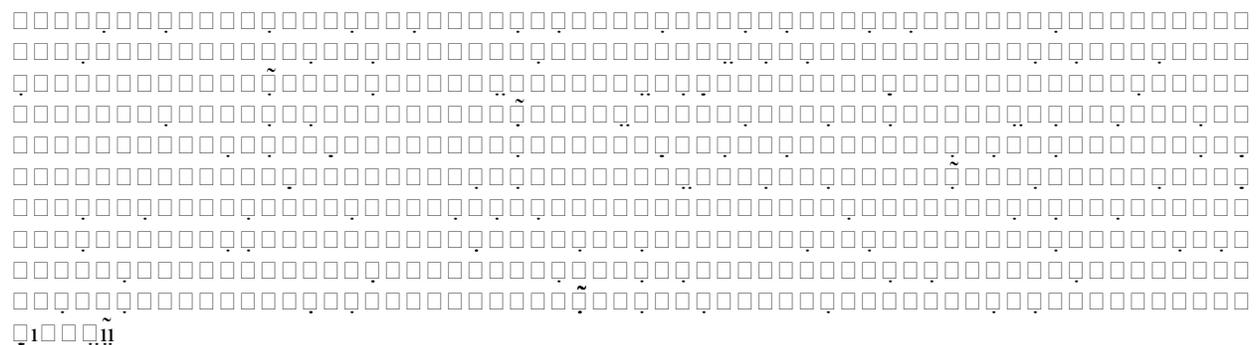
The context of these new formations is a crisis in the contemporary system of world knowledge that no longer provides adequate explanations and often results in a profound intellectual impasse. Old certainties of Enlightenment have given way to intense doubting.⁶ The doubt being expressed in the global modes of thinking that has dominated intellectual life is resulting in a lifting of the hegemony in post-colonial societies, with a potential liberation of intellectual commitment and creative thinking. Goonatilake has written that

After nearly five centuries of cultural certainty, Europe and European civilization is in a crisis of confidence. Self-doubt has crept in. This potentially can liberate Third World scientists and intellectuals from the oppressive hand of certainty, from the imitative science they follow. It also gives them opportunities to be creative and to attempt to solve these problems of science at the most fundamental level. (*Colonies* 434).

Unknown to Goonatilake, the African philosopher Paulin J. Hountondji had written just a few years earlier:

The real problem is to liberate the creativity of our people, to liberate it by giving it the means to be put effectively into practice, beginning with open inquiry and proceeding through free discussion in which the most diverse theories can be formed and rejected. When all is said and done, philosophy in the active sense of the word is at first

⁶ Another important tendency recognizing the nature of the intellectual impasse termed "a massive worldwide drifting" (quoted from the pamphlet of the Fernand Braudel Centre, October 1993) is to be found with Wallerstein and several other leading intellectuals connected with the Braudel Centre who have contributed to the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences. Similar to Goonatilake and many of the post-colonial intellectuals, they recognize "that the present structure of the social sciences creates unreasonable blocks to intellectuals development and the consequent need for some restructuring".



nothing but that: a great public debate to which everybody contributes. Everything else follows -- everything, including science. (Quoted in Copans *The Marxist* 37).

Whether in social sciences or physical sciences, studies now abound reflecting these uncertainties.⁷ Many texts from the 1960s onward bear witness to this breakdown in intellectual consensus, especially in the social sciences.⁸ But it is important to recall the difficulties that this incipient knowledge of resistance has had in challenging the deeply entrenched institutionalized knowledge. The entire form of organization of knowledge production and reproduction within the universities as disciplines, departments, associations, journals, scholarly classifications and so on, cannot easily be dislodged. Williams discusses universities as "privileged cultural institutions" which "can be seen as indispensable instruments of production of the ideas and practices of an authoritative order, . . . even when . . . they include minority elements of dissent or opposition" (*Culture* 225).

There is a powerful connection between dominant knowledge institutionalized within the universities and then dominant, entrenched political culture that is linked to the historical processes of Western imperialism. Pertinent to our analysis or inquiry is whether the "civilization project of the West" (Abdel-Malek's term) or "the global political project" (Amin's term) has reached an impasse.

It is within such an historical conjuncture or impasse that new formations emerge or may be signaled by what Williams calls "pre-emergent" formations in the process towards transformation or breakthrough, although they are not to be taken as mechanical linear developments. There is a fluidity, perhaps best captured in the notion of discontinuities, to these intellectual groupings through processes such that intellectuals contribute to the precursor emergence and then may develop as emergent intellectuals themselves or even return to the role of "traditional" intellectuals.

For our analysis of the processes towards new intellectual formations, several critical studies by post-colonial academics or "traditional intellectuals" can be cited as important precursors or pre-emergent indicators. Recalling that "The transmission of formal packages of knowledge through the curriculum of universities is through the content matter of individual disciplines" (Goonatilake, *Crippled* 189), these studies critique the foundations or origins of each discipline to demonstrate the "intimate connection" between social and economic circumstances in the West and prevailing paradigms within each discipline. These studies systematically link the institutionalized knowledge or dominant knowledge in the disciplines of the social sciences to the ideologies of colonialism or imperialism thereby challenging the basis of each discipline.

⁷ This point is well-documented in Goonatilake's *Crippled Minds*, which refers to such works as Morris Kline, *Mathematics, The Loss of Certainty* (Oxford University Press, 1980) and a host of other texts.

⁸ By "intellectual consensus", I am not implying that there were no debates or various schools within the social sciences. However, the overall context for these debates was a pre-dominance of Western paradigms that draw their origins from the Western, European political and social theorists and their experience. Even Marxism, which has never been a dominant paradigm, is rooted in Eurocentric thinking of Hegelian thought. See also, U. Kalpagam's review of *Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture and Resistance* in which she states that "We can do nothing but agree with Hegel that history has decided irrevocably in favour of the Western world to provide the context and categories for exploring all other traditions of thoughts" (*Economic and Political Weekly*, 16-23 May 1992, 1070).

Goonatilake has done extensive deconstruction to illustrate the inappropriateness of the basic tenets in the fields of sociology, economics and anthropology (196-213).

Similarly, Talal Asad has edited a series of essays in *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* that unmasks anthropology's historical links to imperialism and the colonialists' agenda. The Ugandan intellectual, Yolamu Barongo in *Political Science in Africa: A Critical Review*, and the Nigerian Claude Ake in *Political Science as Imperialism*, both provide a wealth of evidence to denude political science and to link its original theories to the imperialist mission. The Egyptian economist, Samir Amin, has taken on economics, particularly "development economics"; and the South African, Archie Mafeje, queried sociology in his article "The New Sociology, Strictly for Europeans". Many other texts provide this systematic critique of institutionalized knowledge systems that are intimately tied to hegemonic Western cultural processes.⁹

What unites these intellectuals to the new movement is their rejection of much of the last four decades of conceptualization and their common intellectual quest to be freed from the inherited methodological paradigms and thematic concerns of dominant Western and more recently American social sciences. Various other texts which critique each of the disciplines of the social sciences began to emerge around the 1960s (see also Ganguli, Alvares and Stavenhagen among others). Skepticism about the epistemological foundations of our so-called "universal knowledge systems", instituted into the world university and scholarly system between about 1850 and 1960, has grown enormously since that time.

Much of this fundamental questioning is rooted in the awareness that the dominant institutionalized knowledge is an *excluding* knowledge, based on an *exclusive* experience and yet presents itself as universal. Consequently, the most interesting challenges are coming from "peoples" who observed their absence, their exclusion from the dominant knowledge system: peoples of post-colonial societies.¹⁰ Or if they were present, they were there as a construct or invention of the West, boxed within the paradigms of the Western hegemonic discourse.

Mamdani illustrates the paradoxical problems of confronting dominant Western paradigms in his short piece "A Glimpse at African Studies, Made in USA" (*The Social* 7-11). He traces the way Africanists -- those based in the USA studying Africa but he could also be describing those in Africa who work uncritically within the framework of Western paradigms -- have liberally borrowed paradigms from Comparative Studies shifting from the language of "modernization", "nation-building", "tribalism" and even "ethnicity" to that of "dependencia" and more recently the "paradigm structures around the polarity state vs. civil society". He asserts that "No matter what its merits, at its inception the paradigm is an attempt to read reality .

⁹ Said in "Orientalism Reconsidered" (especially, 13-14) and in *Culture and Imperialism* refers extensively to these intellectuals and their texts.

¹⁰ There is a parallel experience of women intellectuals, among "peoples" who read their absence, along with Aboriginals, the disadvantaged and the marginalized poor. Feminist discourse which addresses women's discovery of their suppressed creativity can be found in Tillie Olsen's *Silences* and the works of Adrienne Rich. Similarly the notion that women possess a creativity stifled by patriarchy can be found in the works of Mary Daly *Gyn-Ecology* and Andrea Dworkin *Women Hating* among others. There is a parallel struggle of emergent intellectuals in Third World societies and women: both have been historically excluded from the dominant discourses and their emancipation relates to inserting their experience in reinterpretations of history. See also the work of Sandra Harding and Joan Cocks.

. . . *reality is read from the paradigm*" (8, my emphasis). At the heart of the problem for Mamdani is the distance of the Africanists from African reality, from the real struggles of real social forces on the continent. But those same paradigms dominate the disciplines within the African universities themselves. It is what Goonatilake describes as "intellectual mapping from the centres of dominance" (*Crippled* 215) that must be challenged.

ELABORATING THE NEW FORMATIONS

Critical studies similar to those described above continue to be produced and contribute to the process of intellectual transformation which can be characterized more concretely under four broad tendencies in which representative emergent intellectuals constituting "new formations" in post-colonial societies can be identified. These tendencies are in no way exhaustive but rather are grouped as illustrative of the general transformative processes that I am suggesting. Unlike the precursors of "traditional intellectuals" described earlier, most of these emergent or organic intellectuals, though often educated in Western schools and imbibed with Western culture, do not carry out their "discursive practices" within the universities. Yet, it is important to point out that there is often an "alliance" (Gramsci 330 and 418) between those traditional intellectuals in the universities and these "organic intellectuals" seen as a necessary process to change or transform institutionalized knowledge. The consequence of their "oppositional" as opposed to "alternative" praxis has often been exile or imprisonment (Ngugi) and even assassination (in the case of the Guyanese intellectual Walter Rodney).

Four dominant intellectual tendencies in the process of emergent formations can be described as follows.

1. *A fundamental questioning of Western rationality and the central tenets of Western philosophy.* All of these intellectuals -- Pathé Diagne, Samir Amin, Walter Rodney, Ashis Nandy, Mamdani, Goonatilake, Chatterjee and so on -- understand that dominant Western paradigms transplanted to their societies as rooted in imperialism, have distorted and falsified interpretations of knowledge. As well they identify overt racism in the works of many social thinkers on which Western philosophical thought and culture are based. For example, Ngugi (*Writers* 14) and Goonatilake (*Crippled* 75), likely unknown to each other, single out Hume and Hegel for attack (see also Said *Culture* 240-41).

2. *A re-interpretation of the history of the Indigenous peoples (the colonized) and revalidating their cultural praxis.* Prominent examples are Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* and Goonatilake's *Aborted Discovery* and more recently, his *Toward a Global Science*. Additional specific examples include the rewriting of Mau Mau history (see Kanogo's *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau*) and other anti-colonial struggles from the perspective of the subjugated peoples; the Sub-altern Studies in India, especially the texts of Ranajit Guha, Romila Thapar and Partha Chatterjee; the fiction writing of Ngugi, especially *Petals of Blood*, and other writers. Much of this intellectual work also serves as a force to re-interpret the dominant view of the colonizer's historical narratives.

3. *A search to unearth marginalized or ignored forms of conceptualization and indigenous systems of thought.* This work involves validating indigenous systems of knowledge but not as artifacts or constructs of the West's view or an "Orientalism" in the sense of Said. The works of Nandy, Diagne, and Goonatilake can again be cited as contributing to this tendency. Cheikh Anta Diop, Paulin Hountondji, V. Mudimbe and Amilcar Cabral have all contributed to asserting indigenous knowledge systems as a challenge to the dominant discourse.

4. *An advocating, after a long process of intellectual angst, of "total disengagement" from the Western knowledge system, intellectually and practically.* While there has been much debate on all of the above tendencies, this one is the weakest in terms of support. Ngugi in *Decolonising the Mind* abandons writing in English, citing it as the Western imperialist's cultural tool; and Samir Amin in *Delinking* and *Eurocentrism* advocates a break with the Western capitalist culture if Third World societies are ever to liberate themselves, economically, politically and culturally.

Other intellectuals are grouped around or linked to indigenous organizations in various post-colonial societies outside the hegemonic domain. There are also many intellectuals who are not concerned with "the experience of colonialism and imperialism" (Ahmad 113-8); our focus is on those who are.

The four tendencies described here suggest the dominant characteristics of the emergent intellectual formations in the process towards transformation of the existing body of institutionalized knowledge. The individuals or works cited are not isolated examples but are reflective of a wider movement of intellectual activity taking place throughout the diverse regions of these societies. The process of elaboration continues to be assisted by "traditional" intellectuals within the formal institutions where the existing body of knowledge in the social sciences is slowly being dislodged or reconstructed. Paradoxically, the critical tendency and the tradition of dissent that is intrinsic to Western intellectual thought itself also assist the process. That accounts for some of the popularity of Marxism amongst emergent intellectuals; it represented one of the few tendencies that was oppositional and/or alternative within the Western intellectual tendencies but was never dominant (see Goonatilake, *Crippled*; Nandy and Alvares who reflect on this point). However, alternatives are often incorporated or coopted in order to be neutralized and this process results in no significant change in the dominant paradigms. To some extent much of the imitative work of Marxism has suffered this fate.

What I have attempted to suggest is a wider, more fundamental break with the dominant modes of cultural practice which has set in process a network of new intellectual formations. A new philosophical basis for understanding our societies and interpreting world order -- goals of social sciences -- is gradually emerging to displace Western cultural hegemony, though it is still a process in flux and has not as yet significantly dislodged the existing body of knowledge or mainstream institutionalized knowledge. While there are not yet fully formed alternative conceptual frameworks, the current deluge of books highlighting the complex processes of how power, knowledge and culture interact attests to the shifting tendencies. See, for example, *Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture and Resistance*, which raises important questions about the superiority of certain knowledge claims and epistemological issues in our struggle to know.

Within the post-colonial societies, the bridgers -- those that present the pre-emergent challenges -- who also contribute to the new formations are usually educated in the Western

traditions and are often part of the elite that is disconnected from its organic intellectual roots. How then do these critical intellectuals break from their formation? I have attempted to analyze the character of the responses to the constant tension or ambiguity expressed by those who are part of the new intellectual formations. Similarly, I have attempted to outline broadly what some post-colonial intellectuals "signified", accomplished, or practiced in their discourses to make them part of these "emergent formations".

I am attempting to underscore the formative stage of fracturing in the hegemonic dominance of Western institutionalized knowledge that is taking place in post-colonial societies. There are various critical intellectual tendencies that are emerging as a challenge to the "suffocating blanket" of Western dominance. These tendencies have not yet crystallized into a school or identifiable body of thought that could neatly classify; often intellectuals from different regions unknown to each other express similar points of dissent to the dominant paradigm. What we suggest is that there is a common groping among intellectuals and researchers in or from post-colonial societies, searching in the same broad directions to break out of the dependent and imitative patterns of thinking that continue to form the main body of institutionalized knowledge in the universities. It is this search for a redefinition that forms part of a worldwide restructuring of modes of thinking. Are new conceptual initiatives possible?

SPECIFIC EXAMPLE

Susantha Goonatilake suggests that intellectuals whether in Africa, Asia or Latin America "are imprisoned within a set of paradigms that are established elsewhere, a system of legitimation and reward that is determined elsewhere, and a system of science which is by nature imitative and noncreative" (*Colonies* 433). Breaking out of this imprisonment implies for Goonatilake "a rejection of the preemptive perceptions of the handed-down Western tradition . . . and a reconnection with the valid inquiries of the hitherto ignored heritage of . . . scientific and intellectual knowledge" (*The Voyages* 263) within their societies. He also suggests that this process is assisted by the expressions of doubt -- "lifting of certainty" -- within Western thought itself.

Fundamental to Goonatilake's dissent is an understanding of the vast knowledge in pre-colonial history. However, this is only a first step in altering one's perceptions on "legitimized knowledge". He does not wish to suggest a simplistic substitute or exchange of Western for Asian or African or Latin American. His words "aborted" and "crippled" are suggestive of the detachment from indigenous organic knowledge that has taken place, particularly from the 19th century on. In the search for reconnection, he considers and rejects complete disengagement from Western systems of thought. Similarly, he differentiates earlier nationalist thinkers who wanted a syncretic amalgam of 'East' and 'West' from the new critical literature, the new awareness which is rooted in a thorough "historical perception of the structural links between the two (cultures) in order to overcome them by social and cultural measures" (*Aborted* 151).

Goonatilake describes alternative social structures of sciences that are emerging, processes of social detachment and reattachment, new orientations, means of rearranging the given patterns, and "how patterns of enquiry from the vast store of the non-European past could be integrated into new creative scientific endeavours" (*Aborted* 166 and more recently *Toward a Global Science* 1993). We see in his work and a wide range of others from the three regions, a body of critical works in which a new discourse is taking place.

CONCLUSION

The premise of this presentation has been that universities in post-colonial societies, especially in their *dominant* institutionalized knowledge and their curricula within their various disciplines, are imitative and stifling of creativity for post-colonial intellectuals. They are dominated primarily by transplanted modes of Western thought and knowledge systems that are inappropriate even for Western societies. We examined in a general way how this cultural hegemony was implanted within the universities over centuries of imperialist plunder, but particularly during the colonial period, and thereby de-legitimized or marginalized indigenous knowledge. Whole areas of knowledge were hidden or erased and are now being slowly uncovered. Tracing the evolution of the challenges or forms of resistance to this institutionalized knowledge through selected identifiable texts led us to suggest that there is an incipient network or formation of emergent intellectuals scattered within post-colonial societies evolving new knowledge systems. However, this intellectual work has yet to dislodge the basic canons of institutionalized knowledge in the universities. New programs that are developed often simply join across disciplines but without any fundamental transformation of what is taught. The more fundamental challenges are taking place at independent research centres or groupings of intellectuals outside the universities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WORKSHOP

Transdisciplinarity that attempts to liberate us from the borders of disciplines or refers to those who have no discipline is being debated in a wide range of academic circles throughout the world. For me, it is reflective of yet another genuine attempt to open up or democratize intellectual inquiry at the conjuncture or impasse that I have outlined above. Some of the questions that have yet to be resolved are: what are the implications of this fundamental questioning of the canons of institutionalized disciplines for restructuring of knowledge systems in the university? Does transdisciplinarity address the problems that I have outlined? Will there be a new canon or an enlargement of the space for sources of authority through transdisciplinarity? How will such forms of knowledge gain legitimacy? If these new intellectual formations that I have discussed are happening mainly outside the university, how do we ensure that they make their way into the legitimate knowledge systems of the university so as not to abandon the university “space”?

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