Knowing Together in Compassion and Confrontation:
The Calling of Transformative Knowledge

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ABSTRACT

To know is to know together and practices of knowing together involve both compassion and confrontation. Compassion enables us to feel together our pain and suffering while confrontation enables us to confront that part of self, other and society which hinders unfoldment of our potential for fuller realisation and becoming. In practices of knowing together we create a compassionate community and help each other to learn. This is also a space of solidarity, a solidarity which is always in a process of fuller realization rather than a fixed thing. In knowing together we compassionately understand each other, our points of view, including those of the ones we confront and in the process our points of view become circles of view capable of more generous embrace. In knowing together we also confront each other, our existing conceptions of self, nature and society especially those conceptions which reiterate structures of domination and do not facilitate realization of our human, societal, divine and cosmic potential. The paper presents such pathways of knowing together and presents visions and practices of transformative knowledge which contribute to self-development, inclusion of the other and planetary realizations

The prime condition for a democratically organized public is a kind of knowledge and insight which does not yet exist.

— John Dewey (1927), *The Public and its Problems*, p. 166.

The consideration of life itself requires that the potent reality of the soul be described in its wholeness, from its more humble to its highest possibilities.

— Wilhelm Dilthey.

True, an outward battle also has to be fought, but against institutions which stand in the way of spreading the light and reign of brotherhood, not against men as unbelievers, in a spirit of understanding, of knowledge, of firm will, but also of charity for ignorance and love [..]

— Sri Aurobindo, *Birth Centenary Volume* 17, p. 326.

THE ADVENTURE AND INVITATION OF KNOWLEDGE

In the Bible we read about a woman who is wailing in the streets and her name is Wisdom.[1] She is weeping because despite knocking we are not opening our doors. But in the human journey as well as in our contemporary world it is not only wisdom which is weeping, knowledge is also weeping as it has become imprisoned within varieties of structures of domination, commodification, illusion and isolation. But to know is not only to know of but to know with—a practice of knowing with which involves both self-knowledge and knowledge of the world (cf. Sunder Rajan 1988). It is a process of knowing where we hold each other's hands, look up to the face of each other and learn together. This helps us realize our primordial need for self-knowledge ("Know Thyself), knowledge of the other and the world. It is in this process of knowing together that knowledge becomes a journey of co-realization, co-learning and collective learning involving both ontology and epistemology, joy as well as suffering. Suffering comes from structures of domination imposed upon us limiting our reality and possibility of coming together and freely learn and share our heart; joy comes from the very striving towards it despite imposed restrictions and fears of many kinds. Suffering also has a much deeper root, for example, suffering emerging from our lack of readiness to embrace a new definition of self and society and clinging to our earlier conception of self. Joy emerges from experiences of breaking open such boundaries and realizing liberation.

The present essay seeks to explore contours of transformative knowledge which helps us interrogate and transform structures of domination and absolutism and contributes to self and social liberation. It presents the vision and practice of knowledge as knowing together which involves compassion and confrontation. It discusses the role of critical movements in generating transformative knowledge and creating a new language of self and society. It discusses the contours of a new

sociology and archaeology of knoweldge building upon the work of Karl Mannheim and Michael Foucault. It also discusses how knowledge can create transformative resonance in our present-day world and contribute to realizing a new art of wholeness.

KNOWING TOGETHER IN COMPASSION AND CONFRONTATION

Knowledge is a work of what I have elsewhere called ontological epistemology of participation which involves transformations in epistemology and ontology as we know and making them mutually inteperpenetrative and transformative (Giri 2006).[2] Ontological epistemology of participation involves compassion and confrontation. Practices of knowing together involve both compassion and confrontation. Compassion enables us to feel together our pain and suffering while confrontation enables us to confront that part of self, other and society which hinders unfoldment of potential. In practices of knowing together we create a compassionate community and help each other to learn. This is also a space of solidarity, a solidarity which is always in a process of fuller realization rather than a fixed thing. In knowing together we compassionately understand each other, our points of view, including those of the ones we confront and in the process our points of view become circles of view capable of more generous embrace. In knowing together we also confront each other, our existing conceptions of self, nature and society especially those conceptions which reiterate structures of domination and do not facilitate realization of our human, societal, divine and cosmic potential. But this confrontation takes varieties of forms—violent, non-violent, dualistic as well as non-dual. There are also practices of knowing together which involve compassionate confrontation where partners of confrontation are not eternal demons; though we fight, we realize that we are part of a bigger drama of co-realization where we are not just to annihilate our enemies but create a field where transformation embraces self, other and the world.

Knowledge is at the root of realization of living and in spaces of togetherness living is nurtured and cultivated. It is in these spaces of togetherness with all their challenges and contradictions that life has learnt the art of living and facing the challenges of evolution. It is in the spaces of togetherness that humanity has also learnt about life, self, culture, society, Nature and the Divine. These spaces are not just collectivist spaces; they are also spaces of self, co- and societal meditation. We find examples of such spaces of togetherness as spaces of knowledge and meditation in many different traditions of human striving—religion, art and sciences.

In human histories and societies we see such work on knowledge and togetherness unfolding in various fields of life including in varieties of movements—socio-political as well as socio-spiritual. These movements have presented fields in which fellow beings have come together, have learnt new knowledge about themselves, each other, society, Nature and cosmos. In these fields we have also learnt how to overcome our existing conceptions of self and social order and feel confident about new knowledge of self, society and the other that we create. For example, in our turbulent histories in the last two hundred years workers' movements and anti-colonial and post-colonial struggles for freedom have been critical actors of transformations and these movements have challenged existing structures of self and social formation. Workers' movements have fought for dignity of labor and against the oppression by the bourgeoisie struggling for not only their freedom but also for fuller social becoming and freedom for all. Struggles for freedom have also created new knowledge of self, society and the world confronting the existing colonial structure of self-formation, social governance and exploitation. In Gandhi's anti-colonial and post-colonial struggle for freedom this process of knowing together transcended many boundaries. As a space of togetherness Gandhi-inspired mobilizations, like Buddha and Jesus before him, created spaces of compassion and confrontation in which seeking and struggling participants knew together in struggle. This struggle brought together men and women from diverse backgrounds including sympathetic transformers such as CF Andrews from the national space of the colonizers.

In our contemporary world as it is in the last half century varieties of movements despite inevitable and understandable human and social limitation continue to create multiple fields of knowing together. They act as agents of self-production and challenge the available conceptions of the normal and the pathological (cf. Das 2003, Touraine 1977). They generate a new language of self and social imagination urging us to realize how existing language trap us in bondage. In our contemporary world, Dalit movements, women's movements, gay and lesbian movements, differently abled movements and global justice movements, such as World Social Forum, (cf. Ferrera 2006) create a field of knowing together in which social movements themselves play a key role as cognitive agents, creating new knowledge about self, nature and society and fields to generate and sustain such knowledges. But social movements are not only cognitive agents in a narrow way, they are also spaces of emotional intersubjectivity. Spaces of togetherness from the dawn of humanity till the most recent are not only cognitive spaces but also emotional spaces of mutual nurturance and nurturance of flames of

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aspiration through music, art, poetry and other expressive creativities. It is not true that we find such expressive dimension only in the so-called new social movements in the last three decades or so. The workers movements also had a vibrant musical and literary engagement as do many political movements now, such as the Zapatista movement in contemporary Mexico. Fields of knowing together are multi-dimensional spaces of cognition and emotional nurturance, knowledge and art of life.

TRANSFORMATIVE MOVEMENTS AND THE CALLING OF NEW LANGUAGES

Knowing together in compassion and confrontation especially in the work of transformative movements creates a new language of self and society. It creates a new imagination for self and society. Transformative movements create a space of compassion and confrontation—a space of meditative solidarity—in whose lap[3] the inadequacy of existing language of self and society is felt giving rise to a new language. This language is often a language of the heart[4] which is not just the reiteration of the existing language of role utterance, grammar of life and social order. Social movements interrogate the existing language of classification, identification, punctuation and grammar and create a new language of self and social realizations. Some examples are helpful here. Habitat for Humanity is a Christian socio-religious movement in the US which builds houses with the help of volunteers for low-income families in many communities in the US and worldwide. Habitat for Humanity interrogates the existing language of homeownership in the US, for example the existing cultural logic that homeowners are morally superior to the renters (cf. Giri 2002). It strives to create a new language of home as the altar of God and builds houses with what it calls "the theology of the hammer." Swadhyaya is a socio-spiritual movement in contemporary India which seeks to interrogate the available language of priesthood and creates a new language that all of us who seek to meet with others and share time and labor with them, what is referred to in Swadhyaya as *shramabhakti,* are part-time priests (Giri 2008). Those who take part in various Swadhyaya projects such as community orchards are called *pujaris*, priests. Though such a language does not totally interrogate the Brahminical language of hierarchy it nonetheless creates some new possibilities. Similarly Swadhyaya speaks of wages paid to labourers as *Sambhabana*—possibility— though rarely do employers use such a word and embody the spirit of fellowship that is suggested with such words. Liberation theology in Latin America also creates a new language of community as a journey. The term *Caminhada* which literally means a "march or path"[5] is akin to the

Swadhayaya keyword *Bhaktipheri* which means devotional travel where participants move from home to home and one location to others. Movements of disability, gender justice, global justice and child-centred education also seek to create a new language of identity and aspiration. Advocates of disability seek to create a new language in which people are not disabled but differently abled. Similarly global justice movements such as Attac in Europe and World Social Forum interrogate the contemporary capitalist definition of self as profit-maximizing individuals and present an animating slogan for a new possibility: "People, Not Profit! The World is Not For Sale." Participants of child-centred movements such as Steiner-Waldorf schools and integral education movement present a new language of childhood, learning and teaching in which we are all integral beings and students of life which has potential to transform the existing grammar of socialization and social order (Giri 2009a). These new words have created a new meaning and aspiration of life as well as a new discursive climate.[6]

These movements in our recent global histories must be looked at as part of the entire heritage of humanity—in its multiplex histories of compassion and confrontation, the struggle to create a new language which could express the world aspired to be born.[7] But as these movements strive to create new languages we must not romanticize these struggles nor should we be carried away by these words forgetting the complex relationship of contestation and the need for perennial self-transformation for the realization of new social relationships suggested in the rise of new words. A perennial challenge here is the fact that both proponents of a new language of self and society as well as their followers may just repeat such words and then continue to create and live in an illusion that such recitation alone is enough for changing the existing social order which is still the house of a language of humiliation and indignity in social relations.[8]

Acknowledging these constraints and building upon our failures, including failures of traditions and experimentations with traditions, we are nonetheless challenged to realize the limits of existing language in practices of transformative knowledge which in turn challenges us to rethink our existing and dominant conceptions of language and society. Many times a naïve interpretation of Wittgenstein's view that language is a form of life has led to a naïve sociologism on the part of philosophers treating language as a form of life and expression of society without interrogating structures of domination, exclusion, violence and humiliation encoded in such forms of life.[9] Philosophers are prone to a naïve sociologism because they themselves rarely do fieldwork with

people who are carriers of multiple vibrant languages as unfolding streams of life. But such a naivety exists not only among philosophers but also among sociologists and anthropologists who accept Wittgenstein as a guru[10] and do not explore further the challenge of exploring and realizing both the depth dimension and the height dimension of the practice of language. This is often justified in the name of pragmatism but there is also a rich history of spiritual pragmatics where there is a struggle to create new languages in the interstices of both practical discourse and practical spirituality (cf. Giri 2009c). In spiritual pragmatics new languages and practices are born of multidimensional *sadhana*, strivings and struggles touching both the social and spiritual bases of life and society. We find elements of spiritual pragmatics in both Sri Aurobindo and Martin Heidegger[11] as well as in Wittgenstein[12] and knowing together in compassion and confrontation, as it is challenged with the evolutionary calling of creating new languages, is confronted with this calling of a spiritual pragmatics.

THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE

Spiritual pragmatics interrogates the language of knowledge as property and challenges us to realize it as a gift. Knowledge is not a property, it is a gift. We partake in this gift of life, we stand upon the great heritage of knowledge and life and the only way we can pay back our debt to this heritage is by giving unconditionally knowledge and life we have received. But not only today but down the ages knowledge has been bound in various ways ("Prometheus Bound") and used for domination rather than for liberation and unfoldment of potential. In the past as it is still in the present knowledge was and is being denied to vast sections of societies—slaves, women, untouchables, low-caste, poor and the gentiles. These structures of exclusion have been challenged in some ways but yet much still remains to be done, thus, calling for the need to take part in varieties of movements of transformation.

Now we are confronted with an unprecedented challenge of commercialization and commodification of knowledge which starts from the kindergarten and follows all the way to portals of higher education. Even to teach one's children, on the part of a daily wage earner, one has to spend Rs 200 per month in a remote Indian village. What kind of society is this?

Today commodification of knowledge is reaching a level of obscenity and sacrilege which is an assault on the essential divine dimension of knowledge. It is an assault on both Sophia (Goddess of Wisdom in the Biblical traditions) and Sarasvati (Goddess of Learning in

Indic traditions). With new weapons such as intellectual property rights producers of knowledge are becoming slaves in the valorization of capital losing their dignity and responsibility. Even spaces of knowledge sharing have become spaces of capital. One day I was passing through Bristol, England and got to meet the professor who was organizing an interesting international conference the very next day. I naturally felt attracted and was prepared to sleep in the cold streets of the city just to listen to these words of wisdom but the professor told me that without paying a registration fee which ran up to hundreds of pounds I could not attend the seminar. I asked him: "You are organizing the seminar in any way. I am a passer by. Is your seminar going to suffer any loss if I do not pay? But by denying me participation are you fulfilling your sacred task as a practitioner of knowledge? Aren't you making it a money-making machine?"

Making knowledge a gift is a continued challenge for us and it calls for multi-dimensional transformations—self as well as structural. Knowledge is usually associated with an exclusionary elitism and expertise and here we are challenged to embody a new art of sharing and border-crossing.[13] Those of us who are in paths of learning have to confront the contemporary structures of commodification of knowledge by not only giving and opening up our spaces of knowledge to all souls but also by ourselves becoming gifts of knowledge and life . We have to embody compassion and confrontation in our lives and varieties various spaces of togetherness where we belong. We would also have to make our field of knowledge a fertile one nurturing varieties of cross-fertilizations.

THE CALLING OF TRANSFORMATIVE KNOWLEDGE: KNOWLEDGE, HUMAN LIBERATION AND PLANETARY REALIZATIONS

The above outlines some challenges in addressing the invitation and adventure of knowledge and the need to link it to liberation which involves liberation from structures of social domination as well as self-domination such as the rule of the ego and the propensity to dominate and annihilate. Knowledge today is imprisoned not only in structures of domination but also in varieties of dualisms— expert and the lay, cognitive and emotional— and we need a new art of cultivating non-duality and wholeness. But as a prelude to cultivating the fields of transformational and liberatory knowledge we are invited to foundationally rethink and reconstitute the very terms of our conversations such as "knowledge" and "human." Knowledge is not confined to only what is known as knowledge in modernity, through epistemic procedures, but is linked to ontology and is also part of the

interpenetrative field of action and devotion. *Gyana*, *Karma* and *Bhakti*—Knowledge, Action and Devotion—constitute a multi-dimensional field of autonomy and interpretation in which our engagement with knowledge takes place.

Like a multidimensional realization of knowledge we also need to nurture a multidimensional realization of human. Human is not confined to what is typified and bounded as human in modernity, in an anthropocentric way produced, mechanically as part of a series of dualistic operations such as dualism between nature and society, human and non-human, and transcendence and immanence. Human liberation is not just confined to the human but part of multidimensional transformative moves towards planetary realizations which involve transformation in the existing organization of society, namely the nation-state, rationality and the anthropocentric definition of the human. The "human" in this transformative quest builds upon creative post-human transformations in contemporary discourse and practice and is part of an evolving field of non-human, human and divine. Knowledge and human liberation helps us to realize ourselves as children of mother Earth and the bigger family of the planet consisting of other beings. Human liberation is part of transformative seeking for what Dallmayr (2009) calls an "Other Humanism" beyond a "high tide of old-style humanism" and embodying a "tentative resurgence of a subdued, self-critical and non-Eurocentric (that is, non-hegemonic) view of human." This is also linked to animal liberation and realizing a relationship of dignity with the non-human world and a commitment to transforming suffering[14] for both the human and the non-human realizing their inherent creativity (see Latour 2009).

THE CALLING OF TRANSFORMATIVE KNOWLEDGE: BUILDING ON CREATIVE EXPERIMENTS AND OVERCOMING THE PRISON OF ABSOLUTISM

Knowledge and human liberation strives to cultivate transformative knowledge which emerges out of transformative *sadhana* and struggles and contributes to self, social and world transformations. Contemporary cultivation of transformative knowledge can build on creative experiments in imagining and realizing knowledge in transformative ways in the dynamics of self, culture and society. To understand the work of transformative knowledge, we can build upon a creative sociology and archaeology of knowledge nurtured by pioneers such as Karl Mannheim and Michael Foucault. Mannheim cultivates sociology of knowledge as a multi-dimensional striving in going beyond absolutism of both individualism and collectivism, creating a more organic society,[15] and realizing meaning beyond the logic of "optimum of adaptation" (1936:

18). Sociology of knowledge in Mannheim is also not imprisoned within knowledge as nouns or possessive pronouns but is open to realizing knowledge as verbs calling for a new *yoga* of dialogue and transformations between nouns and verbs.[16] Most of the time our knowledge is a "knowledge of" which is again confined to knowledge of nouns. Nouns are presented and perceived to be static and fixed[17] hiding multiple streams and verbs that flow in and constitute these. Knowing together in compassion and confrontation strives to cultivate knowledge as multi-dimensional meditative verbs of self, co-and social realizations. Verbs of knowledge are not just activistic but they are also meditative. Knowledge and human liberation today calls for a new art of activistic meditation and meditative action going beyond pervasive but rarely reflected upon dualism between noun and verb.[18]

Though Mannheim understands the significance of epistemology in modernist paths of engagement with knowledge he nonetheless challenges us to understand its limitation. For Mannheim while "All epistemological speculation is oriented within the polarity of object and subject" (1936: 12) epistemology becomes an "analysis of the knowing subject" (ibid).

In Mannheim, sociology of knowledge is a striving to go beyond absolutist point of view of both the subject and the field constructed by the knower, observer and the participant. Writes Mannheim, "[The modern investigator] will no longer be inclined to raise the question as to which of the contending parties has truth on its side, but rather he will direct his attention to discovering the approximate truth as it emerges in the course of historical development out of the complex social process" (ibid: 75). He further writes:

It may be true that every form of expression, in which we clothe our thoughts, tends to impose upon them an absolute tone. In our epoch, however, it is precisely the function of historical investigation [..] to analyse the elements that make up our self-assurance, so indispensable for action in immediate, concrete situations, and to counteract the bias which might arise from what we, as individuals, take for granted. This is possible only through incessant care and determination to reduce to a minimum the tendency to self-apotheosis. Through this effort the one-sidedness of our point of view is counteracted, and conflicting intellectual positions may actually come to supplement one another (ibid: 75-76).

Mannheim's sociology of knowledge makes a creative use of evaluative and non-evaluative thus cultivating the possibility of non-evaluative evaluative stances and frames of non-judgmental judgment:

"[..] if, after the influence of the political and social position of knowledge has been accounted for there should still remain a realm of non-evaluative knowledge (not merely in the sense of freedom from partisan political judgment, but in the sense of the employment of an unambiguous and non-evaluative categorical and axiomatic apparatus) [..]" (ibid: 167). Mannheim writes: "The non-evaluative insight into history does not inevitably lead to relativism, but rather to relationism [..] Knowledge arising out of our experience in actual life situations, though not absolute, is knowledge nonetheless [..] Relationism signifies merely that all of the elements of meaning in a given situation have relevance to one another and derive their significance from this reciprocal relationship in a given frame of thought" (ibid: 76).

Building on Mannheim we need to nurture the transformative agenda of sociology of knowledge by continuing to interrogate and transform the logic and structures of absolutism. While it is common place today to speak of plurality of knowledges, advocates of such views such as Santos and Beteille[19] rarely address the issue of how to find paths of emergent coordination and commonalty in the fields of plurality of knowledges. In this context we need to cultivate "a multi-valued logic of autonomy and interpenetration" as a way to find paths of emergent commonalty in the fields of plurality of knoweldges. Plurality of knowledges are part of a field; while each of the elements have their autonomy they are also interpenetrated by others (see Giri 2006). But the construction of knowledge and reality by both the participants as well as observers may not be able to express this logic of autonomy and interpenetration and it calls for further work in self and epistemology to discover this—threads of both connections and disjunctions. Multi-valued logic helps us overcome the prison of absolutism claimed on behalf of each of these knowledges and helps us realize, as Mohnaty presents the pathway of multi-valued logic which I have also elaborated elsewhere, "is partly true, partly false and partly undecidable" (Mohanty 2000: 24; see Giri 2006).[20]

Liberating ourselves from absolutism is a goal shared by many seekers in the garden of transformational knowledge in societies and histories. Like Mannheim's suspicion of absolutism Foucault shares a suspicion of totality. For Foucault, "epistemological mutation of history is not yet complete" (1972: 11). In the same spirit, epistemological mutation of knowledge is never complete and it is facilitated by ontological mutations. In his reflection on knowledge, Ivan Marquez talks about epistemological alchemy (cf. Marquez 2009) which suggests such epistemological and ontological mutations.

Foucault adopts an archaeological approach to knowledge: "Archaeological analysis individualizes and describes discursive formations [which is different from] epistemological and 'architechtonic' descriptions, which analyze the internal structure of a theory" (1972: 157). For Foucault, an archaeological approach to knowledge helps us discover "tangle of interpositivitites whose limits and points of intersection cannot be found in a single operation" (ibid: 160). Through archaeological analysis Foucault wants to show the "proximities, symmetries, or analogies that have made generalizations possible, in short, to describe the field of vectors and of differential reciprocity (of permeability and impermeability) that has been a condition of historical possibility for the interplay of exchanges. A configuration of interpositivity is not a group of neighbouring disciplines; it is not only an observable phenomenon of resemblance; it is not only the overall relation of several discourses to this or that discourse; it is the law of their communications" (ibid: 161-162). The pathway of multi-valued logic of autonomy and interpretation as a mode of relationship between different domains in the field of knowledge briefly outlined above which I have presented in details elsewhere (cf. Giri 2006) resonates with this Foucauldian archaeological spirit of interpositivity animated by a passion for communication and at the same time seeks to make such interpositivity much more interpenetrative than what Foucault seems to attempt.

Foucault's archaeology of knowledge is critical of an archaeological approach to knowledge which reduces knowledge as document to knowledge as monument: "[..] in our time history aspires to the condition of archaeology, to the intrinsic description of the monument" (ibid: 7). Knowing together in compassion and confrontation shares this spirit of interrogating knowledge as monument but it goes further than just retrieving knowledge as document to understanding and creating knowledge as what Heidegger (2004) might call "way-making movement." Ontological epistemology of participation as an approach to and path of knowledge creation embodies continued transformative moves in epistemology and ontology making knowledge a continued movement.[21] Foucault is also known for his genealogical approach to knowledge which resonates with the spirit of historical contextualization in Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. But while Foucault's (1980: 117) early genealogy of knowledge gets rid of the "subject itself," cultivation of transformative knowledge vibrates with the spirit of later Foucault (2005) who talks about "hermeneutics of the subject" and paths of creative subjectivation other than models of individualization offered by state and society. While Foucault's genealogy of knowledge despite promise of plurality seems to construct a linear and one-dimensional

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portrait of knowledge, especially modern knowledge, as disciplining discursive formations, we need to interrogate any such visible or invisible one-dimensionality and linearity[22] and seek to understand pluralities of streams—both binding as well as liberative—at work in any field of knowledge. The story of modern knowledge is not just a story of increasing discipline; it is also a story of struggle for liberation nurtured by emancipatory streams flowing within and across it.

Foucault talks about "regime of truth" where truth, like knowledge is constituted by power, and argues that "the essential political problem for the intellectual [..] is the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing people's consciousness—or what is in their heads—but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth" (1980: 133). But this language of "regime of truth" is limiting and we need to nurture a new language of landscape of truth and truth realization. The challenge before us is not only a new politics of truth but a new spirituality of Truth realization in the dynamics of self, culture and society involving both transformation of consciousness as well as "regimes of truth."[23]

TOWARDS AN EPISTEMOLOGY OF AWAKENING

The landscape of knowledge, power and truth provides a multi-dimensional perspective and mode of engagement and realization rather than a one-dimensional and single-point perspective. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, it is the "one-point perspective of Renaissance which has created an "epistemology of blindness" giving rise to "the absolute immobility of the eye and the blindness necessary to create the single view" (Santos 2001: 266). With this epistemology of blindness modern science has discarded "all the alternative knowledges" resulting in "epistemicide" (ibid: 264). In place of epistemicide we need a fertile field of epistemological efflorescence and regeneration.

This spirit of fertility needs a new Time realization. For Santos, in modernity, we are temporally poor, for example, most of us thinking of ourselves as only modern, divorced from tradition as well as a notion of creative future and we need to cultivate a new "temporality of bridge" (ibid: 266).[24] In cultivating transformative knowledge we need to liberate ourselves from modernistic conceptions of linear time and experiment with different spatio-temporal formations. We need to cultivate pregnant space and pregnant time which can be taken further to realize time as our mother through cultivation of non-anxiety in self and society. Time is a source of much suffering in modernity. The calling of transformative knowledge challenges us to go beyond the contemporary structuration

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of time and suffering and move towards time and healing.

In place of "epistemology of blindness" Santos proposes an "epistemology of seeing" which involves both "creating solidarity" (ibid: 270) as well "social experimentation" (ibid: 273). Solidarity in "epistemology of seeing" resonates with participation in "ontological epistemology of participation" (cf. Giri 2006) but here the language of "seeing" seems inadequate. In place of an "epistemology of blindness" we need not only an epistemology of seeing but also an epistemology of awakening which is neither simply nor solely epistemological. This epistemology of awakening is also an awakening of wholeness.[25]

For Santos, the epistemology of blindness has created many abysses including the abyss of colonialism. Elsewhere I have discussed the need for creating a post-colonial cosmopolis building on both post-colonial transformations and cosmopolitan aspirations (Giri 2006). This striving for a "post-colonial cosmopolis" can build on what Santos calls "post-abyssal thinking" which is a "non-derivative thinking" as well as "ecological thinking" (2007: 23). "Ecology of knowledge is founded on the idea that knowledge is inter-knowledge" (ibid: 27).

For Santos, "The first condition for a post-abyssal thinking is radical co-presence" (ibid). This finds a creative resonance in creative remembering and reconstitution of the present in the insightful recent work of Nitasha Kaul who cultivates post-colonial paths in epistemology. For Kaul, "[..] modernist knowledge needs to be haunted by a post-colonial memory, a re-membering, which can be instigated by placing the question of difference at the heart of the story. When one re-members, one does not simply recall—to re-member is to put it altogether again. This putting together all over again is not a temporalized recitation of what happened after what. Rather it is first of all an undoing of the present [..] In order to re-member the present, one has to not undo simply the present, but also oneself [..]. In this way, the post-colonial moment in epistemology is immediately also the *interpellation of knowing with re-membering*" (Kaul 2009: 116). Ontological epistemology of participation can also be looked at as a way of knowing with remembering and nurturing the possibility for healing, reconciliation and transformation. Kaul also urges us to realize the "epistemic violence of modernist universalism" (ibid: 13) and the "violence of knowledge" itself (ibid: 25). This heightens the need for going beyond the violence of modernist epistemology and nurturing non-violence in social relations and non-injury in modes of thinking. It calls for a new standpoint in knowledge participation and generation which for both Kaul and Santos is a project, "not an inheritance" (Kaul 2009: 141). We are now invited

much more urgently to realize the links between emancipation and epistemology involving "an overcoming of the conventional project of epistemology itself [..]" (Kaul 2009: 234). For Kaul, "[..] it is the pivotal ideals of conventional epistemological project—objectivity, impartiality, universality—which will need reconstruction in order to move towards transformative emancipatory projects" (ibid). We need to reconstitute these terms of discourse, for example heightening the need to transform the language of universality to a multiverse of transversality (see Giri 2006b).

This calls for dialogue. Transformative knowledge in a quest for post-colonial cosmopolis involves intra-cultural, cross-cultural, transcultural dialogues and planetary conversations. It involves immersion in traditions of aspirations and struggles in different locations, an involvement which seems to be missing in much of contemporary theorizing whether it is post-colonial[26] or cosmopolitan. This calls for a new art of learning, learning with our heart, in delving deeper into our traditions of thinking and realizations (Dallmayr 2007).

CREATING TRANSFORMATIVE RESONANCE

In nurturing transformative knowledge we can find inspiration from many fellow seekers and travellers. Piet Strydom (2000) known for his pioneering work *Discourse and Knowledge: The Making of Enlightenment Sociology*, is one such who challenges us to realize that knowing involves not only double contingency of subject and object but also the triple contingency of an ever-expanding and self-reflective public (Strydom 2009). Strydom also discusses the way knowledge can create transformative resonance. But knowledge as transformative resonance has to interrogate and transform another structure of resonance in our present-day world what William Connolly calls "The Evangelical-Capitalist Resonance Machine" (2005). Connolly discusses this in the context of the coming together of American Christian fundamentalists and neo-liberal capitalists in the last quarter century of American religion, economy and politics. This resonance machine creates "resentment against cultural diversity, economic egalitarianism, and the future" (Connolly 2005: 879). This resonance machine is at work in other parts of the world as well as the fundamentalist-capitalist-resonance machine. In this context, a challenge for transformative knowledge is to interrogate and transform this fundamentalist-capitalist resonance through creative experiments in going beyond both capitalism and fundamentalism. Dada Mahesvarananda (2002) chronicles several moves which help us to move beyond capitalism and Connolly writes about evangelical proponents of "Open Theism" in contemporary United

States who contend that "the view of God as omnipotent—and omniscient—makes God complicit in evil" (ibid: 882). In this context, Open Theism expresses a "desire to replace a spirituality infused with revenge with one inspired by care for the fragility of the world" (ibid) and "pray to a limited, loving God who learns as the world turns" (ibid).

But this project of creating transformative resonance is not only a political project, it also involves new experiments in body, mind and soul. Building upon his earlier work on neuro-politics which also involves an unspoken project on neuro-spirituality, Connolly tells us: "We should experiment cautiously with body techniques that then find expression in thought and feeling. [..] Such strategies might include visualization, priming dreams by reviewing a perplexing issue before going to sleep, lucid dreaming—meditation, and neurotherapy" (Connolly 2006: 75). Connolly hopes that "as we move back and forth among experiential awareness, media studies, knowledge of body/brain processes, and subtle technologies of body / brain intervention [In Sri Aurodinbo it would be subtle technologies of body / brain transmutation through *Yoga*], we may also gain more insight into how to confront and counteract the politics of cultural revenge that exerts so much of power [..] today" (ibid).

Through such experiments we can "tap a latent reserve of compassion," in ourselves, "a reserve that finds expression in future conduct" (Connolly 2006: 73).[27] For Connolly, this is also pertinent to the "quality of ethical life" in our world today, especially, paths of the ethical nurtured by savants such as Spinoza who "deny that goodness takes the form of obedience to universal law, as claimed in the dualist traditions of Augustine and Kant", helping us realize that "command-and-obedience models of morality too often contain within them a drive to revenge against the human condition, finding expression in punitive and accusatory orientations towards the diversity of life" (ibid). In place of revenge Spinoza urges us to practice love.

There is a world-wide renewal of Spinoza now and in cultivating new paths of knowledge and human liberation we can draw inspiration from him. Here we can learn from an inspiring work on Spinoza by Chitta Ranjan Das where he writes: "According to Spinoza, love is the mediating link between knowledge and power. Love of humanity, love of the world, a deep faith in the unending possibilities of individuals as well as the collectives. This calls for a higher consciousness which all knowledge should congenially aim at" (Das 2009).

Spinoza helps us to understand the limits of both reason and

religion. Realizing these limits is an important challenge before transformative knowledge today. This is highlighted in the recent works of Jurgen Habermas, especially in his debate with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) held on January 19, 2004 at the Catholic Academy in Munich in which both agree that: "Religions and secular rationalities need to engage in a mutual process of dialogue in order to learn from each other and to protect the planet from the destructive potential of the uncoupling of faith and reason" (Heythrop Institute 2005: 2). Habermas and Ratzinger term this mutual need of faith and reason for each other a "co-relationality". But Ratzinger and Habermas themselves state that the co-relationality between faith and reason in the modern world, although led by Christianity, needs to "engage other cultures and religions in order to become a polyphonic co-relationality capable of providing norms and values for a global world" (ibid: 2).

What is striking is that in this debate Habemas acknowledges the limits of secular rationality such as the pathology of reason[28] while Ratzinger acknowledges the pathology of religion as manifested in the recent link between religion and terrorism. But the pathology of religion has a much deeper root, for example, in a one-dimensional exclusivity which does not acknowledge the *apophatic* character , i.e., "the ineffable character" of our human-divine existence and the "darkness enveloping it" (Wilfred 2008: 84).[29] While the divine cannot be bound in a systemic way, all religions including the self-proclaiming open-ended religions seek to bind it, making it an exclusivist site where the Divine also becomes afraid to manifest Himself or Herself leading to what is called hibernation of God in Jewish theology. This is a foundational pathology of religion which calls for continued spiritual awakening and self-development. Similarly the pathology of reason consists of its own exclusivity and it being a hand maiden of instrumental reason and reason of the State. For overcoming pathology of reason, Habermas (2006: 5) pleads for a "complementary learning process" in which both people of faith and reason take part. In this learning process "true belief is not only a doctrine, believed content, but a source of energy that the person who has faith taps performatively and thus nurtures his or her entire life" (ibid: 9).

In this dialogue Habermas and the Pope urge us to realize that what is needed at the contemporary juncture is a "correlation of reason and faith, of reason and religion, both being summoned to mutual cleansing and healing." And in this task of cleansing and healing we can walk with and draw inspiration not only from Kant—who seems to

be the primary source of inspiration with Habermasian critical theory—but also from Spinoza who worked as a doctor of human affects and pleader for more understanding beyond quick judgment. Spinoza stressed the significance of reason in religion and challenged us to go beyond superstition. Spinoza also sought to heal the split between "natural knowledge" and "divine knowledge" with ease. For Spinoza, "[..] 'natural knowledge' attainable by all human beings through the excess of their own natural faculties is really equivalent to prophecy, namely, that unique communication of 'sure knowledge of some matter revealed by God to human beings' [..]" (Bagley 2008: 15). As Das (2009b) presents us Spinoza's pathways of religion:

> Reason leads us to religion. Union with men by social piety raises us to feel the spirit of God. [..] We can only unite with them as one among them. To know this, to know oneself *sub specie aeternitatis* leads us to the intellectual love of God. This love is Spinoza's religion, and its reward is beatitude. It is that state of faith which comes after complete understanding. This religion is also a modern necessity.

CULTIVATING TRANSFORMATIVE KNOWLEDGE AND A NEW ART OF WHOLENESS[30]

Overcoming pathologies of reason, religion and the wider society calls for a new art of healing and integration which is integral rather than totalitarian. Cultivating transformative knowledge embodies a new art of wholeness[31] going beyond many of our dualisms and polarities. Modern knowledge guided by critical rationality and democratic mobilizations has challenged us to realize the significance of the horizontal. Habermas's communicative rationality is part of the much needed democratic transformation for horizontal dignity, justice and equality. Religions and spiritual quest have always challenged us not to forget the significance of the vertical and depth dimension[32] of our lives. But in traditional religion and spirituality the vertical has got imprisoned within many hierarchies of domination and it has also been accompanied by world-rejecting renunciation and flight from responsible and transformative engagement with the world. Ascent has rarely been accompanied by descent and horizontal solidarity with fellow beings. But knowledge, human relation and planetary realizations today call for a new art of integration of the vertical and the horizontal as part of an ever-evolving, expanding and mutually interpenetrative circle of the vertical and the horizontal.

This art of integration is at the same time an art of weak and gentle integration compared to the telos of strong integration in modern self,

society and polity. The discourse of integration in sociology as well as in the wider public discourse in modernity, for example, in the discourse of nationalism and self, has been imprisoned in a logic of strong integration which has been a source of much violence, suffering and annihilation of potentiality. In this place we need to cultivate an art of weak and gentle integration, where integration begins with realization of weakness and vulnerability and where this acknowledged vulnerability becomes the lubricant and binding thread for integration as an unfolding, evolving and emergent journey of realization of connectedness and wholeness, animated by a transformative interepenetration of dynamic emptiness as well as dynamic harmony. The objective is not valorization of strength or mastery, especially over others, but realization of weakness including weak strength as a companion to realize our common fate and our emergent shared potentiality. Knowledge, human liberation and planetary realizations need to cultivate an art of weak integration building upon insights from critical theories of post-nationalism and developments such as weak naturalism, weak nationalism, weak epistemology, weak ontology, weak theology and weak pedagogy.[33]

This new art of weak integration calls for self-development and transformative intellectual, social, political and spiritual mobilizations. Here we can draw upon not only seekers such as Benedict Spinoza but also Dara Shikoh who four hundred years ago embodied the art of crossing borders. Dara Shikoh was the eldest son of Shah Jahan and translated Upanishads into Persian. He explored common sources of both Upanishads and Quran urging us to realize the "commingling of two oceans" which angered the priests as well as the Emperor to be. He was killed by Aurangzeb (Dara Shikoh 2006). But in his meditations Dara Shikoh challenges us to realize that friendship is the most important marker of a seeker of knowledge (1912).[34] This resonates with some thoughts I was shared in my recent fieldwork in Kandhamal, Orissa in Janauary 2009, where an erstwhile follower of Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh said that the highest religion is the religion of friendship (cf. Giri 2009b). The contemporary challenge of knowledge, human liberation and planetary realization is to realize these fields as fields of friendship even as they are continuously challenged by hatred and enmity. This also urges us to be *bhikhus—gyanabhikhu*, *premabhikhu*, *jeevanabhikhu* and *viswabhikhu*.[35]

But these fields of life and knowledge implicit in it have become barren and have become graveyards of destruction of potential—self, social as well as planetary. In this context, we need to make our grounds of knowledge and life fertile again by being earthworms ourselves.[36]

We also need to tend the garden of transformational knowledge with care and courage as gardeners.[37] But we also need to develop what Peter Sloterdijk calls "avicultural skills," grow wings and become birds.[38] Being birds such as swans which can simultaneously walk on earth, swim in water and fly in the sky would help us come out of our fixation in one location and consequent exclusionary and annihilating absolutism which is a source of much violence and suffering today. Transformative knowledge calls for a new realization of human beings as simultaneously earthworms, humans and swans. In cultivating transforming knowledge, we would have to be simultaneously earthworms, gardeners and swans nurturing the soil, making it fertile,[39] tending the garden and flying out from isolation and bondage in quest of new poetics, politics, spirituality of knowledge, human liberation and planetary realizations.

NOTES

1   Nicolaus of Cusa (1401-1464), a seeker of the inspiring pathway of what he called "knowing unknowledge" or "learned ignorance" writes: "I want to tell you that wisdom cries out in the streets, and her very cry indicates how she dwells 'in the highest'" (quoted in Dallmayr 2007: 61).

2   Ontological epistemology of participation as it involves both ontology and epistemology is based upon transformations in epistemology and ontology such as such as "virtue epistemology" and "weak ontology." As John Greco writes about virtue epistemology: "Just as virtue theories in ethics try to understand the normative properties of actions in terms of the normative properties of moral agents, virtue theories in epistemology try to understand the normative properties of beliefs in terms of the normative properties of cognitive agents" (Greco 2001: 136). Virtue epistemology makes activities of research "person-based rather than belief-based" (ibid). While in epistemology there is a move towards "virtue epistemology" in ontology there are moves towards "weak ontology" as pioneered by Vattimo (1999), "practical ontology" and "critical ontology" as attempted by Dallmayr (1991), and "ontological anthropology" as presented by Clammer et al. (2004), which interestingly embodies a "relational epistemology" (Clammer et al. 2004: 17). Vattimo's weak ontology embodies vulnerability, self-emptying (*kenosis*), love and non-violence; similar is also Dallmayr's strivings of a practical ontology which touches the height and depth of a practical spirituality. We can bring "virtue epistemology," "weak ontology," "practical ontology," "ontological anthropology" and Bhaskar's (2002) expanded ontology or ontology of self-expansion and nurture the ground for an ontological epistemology of participation.

3   A poem by the author originally written in Oriya and translated below presents such a view of birth of new languages from the lap of intimate and meditative solidarity:

I

Oh friend
You said
We need a new language
A new *sadhana* of words and *tapasya* of worlds
This is not a language of victory

22

Nor is one of self-advertisement and aggrandizement
Neither is it a language of doomsday
This is a language of walking our ways together
Walking our dreams, *sadhana* and struggle

<center>II</center>

In our co-habitations of affection
Of compassion and confrontation
Words become *mantras*
Of a new life, a new responsibility
Of wiping tears from our eyes and
Again taking each other into our laps
Renewing our strength from embrace
We create new paths by walking
We create new language
Our language is the language of walking
Stars of *mantras* leap from our lap

4   In his essay, "Language: A Medium of Expansion of Heart," written more that half a century ago, Chittaranjan Das (1999) suggests some pathways in this direction.

5   John Burdick who has studied base communities inspired by liberation theology in Brazil writes about this:

> The *caminhada* carries the connotation of pilgrimage: a hardship carried out in the spirit of self-sacrifice and love. Thus the image of walking the path applies simultaneously to individual spiritual growth, the communidade's collective development toward greater love and solidarity, and the physical displacement of either in efforts to point out contradictions and ambiguities in progressive practice: for the church, it is said, is 'still *caminhado* (Burdick 1993: 46).

6   In order to understand the significance of new languages in initiating self and social transformations what Arjun Appardurai writes about significance of new words in the struggle for a new space and dignity among the slum dwellers of Mumbai can be helpful:

> [..] in these public and ceremonial moments, we can see another remarkable way in which the capacity is built by changing the terms of recognition. Time after time, in the speeches by the leaders of the Alliance at these events, I have seen the importance of the languages of hope, aspiration, trust, and desire come together in a variety of languages (English, Hindi, and Marathi especially, in speeches built around a core of terms such as *asha* (hope), *bharosa* (trust), *yojana* (plan), and *chahat* (desire), all deployed in speeches about the importance of building more housing for the poor, for increasing their freedom from harassment, and for expanding their spheres of self-governance. As politicians and bureaucrats join these events, in which much speech making is substantially spontaneous, they also find themselves drawn into the lexicon of plans, commitments, hopes, and trust. While it is possible to view these events as mere political charades, I would suggest that they are productive forms of political negotiation, in which poor communities are able to draw politicians into public commitments to expand the resources and recognition available to the poor. Not all these promises may be kept (or even meant), but they change the climate of negotiation, place certain commitments on public record, and produce a common terrain of aspiration in

<center>23</center>

which the politics of the poor and the politics of politicians are brought into a common performative space. [..] Words, in such contexts, many not exactly be performatives, which guarantee material outcomes. But they are potent signals and occasions for building the capacity to aspire (Appadurai 2004: 77-78).

7   The history of birth of mother languages in India is a case in point here. Bhakti movements played an important role here. In Orissa, the Pachaskakhas such as Jagannatha Das and Balarama Das wrote Bhagabata and Ramayana in Oriya and they gave expression to the language of the people. See Chittaranjan Das (1999), "Odiya Sahityare Pachasakha" in his *Sila o Salagrama*.

8   In his recent book on Biswantha Patnaik, the leader of land *satyagraha* movement in Orissa, Chittaranjan Das whether Sarvodaya and constructive works are mere words (Das 2009a: 16): "Are these only words?" Das also tells us how in the course of this movement new terms such as Jivanadana proliferated and slowly people tended to substitute such words for concrete social transformations and transformation in relationships.

9   Society in modernity has been conceptualized in term of nation-state which is built upon annihilation of multiple languages existing in the space of the nation-state and violent enthronement of one single language as official language of the nation-state.

10 In his autobiographical reflections *Available Light* anthropologist Clifford Geertz (2000) tells us that he considers Wittgenstein as his *guru*. But had he also considered Heidegger as his *guru* he could have developed a much more deeper conception of language, social practice and art of thick description. The situation seems not to be much different now. In the international seminar on "Language, Mind and Social Construction" at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai in February 2009 in which some aspects of arguments in the present text were presented. While there were many papers in the seminar presenting Wittgenstein's views on language there was not even a single paper presented on meditations on language by either Heidegger or Sri Aurobindo.

11 What Heidegger writes in his essay, "Way to Language" deserves our careful attention:

> *"What unfolds essentially in language is saying as pointing.* Its showing does not culminate in a system of signs. Rather, all signs arise from a showing in whose realm and for whose purposes they can be signs" (Heidegger 2004: 410). Furthermore, "What is peculiar to language thus conceals itself on the way, the way by which the saying lets those who listen to it get to the language" (ibid: 413). For Heidegger, "the way to language is the [..] way-making movement of propriation and usage" where "propriation propriates human beings for itself, [..] propriation is thus the saying's way-making movement toward language" (419, 418).

> What looks more like a tangle than a weft loosens when viewed in terms of the way-making movement. It resolves into the liberating notion that the way-making movement exhibits when propriated in saying. It unbinds the saying for speech. It holds open the way for speech, the way on which speaking as hearing, hearing the saying, registers what in each is case is to be said, elevating what it receives to the resounding word. The saying's way-making movement

to language is the unbinding bond, the bond that binds by propriating (ibid: 419).

What Heidegger speaks about language as saying as part of "way-making movement" is suggested in tradition of people's enlightenment in Europe namely the folk high school movement and people's enlightenment patiently cultivated by Grundtvig and Kristen Kold. Both of them challenged us to realize language as "living words"— words that could enliven and energize us. This is also akin to Sri Aurobindo's suggestion to create poems which would work like *mantra*.

12 Veena Das building upon Stanley Cavell shares some insightful reflections here:

> When anthropologists have evoked the idea of forms of life, it has often been to suggest the importance of thick description, local knowledge or what it is to learn a rule. For Cavell [Stanely Cavell, the noted contemporary philosopher] *such conventional views of the idea of form of life eclipse the spiritual struggle of his [Wittgenstein's] investigations*. What Cavell finds wanting in this conventional view of forms of life is that it not only obscures the mutual absorption of the natural and the social but also emphasizes *form* at the expense of *life* [..] the vertical sense of the form of life suggests the limit of what or who is recognized as human within a social form and provides the conditions of the use of criteria as applied to others. Thus the criteria of pain do not apply to that which does not exhibit signs of being a form of *life*—we do not ask whether a tape recorder that can be tuned on to play a shriek is feeling the pain. The distinction between the horizontal and vertical axes of forms of life takes us at least to the point at which we can appreciate not only the security provided by belonging to a community with shared agreements but also the dangers that human beings pose to each other. These dangers relate to not only disputation over *forms* but also what constitutes *life*. The blurring between what is human and what is not human sheds into blurring over what is life and what is not life (Das 2007: 15-16; emphasis added).

13 In the Indian context, it challenges us to transform Brahminical exclusion of knowledge and create a new dialectic of self-realization where Brahmins and Dalits help each other to be seekers of both labor and knowledge together (see Giri 2002). It also challenges us to overcome the exclusionary division between the experts and the lay in practices of knowledge. Here we can build upon rich traditions of lay wisdom in pathways of the world especially in Nicolaus Cusa's the *Layman on Wisdom*, where a poor untutored layman meets in the Roman Forum a very wealthy orator whom he addresses courteously (a manner reminiscent of Socrates in the marketplace): "I am quite amazed at your pride, for even though you have worn yourself out with the continual study of innumerable books, yet you have not been moved to humility" (quoted in Dallmayr 2007: 60). This lay tradition is characterized not only by humility but also by a "pathos of immediacy: the immediacy of concrete experience as contrasted with the mere book learning and a purely scholastic treatment of real life" and "speaking and writing in a simple vernacular idiom" (ibid: 61).

14 Derrida referring to Bentham's question vis-à-vis animals "Can they suffer?" writes: "the question is not to know whether the animal can think, reason or speak, etc., something we still pretend to be asking ourselves (from Aristotle to Descartes, from Descartes, especially, to Heidegger, Levinas, and Lacan) [..] but rather to know whether animals *can suffer*" (Derrida 2008: 27).

15 What Mannheim wrote nearly three quarters of a century ago seems prophetic today:

Nor is it by chance that the outlook which brings together the social and the cognitive spheres emerge in a time in which the greatest exertion of mankind once more consists in the attempt to counteract the tendency of an individualistic undirected society, which is verging toward anarchy, with a more organic type of social order. In such a situation there must arise a general sense of interdependence—of the interdependence which bonds the single experience to the stream of experience of single individuals and these in turn to the fabric of the wider community of experience and activity. Thus, the newly arising theory of knowledge too is an attempt to take account of the rootedness of knowledge in the social texture. In it a new sort of life-orientation is at work, seeking to stay the alienation and disintegration which arose out of the exaggeration of the individualistic and mechanistic attitude (1936: 29-30).

16 Mannheim (1936: 20) writes:

The world of external objects and psychic experience appears to be in a continuous flux. Verbs are more adequate symbols for this situation than nouns.

17 Nouns such as the names of the person or country are presented and perceived as fixed. But the name *Bharatavarsha* for India brings together both space and time varsha reflecting time. This suggests that Bhratabarsha is not just a fixed space but a journey in space and time. All nouns have this dimension of journey in space and time and have multiple verbs flowing in these but it is a limitation of language that we rarely perceive nouns as emerging out of multiple verbs.

18 In his engagement with knowledge Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007) presents a notion of "action-with-*clinamen.*" He borrows this from "Epicurus and Lucretus the concept of *clinamen*, understood as the inexplicable 'quiddam' that upsets the relations of cause and effect, that is to say, the swerving capacity attributed by Epicurus to Democritus' atoms. The *clinamen* is what makes the atoms cease to appear inert and rather be invested with a power of inclination, a creative power, that is, a power of spontaneous movement" (2007: 40-41). Santos further writes: "Unlike what happens in revolutionary action, the creativity of action-with-*clinamen* is not based on a dramatic break but rather on a slight swerve or deviation whose cumulative effects render possible the complex and creative combinations among atoms, hence also living beings and social groups" (ibid: 40-41). This view of action with energy also needs to cultivate knowledge as action with meditation which in turn calls for further cross-cultural work on action, meditation and modes of energization.

19 For Beteille, an ideological approach to reality tends to present an absolutist picture while sociology and social anthropology present us plural standpoints: "[..] there is no one unique or privileged standpoint in the study of society and culture. Even within the same society there generally is a plurality of standpoints, varying with religion, class, gender or moral and intellectual predilection, and besides different outsiders may view the same society from different standpoints. Sociology and social anthropology cannot move forward unless the plurality of standpoints is accepted as a fundamental condition for the systematic and comparative study of society and culture. But it is one thing to acknowledge the value of, say, studying marriage from the standpoint of a woman, or discrimination from that of a *dalit*, and quite another to have the standpoint itself defined by a particular agenda" (2009: 210). But each of these standpoints is partial though they may claim absolutism on its behalf. Beteille would agree with this. But

realizing the partial nature of one's standpoint and realizing that ones' standpoint is interpenetrated or needs to be interpenetrated by others' standpoint calls for further work on self-transformation, ontological transformation and transformation of one's one-dimensional epistemology and politics. This calls for a multi-dimensional *sadhana* of multi-valued logic. Each of these standpoints is partly true and also not partly true. Moreover, each of these standpoints is also interpenetrated by the standpoint of others. For example, a Dalit standpoint on society is interpenetrated by Brahminical standpoint in the ontology of reality as a field which holds both the Dalits and Brahmins together even though both of them may deny that their standpoint is interpenetrated by the other. Similar is the situation vis-à-vis the standpoint of man and woman about society. While this is an aspect of reality which holds us, our epistemological construction of it is many a time one-dimensional which is fuelled by an uncritical and one-dimensional commitment to a single political ideology. In this context, there needs to be communication among these plural standpoints. How do we pluralize our plural standpoints which at the levels of self, ideology and even sociological method, present themselves in a singular and exclusionary way? Pluralizing plural standpoints calls for generosity and expansion of points of view on the part of both participants and observers which is not necessarily suggested in the sociological method as it is prevalent today. This calls for spiritual work on self, method, accepting others and realizing the limits of self and one's standpoint. While Beteille helps us in understanding the limits of ideology in realizing our integral and inevitable human and social condition of pluralities, we are also challenged to probe further the limits of sociology in undertaking pluralization as a multi-dimensional process of self-becoming and social realization involving acceptance of the partial nature of one's standpoint and embracing the other.

20 What Mohanty writes deserves our careful attention:

> The ethic of non-injury applied to philosophical thinking requires that one does not reject outright the other point of view without first recognizing the element of truth in it; it is based on the belief that every point of view is partly true, partly false, and partly undecidable. A simple two-valued logic requiring that a proposition must either be true or false is thereby rejected, and what the Jaina philosopher proposes is a multi-valued logic. To this multi-valued logic, I add the Husserlian idea of overlapping contents. The different perspectives on a thing are not mutually exclusive, but share some contents with each other. The different 'worlds' have shared contents, contrary to the total relativism. *If you represent them by circles, they are intersecting circles, not incommensurable, [and it is this model of] intersecting circles which can get us out of relativism on the one hand and absolutism on the other* (Mohanty 2000: 24).

21 Recently philosopher Heike Kampf (2009) talks about historicization of epistemology and ontology. Ontological epistemology of participation involves historicization of both epistemology and ontology.

22 It is enriching here to think about Partha Chatterjee's recent genealogical investigation of modern normative political theory what he calls "Lineages of Political Society" (2009). Chatterjee uses lineage as a method in Foucault's genealogical sense but like Foucault presents a unitary view of modern knowledge, in this case, modern normative political theory without exploring the plurality of streams of contestation within this constructed single field of normative theory. For example, in this normative space everybody did not justify colonialism as

exception to the norm of normative political theory. Chatterjee seems to have a singular notion of norm such as representative democracy but this single theme itself hides a plurality of streams, not to speak of well-known tension among equality, liberty and fraternity. Methodologically, lineage as an approach seeks to go beyond linearity, but this is deployed much more to tell multiples stories from "most of the world" rather than multiple streams of normative struggles, social mobilizations and contestations from the Euro-American world. The language of lineage is used to construct a linear and one-dimensional object of critique, in this case the "mythical space of" normative political theory but the object of critique has also a lineage of plurality as the historical experience of "most of the world" from which such a critique is being launched. Probably we need a new genealogical method which is equally generous to the lineages of plurality in all parts of the world and not only in colonized and post-colonial societies.

23 Chittaranjan Das here urges us to understand the limits of the language of politics and realize the transformative possibilities in the language of *sadhana*. There need to be mutually interrogative and transformative dialogues between approaches to knowledge such as Foucault's which talk about "politics of truth" and those which talk about sadhana of truth-realization. For Das, while the politician draws all to himself a *sadhaka* "immerses himself with all and in this fulfills himself" (Das 1958: 90). A key question here before us is even when we speak of "politics of truth" whether we should look at and realize ourselves as politicians of knowledge or as *sadhakas* of knowledge.

24 In the words of Santos: "Projects are an anticipation of reality and as such imply distance from current experience. This anticipation and distance has a specific temporality, the temporality of a bridge among noncontemporaneous courses of action through aspiration and desire. The fallacy of false contemporaneity [..] makes such a bridge a useless device, thus turning aspiration into conformism and desire into the desire of conformism" (2001: 266).

25 Jack Kornfield (2000: 162) talks about the "Mandala of Awakening."

26 Partha Chatterjee explores challenges before "postcolonial political theory" thus: "The first is the challenge to break the abstract homogeneity of the mythical time-space of Western normative theory [..] The second is the even greater challenge to redefine the normative standards of modern politics in the light of the considerable accumulation of new practices [from colonial, post-colonial societies as well as from Euro-American world] (2009: 23). But this project does not explicitly realize the need for cross-cultural dialogue. Furthermore, this does not include the challenge of understanding and learning languages of normative thinking in traditions such as India. For example it is said that King Janaka, father of Sita, nurtured his people as a mother. Learning much more about such languages of governance would bring new enrichment and imagination to postcolonial political and social theorizing. But how is it possible when our postcolonial advocates mostly interact with knowledge emerging from the Euro-American world and rarely go inside other traditions of thinking and realizations? The possible significance of nurturing one's subjects as a mother is explored in the following poem:

> King Janaka nurtured
> His People as a mother
> And Could not our Janakas—
> Our fathers in politics, family and religion

Nurture us as mothers?
Could not God and His arrogant servants
Be a Manifestation of Creative Motherhood
And our state and society
A Flow of Motherhood
In place of the machinery of violence
 A Flow of Compassion and Transformation.
(extracts from a poem in Oriya written by the author and translated)

27 Recent collaboration between neuroscientists and spiritual practitioners such as Dalai Lama and his followers shows us how creative work with mind makes brain much more porous and open to transformations. See Begley 2007.

28 By pathology of reason Habermas has in mind the arrogance of reason to claim absolute justification and truth claim about itself and apriori exclude other ways of thinking and practice.

29 Creative theologian and social philosopher Felix Wilfred (2008) thus cultivates the paths of *apophatic* theology which finds a correspondence in paths of *apophatic* anthropology nurtured by Ivan Illich: "*Apophatic* anthropology is the rigor of not talking about God, but actually living as Christ enfleshed has done [..]" (Schroyer 2009). This finds a resonance with the new relationship between faith and knowledge articulated by Jurgen Habermas (2003) which primarily revolves around creative practice.

30 Specialized knowledge has the power of concentration but transformative knowledge while acknowledging its necessity understands its limitations and move from fragments to emergent wholeness. In this context what Schiller wrote long ago is full of challenging insights: "Thus, however much the world as a whole may benefit through this fragmentary specialization of human powers, it cannot be denied that the individuals affected by it suffer under the curse of this cosmic purpose. Athletic bodies can, it is true, be developed by gymnastic exercises; beauty only through the free and harmonious play of the limbs. In the same way the keying up of individual functions of the mind can indeed produce extraordinary human beings; but only the equal tempering of them all, happy and complete human beings. [..] *It must, therefore, be wrong if the cultivation of individual powers involves the sacrifice of wholeness*" (Schiller 1982: 43). Schiller also urges us to realize that in modernity State stands for a Whole and we are chained to it as a fragment. What Schiller writes below can help us understand our predicament of fragmentariness from our quest for a new art of wholeness begins:

Everlastingly chained to a single little fragment of the Whole, man himself develops into nothing but the little fragment; everlastingly in his ear the monotonous sound of the wheel he turns, he never develops harmony of his being, and instead of putting the stamp of humanity upon his own nature, he becomes nothing more than the imprint of his occupation or of his specialized knowledge. But even that meager, fragmentary participation, by which individual members of the State are still linked to the Whole, does not depend upon forms which they spontaneously prescribe for themselves [..] it is dictated to them with meticulous exactitude by means of a formulary which inhibits all freedom of thought. The dead letter takes the place of living understanding [..] (ibid: 35).

We can here think together Schiller's reference to dead letter and Grundtvig's plea for living words.

29

31 In my current work on wholeness I am exploring a new logic of wholeness which realizes that the quest for as well as the field of wholeness acknowledge the many holes in our lives and building on these holes strives towards an emergent wholeness which is contingent and not closed. See Giri 2009a.

32 In a recent insightful work philosopher A Raghuram Raju discusses the work of philosopher Chandidas on desire, knowledge and liberation and tells us how Chandidas accords a primary importance to depth dimension in liberation by which he means "routes of intensification" (Raghuramraju 2009: 132). Intensification is also close to concentration.

33 Weak naturalism as a companion in quest for weak integration helps us realize that we are part of nature but we are not determined by it and we should eschew the arrogance of human mastery and social control. This is accompanied by weak nationalism which interrogates the construction of nation-state as a naturalized entity propagating the cult of unitary strength at the expense of the plurivocity of beings, societies, languages, nations and cultures. Weak epistemology in this journey makes our epistemic certainty humble and urges us to realize the limits of methods in our scientific understanding as well as social life. All these are accompanied by weak ontology which urges us to realize that ontological cultivation is not only a cultivation of mastery of the self but also cultivation of its humility, fragility, weakness and servanthood facilitating blossoming of non-sovereignty and shared sovereignties (cf. Vattimo 1999). Weak theology as a companion in this quest for weak integration makes theology weak rather than strong which then facilitates border-crossing and dialogues between religions and theological systems. Weak theology is also facilitated by the rise of practical spirituality in religions which relativize pronounced religious beliefs and dogmas and lay stress on practice, especially transformative practice, to transform social suffering. Finally weak pedagogy helps us realize that if the project of realizing good society is a pedagogic one then as educators we can not perpetuate the logic of strength imposing our views on others, especially on children and treating fellow participants and citizens as children, but persuade to take part in collective transformative co-learning where as educators we realize, as Sri Aurobindo challenges us to realize, that "nothing can be taught."

34 Writes Dara Shikoh:

> There is no asceticism in it, everything is easy, gracious and a free gift [..]

> Even the blessed Prophet used to call his disciples by the words companions and friends. And there was no mention of *Piri* and *Muridi* (Teacher and Disciple) between them. Therefore, whenever, in this book there occurs the word "friend," understand by it the seeker of God (1912: 5).

> Earlier in the text while discussing the work of Connolly we had discussed about new possibilities for self-realization and political transformation opened by new meditative experiments with mind and body. What Dara Shikoh also writes in this book helps us understanding the link between knowledge, meditation and compassion:

> Anyone whose heart has become refined, and has awakened, sees in this world [..] beautiful and refined forms, hears exquisite music [..] But he whose heart is burdened with coarseness, and is unawakened (on the higher), sees ugly forms, and hears disgusting sounds [..] And he does not see anything but what exists on the physical plane [..]

> Therefore, O Friend! Thou shalt practise with diligence and perseverance, the

methods of meditation [..] the rust from thy heart will be removed, and the mirror of thy soul will become bright [..]

35 The Buddha has urged us to be *bhikhus*. But what is the meaning of being a *bhikhu* today? Does it mean to be beggar? Given the negative connotation with the word begging we have to first transform the language of begging and make it a movement of seeking. To be a *bhikhu* today is to be a seeker, a wanderer but not necessarily with a different robe and a bowl in hand. We become *gyanabhikhu*—seeker of knowledge, *premabhikhu*—seeker of love, *jeevanabhikhu*—seeker of life and *viswabhikhu*—seeker of the world and the cosmos.

36 Socrates thought of himself as a gadfly. I submit that we need to realize ourselves as earthworms making our fields of relationship even with powers that be more fertile and thus capable of new beginning. There is an epochal need for cross-fertilization now. In his reflection on Grundtvig, the inspiring founder of the folk high school movement in Denmark, Fernando (2000) writes that Grundtvig worked towards people's education where one part of the society could fertilize the other. This work of fertilization and cross-fertilization is an epochal need today as there is so much exclusion all around and so little cross-fertilization. We need to be earthworms in order to fertilize and cross-fertilize self, other and society.

37 During a recent discussion R Kumaran who teaches Sociology at Gandhigram Rural Institute, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu very insightfully commented on the distinction between farmer and gardener. While the farmer tends to weed out the so-called unnecessary plants gardener tends to nurture all plants in the garden with care. Though rationalist gardening in modernity as Stephen Toulmin (2001) would caution us tends to make gardening too planned and it also tends to weed out the so-called unnecessary plants.

38 Anthropologist Evans-Pritchard tells us how the Nuer think of human children as simultaneously human and birds. M.N. Srinivas, the distinguished student of Evans-Pritchard, writes that among the Coorgs in South India it is believed that a cobra during the last phase of his life "develop wings" (Srinivas 2003: 168). Instead of treating it as irrational and drawing lessons from philosopher Sloterdijk as well as the spiritual traditions of humanity we need to consider ourselves as simultaneously human and birds. To this I would also add earthworms. If Connolly talks about experience and experiment we need to engage ourselves in new creative experiments of imagining ourselves as earthworms, human and swans. In a spirit of planetary realizations we can also place ourselves in the positions of our non-human fellow beings and realize what it is likely to be an earthworm or a bird or a snake. We can also engage ourselves in creative experiments of realizing ourselves as five elements of universe such as earth, air, water, fire and sky. If recent coming together of neuroscience and spirituality tells us transformative possibilities in new experiments in experience and experiment undertaking experiment where we feel like water, fire, air, earthworm and swan would help us overcome our anthropocentric fixation and move towards planetary realizations. My friend and co-traveler Professor Subhash Sharma who is the Director of Indus Business Academy, Bangalore, is doing some such experiments with the name of what he calls osmotic meditation (see Sharma 2009).

39 Making the soil of our land, life and relationship fertile calls for cross-species collaboration and also grace from Nature and the Divine especially as we seem to have come to a point of desertification of our land. Global warming is symbolic of the barrenness of our soil and to overcome this we need new initiatives, meditations and struggles as well as the co-work and grace of Nature and Divine.

31

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